

1 GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

2
3 STANDING, & SPECIAL REEF FISH, SOCIOECONOMIC, & CORAL SCIENTIFIC
4 AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEES

5
6 January 9, 2020
7

8 **STANDING SSC VOTING MEMBERS**

- 9 Joseph Powers.....
- 10 Lee Anderson.....
- 11 Luiz Barbieri.....
- 12 David Chagaris.....
- 13 Benny Gallaway.....
- 14 Bob Gill.....
- 15 Douglas Gregory.....
- 16 Jeff Isely.....
- 17 Walter Keithly.....
- 18 Kai Lorenzen.....
- 19 Camp Matens.....
- 20 James Nance.....
- 21 Will Patterson.....
- 22 Sean Powers.....
- 23 Kenneth Roberts.....
- 24 Steven Scyphers.....
- 25 Jim Tolan.....

26
27 **SPECIAL REEF FISH SSC VOTING MEMBERS**

- 28 Judson Curtis.....
- 29 John Mareska.....

30
31 **SPECIAL SOCIOECONOMIC SSC VOTING MEMBERS**

- 32 Kari MacLauchlin Buck.....
- 33 Andrew Ropicki.....

34
35 **SPECIAL CORAL SSC VOTING MEMBERS**

- 36 Sandra Brooke.....
- 37 Paul Sammarco.....
- 38 George Schmahl.....

39
40 **STAFF**

- 41 John Froeschke.....Deputy Director
- 42 Jessica Matos.....Document Editor & Administrative Assistant
- 43 Natasha Mendez-Ferrer.....Fishery Biologist
- 44 Ryan Rindone.....Fishery Biologist - SEDAR Liaison
- 45 Charlotte Schiaffo...Administrative and Human Resources Assistant
- 46 Carrie Simmons.....Executive Director

47
48 **OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

1 Steven Atran.....FL
2 Roy Crabtree.....NMFS
3 Nancie Cummings.....SEFSC
4 Jason Delacruz.....FL
5 Beth Dieveney.....FKNMS
6 Tom Frazer.....GMFMC
7 Susan Gerhart.....NMFS
8 Peter Hood.....NMFS
9 Christopher Liese.....SEFSC
10 Skyler Sagarese.....SEFSC
11 Katie Siegfried.....SEFSC
12 Mike Travis.....NMFS

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14
15

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TABLE OF MOTIONS

PAGE 34: Motion that the SSC recommends that the Gulf Council support a sanctuary boundary expansion that includes Pulley Ridge with the associated regulations, including no anchoring, because it would afford increased protection to mesophotic corals and associated communities. The motion carried on page 50.

PAGE 54: Motion to support the elimination of idle speed zone with the corridor in Alternative 4 in the Tortugas region. The motion was withdrawn on page 55.

PAGE 73: Motion that the updated Gulf of Mexico lane snapper assessment using the Itarget model with FES data is considered the best scientific information available. The motion carried on page 75.

PAGE 79: Motion that the updated Gulf of Mexico lane snapper assessment using the Itarget model with FES data is considered useful for management advice. The OFL utilizing the 50th percentile of the PDF is 1.09 million pounds whole weight, and the ABC utilizing the 30th percentile of the PDF is 1.07 million pounds whole weight. The motion carried on page 82.

PAGE 103: Motion that, given the SEDAR 61 red grouper stock assessment, which was accepted by the SSC as the best scientific information available and utilized the FES recreational landings estimates time series of 1986 to 2005, 1986 to 2009, and 1986 to 2018, yield scientifically valid estimates of OFL and ABC found in the following table. The motion carried on page 110.

Landings Time Series	Comm %	Rec %	Million pounds gutted weight			
			OFL (P* = 0.5)			P* = 0.3
1986-2005	59.3	40.7	4.66			4.26
1986-2009	60.5	39.5	4.70			4.30
1986-2018	59.7	40.3	4.67			4.28

- - -

1 The Standing and Special Reef Fish, Socioeconomic, and Coral
2 Scientific and Statistical Committees of the Gulf of Mexico
3 Fishery Management Council convened on Thursday, January 9,
4 2020, and was called to order by Vice Chairman Kai Lorenzen.

5
6 **INTRODUCTIONS AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
7

8 **VICE CHAIRMAN KAI LORENZEN:** Good morning. My name is Kai
9 Lorenzen, and I welcome you all as the Vice Chair of the
10 Scientific and Statistical Committee of the Gulf of Mexico
11 Fishery Management Council. Our Chair, Joe Powers, is joining
12 us via webinar. We appreciate your attendance and input at this
13 meeting. Representing the council is Tom Frazer. Council staff
14 in attendance are Ryan Rindone, John Froeschke, Carrie Simmons,
15 Natasha Mendez-Ferrer, Jessica Matos, and Charlotte Schiaffo.

16
17 Notice of this meeting was provided to the Federal Register.
18 Notice was also sent via email to subscribers of the council's
19 press release email list and was posted on the website. The
20 following topics will be reviewed at this meeting: Adoption of
21 the Agenda; Approval of Verbatim Minutes from the 2019 September
22 meeting and 2019 October webinar SSC Meeting; Scope of Work;
23 Selection of an SSC Representative for the January 27 to 30,
24 2020 Council Meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana; Florida Keys
25 National Marine Sanctuary Expansion; Coral SSC Recommendations;
26 Update of SEDAR 49, Lane Snapper, with MRIP-FES Data, Including
27 OFL and ABC Recommendations; SEDAR 61, Gulf Red Grouper,
28 Projections with MRIP-FES Revised Allocations and Projections;
29 National Marine Fisheries Service Standardized Economic Reports
30 for Gulf Reef Fish and Mackerel Fisheries; and Discussion of
31 Joint Gulf and South Atlantic SSC Meeting in May 2020.

32
33 This meeting is open to the public, and this meeting is being
34 streamed live and recorded. When you wish to speak, please
35 press the top button on the microphone to activate and state
36 your name each time before commenting. Please deactivate your
37 microphone when you finish speaking.

38
39 A summary of the meeting, verbatim minutes, and digital
40 recordings will be produced and made available to the public via
41 the council's website. For the purpose of voice identification,
42 please state your name, beginning on my left.

43
44 **DR. TOM FRAZER:** Tom Frazer.

45
46 **DR. JAMES NANCE:** Jim Nance, Standing SSC.

47
48 **MR. CAMPO MATENS:** Camp Matens.

1
2 **DR. LUIZ BARBIERI:** Luiz Barbieri, Standing SSC.
3
4 **MR. DOUGLAS GREGORY:** Doug Gregory, Standing SSC.
5
6 **DR. PAUL SAMMARCO:** Paul Sammarco, Coral SSC.
7
8 **MR. G.P. SCHMAHL:** G.P. Schmahl, Coral SSC.
9
10 **DR. NATASHA MENDEZ-FERRER:** Natasha Mendez-Ferrer, council
11 staff.
12
13 **DR. WALTER KEITHLY:** Walter Keithly, Standing SSC.
14
15 **DR. LEE ANDERSON:** Lee Anderson, Standing SSC.
16
17 **DR. STEVEN SCYPHERS:** Steven Scyphers, Standing SSC.
18
19 **DR. WILL PATTERSON:** Will Patterson, Standing SSC.
20
21 **DR. DAVID CHAGARIS:** David Chagaris, Standing SSC.
22
23 **MR. BOB GILL:** Bob Gill, Standing SSC.
24
25 **DR. KARI MACLAUHLIN BUCK:** Kari Buck, Socioeconomic SSC.
26
27 **DR. ANDREW ROPICKI:** Andrew Ropicki, Socioeconomic SSC.
28
29 **DR. JUDSON CURTIS:** Judd Curtis, Reef Fish SSC.
30
31 **MR. RYAN RINDONE:** Ryan Rindone, council staff.
32
33 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** I believe we have to do the same for
34 the webinar.
35
36 **DR. BENNY GALLAWAY:** Benny Gallaway, Standing SSC.
37
38 **CHAIRMAN JOE POWERS:** Joe Powers, Standing SSC.
39
40 **MS. BETH DIEVENNEY:** Beth Dieveney, Florida Keys National Marine
41 Sanctuary.
42
43 **DR. JEFF ISLEY:** Jeff Isley, Standing SSC.
44
45 **MR. JOHN MARESKA:** John Mareska, Reef Fish SSC.
46
47 **DR. JIM TOLAN:** Jim Tolan, Standing SSC.
48

1 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Anyone else on the webinar? Okay.
2 Let's proceed to the Adoption of the Agenda. Any comments or
3 additions on the agenda? Ryan.
4

5 **MR. RINDONE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a couple of
6 additions, a brief discussion about the National SSC Meeting in
7 Alaska that's going to be this August, and then also the ABC
8 Control Rule Working Group.
9

10 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you. Any other comments or
11 additions? We are looking for a motion to adopt.
12

13 **MR. GILL:** So moved.
14

15 **DR. BARBIERI:** Second.
16

17 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Any objections? The agenda is adopted.
18 We then also have to approve the minutes from the last meeting,
19 and so it's the September 2019 in-person meeting and the -- Bob.
20

21 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

22

23 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a typo on the
24 September 2019 summary. On page 14, under the gag terms of
25 reference, the motion should read "SEDAR 72, Gulf of Mexico
26 gag", and it was a copy from the amberjack motion above.
27

28 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay.
29

30 **MR. RINDONE:** This is in the October minutes or the September
31 minutes? Okay.
32

33 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Any other comments or corrections? If
34 not, would anyone like to move to accept that?
35

36 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Move to accept.
37

38 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Do we have a second? Any objections?
39 Okay. We have approved those minutes, with a small correction
40 that's been noted. The October 2019 webinar, any comments or
41 corrections?
42

43 **MR. GILL:** Move to accept.
44

45 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Anyone seconding?
46

47 **DR. BARBIERI:** Second.
48

1 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Any objections? Okay. We approve
2 those minutes too without objections. Then we have a scope of
3 work, and, Ryan, do you want to talk about this scope of work,
4 or should we just do that?
5

6 **SCOPE OF WORK**
7

8 **MR. RINDONE:** I can talk about it in total, or I can go -- I can
9 talk about it before each item, and it's whatever your
10 preference is.
11

12 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Maybe it makes more sense to do item-
13 by-item. Okay. Then we'll do that, and so Selection of the SSC
14 Representative for the January 27 to 30 Gulf Council Meeting in
15 New Orleans, Louisiana. Any volunteers?
16

17 **SELECTION OF SSC REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE JANUARY 27-30 GULF**
18 **COUNCIL MEETING IN NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA**
19

20 **MR. GREGORY:** If nobody else is interested, I will volunteer to
21 go.
22

23 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Any others?
24

25 **MR. GREGORY:** But I will need guidance from Luiz on how to do
26 it.
27

28 **SSC MEMBER:** Kai, what is this for again, please, the
29 volunteering?
30

31 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** This is to represent the SSC at the
32 council meeting, and so this is providing summaries of some of
33 our discussions at various points in the meeting and being
34 available to comment. Then I think we can just accept Doug.
35 Okay. Good. We've done that. The first meat item on the
36 agenda is the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Expansion,
37 and I guess, Ryan, if you want to talk about the scope of work.
38

39 **FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY EXPANSION**
40

41 **MR. RINDONE:** Sure, and this is Item V on the Scope of Work, and
42 so Ms. Beth Dieveney is on the webinar, and she's going to
43 present the committees with a summary of the changes proposed
44 for the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Restoration
45 Blueprint, and you guys will be reviewing the data and the
46 background materials that are on the website, in the meeting
47 materials, and especially the justification for the proposed
48 changes within the council's jurisdiction, which includes the

1 boundary expansion to encompass the Dry Tortugas region and the
2 proposed Tortugas Corridor and the inclusion of Pulley Ridge.

3
4 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** To kind of give you an idea of what the game
5 plan for this agenda item is, first, we'll hear a presentation
6 from Ms. Dieveney from the Florida Keys National Marine
7 Sanctuary, and you can ask her questions that you may have, and
8 I do want you to focus on the changes that are being proposed,
9 especially for the Gulf Council jurisdiction.

10
11 After that, I have a short presentation kind of summarizing the
12 comments that we've been receiving from the AP panels, and they
13 have already seen this presentation and this information, and
14 they have kind of provided some feedback, and, on our website,
15 we provided a copy of the supporting materials that were
16 included in the DEIS that were supporting justifying the
17 proposed changes for the Dry Tortugas region and Pulley Ridge,
18 and so we're hoping to bring all of these comments at the next
19 January council meeting, so we can provide a letter to the Keys
20 Sanctuary, and I think we can have Ms. Beth Dieveney present.

21
22 **PRESENTATION**

23
24 **MS. DIEVENEY:** Good morning. Thank you, and thank you for
25 inviting us to provide a little bit of context and background,
26 and my apologies that I'm not able to be there in person, and so
27 I'm just going to give, as Natasha said, a little bit of context
28 and background of the sanctuary and our proposal, and then I
29 will take any questions you might have.

30
31 Just a little bit of background on the sanctuary. The Florida
32 Keys National Marine Sanctuary was designated by an Act of
33 Congress in 1990, and the first set of management plans,
34 sanctuary-wide regulations, and individual marine zones was put
35 in place in 1997.

36
37 There was, in 2001, an update to include the Tortugas Ecological
38 Reserve North and South, and, in 2007, the management plans, the
39 non-regulatory activities, was updated, and so this slide, the
40 visual in this slide, shows the existing management scheme in
41 the Florida Keys, and the red is the existing sanctuary
42 boundary, including this individual Tortugas South Zone here,
43 and the black is an area to be avoided, which we regulate for
44 prohibiting vessels over fifty meters, and all of these
45 individual squares and shapes are individual marine zones that
46 we manage for different natural resource protection goals and
47 regulate different uses in those zones.

1 This management plan, the boundary, the regulations, and the
2 marine zones have not been comprehensively looked at or updated
3 since 1997, and so that's what we're doing through this
4 restoration blueprint process.

5
6 Why create a blueprint? As you all well know, healthy
7 ecosystems, and particularly in the Florida Keys, a healthy
8 marine ecosystem really is the foundation of the economy there,
9 the tourist economy for many different activities, which I will
10 show you on the next slide, and the natural resources in the
11 Florida Keys are impacted, are under stress, from different
12 pressures, and we are doing due diligence to look at how we and
13 our partners are managing these resources and planning for the
14 future, for healthy coral reef ecosystems in the Florida Keys
15 and a healthy, sustainable economy.

16
17 This slide just shows some of the economic drivers, the uses in
18 the Florida Keys and the economic drivers of tourism, and there
19 is a very large tourism sector in the Florida Keys and lots of
20 activities that both locals and tourists partake in, boating,
21 diving, snorkeling, commercial and recreational fishing.

22
23 This is just an overview of that value to the Monroe County
24 economy of the Florida Keys, the resources and the uses that
25 take place there, and the latest statistics we have is that it
26 is about 60 percent of the Monroe County economy is based on
27 marine activities and uses.

28
29 Now I will just do a little bit of background on the condition
30 of resources, and then I will move into our proposal, and so, as
31 some of you may know, the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
32 does condition reports for each of their sanctuaries, and the
33 Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary released their condition
34 report in 2011, and this is a report in the Florida Keys, and we
35 looked at water quality resources, habitats, living marine
36 resources, and maritime heritage and cultural resources, and a
37 compilation of all the known data and studies and monitoring
38 information, and we compile that to get a sort of report card
39 ranking of the condition of these resources.

40
41 It includes what the pressures are, what the impacts are, the
42 condition, and the condition of most of these resources were in
43 the fair to fair/poor range at that time, in 2011, and it also
44 identifies some of the actions, management actions, that are
45 taking place and could take place to address the condition of
46 resources.

47
48 This condition report was released in 2011. As many of you

1 likely know, there have been a lot of additional impacts and
2 threats to the resources in the Florida Keys since that time,
3 and this slide just shows a host of those impacts that were not
4 included in the ranking and the report card of the 2011
5 condition report.

6
7 In light of the impacts to sanctuary resources, we really do
8 look to local action and local management activities to enhance
9 resilience and address the impacts to these resources that we
10 can from a local perspective, and so this slide just shows some
11 of those activities, and we have over 500 mooring buoys that we
12 have put in place for both facilitating access to the resources
13 as well as protecting the benthic habitat in sensitive areas. A
14 lot of coral restoration activities are going on, research,
15 outreach, education, and the like.

16
17 To kick off the review of the sanctuary management plan, we have
18 a Sanctuary Advisory Council, which operates in some ways
19 similar to the fishery management councils, but slightly
20 different. This is a voluntary body, and they provide advice
21 and recommendations to the sanctuary superintendent on
22 management issues, management direction, and they really led
23 this effort to look at our management and our management scheme.

24
25 From the release of the 2011 condition report, they developed a
26 suite of goals and objectives for where we want to go in
27 managing the Florida Keys, and they held over seventy public
28 meetings and got public comments and had individual working
29 groups looking at specific issues, and, after all of that, they
30 provided recommendations to the superintendent that then the
31 agency translated into what is in the restoration blueprint,
32 but, before I go there, I just want to highlight the two
33 overarching goals that the Sanctuary Advisory Council set for
34 this review is twofold.

35
36 One is improving the biological and ecological systems in the
37 Florida Keys, while also looking at how we can facilitate public
38 and private resource use that is compatible with natural
39 resource protection.

40
41 Now we'll turn to where we are, the opportunity that both the
42 Gulf Council and South Atlantic Council have in reviewing and
43 providing input on our restoration blueprint, and so this slide
44 is a lot of text, but this provides, from the National Marine
45 Sanctuaries Act, the language that outlines the opportunity that
46 fishery management councils have when a sanctuary is either
47 being established or updating its regulations, and so we provide
48 the relevant regional fishery management councils the

1 opportunity to review and consult on our proposed updates and
2 the opportunity to, where relevant, decide to draft fishing
3 regulations.

4
5 I will note here this point here that the council action must
6 fulfill National Marine Sanctuary purposes and policies, and so
7 that's why I put the Sanctuary Advisory Council's goals, really
8 looking at natural resource protection while also facilitating
9 uses, and so this is the background for the consultation
10 opportunity for the council. Now I will walk through the
11 specific elements of the proposed actions that are within the
12 Gulf Council jurisdiction.

13
14 In the restoration blueprint, we do have four alternatives for
15 public comment, ranging from no action, status quo, to a
16 reasonable range of alternatives. Alternative 3 is our
17 preferred, and that range of alternatives goes from a little bit
18 more protective from status quo to a much more environmentally-
19 protective alternative in Alternative 4, and so Alternative 3
20 really tries to find a balance of where are resources impacted,
21 or where are resources still resilient that we want to protect
22 and manage, and how can we facilitate the greatest amount of
23 activity and use while protecting these resources.

24
25 Each of the alternatives does have four components, and they're
26 sort of what I outlined on the first slide. We have management
27 plan activities, which are those non-regulatory activities, our
28 mooring buoys, our resource program, our outreach and education
29 program, and it also has an overall boundary expansion,
30 sanctuary-wide regulations, and those are regulations that apply
31 throughout the sanctuary, regardless of location, and then
32 proposals for modified or new specific marine zones and the
33 regulations within those marine zones, and I am now going to
34 highlight those that are relevant for your consideration,
35 starting with the sanctuary boundary.

36
37 We have this slide here that shows the agency's preferred, and
38 we are proposing to expand the boundary in two locations, here
39 along the northern, eastern, and southern, and this line aligns
40 with that area to be avoided that I noted on the first slide.
41 This is an area that we have regulated since 1990, and it
42 prohibits large vessels from entering, and this was established,
43 in large part, because of some large vessel groundings that
44 happened in the 1980s and impacting the reef here, and so the
45 proposal is to align our existing geographic boundary with this
46 boundary that we have regulated and provide additional
47 protections in that region.

48

1 Relevant to you is the boundary expansion in the Tortugas, and
2 the proposal here is to expand the boundary to encompass the
3 Tortugas Ecological Reserve South to provide additional
4 sanctuary-wide protection in this area and to afford
5 connectivity protections in this region, and so this is the
6 agency's preferred.

7
8 However, I am also going to show you our Alternative 4, our most
9 protective alternative, that includes Pulley Ridge in our
10 boundary expansion proposal, and the intent here is to align
11 with the existing and proposed expansion that the Gulf Council
12 has put forward, and, in addition to the habitat area of
13 particular concern regulations, the sanctuary proposal would
14 include sanctuary-wide regulations in this area. Of relevance
15 would be oil and gas development and discharge, and, in
16 addition, the sanctuary is proposing no anchoring for all
17 vessels in this area, and so, again, this is included in our
18 Alternative 4 proposal.

19
20 Regarding sanctuary-wide regulations in our proposal for
21 sanctuary-wide regulations that we are either modifying or
22 proposing new, there are none that are specifically relevant to
23 fishery management council jurisdiction or consultation, but I
24 did want to highlight this existing language, just because this,
25 I think, is a question and concern when we have been doing these
26 fishery council consultation presentations.

27
28 This sanctuary-wide regulation is allowing traditional fishing
29 in the entire sanctuary, and so, just to go back, in the entire
30 sanctuary, sanctuary-wide regulations, currently, it allows
31 traditional fishing, and this is the definition on this slide,
32 and then the underlined text is text that we are proposing to
33 include, to provide a little bit more clarification of the
34 relevant other agencies who have authority over fishing activity
35 and regulation in the sanctuary as well as some clarification of
36 what is intended by traditional fishing, and so I just wanted to
37 highlight that sanctuary expansion does not affect fishing
38 activity related to traditional fishing activity, and so I'm
39 happy to take questions, or take comments, as you guys develop
40 comments on this language.

41
42 Finally, and what I think is of most interest to the public and
43 our fishery partners, both the councils and our state partners,
44 are the specific marine zone boundaries and regulations, and I
45 am going to just highlight a few in the Gulf jurisdiction, but,
46 first, I just want to note that marine zones, as I said, have
47 been in place since 1997, and we have used them as a management
48 tool to protect different targeted places and manage and/or

1 separate uses in these targeted places.

2
3 The proposal does continue to use marine zones as a management
4 tool, and I will just highlight those that are in the Gulf
5 jurisdiction, and so this slide shows state boundaries is the
6 white dotted line, and the dark gray is existing marine zones
7 that have no fishing allowed, and the blue are proposed either
8 modified or new marine zones that would have no fishing allowed,
9 and this is our preferred alternative with status quo, and so
10 the proposal in the Tortugas, Tortugas North, is existing, and
11 the proposal does not include any changes to that marine zone,
12 in either the spatial or regulatory aspects.

13
14 Tortugas South is proposed to be expanded to the west by one
15 mile, and I will talk through the purpose and intent of that,
16 and then a proposed new marine zone in the Tortugas is this
17 Tortugas Corridor, and I will talk through some of the
18 scientific information that we are using to include this in the
19 proposal.

20
21 First, I will talk about the western expansion of the Tortugas
22 Ecological Reserve South, and then I will highlight the spawning
23 corridor, the Tortugas Corridor, between the national park and
24 Tortugas South.

25
26 In Tortugas Ecological Reserve South, in about this area, is a
27 feature that I'm sure many of you know about very well, Riley's
28 Hump, and this area is shown to support spawning activity,
29 multi-fish spawning activity. This shows that feature and the
30 various fish species that our partners at FWC have tagged and
31 witnessed and seen activity, spawning activity, in this area,
32 and so the proposal is taking the existing zone and extending it
33 to the west, and that's not quite on this slide, but extending
34 it to the west, to provide a little bit of additional protection
35 for the ecosystem, habitat, buffer for the spawning fish and the
36 activity taking place.

37
38 Related to the corridor, this, again, is data provided by our
39 state partners, FWC partners, and this slide shows they have
40 tagged largely mutton snapper and the movement between Dry
41 Tortugas National Park and Riley's Hump to spawn and this
42 movement back and forth, and so the proposal is to provide some
43 additional protection for spawning fish in their movement
44 between their home range and where they spawn in the summer
45 months.

46
47 Just if you have not already, we have a dedicated webpage where
48 the document can be found and supporting material, as well as

1 all of the maps. I have only, obviously, highlighted three of
2 the marine zones in the Tortugas region, but all of the marine
3 zones that are either proposed to be modified or new have
4 individual maps that show the changes across the alternatives as
5 well as there's this interactive map where you can go in and
6 select the area and the type of zone you're interested in
7 looking at and find out more information about the size and the
8 purpose and intent and additional information.

9
10 This here, just of relevance for this audience, is these are all
11 the various meetings we have had and will continue to have with
12 our fishery partners, the Gulf of Mexico, the South Atlantic,
13 and the FWC, very important engagement by all of these bodies in
14 providing us input and comments and working to protect the
15 resources of the sanctuary.

16
17 Finally, we have also done a fair bit of community engagement,
18 and this is only the formal meetings we've done, and I think
19 we've done over forty other individual meetings in the Florida
20 Keys to reach out to the community and share what is in this
21 blueprint, answer questions to solicit and facilitate public
22 engagement and public comment. Public comment is open through
23 January 31, and all comments are at regulations.gov.

24
25 That is what I have to present that is of relevance to the Gulf
26 Council, and I'm happy to take questions or go back to any
27 previous slides, or if, Natasha, you want to present the
28 information you have first, and then I can take questions,
29 whatever you guys desire.

30
31 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** It seems to me that we should entertain
32 questions specifically on this presentation first, and is that
33 okay with you?

34
35 **MS. DIEVENNEY:** Yes.

36
37 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Any questions on this presentation?
38 Paul.

39
40 **DR. SAMMARCO:** You have made it very clear that your group
41 prefers Alternative Number 3, which is changing regulations, and
42 Number 4 expands to include Pulley Ridge, and we're pretty aware
43 of some of the issues with Pulley Ridge, as it being a valuable
44 environmental area and just some of the perturbations that it
45 receives. What is the rationale for your group's preference for
46 Alternative Number 3 over Alternative Number 4? Thank you.

47
48 **MS. DIEVENNEY:** Paul, are you speaking specifically to the

1 proposal related to Pulley Ridge?

2

3 **DR. SAMMARCO:** That's correct.

4

5 **MS. DIEVENEY:** Looking at -- As we reviewed our management
6 plans, part of that was also looking at what other protections
7 are in place and what other management is going on and where
8 sanctuaries could add some additional protections that could be
9 of benefit, knowing that this area right now, and potentially,
10 is included as a habitat area of particular concern.

11

12 We looked at what additional -- We looked at the state of the
13 resources and the value of those resources and what some of the
14 impacts and threats to those resources could be and how
15 sanctuary protection and regulation could provide additional
16 value and additional protection, and so we did want to include
17 this in our alternatives for public comment, for consideration,
18 to provide additional protection, largely the no anchoring for
19 all vessels.

20

21 Recognizing that it is already protected from many threats that
22 impact the mesophotic coral reefs there, we did not include it
23 in our preferred, for largely those reasons, sort of balancing
24 the range of protections and management that takes place there,
25 but we do welcome public comment.

26

27 One nuance of how we have put these proposals out for the public
28 and how we are planning to -- Once we receive all the public
29 comments and various consultations, we do not foresee having to
30 select one alternative that exists in the proposal to move
31 forward, and so, for example, if we get a lot of public comment
32 related to this area, this could be included in our proposal
33 that goes forward, and so we have the flexibility to select
34 across our proposals for what goes forward in our next proposal,
35 if that makes sense.

36

37 **DR. SAMMARCO:** So you're saying that your proposals are,
38 obviously, heavily influenced by your public comment, and you
39 have -- My compliments to you on the degree to which you've
40 sought that, which solves a lot of problems, and is that
41 correct?

42

43 **MS. DIEVENEY:** Yes.

44

45 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Because, with Pulley Ridge, we're facing several
46 problems. Well, the first thing is that it is a -- What is
47 there, what exists there, is valuable on its own, but, secondly,
48 admittedly it is not at the depths at which the reefs are in

1 your sanctuary, in the other parts of your sanctuary, but, for
2 that very reason, it can act as an important reserve or refuge,
3 through time, for a subset, for a suite, of species, which may
4 be represented in the normal sanctuary area, but, also, as you
5 know, those corals in the shallow reefs are being tremendously
6 affected by a number of perturbations, both global and local,
7 and so them having innate value in themselves is important,
8 number one, and, number two, they can serve as a reserve, and
9 the third thing, which you have mentioned, is that the anchoring
10 by larger vessels, in particular, but any vessel, because it is
11 hard bottom and out of sight and deep, can be very destructive,
12 particularly with repeated perturbations over and over and over
13 again. These are, I think, the concerns of the Coral SSC, if
14 I'm not speaking out of line.

15

16 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thanks, Paul. Luiz.

17

18 **DR. BARBIERI:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Beth, thank you for the
19 presentation. This is very, very interesting and helpful. My
20 question, I guess, is expanding on one of the comments that Paul
21 made earlier, and can you give us just a general idea, and I
22 think you justified really the rationale behind the proposals
23 that are here before the committee now, the three actions that
24 will be more directly related to Gulf Council jurisdiction and
25 actions, but can you give us an idea, just because I don't have
26 that background, of the thrust, the main thrust, of the public
27 comment that you received on these actions, proposed actions,
28 pro and con, briefly?

29

30 **MS. DIEVENY:** Luiz, you are wanting specific to what's in the
31 Gulf jurisdiction, correct?

32

33 **DR. BARBIERI:** Well, yes, just because the plan itself is so
34 broad, and there's so many actions, and so I'm looking here at
35 our scope of work and the actions that this committee is being
36 asked to review are the proposed changes within the council's
37 jurisdiction, which would be the boundary expansion to encompass
38 the Dry Tortugas region, the proposed Tortugas Corridor, and the
39 inclusion of Pulley Ridge, and I think you spoke very well in
40 justifying the rationale behind those actions. The one thing
41 that I think would be informative is hearing both sides, in
42 terms of public input and comments on this.

43

44 **MS. DIEVENY:** So, just high level, we have received very
45 general comments on both sides that make no changes to the
46 spatial and boundary, leave it status quo, and, with those
47 comments, they also identify, however, take action related to
48 water quality, enforcement, education, and similar activities.

1
2 We have also heard and received general comments that note
3 Alternative 3, and even Alternative 4 -- One, that I support
4 those, and, in some cases, two, that's not sufficient for what
5 the condition of the resource is and intensity of use needs
6 right now, and you're not doing enough, and so we have received
7 general comments on both sides.

8
9 Specific to the items that I identified, we have not really
10 received targeted comments through regulations.gov yet on the
11 specific proposals in the Tortugas or Pulley Ridge. We have
12 received support for Pulley Ridge.

13
14 In some of the public meetings we've held and the other
15 conversations we've had, we have gotten feedback on the Tortugas
16 Corridor and how that is used by the various fishing
17 communities, and we heard a lot from lobster fishing, that that
18 is an area that they use and from hook-and-line fishing that
19 that's an important hook-and-line fishing area, and maybe other
20 gear as well, and I'm generalizing here, and my apologies to the
21 council, but, primarily, those are the comments from the public
22 that we have received. Natasha will talk about some of the
23 feedback from the other APs related to these proposals, but not
24 a lot of specific comments yet from the public on these
25 proposals.

26
27 **DR. BARBIERI:** Sounds good, Beth. Thank you. That's exactly
28 what I was trying to get to. Thanks.

29
30 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you. Before we continue with the
31 questions, I just wanted to point out, for those of you who
32 haven't followed the links maybe, there is a very substantial
33 report, the draft environmental impact statement, that is linked
34 in the slides that Beth showed, and that includes some level of
35 socioeconomic assessment of expected impacts of these changes on
36 the fisheries, and I just wanted to point out that that
37 information is also there. I have Jim and then Doug.

38
39 **DR. NANCE:** I have a question on the proposed expansion for the
40 whole Tortugas, the connectivity area. Is that more for ease of
41 enforcement than any other purpose?

42
43 **MS. DIEVENEY:** I think it's a combination of acknowledging that
44 we have this individual marine zone here, and there are habitats
45 to provide additional protection in this area, and so affording
46 some additional protections and connectivity of the resources,
47 and it would potentially enhance enforcement, but the green
48 portion would be sanctuary-wide regulations, and Tortugas South

1 would remain transit only without a valid permit.
2
3 **DR. NANCE:** Okay. Thank you.
4
5 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Doug.
6
7 **MR. GREGORY:** Thank you, Beth, and thanks for coming to the SSC.
8 In your report, on page 170, do you have the graph that you can
9 show us for the Tortugas Corridor proposal, your preference,
10 Alternative 3? I have a question about that. In the blueprint,
11 it's on page 170, but I couldn't get the interactive map to work
12 on my computer, but that may show it, too.
13
14 **MS. DIEVENEY:** Okay, and so I'm going to use the interactive map
15 to show -- We can go to the preferred, and that's what you're
16 asking for, correct, what the preferred is?
17
18 **MR. GREGORY:** Correct.
19
20 **MS. DIEVENEY:** Okay. The preferred is --
21
22 **MR. GREGORY:** Okay. That's good enough.
23
24 **MS. DIEVENEY:** Let me, before you -- I apologize, Doug, but one
25 other comment that we have received is -- So this is proposed as
26 a new sanctuary preservation area, which would allow diving,
27 snorkeling, and it does not allow fishing. The hatched marks
28 indicate that it would be proposed as idle speed no wake, and
29 the gray indicates that it would be proposed as no anchor.
30
31 One of the comments that we have received -- One of our
32 proposals was to make all sanctuary preservation area
33 regulations consistent, and many of the sanctuary preservation
34 areas are tiny, over here, and so idle speed no wake and no
35 anchor in that area might make sense.
36
37 We heard a lot of comments about these larger areas, that idle
38 speed no wake does not make sense, and no anchoring may make
39 sense in certain areas, and not all areas, and so before, Doug,
40 you asked your question, I apologize, but I wanted to note that
41 we have received that general comment as well.
42
43 **MR. GREGORY:** Well, you heard me in Islamorada. That's one of
44 my main points, is that's open ocean, and to have an area that
45 large as idle speed zone that people have to transit is just a
46 safety-at-sea issue, and it just doesn't make sense, and it goes
47 back to something that is in the blueprint that's not directly
48 related to fishing, but it's related to this, and somebody, in

1 writing the blueprint, decided to make ecological reserves a
2 SPA, rename it, recategorize it.

3

4 In the document, it says this doesn't change anything, and you
5 still have the same access, and, well, that's incorrect,
6 because, in the ecological reserves, other than on top of the
7 reef, where there is mooring buoys, you can anchor anywhere you
8 want, and you can go fast, and you don't do idle speed, and so
9 the sanctuary needs to take a hard look at that change in
10 definition and make ecological reserves ecological reserves and
11 quit converting them to SPAs, and, if you do that, you will get
12 rid of this problem of having areas of the open ocean that is
13 idle speed zones that the boating community just laughs at.

14

15 The thing that is curious about this is the green areas here in
16 the Tortugas, the Tortugas North and Tortugas South, were also
17 called ecological reserves, yet the sanctuary did not convert
18 them to SPAs, and so there's an inconsistency in how the old
19 ecological reserves are being treated in this new document, and
20 I think that inconsistency needs to be looked at again.

21

22 The other thing is, in your condition report, and granted it's
23 2011, and we have the Tortugas assessment report in I think it
24 was 2013, and there is very little or no mention of the National
25 Marine Fisheries Service SEDAR stock assessments, and mutton
26 snapper and black grouper are referenced quite a bit in these
27 reports, and I would suggest that the sanctuary go back and try
28 to incorporate those stock assessment assessments and identify
29 management changes that the fishery councils have made that
30 helped to rebuild these populations, because they are missing
31 from your condition report.

32

33 Again, with the Tortugas area here, the Alternative 4 is
34 actually less conservative than the Alternative 3, if I remember
35 right, and your Alternative 4 makes the corridor just a no-
36 transit zone, and it doesn't say no anchoring, and it doesn't
37 say idle speed, and so this seems to be a more practical
38 approach, but it's Alternative 4, which has been defined as
39 being more conservative, and, in this case, it's not.

40

41 Then I've got a question about the no anchoring zones up and
42 down the Keys. Does no anchoring mean no trap fishing? Trap
43 boats can fish without anchoring in a particular spot. They can
44 lay their traps across the spot, and so, if something is -- I
45 know, in this case, it's no fishing, and so that doesn't matter,
46 but I think, in the upper Keys, there's a large area that is no
47 anchoring, but it doesn't indicate whether or not trapping is
48 allowed or disallowed. Thank you.

1
2 **MS. DIEVENEY:** If I may sort of go a little bit point-by-point,
3 the ecological reserve, Tortugas Ecological Reserve North and
4 South, and our other existing ecological reserve is Western
5 Sambo Ecological Reserve. These three are existing ecological
6 reserves, and these are maintained as ecological reserves
7 throughout the alternatives, and the regulation there is transit
8 only without a valid permit.

9
10 This area, while it has always been called an ecological
11 reserve, has always been managed like a sanctuary preservation
12 area, which allows fishing and diving and does not allow --
13 Sorry. It allows snorkeling and diving, and it does not allow
14 fishing, and so that change in terminology was more of a
15 housekeeping item, to be clear of what is allowed and not
16 allowed in this area, rather than a real change in what is being
17 achieved, and so it is a little bit of a housekeeping item, but
18 these areas, the ecological reserves, are intended to be the
19 most protective marine zones, and there are the fewest of those
20 in the Florida Keys, and they are the most protective, transit
21 only without a valid permit, and, in the proposal, they are
22 intended to protect large, contiguous habitats, as they do in
23 the Tortugas region, and there are two new proposals here, in
24 the middle Keys and upper Keys, research only areas, protecting
25 new habitat types, hardbottom habitat types, that are not well
26 represented now.

27
28 Thank you for your comment about incorporating the relevant
29 stock assessment information. We have received comments about
30 that, specific to mutton snapper and some of the decisions that
31 the councils have made and the state has made related to
32 different fishery management plans, and that we look at that
33 when looking holistically at our proposal to change marine
34 zones.

35
36 Your question about no anchoring and trap fishing, the proposal
37 -- All of these yellow sanctuary preservation areas in the
38 proposal are proposed to be no anchoring, and these are already,
39 and will continue in the proposal -- They are proposed to be
40 continued no-fishing areas, and so those no-anchor areas would
41 also be no-trapping areas. This large existing Key Largo
42 existing management area, in the proposal, it is included as a
43 no-anchor zone, and it says nothing about changing any of the
44 fishing activity that is currently allowed, which includes trap
45 fishing.

46
47 However, we have heard, as you all can likely imagine, a lot of
48 comments about including this large area, deep area, as a no-

1 anchor zone, and much of the comment has been to have more
2 targeted no-anchor areas in the areas where the resources would
3 benefit from those additional protections. Did I capture your
4 questions, Doug?

5
6 **MR. GREGORY:** Yes, and thank you, but, if I may, Mr. Chair.
7 Back to the Western Sambo Ecological Reserve/SPA. Currently,
8 today, with the exception of the reef top, the fore reef, where
9 there is mooring buoys, I can anchor anywhere within that
10 ecological reserve, and I can go fast anywhere in that
11 ecological reserve, and so, by changing it to a SPA, you have
12 changed access dramatically, and that's a nine-square-mile area
13 going five miles offshore, and so anybody transiting Hawk
14 Channel is going to be hit with like a one-mile-wide idle speed
15 zone in open water.

16
17 It just doesn't make sense, and so, contrary to what's in the
18 document, and what I think you said, it does change the access
19 and the availability of that area to the public, by making it a
20 SPA instead of an ecological reserve. Thank you.

21
22 **MS. DIEVENEY:** In the proposal, the agency has proposed that all
23 sanctuary preservation areas, which are these small, generally
24 small, yellow, on this map, become, in addition to separating
25 conflicting uses of fishing and diving, also proposes that they
26 become idle speed no wake and no anchor, to provide additional
27 protection for the benthic habitat.

28
29 We have received a fair bit of public comment about these areas,
30 these larger areas here and here and here, that idle speed no
31 wake is too restrictive, is a safety hazard, everything you have
32 just noted here, and so we have definitely heard that from the
33 public, and that is part of what we will be considering when we
34 develop an updated proposal draft rule for public comment.

35
36 **MR. GREGORY:** Thank you. That's all.

37
38 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you. Paul.

39
40 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Just a quick question for you, looking at your
41 maps. You have a number of different areas with a variety of
42 restrictions associated with each, and I don't know how many,
43 and maybe four or five or something like that, and do you --
44 First, how many are there, and, secondly, do you find that the
45 users are just a little bit confused as to where they can go and
46 what they can do and what they can't do in these regions?

47
48 **MS. DIEVENEY:** I am going to put on status quo, and I'm going to

1 zoom out a little bit, and the color scheme does show -- Yellow
2 is one type of marine zone, sanctuary preservation areas, and
3 those -- This is what currently exists, and it separates
4 conflicting uses, fishing, diving, snorkeling, and we provide
5 mooring buoys, to provide some additional protection for the
6 benthic habitat.

7
8 The green, which we have a tiny one here, a tiny one here, and a
9 tiny one here, and here and here, and those are either special
10 use areas, and these small ones are special use areas, research
11 only without a valid -- Sorry. They are transit only without a
12 valid permit and transit-only ecological reserves.

13
14 Sanctuary preservation areas, special use areas, ecological
15 reserves, and then we have -- You can see these light blue,
16 orange, red, light blue, orange, and those are wildlife
17 management areas. They are quite small, and they are intended
18 to protect shallow-water habitat, in some cases nesting and
19 roosting birds and turtle nesting beaches, and the regulations
20 in these areas are really targeted for what the resource
21 protection goal is, and so they could be idle speed no wake, and
22 they could be no motor, and, in some cases, the red is no entry.

23
24 Currently, we have four different zone types, and I believe --
25 The number is down here, and we have fifty-seven marine zones
26 existing. In our preferred, we use the same type of
27 protections, and it goes up to ninety-eight proposed marine
28 zones. The bulk of the changes and the addition is in these
29 wildlife management areas, protecting the shallow-water habitats
30 in areas near mangrove islands, et cetera.

31
32 It is a range of what we hear about public understanding,
33 compliance, between locals and visitors alike, and some of the
34 changes we've made are intended to facilitate greater
35 understanding and compliance, and so trying to be very
36 consistent, where, if it's this type of marine zone, this is
37 what is allowed and this is what is not allowed. However, you
38 are correct in that there is a lot of management in this area, a
39 lot of different flavors of management, and so education and
40 outreach is a big part of the management plan elements, as well
41 is a big part of the public comment we have been receiving.

42
43 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Thank you.

44
45 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you. Steve.

46
47 **MR. STEVEN ATRAN:** I'm not a member of the SSC, and I appreciate
48 you letting me speak, and I just have a brief comment. A slight

1 change of subject, but can you put your presentation back up, on
2 Slide 20, and it's the definition of "traditional fishing". I
3 have been staring at this for a while, and, even with the
4 proposed changes, to me, it still seems a little bit ambiguous
5 to exactly what is "traditional".

6
7 Both the Gulf Council and the South Atlantic Council have lists
8 of authorized fisheries and fishing gear, and they are very
9 specific as to what fishing is allowed and what gear is allowed
10 or each type of fishing. Not all of them are appropriate for
11 the Keys. I mean, longlining is one of the things on the list,
12 and there might be some things that aren't on there, but I was
13 thinking that perhaps this definition might want to reference
14 those lists of allowable gear, or maybe even include a subset of
15 them, because they are quite specific, and, from an enforcement
16 standpoint, it would make the definition of "traditional
17 fishing" much more precise. That's all I had to say.

18
19 **MS. DIEVENEY:** Yes, and thank you for that comment, and you
20 raise a very valid point. We do reference that it is identified
21 and defined in the original EIS management plan, and so being
22 able to -- That would not change, and so being able to provide
23 that more detail of what is meant by traditional fishing -- We
24 do outline it in the original EIS, but referencing that, pulling
25 that, and even doing an update comparison of the lists you
26 referred to is an exercise that we have and will undergo.

27
28 **MR. ATRAN:** If you want to see the lists, I believe the list for
29 the Gulf Council is still on the Gulf Council website, and you
30 might have to search around a little bit for it though.

31
32 **MS. DIEVENEY:** Okay. Thank you.

33
34 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay. Steven.

35
36 **DR. SCYPHERS:** Could you tell us a bit more about how the public
37 comments are reviewed and analyzed, and, specifically, I am
38 curious if there's any sort of vote counting or ranking of
39 issues, and I feel like it could be pretty helpful to
40 contextualize some of the issues with fisheries and access, and
41 also to help understand the balance, when you are getting
42 comments on both sides of a lot of these issues. Thank you.

43
44 **MS. DIEVENEY:** I apologize, and I lost you for a moment there,
45 and you had asked about how we are looking at public comments
46 and ranking them?

47
48 **DR. SCYPHERS:** Just if you had plans to kind of code and

1 categorize all of the public comments you're getting. My kind
2 of instinct is that it could help rank a lot of the issues that
3 are being raised by the public and also help with a bit more
4 understanding, when you're getting comments on both sides of a
5 particular issue, what the balance is, if it's a 50/50 split or
6 if it's something that is more leaning to one side.

7
8 **MS. DIEVENEY:** At present, we are obviously pulling all the
9 public comments and categorizing them by issues raised and
10 making sure that comments that -- Many comments have multiple
11 issues in them, and so capturing all those elements that the
12 public is providing us and taking time to provide the feedback
13 and the input to us.

14
15 At present, we have not done any ranking of sort of -- I don't
16 foresee that we would do any ranking of we've got 80 percent
17 saying this, and so that's the way that we will go, but really
18 looking at the range of comments, the range of input, both from
19 the public and our other agency partners that we're consulting
20 with, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Fisheries Service, the
21 councils, our state partners, and so there's a lot that goes
22 into this, but we are doing due diligence to ensure that we are
23 considering all of the public comments, and that may not be a
24 satisfying answer right now, and the public comment does go
25 through the 31st, and so, as we get more and get the final
26 comments and look at them in total, we may look at it in a
27 different way, but, right now, we're just making sure that we're
28 capturing them all and categorizing them by issues raised and
29 not necessarily by number of comments on any specific element.

30
31 **DR. SCYPHERS:** Thank you very much.

32
33 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you. Any more specific questions
34 to Beth? Otherwise, we will move on to Natasha's presentation.
35 Also, I know we have a number of members of the fishing public
36 in the back, and, if you want to ask a question or speak, just
37 raise your hands, and we'll accommodate that. Thank you.
38 George.

39
40 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Beth, could you clarify, relating to the proposal
41 in Alternative 4 for Pulley Ridge, what the proposed regulations
42 in that alternative are for that specific area?

43
44 **MS. DIEVENEY:** In this specific area of Pulley Ridge, it would
45 be the sanctuary-wide regulations, and, just to highlight a few
46 of those, it's no discharge, no oil and gas, no impact to the
47 benthic habitat without a permit, historical resource extraction
48 permits, et cetera, and so sanctuary-wide regulations would

1 apply, and we are proposing to include an additional no anchor
2 of all vessels in that area.

3
4 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Thank you, and, actually, Natasha, maybe you could
5 address this. First of all, I know that the Coral Amendment 9
6 has just recently been finalized, and it includes an HAPC for
7 the Pulley Ridge area, and the boundaries look very similar, and
8 that was my first question, whether or not they're exactly
9 similar or whether they're not, and to clarify the regulations
10 that were included in the HAPC designation, which I believe
11 allowed for bottom longlines in that area.

12
13 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** That polygon that the Keys is proposing,
14 that they are calling Pulley Ridge, actually includes the
15 current Pulley Ridge HAPC, which has fishing regulations of no
16 fishing with any bottom-tending gear and no anchoring for all
17 fishing vessels, and, that kind of square that is expanded to
18 the west, that's the proposed Pulley Ridge South A in Coral 9,
19 and that one is also no anchoring for all fishing vessels, but
20 there is a provision that would allow bottom longlining, and so
21 the difference, in this case, is like the anchoring would be
22 expanded to all vessels and not just fishing vessels.

23
24 **MR. SCHMAHL:** All right. Thank you.

25
26 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Jason, has your question been answered?

27
28 **MR. JASON DELACRUZ:** He brought the point up, but she said no
29 benthic interactions, and with the exclusion, so that we can
30 longline in that lower corner, is that considered -- In other
31 words, is that something that we're going to slip through the
32 cracks, and we're okay in Amendment 9, but not okay in the
33 marine sanctuary expansion?

34
35 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Beth, do you have a -- Or Natasha? Do
36 you want to speak to that?

37
38 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** I guess maybe a clarification on the
39 question. Are you asking Beth if they are proposing any
40 additional fishing regulations with this EIS in that Pulley
41 Ridge area?

42
43 **MS. DIEVENEY:** We are not proposing any additional restrictions
44 on the fishing activity that is included in Amendment 9. The
45 addition would be no fishing for -- Sorry. No anchoring for all
46 vessels.

47
48 **MR. DELACRUZ:** Thank you.

1
2 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you, and I had Paul.

3
4 **DR. SAMMARCO:** A quick question for Natasha. Do anchoring
5 restrictions apply to larger vessels, like freighters and so
6 forth, or are they permitted to -- This is in the Pulley Ridge
7 area. Are they permitted to anchor there?

8
9 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Currently, I don't think there is a
10 restriction. I mean, correct me if I'm wrong, but I don't think
11 that there were any specifications on vessel size for anchoring
12 or no anchoring in that area.

13
14 **MR. SCHMAHL:** My understanding is that, obviously, the HAPC
15 regulations only apply to vessels engaged in fishing activities,
16 and so, if you're a freighter or some other kind of vessel, HAPC
17 regulations do not apply to those vessels.

18
19 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Would those restrictions apply under the Florida
20 Keys National Marine Sanctuary?

21
22 **MS. DIEVENEY:** The intent by the proposed no anchoring of all
23 vessels would be to capture the non-fishing vessels that may
24 anchor in that area, that habitat, and so it would be an
25 additional protection on top of the existing and proposed Gulf
26 of Mexico regulations in that area.

27
28 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Thank you.

29
30 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay. Thank you very much, Beth, for
31 that presentation and the detailed answers you've been providing
32 so far, and stay on the line, and I think we'll move on to
33 Natasha's presentation, but the discussion will continue after
34 that. Thank you.

35
36 **MS. DIEVENEY:** Thank you, and, if I may, before Natasha starts,
37 and I let Natasha know this, I'm going to stay on as long as I
38 can, but I do have a flight to catch, and so, if you hear me
39 drop off, I do apologize in advance, but I will stay on as long
40 as I can and answer any questions that might come up, and, if
41 things come up after, I am available by email, and I can engage
42 with anyone following this meeting, and so thank you again, and
43 apologies if I have to get off before this agenda item is over.

44
45 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you.

46
47 **FEEDBACK ON PROPOSED CHANGES IN GULF JURISDICTION**

1 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** I think this is a great kind of transition,
2 and some of your questions have been related to what kind of
3 public comments we've been receiving, and so I will go through
4 kind of a summary of what we've heard.

5
6 Well, the DEIS was originally released on August 15, and, since
7 then, we've been convening the various advisory panels and SSCs
8 to kind of gather what their thoughts are, and Beth and other
9 sanctuary staff have been presenting detailed information on the
10 DEIS, and so, as you can see, almost every month we've had a
11 meeting, and hopefully, by the next January council meeting, I
12 will be able to compile everyone's comments and your suggestions
13 and present them to the council and then we can make that letter
14 and provide it to the sanctuary with the council's
15 recommendations.

16
17 In your presentation, you will see two slides that have general
18 comments, and what I mean by general comments is that these
19 comments were kind of consistent throughout the various advisory
20 panel meetings that we had, and there was concern that the DEIS
21 was difficult to understand, that there was a lot of
22 information, and therefore it was hard for the stakeholders to
23 provide sort of a more detailed comment on specific items.

24
25 Fishermen are also concerned about future restrictions that may
26 influence their ability to fish in sanctuary waters, and so, as
27 you can see, there is a new area in the Dry Tortugas region that
28 was not part of the sanctuary, and so, if that area were to
29 become part of the sanctuary, would that mean that, later down
30 the line, there would be more stringent fishing regulations that
31 would affect the fishermen's ability to catch the fish, and so
32 that's a concern.

33
34 Given the amount of marine zones that are being designated, the
35 other concern is enforceability of all these regulations
36 proposed, and some of the stakeholders didn't think that there
37 were enough law enforcement officers that could actually enforce
38 some of these regulations.

39
40 Stakeholders were also requesting a table with all the
41 coordinates of these areas, so that they know which areas they
42 can fish in and which areas are no-entry zones, and there is
43 also a confusion regarding some of the navigational regulations
44 and what does it mean in these areas, and why are some idle no
45 wake, what's the difference between no motor, and is there a
46 speed specific to what would be considered trolling?

47
48 Another suggestion was the installation of navigational aids

1 instead of closing areas, and this comment particularly refers
2 to some of the smaller areas that are being proposed as no-entry
3 zones in the lower Keys, and this area is really shallow, and
4 the locals were just suggesting that, instead of closing these
5 areas to protect kind of that seagrass, that better channel
6 markers, providing guidance to the boaters, might be a better
7 approach.

8
9 One of the resounding topics that we heard was water quality
10 issues in the Keys and that there should be more being done to
11 address kind of these concerns, and we have heard from the
12 sanctuary that part of their management goal is to collaborate
13 more with all of the other state agencies that are in charge of
14 monitoring water quality in the area.

15
16 Another comment is that the stakeholders do recognize that there
17 has been a decline in the environment, like coral reefs, and
18 they have seen a decline in that, and harmful algal blooms, and
19 so they do understand the overall goal, but that there needs to
20 be more data, and the data needs to be more robust to justify
21 some of these closures.

22
23 Stakeholders would also like to see more engagement with the
24 Keys Sanctuary, especially when it comes to outreach and more
25 education to the locals, education to the tourists, since it's
26 an area that's highly visited, and better signaling, especially
27 with all the designations of the new marine zones, and more
28 collaboration with the fishermen. They do want to be involved
29 in the data collection that might help support the decisions
30 moving forward with the sanctuary.

31
32 Then we also have some more specific comments from some APs.
33 The Shrimp AP, specifically, opposes the northwestern expansion
34 of the boundary and the southern expansion. That basically
35 means that kind of salmon color is the current sanctuary
36 boundary, and the green would be what's being proposed in
37 Alternative 2 and 3, and the reason behind this is because they
38 are concerned of more stringent fishing regulations, especially
39 in the newer areas around the Dry Tortugas region, and that they
40 wanted to see more support in the biological data as to why this
41 area is being proposed to be new sanctuary waters.

42
43 Then we also had a meeting, a joint meeting, with the South
44 Atlantic and the Gulf Spiny Lobster APs, and they had some
45 specific recommendations. One of them was to consider adding
46 additional regulations specifically to the no anchoring and no
47 harvest of lobster by all user groups in the areas identified in
48 Spiny Lobster 11, and so these are areas that are closed for

1 spiny lobster trap gear, because of the presence of endangered
2 corals, and so, when we look at an overlap of these polygons,
3 there wasn't really overlap between those closed areas and some
4 of the SPAs and additional no entry and no anchor zones, but
5 they're really small, and I could provide -- It's not included
6 here, but, if you wanted to see a map of that, I could send it
7 on to your email.

8
9 Another comment was to recommend the council to oppose the
10 closure of any new areas to lobster trap fishing, as proposed by
11 the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary restoration
12 blueprint.

13
14 There was a comment on opposition of the idle speed no wake
15 restrictions in Hawk Channel, and Beth brought up that comment
16 during her presentation, and those were those long sanctuary
17 preservation areas that cover all the way from the shoreline
18 through the seagrass to the reef, and that's a really large idle
19 zone, and they are concerned about hazards at sea by having
20 these large areas with idle speed regulations.

21
22 Then the final comment was to remove Alternative 4 from the
23 proposed actions, and so to not even consider what is in
24 Alternative 4, and this is because they believe that the goals,
25 the overall goals, for the sanctuary could be still addressed by
26 Alternative 2 and 3, and, again, because of the complexity of
27 the DEIS, and, if you go to the next slide, it's to remind you
28 that Alternative 4 was including the Pulley Ridge area, in
29 addition to other regulations that are more protective of the
30 different various habitats.

31
32 I have been compiling some of your comments and your questions
33 to Beth, but we do want to hear kind of your concrete thoughts,
34 hopefully, of what are -- Does the data that we provided support
35 these changes? Do you have any specific comments that we should
36 bring to the council, in addition to the discussions that you
37 have already had?

38
39 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you. There are a number of
40 supporting documents that are also on the agenda and on the
41 website, and we're not going into those, and is that right?
42 They are just there, and there's a number of papers, and there's
43 a summary of the FWC comments and so on. I just wanted to point
44 that out.

45
46 I think we should have questions and a general discussion first,
47 and I think that we need to circle back to the scope of work
48 here, and I think, in terms of the questions you have put up, of

1 course, our job really is to vet the scientific information and
2 not so much to make management recommendations. Jim.

3
4 **DR. NANCE:** I just have a general question. It looks like you
5 met with the Reef Fish AP, but I don't see any motions or
6 feedback from them. Did they have any?

7
8 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** There were no motions from the Reef Fish AP.
9 There was concern, and thank you for bringing it up, about the
10 Tortugas Corridor, because of the snapper fishery in that area,
11 but there were no follow-up motions during the meeting.

12
13 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** George.

14
15 **COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

16
17 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I had a couple of comments on the -- There's
18 several things, I think, that have been specifically asked
19 about. One is that the expansion of both the Tortugas North
20 area, and I want to kind of address it specifically from the
21 coral perspective, because I'm on the Coral SSC.

22
23 First of all, I will note that -- Let me start with the
24 corridor, actually. The corridor area, and I don't really have
25 anything much to say about the idle speed and that kind of
26 thing, but, as far as the communities, there are known coral
27 communities within that corridor area, and you can look at the
28 NOAA and the Gulf Council's coral portal, to see that there are
29 records of deepwater and mesophotic coral communities in that
30 corridor area, and so I would be very supportive of actions that
31 would restrict bottom impact activities, and especially
32 anchoring, in that area.

33
34 That is also true with the Tortugas South Ecological Reserve,
35 the proposal to expand that boundary to the west, and I think
36 about a mile I think is the proposal, and there are also known
37 coral communities within that area, and, obviously, there's fish
38 associated with it too, but, I'm just looking at it from the
39 coral perspective, and so I would also be in strong support of
40 the expansion of the Tortugas South boundary.

41
42 The Tortugas North boundary is a little bit different, and
43 there's actually -- That area has not been explored very well,
44 and, as far as I can tell, there is no documented coral
45 communities in that area.

46
47 Just looking at the bottom contours and the bathymetry, it's
48 very likely that there are, but I guess, putting on my manager's

1 hat, because I am a superintendent of a National Marine
2 Sanctuary at the Flower Garden Banks, this does make sense, from
3 an administrative and enforcement perspective, to make the
4 boundaries contiguous.

5
6 It's harder when you have like Tortugas South kind of sitting
7 out on its own, and to bring the boundary together to make
8 something that is easily identifiable, both by the public and
9 for enforcement and administrative purposes.

10
11 Finally, for the Pulley Ridge area, this is an incredibly
12 important coral community area, and, as has been mentioned, the
13 actions that the Gulf Council has recently taken are really,
14 really good, but, as was pointed out, those protections only
15 relate to fishing vessels and fishing activity, and so nothing
16 would prevent a freighter from going into Pulley Ridge and
17 dropping a thousand-pound acre right on top of it, and there's
18 nothing, at this point, we could do about it, and so that's, I
19 think the benefit. What sanctuaries can bring is a
20 comprehensive management approach to these areas, and I would
21 also be supportive of including Pulley Ridge in a sanctuary
22 proposal.

23
24 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Bob.

25
26 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. G.P., my question is were
27 you talking from your personal perspective, or were you
28 summarizing the Coral SSC's perspective, or both?

29
30 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I was trying to do both. I do sit on the Coral
31 SSC, and we've had numerous discussions, as Coral Amendment 9
32 was being proposed and discussed, and numerous -- I am very
33 familiar with the studies recently that have gone on, and there
34 was a very large study that was funded by NOAA to look at
35 connectivity between the Pulley Ridge area and the Florida Keys
36 in general, and we had several presentations from John Reed, who
37 has done extensive work in that area, and so I have actually
38 been there and dived on Pulley Ridge, in a submersible, and so I
39 know that area very well, and so it's both, both from a personal
40 and the SSC point of view.

41
42 **MR. GILL:** A follow-up, Mr. Chairman?

43
44 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Yes.

45
46 **MR. GILL:** Thank you. One of the questions I had was that the
47 Coral SSC engaged in various motions relative to the sanctuary
48 proposals, or, excuse me, relative to the other proposals, and

1 very little on the sanctuary, but they didn't weigh-in on their
2 position relative to the sanctuary expansion proposal, and is
3 there a reason for that? Were you waiting for this meeting, or
4 why did you not weigh-in on we agree with Alternative 3, or we
5 disagree, or whatever it happened to be, but no motions at all
6 from the SSC.

7
8 **DR. SAMMARCO:** I think a lot of the discussion, if I remember
9 correctly, regarding that particular issue came from the Shrimp
10 SSC, and there were a lot of other issues too that were being
11 considered at the time, but I seem to recall -- I mean, we did
12 discuss it, and I'm sorry that Sandra Brooke isn't here today.

13
14 **UNIDENTIFIED:** She's on the webinar.

15
16 **DR. SAMMARCO:** She's on the webinar? I am sure that she would
17 be able to tell you an awful lot about what went on during that
18 discussion, but I think we were indeed supportive of that being
19 included, and I don't think there was a motion that was made to
20 show that, and I think we would be willing to do that now, if it
21 will be of assistance.

22
23 **DR. SANDRA BROOKE:** If I could just jump in. I was muted at the
24 beginning, and so I didn't admit to my presence, but I think
25 Paul and G.P. are right. The SSC did not specifically weigh-in.
26 The Coral AP, however -- I am trying to rack my memory here, but
27 there was some -- I forget when the meeting was, but the Coral
28 AP did generate comments, and I think it was the South Atlantic
29 AP, which I'm on, did generate some comments about this, and
30 they generally supported Alternative 4, the more conservative of
31 those alternatives, but, as far as the Gulf SSC, no, we did not
32 make any specific recommendations, but that would be
33 appropriate, I think, if we did.

34
35 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Just to let you know, a summary of that
36 meeting was provided in Agenda Item VI. Also, the Coral SSC can
37 make motions right now for the Florida Keys expansion, and, as a
38 matter of a fact, our SOPPs say that whatever motion that the
39 Special Coral SSC does has also to be supported, or needs to be
40 backed, from the Standing SSC, and so this would be a good
41 moment to do that.

42
43 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** They would be able to do a separate
44 motion just for the Coral SSC? That would be complicated.
45 Doug.

46
47 **MR. GREGORY:** I remember looking at the agenda of that meeting,
48 because it was the day before our SSC meeting in September, and

1 I think part of the problem was that most of the discussion was
2 caught up with an update on the Flower Gardens stuff, and so
3 that didn't leave much time to discuss the Florida Keys, is my
4 memory.

5

6 **DR. BROOKE:** I think that's correct, yes.

7

8 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Paul.

9

10 **DR. SAMMARCO:** If I may, I would like to -- The Coral SSC would
11 like to make a motion.

12

13 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay. Go ahead.

14

15 **DR. SAMMARCO:** We propose that the Florida Keys National Marine
16 Sanctuary consider seriously supporting Alternative 4, and we
17 support that ourselves for the Pulley Ridge issue.

18

19 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** This now we have to treat as a motion
20 for the combined SSC, which also would mean that we have to
21 bring in fisheries considerations and so on, and it can't just
22 be based upon the coral alone.

23

24 **DR. BROOKE:** This has kind of caught us a little bit off guard,
25 I think, and do we have to make a motion now? Can we discuss
26 and propose a motion or something similar at a future date?

27

28 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE SIMMONS:** I think the problem is we
29 have limited time to comment on this. I mean, the council got
30 an extension to February, but this is really the council's
31 chance, at the end of January, to get all of our comments
32 together and put them in a letter and get to the sanctuary.

33

34 Regarding the meeting that happened in September, we were trying
35 to get ahead of the fisheries interactions and get the
36 appropriate coral folks together to look at the first draft of
37 that DEIS, and so it wasn't just a matter of timing and
38 logistics. There was a lot of things going on that we were
39 trying to get ahead of for the first shot that we had at
40 reviewing this DEIS.

41

42 At that time, I don't think people were thinking about, yes, we
43 need these motions, but the way our SOPPs read, like Natasha was
44 suggesting, is the special SSCs are supposed to vote together
45 with the Standing SSC, and so this would need to come together,
46 and that's another reason that we're convening the Coral SSC
47 with the Standing SSC today.

48

1 **DR. BROOKE:** Okay.
2
3 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I would like to offer a comment, and perhaps an
4 amendment, to the motion. I think, the way I look at it, it's
5 that I would like to see the Pulley Ridge area included in the
6 preferred alternative and not a blanket support for Alternative
7 4, because there's a lot of other things in Alternative 4 that
8 are not related to Pulley Ridge and that may also -- I know that
9 are somewhat controversial and apply to other parts of the
10 Florida Keys Sanctuary that are not in the Gulf Council's
11 jurisdiction, and so that would be my recommendation.
12
13 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Paul.
14
15 **DR. SAMMARCO:** As the person who made the motion, I agree.
16
17 **DR. BROOKE:** Yes, I would agree with that, too. I think there's
18 some things in Alternative 4 that the AP specifically commented
19 on, and, if I recall correctly, generally agreed with, but I
20 would be fine with going with the other SSC members on
21 Alternative 3.
22
23 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Luiz.
24
25 **DR. BARBIERI:** It would be funny to have a Brazilian guy be so
26 attached to the rules here, but this is a point of order. I
27 don't think that this motion had a second to be open for
28 discussion.
29
30 **DR. BROOKE:** I will second it.
31
32 **DR. BARBIERI:** Then we can entertain amendments to the motion.
33
34 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** It's been seconded. Is there
35 discussion? Doug.
36
37 **MR. GREGORY:** The motion needs to read that, instead of the
38 Coral Committee, the SSC recommends that the Gulf Council
39 support Alternative 4. We cannot make recommendations to
40 anybody but the Gulf Council.
41
42 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Bob.
43
44 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So a question on process.
45 We have a special SSC making a motion, and my -- I don't know
46 what the SOPPs say, but my take would be that they would have to
47 vote that motion up or down before it goes to the Standing SSC.
48

1 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Well, apparently that's not the case.
2
3 **MR. GILL:** Okay.
4
5 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Carrie.
6
7 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me
8 try one more time. This is just like the Reef Fish SSC and the
9 Socioeconomic SSC and those three individuals that are
10 specialized in this area, and so the Coral SSC is just like
11 them. It's just like when you have a Reef Fish Special SSC
12 member make a motion. Those folks and the Standing SSC vote on
13 it. That's exactly what we're doing here. The Coral folks and
14 the Standing SSC need to vote on this. Now, the other SSCs,
15 special SSCs, I guess that's up to you, Mr. Chairman, if they
16 want to be included in the vote or not.
17
18 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Will.
19
20 **DR. PATTERSON:** So, as far as the crafting of the language here,
21 we need to put something in here about what are we considering
22 Pulley Ridge for, protection as what, and it just says including
23 it as part of the preferred alternative, but not in what
24 respect.
25
26 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I guess my intention was to be included as
27 proposed by the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, so that
28 the regulations that are proposed as a part of the Pulley Ridge
29 expansion for the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary would
30 go along with that, basically as proposed.
31
32 **DR. PATTERSON:** So I just think we need to have precise language
33 here of what we're saying and how that affects our
34 recommendation, what's intended by the recommendation
35
36 **DR. BROOKE:** I am not sure what the confusion is, because it
37 seems relatively clear to me, but could you repeat your question
38 or comment?
39
40 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Adding that "as proposed" I think clarifies it for
41 me, but I'm not sure if that addresses your concern.
42
43 **DR. BROOKE:** Yes, it seems to clarify it, but I'm not clear what
44 the concern is and where the confusion is. It may be that it's
45 part of the preferred alternative, but the preferred alternative
46 didn't include Pulley Ridge, and so is that correct? So that
47 could be confounding in that wording there, consideration of
48 Pulley Ridge as part of the preferred alternative with

1 regulations as proposed by FKNMS in Alternative 4, and I hope
2 that I'm not mashing this up too badly.

3
4 **DR. PATTERSON:** In the information we were just given, I believe
5 it was proposed as an ecological reserve, with associated
6 regulations, and so, if we put that here in the motion, then
7 that is more specific.

8
9 **MR. SCHMAHL:** My understanding is it was not an ecological
10 reserve, and sanctuary-wide regulations would apply there, with
11 the addition of a general no-anchoring provision, and it's not
12 my understanding that it was proposed as an ecological reserve.

13
14 **DR. BROOKE:** Yes, I would agree with G.P. on that.

15
16 **MR. GREGORY:** Can you put the no anchoring in there somehow, so
17 it's explicit to the council themselves?

18
19 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Paul.

20
21 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Preferred alternative with associated
22 regulations, including no anchoring, as proposed by FKNMS, et
23 cetera.

24
25 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Lee.

26
27 **DR. ANDERSON:** Just a little bit of wordsmithing. I would
28 recommend taking the word "consideration" out and put
29 "inclusion". That's what we're talking about. We want them to
30 do more than consider it. We want them to include it.

31
32 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Natasha.

33
34 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Can we double-check if Beth is still on the
35 line?

36
37 **MS. DIEVENEY:** Yes, I am.

38
39 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Just, I guess, to clarify, and so, for the
40 proposal for the Pulley Ridge, the specific regulations would be
41 no anchoring for all vessels, but including Pulley Ridge, or
42 moving forward with this, will also mean that the remaining
43 sanctuary-wide regulations will also apply to that region,
44 correct?

45
46 **MS. DIEVENEY:** Yes, and so the proposal for Pulley Ridge is
47 general boundary expansion to include Pulley Ridge, and so that
48 would have general sanctuary-wide regulations apply and the

1 addition of no anchoring by all vessels. Did that help?

2
3 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Yes. Any more discussion on the
4 motion? Dave.

5
6 **DR. CHAGARIS:** I am at a loss here on like how we're supposed to
7 make a decision on this. We haven't been presented any data or
8 any type of impact analysis, and we don't know how many vessels
9 traverse this area or how that would impact commerce or how much
10 landings are coming out of this area, and so, I mean, I would
11 abstain from any vote on this.

12
13 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** I think my understanding is you are
14 proposing this on the basis of a coral conservation concern, but
15 we have not really reviewed the fisheries-related information
16 for this.

17
18 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I don't know to what extent it was addressed in
19 the DEIS, but there is a DEIS out there, and it includes an
20 analysis of all of the alternatives, including Alternative 4,
21 which includes Pulley Ridge, and so there is information about
22 Pulley Ridge in the existing DEIS that is out on the street,
23 and, of course, part of the process, of course, would be, when
24 it goes to the next stage, that DEIS has to be revised into a
25 final EIS to include their final proposal, what alternative they
26 actually chose, and it would include an analysis of the relevant
27 information, which I am not sure it addresses all of the issues
28 that you mentioned, but it certainly addresses some of those.

29
30 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Kari.

31
32 **DR. MACLAUHLIN BUCK:** In the DEIS, and I am Socioeconomic SSC,
33 and so I don't know if I can vote on this or not, but I would
34 like to speak about the social and economic analysis that's in
35 the DEIS, and, for Alternative 4 specifically for Pulley Ridge,
36 while it does talk a little bit about the potential impact on
37 fishing vessels from present and future changes in access for
38 them, there isn't anything specific about a longline exemption
39 in the HAPC, and is that proposed?

40
41 **DR. BROOKE:** Is that for the coral HAPC specifically? Sorry. I
42 was pulled away for a second, and are you asking about the coral
43 HAPC, the deep coral HAPC, in Coral Amendment 9, or were you
44 asking about the sanctuary?

45
46 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** I am assuming that you're asking about Coral
47 9, and so those regulations, specifically to fishing vessels,
48 are in our Coral Amendment 9, and so that portion that has the

1 provision for the bottom longline is in our document.

2
3 **DR. MACLAUHLIN BUCK:** Is Coral 9 proposed or is it finalized,
4 or where is it at, I guess?

5
6 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** It's been finalized. It's approved, but the
7 rule is still in development.

8
9 **DR. MACLAUHLIN BUCK:** So I guess my point would be that, with
10 any consideration of the Pulley Ridge component of Alternative
11 4 and moving it into the preferred suite of actions, it would be
12 -- That needs to be included in the social and economic impact
13 analysis of making those changes on the fleet that would have
14 access to what is now the HAPC and what is Coral 9, and they
15 would have some access, and how, if it became part of the
16 sanctuary, immediately how that would impact them, as just
17 having sanctuary-wide, and are there any conflicting regulations
18 with those sanctuary-wide regulations. Then, in the future -- I
19 mean, I think you need to talk about like what the sanctuary
20 could be able to do in the Pulley Ridge area that could
21 eventually, down the road, affect it, especially with some of
22 the conflicting goals.

23
24 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Paul.

25
26 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Beth I think is still on the line. I think that,
27 in order for them to draw a box around that, that they had to
28 have done a lot of that research in their seeking comments on
29 all the changes that they want to make, and I have not seen all
30 the comments, but she probably would be the best one to answer
31 both of your sets of questions, that they have to be logged
32 somewhere, or there wouldn't be a box there.

33
34 **DR. MACLAUHLIN BUCK:** Well, I'm not -- I'm sure there have been
35 comments from any fishermen or businesses that would be impacted
36 by this. It's a little more of, currently, in the DEIS, in the
37 social and economic analysis for including Pulley Ridge, there
38 is not, at this point, a lot of, that I have seen, at least in
39 the DEIS, and maybe it's in the supporting documentation, of
40 specifically that longline -- How it would affect those longline
41 vessels.

42
43 **DR. BROOKE:** There was extensive discussion with the longliners
44 and other fishing interests during the development of Coral
45 Amendment 9, and it's a wee bit complicated, because that
46 existing Pulley Ridge area HAPC with regulations, that
47 triangular part, has -- I believe they are not allowed to
48 longline fish in there, bottom longline in there, but there was

1 pushback, or concerns, from the longliners during the -- For the
2 extension of that HAPC with regulations, and so the longliners
3 were given an exemption for that square extension area.

4
5 **MS. DIEVENEY:** I was just going to clarify that, as proposed in
6 the restoration blueprint, the proposal to include Pulley Ridge
7 would not affect the regulations in the existing habitat area of
8 particular concern or the proposed expansion through Amendment
9 9, and so the intent is that it would not impact those HAPC
10 regulations, and it would provide additional protection,
11 sanctuary wide, and no anchoring of all vessels, but, as
12 proposed, the intent was not to impact the existing and proposed
13 updated Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council regulations in
14 that area.

15
16 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Doug.

17
18 **MR. GREGORY:** Back to what Dave Chagaris was saying. Beth, is
19 there any data to document how many ships anchor in that area or
20 what occurs, or even damage to the bottom?

21
22 **MS. DIEVENEY:** We have the AIS and VMS data of ship traffic
23 through that area, and we do have a small number of enforcement
24 actions that I am aware of, or enforcement notice that I am
25 aware of, of larger freighters, vessels, anchoring in there, and
26 so, in part, it is that impact, and part it is protecting this
27 area from future impact. Just for the group, I am going to jump
28 off the webinar, but I'm going to try and stay on the phone as
29 long as possible.

30
31 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you. Carrie.

32
33 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was
34 going to put Luiz on the spot, but, also, I believe in your
35 briefing book, Florida FWC discussed this in early December, and
36 I believe, currently, and they haven't finalized their
37 recommendations, but, currently, I believe they are in agreement
38 with including just the Pulley Ridge and Pulley Ridge expanded
39 area with the currently proposed fishing regulations into the
40 expansion, and I think that document is in your briefing book,
41 but I will let Dr. Barbieri correct me, and maybe I'm not right
42 there.

43
44 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay. Luiz.

45
46 **DR. BARBIERI:** Thank you, Carrie, but, to be honest with you, I
47 have not been following that discussion, and so I should have,
48 but I trust your statement there, your judgment, that that's

1 what happened, if you go back to the documents, and, I mean, I
2 have been paying attention, over several years, to the corridor
3 and the mutton snapper and the telemetry study that evaluated
4 the back-and-forth, and, of course, Riley's Hump's value as
5 spawning habitat, but, specifically to how FWC reacted to Pulley
6 Ridge -- It's not something that I can tell you that the Marine
7 Fisheries Program contributed any analysis to, and so maybe it
8 was reviewed according to another perspective within the agency.
9 Sorry about that, but I really cannot weigh-in on that one.

10

11 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** I am really personally very conflicted
12 here, because I think this -- To me, this reads like a policy
13 recommendation, and I am not sure it's even within the purview
14 of the SSC to make a policy recommendation, and I can see that,
15 in terms of the science. There might be -- The Coral SSC might
16 say, well, based on our knowledge of the corals, extending the
17 sanctuary would provide some additional meaningful protection,
18 and that would be a science statement.

19

20 From the fisheries perspective, I think it's quite clear that we
21 haven't seen the data or the analysis that we would need to
22 actually assess this, and so my sort of take would be it would
23 be useful to -- Well, we'll vote on this, I guess, but I think
24 it would be useful to consider a motion that is more restricted
25 to the scientific information and the potential benefits to
26 coral conservation that would be appropriate, and then we don't
27 have to make a policy recommendation, which I don't think is
28 really what we're here for, but Lee.

29

30 **DR. ANDERSON:** I disagree with that statement, and I know Doug
31 has talked about this before. We can make policy
32 recommendations if they're based on science. I mean, we don't
33 say you have to do this, but we could say the science that I see
34 supports this, and so it's a little bit of a delicate thing. In
35 my training, if I can't talk on policy, then I just will get out
36 of here, and that's what I do. I'm a policy analyst.

37

38 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Will.

39

40 **DR. PATTERSON:** From my perspective, if we were offering input
41 about what are the scientific implications of a given policy, or
42 evaluating the science that's informing a given policy, then
43 we're on safe ground, and so back to the recommendation by Kai.

44

45 If there were a motion that said including Pulley Ridge would
46 have this biological effect on mesophotic corals in this region,
47 then I think we would be on safer ground than just recommending
48 that the policy, the preferred option in this policy, would be

1 what's included here.

2
3 **DR. BROOKE:** Would it be appropriate then to say the council
4 support -- The SSC, blah, blah, blah, support inclusion of the
5 unique Pulley Ridge coral habitat as part of -- Would that cover
6 our scientific butts? We probably need something to do with
7 protection in there. I'm not sure, and does that cover it, or
8 do we need to wordsmith some more?

9
10 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** To my mind, this provides some
11 additional justification, but it still basically commits us to a
12 much bigger statement than I think we're willing to make. Luiz.

13
14 **DR. BARBIERI:** Not to be disruptive to this effort here to look
15 at this motion, but the last slide in Natasha's presentation I
16 think provides some clear statements there that don't go too
17 much into details that perhaps involve information, data, and
18 analysis that we don't have in front of us, and it's just a
19 little simpler, the way that Natasha presented this, and so does
20 the SSC support the sanctuary boundary expansion and then the
21 proposed changes to this region, which is the corridor and the
22 new areas, and the inclusion of Pulley Ridge as part of the
23 sanctuary, which aligns well -- That last question aligns well
24 with the question that they asked FWC, and that was does the FWC
25 -- Doug just showed me here on the presentation to the FWC
26 meeting, that that was the question before the commission, was
27 does it support exclusion of Pulley Ridge as part of the
28 sanctuary, and it didn't go into details about preferred
29 alternatives or what sets of regulations would be associated
30 with that.

31
32 Then I think the last one, the last bullet there, might address
33 some of the concerns that we have noted here, that, in a way,
34 perhaps given the magnitude of this topic, that it's so
35 inclusive, that we haven't been able to go and drill down into
36 all of the detailed data and analysis that would support our
37 decision-making here. We can go back to the general motion, but
38 I was just thinking -- To me, this would be simplifying the
39 question in front of us.

40
41 **DR. PATTERSON:** If we could just stay here for a second, but I
42 think, Luiz, in the statement of does the SSC support -- Really,
43 the unwritten component of this is, based on the best scientific
44 information available, does the SSC conclude -- What is their
45 inference or conclusion about the implications of the sanctuary
46 boundary expansion and about the Dry Tortugas? That's the
47 component that we haven't seen.

48

1 Now, clearly, the Coral SSC has looked at this from a coral
2 perspective and looked at more information, and there seems to
3 be general agreement among the three of you, Sandra being the
4 third, about what the implications of this is with respect to
5 coral, but we haven't really seen any analysis or things that we
6 can hang our hat on with respect to the SSC's role in this,
7 versus a policy role, and I think some of the discussion is
8 focused on maybe as a citizen or as a scientist or an advocate,
9 and folks may think a certain way, but we're restricted here to
10 what the science is and what does it indicate.

11

12 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Paul.

13

14 **DR. SAMMARCO:** I think I will throw a bit of science into the
15 pot here and clarify things. The scenario I worked in is the
16 area between the relationship between fish and coral, and a lot
17 of research, a lot of research, has been done over the past
18 thirty or forty years regarding three-dimensional structure and
19 fish, and now that's primarily on reef fish, reef-associated
20 fish, and it's pretty clear, and this is not just say in the
21 Caribbean or in Florida. It's in the western Pacific as well,
22 and the answer is pretty much the same, that, the more structure
23 you have, the more fish you have, and it's a recruitment issue.
24 The larvae come in, and they love to recruit to rough areas,
25 where they have refuge from predators and then grow up there.

26

27 There is that, and the second thing is I have done a Gulf-of-
28 Mexico-wide study on thirteen or fourteen reefs, doing detailed
29 analyses of structure, three-dimensional structure, of the tops
30 of these deep mesophotic reefs, and, also, the Flower Gardens
31 Banks did parallel studies, while we were doing the physical
32 studies, of the fish and also the benthic organisms, and it was
33 the same -- We have the same thing, which was, the more
34 structure there is in deep water, the more fish you have, the
35 more species diversity you have, and, in fact, it's predictable.

36

37 I gave this information to BOEM, because it is valuable to them,
38 and sometimes they can just look at a reef and see how rugose it
39 is and say don't drill it, don't drill the top, because it's a
40 very rich area, in terms of fish and corals and so forth, and
41 they go to another area that looks like it's been bulldozed, and
42 it's go ahead and do it, and there's nothing there, and you can
43 regress that. You can tell exactly how many there are going to
44 be.

45

46 What I am trying to say is, when we get things like freighters
47 going in and anchoring there, they drag their anchors, and it
48 might look like soft bottom, but the soft bottom is only about

1 that thick, and anybody who has dived can tell you that, and
2 they drag those anchors, particularly in rough seas, and it's
3 like sending a bulldozer through that.

4
5 You do that again and again and again, and it just wipes out
6 more material, more three-dimensional material, and, once you do
7 that, you start destroying the structure of the bottom, and you
8 destroy the structure of the bottom and now it becomes truly
9 dead, because nothing is recruiting there anymore, and so there
10 are real reasons behind this, and there's a lot of data behind
11 it.

12
13 A lot of studies have been done over the decades on this, and
14 it's a rather interesting phenomenon, and I have heard stories
15 from co-workers of mine on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia,
16 where fish larvae, which are reef fish, will come down, and they
17 metamorphose on the way down, and these are not pelagic fish.
18 They will come down, and, as they are coming to the reef, they
19 metamorphose into an intermediate state, and they hunt around,
20 and, if they don't find the refuge, or if it's inappropriate
21 substrate, they go back up and they de-metamorphose, and they go
22 back and go with the currents until they find something they are
23 looking for. I mean, we're not just saying this out of our
24 hats. There are a lot of data on this, and they are robust. I
25 don't know if that helps any, but it helps me.

26
27 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you, Paul. It seems to me that
28 there's a bit of a disconnect. There is a lot of good
29 ecological information, and there is some not very specific
30 socioeconomic information, but there is not really the level of
31 specific, rigorous, quantitative analysis that we are used to
32 seeing in the fisheries management decision-making, and I think
33 that's where we're a little stuck.

34
35 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I just wanted to maybe address that a little bit,
36 because, the way I look at it anyway, we are being specifically
37 asked for our opinion about this specific proposal, and it's
38 done under the context of a formal consultation that is
39 happening between the National Marine Sanctuary Program and the
40 Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, and it's not, hey,
41 hi, what do you all think. It's a formal consultation under
42 304(a)(5) of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act.

43
44 The council, in that process, is really asked to, in some ways,
45 look at it from a slightly different perspective than a typical
46 just straight Magnuson-Stevens fisheries management. They're
47 being asked to look at it from the sanctuary sort of point of
48 view and to apply some of those considerations and policies, and

1 so I would submit that this is a little bit different than a
2 typical action that the SSCs are usually involved in, just from
3 my perspective.

4

5 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Dr. Frazer.

6

7 **DR. FRAZER:** Maybe I can just weigh-in a little bit here. I
8 appreciate the tension between kind of the science and the
9 policy, and it might, as the Chair of the Coral Committee on the
10 council, it might be more effective simply to provide a
11 statement that says, for example, a sanctuary -- A boundary
12 expansion that includes Pulley Ridge, with the associated
13 regulations, including no anchoring, is likely to afford corals
14 increased protection. That's scientifically based, and it
15 leaves the council the opportunity to weigh-in on the policy
16 decision.

17

18 **DR. PATTERSON:** I think that addresses part of what I'm going to
19 say here, is that, whenever we craft these motions and we have a
20 report, there is usually a paragraph or two that is a synopsis
21 of what the discussion was and what the salient points that were
22 raised that went into the vote, like why the SSC supports
23 something, or, if it's kind of a mixed result, what the tension
24 was and the discussion. If this were voted up or down, we would
25 still need to have a discussion about why it is that the SSC
26 proposed a certain -- The motion here.

27

28 In Sandra's additional text about the unique habitat that is
29 Pulley Ridge, we would have to expand on that and say like what
30 is unique about it, and why should we afford this extra
31 protection to this area, and it may be perfectly apparent to
32 folks that work in mesophotic reefs, but we would need to
33 provide the council with that additional information, so that we
34 can have sound rationale for that decision.

35

36 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Right, and we don't actually -- The
37 discussions we have would be summarized in the report to the
38 council, and we don't -- That does not have to include a motion.
39 We do make motions on points that we feel strongly about or we
40 are required to make a very specific statement on, but it
41 doesn't have to be -- Of course, Doug will be in the hot seat
42 with this.

43

44 **MR. GREGORY:** I think the way that Dr. Frazer reframed it is
45 perfect, and it solves the problem, but I also want to point out
46 that, prior to 2006, the SSC would meet for three days, minimum,
47 at every meeting, and we would review fishery management plans,
48 and we would make recommendations, policy recommendations, on a

1 routine basis, and so making policy recommendations is not
2 unheard of, and it's not -- We evolved away from that, because
3 we got so wrapped up in status determination criteria and SEDAR
4 stock assessment processes and stuff, and so now we're meeting
5 for one day, instead of three days, and doing less than what we
6 used to do, and so it's just a matter of what we're comfortable
7 with now.

8
9 I agree with what Kai said. This is not written like a document
10 we're used to seeing. The analyses are not specific to the
11 alternatives in the document, for instance with the anchoring.
12 There is information on anchoring, and I know anecdotal
13 information from charter boats that fish that area that have
14 seen ships anchoring there, but it's not in the document. That
15 data is not there, and so that's making us uncomfortable, but
16 that's true with most of their recommendations.

17
18 It's not what we're accustomed to seeing, and it makes me
19 question what does a real EIS look like anymore, because this is
20 so different than what we do in the fishery world, and it's
21 just, I think, discomfoting.

22
23 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Bob.

24
25 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with Doug and Tom.
26 **I would like to offer a substitute motion, and, if Dr. Frazer**
27 **would be so kind to word it for me.**

28
29 **DR. FRAZER:** I'm happy to do that. **The motion would read: A**
30 **sanctuary boundary expansion that includes Pulley Ridge, with**
31 **the associated regulations, including no anchoring, is likely to**
32 **afford corals increased protection.**

33
34 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** I guess we have to ask if you accept
35 the substitute motion, and I am getting to the edge of my
36 Roberts Rules here.

37
38 **DR. BROOKE:** Are you asking the SSC whether we accept that, or
39 are you asking in general?

40
41 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** I guess we are asking the person who
42 made the original motion, and is that not correct?

43
44 **MR. RINDONE:** The motion maker is Mr. Gill, and it needs a
45 second.

46
47 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Does anyone second?

48

1 **CHAIRMAN POWERS:** I second the motion.

2
3 **DR. PATTERSON:** It seems to me that, as general as this, it's
4 kind of like stating the obvious. If we set aside Pulley Ridge
5 in this way, or have these protections, we are likely to afford
6 benefits to corals. What are we telling the council?

7
8 I mean, this kind of gets back to specific versus general
9 information, and we can't really say, from information that we
10 have in front of us, what benefit is likely to be afforded to
11 these corals and how important these particular corals are to
12 the species found there and what do we mean by unique habitat?
13 What is distinctive about this area, and why should it be
14 afforded this additional protection? All of those things seem
15 intuitive, perhaps, but we don't have anything scientifically in
16 front of us to hang our hat on with that.

17
18 **DR. BROOKE:** Not right in front us maybe, there is a lot of data
19 on Pulley Ridge that describes -- The word "unique" is very
20 overused, but Pulley Ridge is really unique, and there's a lot
21 of data that supports that, and so what more do we need? Is it
22 just to have something in the DEIS that states that?

23
24 **CHAIRMAN POWERS:** First off, I think the discussion has been
25 very good, because it is building a record of what the concerns
26 are. The second thing is, from what I understand about the
27 process, if we have a substitute motion, the way it proceeds, I
28 think, is, basically, you vote on the substitute motion. If it
29 fails, then you vote on the original motion, and so that's how
30 you proceed ahead, and so you don't really have to have somebody
31 agree to this or agree to that. You just basically vote for the
32 two motions.

33
34 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Carrie.

35
36 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a
37 quick question, to make sure we're all clear. Pulley Ridge is
38 already on the books, and we have Pulley Ridge, and there is a
39 proposed expansion, and I think it's South Pulley Ridge is what
40 we're calling it in Coral 9. That hasn't been implemented yet,
41 and are you including that new area in addition to Pulley Ridge,
42 which I think we're calling Pulley Ridge South, or just the
43 current Pulley Ridge?

44
45 **MR. SCHMAHL:** My intent was to include the Pulley Ridge as
46 proposed by the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, and so
47 that would include the South.

1 **DR. BROOKE:** I think, to clarify the anchoring thing, there is
2 no anchoring by fishing vessels in the existing HAPC and the one
3 that's just been approved, and so I suppose this anchoring would
4 expand that to non-fishing vessels, and is that the idea,
5 because fishing vessels are already excluded from anchoring in
6 both of those areas.

7
8 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Yes, is the short answer. I mean, that's one of
9 the primary concerns, and are there any other physical,
10 potential physical, impacts, and that could include treasure
11 salvaging or oil and gas exploration or anything like that.

12
13 **DR. BROOKE:** All right.

14
15 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Paul.

16
17 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Just to comment on what's being proposed here. I
18 worked in government for a long time, and what we have with the
19 second substitute motion is a comment, and they receive it, and
20 the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary has received
21 virtually thousands of comments.

22
23 A recommendation is different. A recommendation is not an
24 instruction. It is not saying you will do this, as we all know.
25 It's a recommendation, and it is saying we think this would be a
26 good idea, and we think you should do this. It doesn't mean it
27 will do it, but it will give some weight to the consideration,
28 along with whatever agencies have also given recommendations to
29 them. That's just a point of clarification.

30
31 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you.

32
33 **DR. BROOKE:** To that end, could we make a recommendation
34 substitute motion that says something like the SSC recommends
35 that the Gulf Council supports a sanctuary boundary expansion
36 that includes Pulley Ridge with the associated regulations,
37 blah, blah, blah, because it is likely to afford -- Is that
38 acceptable?

39
40 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** So this would be a third substitute
41 motion or a second substitute?

42
43 **DR. BROOKE:** I don't know whether it's a modification of the
44 substitute or a third one. That's up to you guys.

45
46 **MR. RINDONE:** Unless you agree to the edits, then it's a second
47 substitute.

1 **MR. GILL:** I would recommend that be a second substitute, since
2 that doesn't fit the notion of the substitute motion that I
3 offered.
4

5 **DR. BROOKE:** Okay.
6

7 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Right. It has to be a second
8 substitute. Is there a second to the second substitute?
9

10 **DR. PATTERSON:** Sandra, since we're offering now a second
11 substitute motion, would you consider adding "and associated
12 communities" to afford protection to corals? This would read:
13 Because it would afford increased protection to mesophotic
14 corals and associated communities.
15

16 **DR. BROOKE:** This is being really picky, but I would add "afford
17 increased protection", since there is already a measure of
18 protection in place.
19

20 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay. Are we getting ready to do some
21 voting? Has this been seconded? Yes. Okay. My interpretation
22 is then we vote on the second substitute motion, and, if that
23 fails, then we move to the first substitute motion. Doug.
24

25 **MR. GREGORY:** There is another Roberts Rules of Order process
26 that we could adopt, and that was one that says an individual
27 can't talk more than three times on a motion.
28

29 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** We are ready to call the vote on the
30 second substitute motion. All in favor, raise your hands.
31

32 **DR. BROOKE:** How do we do that online?
33

34 **MR. RINDONE:** There is six in the room.
35

36 **MR. GREGORY:** Every SSC member here is allowed to vote, whether
37 you're on the special SSC or --
38

39 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Yes, that's my reading as well.
40

41 **MR. GREGORY:** Can we start over?
42

43 **MR. RINDONE:** Yes.
44

45 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** We will start over. Every SSC member,
46 including the special SSCs. Okay. **All in favor, raise your**
47 **hand.**
48

1 MR. RINDONE: Eight. Then on the webinar.
2
3 DR. BROOKE: I am raising my hand.
4
5 MR. RINDONE: So Sandra is nine.
6
7 DR. ISELY: I vote yes.
8
9 MR. RINDONE: Jeff is ten.
10
11 CHAIRMAN POWERS: I vote yes.
12
13 MR. RINDONE: So Joe is eleven.
14
15 DR. TOLAN: I am abstaining.
16
17 MR. RINDONE: Jim abstains. John.
18
19 MR. MARESKA: Yes.
20
21 MR. RINDONE: John votes yes. That's twelve. Am I missing
22 anybody?
23
24 DR. POWERS: I vote yes.
25
26 MR. RINDONE: Sean Powers votes yes, and that's thirteen. Ken
27 Roberts. Benny.
28
29 DR. GALLAWAY: No.
30
31 MR. RINDONE: Benny would vote no. I have thirteen in favor.
32 Who is left? Ken.
33
34 DR. ROBERTS: I vote no.
35
36 MR. RINDONE: Ken is also a no. We have thirteen in favor, and
37 I have Benny and Ken so far for no votes. **In the room, those**
38 **opposed, seven. Thirteen in favor and seven opposed, with one**
39 **abstention.**
40
41 VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN: **The motion carries.**
42
43 MR. RINDONE: No votes, raise your hand again. Six. **Thirteen**
44 **in favor and eight opposed and three abstentions. It carries**
45 **thirteen to eight with three abstentions.** Mr. Chair.
46
47 VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN: Okay. Are there any other discussions
48 that we should have about this part of the agenda? Is there

1 anything on this?

2
3 **DR. MACLAUHLIN BUCK:** I have a few things that I just want to
4 have on the record for the council to consider when they are
5 deciding what they would like to do, as far as the socioeconomic
6 analysis in the DEIS, which is I always really admired and
7 respected that the sanctuary was so involved with the community,
8 and they really focused on the social and economic benefit of
9 the sanctuary and how that ties into the economy and tourism and
10 everything.

11
12 I felt like the DEIS, the affected environment, was great at
13 capturing a lot of those components, and then also analysis of
14 the consequences of the different alternatives, and that was
15 also thorough, but one thing that I did want to point out for
16 the council to just be aware of is that, with some of the
17 economic analysis, especially in potential impacts on the
18 fishing fleet, the commercial fishing fleet, that the data that
19 they used was only through 2013 or 2014, and just for the
20 council to be aware that, when you're talking about that this
21 would be the potential loss to the commercial sector, with some
22 different proposed closures, that might not be as accurate as it
23 could be, considering that it's 2020, and so just that that data
24 is a little dated.

25
26 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Any other comments on this part of the
27 agenda? Okay. Doug.

28
29 **MR. GREGORY:** We've got the corridor issue.

30
31 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay, and lunch is here. I think we
32 kind of missed our coffee break, and I guess one thing we can
33 do, and I think we're all a little fried, is to have an early
34 lunch and reconvene maybe not in hour, but in a little less. If
35 we reconvene at quarter past twelve, would that be civilized
36 enough? Okay. We will reconvene at 12:15. Thank you.

37
38 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed for lunch on January 9, 2020.)

39
40 - - -

41
42 January 9, 2020

43
44 THURSDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

45
46 - - -

47
48 The Standing and Special Reef Fish, Socioeconomic, and Coral

1 Scientific and Statistical Committees of the Gulf of Mexico
2 Fishery Management Council reconvened on Thursday, January 9,
3 2020, and was called to order by Vice Chairman Kai Lorenzen.

4
5 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Can we reconvene, please? We still
6 have a little bit of business left on the marine sanctuary
7 expansion, and we have talked about Pulley Ridge, but the other
8 proposal I think that we wanted to talk about is about the
9 corridor, and, Doug, do you want to lead that off?

10
11 **MR. GREGORY:** Okay. The corridor, there is different analyses in
12 the document about the corridor, and it's a series of sonic tags
13 that FWC and other agencies have been doing over the years that
14 show direct movement between the Dry Tortugas National Park area
15 that is protected and Riley's Hump, and that was the genesis of
16 the corridor suggestion.

17
18 I spoke against the idle speed zone for this open-ocean area,
19 but it appears to me that, of the alternatives, if you want to
20 support the corridor, Alternative 4 is a more reasonable
21 alternative, and the data is there for the corridor, and, in
22 fact, if you look at some of the data where they have been
23 tagging mutton snapper, the red striped area between the
24 corridor and Tortugas North is a productive coral area, but they
25 are not proposing closing that. They are just proposing that no
26 large boats greater than fifty meters can anchor there, but
27 smaller boats can anchor there. **I would like to make a motion**
28 **that the council consider supporting Alternative 4 for the**
29 **Tortugas region.**

30
31 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Are there other comments or concerns on
32 the corridor? Luiz.

33
34 **DR. BARBIERI:** Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Just to add to what was
35 mentioned here, yes, FWC has done, over the years, a number of
36 acoustic telemetry work, looking at this as the migratory
37 corridor there for mutton snapper spawning that happens more
38 specifically during the time of spawning, of course, during the
39 spawning season, but it seems to be a real important area for
40 maintenance of some level of spawning, increased spawning, of
41 mutton snapper in that area.

42
43 We do know the population of mutton snapper that spills over the
44 Florida Keys and the southeast Florida mainland actually do not
45 have as much spawning capacity, and this is documented, and I
46 can clarify it right here right now, but it is documented that
47 the spawning capacity is lower and that a lot of the spawning
48 actually that populates downstream into the Florida Keys and the

1 southeast Florida mainland comes from areas off of the Tortugas
2 and is connected somehow to this movement associated with the
3 corridor.

4
5 Again, it's this issue of presenting a number of value judgment
6 qualitative-type statements that would be that this seems to be
7 an important area for maintenance of spawning, increased
8 spawning, of mutton snapper and an important spawning habitat
9 for this species.

10
11 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Bob.

12
13 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Do we have a second for
14 this motion?

15
16 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** No, the motion miraculously appeared, I
17 think, and so this was your motion, right, Doug? Okay. Does it
18 have a second?

19
20 **MR. GILL:** I will second it for discussion, but I have another
21 question.

22
23 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay.

24
25 **MR. GILL:** That is, showing my ignorance, Doug, does Alternative
26 4 address more than the corridor in the Tortugas region? By the
27 broad motion that you offered -- It incorporates what you're
28 talking about in the corridor, but is there more attached to
29 that alternative that would also be included that might be at
30 issue?

31
32 **MR. GREGORY:** No, not that I know of.

33
34 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Jim.

35
36 **DR. NANCE:** I had that same question, because it seems like
37 there is expansion of those Tortugas and everything else in
38 Alternative 4, because I thought the difference between
39 Alternative 3 and Alternative 4 was you keep all the stuff in
40 Alternative 3, plus you add some other stuff to it, and so, by
41 saying we like that one part of Alternative 4, there may be
42 other issues with Alternative 4 that we need to talk about.

43
44 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Natasha.

45
46 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** I can provide some more background on
47 Alternative 4. The changes being proposed to the Tortugas
48 region, that area, and this will be for Alternative 2, 3, and 4,

1 would be that expansion, that one-mile expansion, westward on
2 the Tortugas Ecological Reserve South. The boundaries for the
3 Tortugas Ecological Reserve North do not change, and the
4 regulations also remain the same.

5
6 The new area that is being proposed in Alternative 2 and 3 is
7 it's a sanctuary preservation area for the Tortugas corridor,
8 and the regulations associated with that would be idle speed no
9 wake, no fishing, and no anchoring. In Alternative 4 for the
10 Tortugas corridor, it would be transit only, and it would be
11 also no fishing, and so it will have similar regulations to what
12 the Tortugas Ecological Reserve North and South currently have,
13 and I hope this clarifies it.

14
15 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Maybe, Doug, we can write down the
16 specifics.

17
18 **MR. GREGORY:** Well, I don't agree with all of that. The
19 boundary expansion includes the one-mile expansion of Tortugas
20 South. The alternative here doesn't do that. It just accepts
21 the boundary expansion that is in the other action, and so
22 Alternative 4 doesn't, from what I see, expand Tortugas South a
23 mile, but it incorporates what is proposed in the very first
24 alternative that addresses the overall boundary expansion.

25
26 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Maybe we can show a map.

27
28 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** It seems to me that we have to be more
29 specific in this motion than -- To make what is it exactly that
30 you are proposing that we support.

31
32 **MR. GREGORY:** Okay. **Well, that's easy enough, to say, and**
33 **please feel free to wordsmith, once it gets a second, to support**
34 **the elimination of idle speed zone within the corridor.** I think
35 that's the only change, because Alternative 3 in the corridor is
36 no anchor and idle speed zone, and Alternative 4 is transit
37 only. Now, I don't know the difference, technically, between no
38 anchoring and transit only, but it sounds the same to me.

39
40 **MR. SCHMAHL:** Transit only means that you can't conduct any
41 activities there, like fishing or diving or -- All you can do is
42 drive your boat through it.

43
44 **MR. GREGORY:** So, in that regard, Alternative 4 is more
45 restrictive, and I was confused.

46
47 **MR. SCHMAHL:** At least that's my understanding of it.

48

1 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Are you withdrawing the motion?
2

3 **MR. GREGORY:** This gets back to the whole thing is so confusing
4 and ill-written that it's hard to understand what you're talking
5 about.
6

7 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I think the second thing you said though is what
8 you're really trying to get at, is the idle speed only component
9 of the proposal for Alternative 3.
10

11 **DR. PATTERSON:** Regardless of how it's written, I don't see the
12 scientific justification to support idle speed or not support
13 idle speed. I don't see what we're reviewing here, except pure
14 policy, in this.
15

16 **MR. GREGORY:** If I may, when I was a graduate student, a
17 statistician, a professor, told me -- He says, you know, you
18 don't need statistics to prove what is obvious. An idle speed
19 zone in the open ocean is ridiculous. I mean, I don't think we
20 need analysis to conclude that.
21

22 **DR. PATTERSON:** I don't disagree with that statement, but I just
23 don't know that it's the SSC's purview to comment on it one way
24 or the other. In fact, I think it's not.
25

26 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** I agree. Again, I think the summary
27 will bring out some of the points that have been made by Luiz,
28 for instance, and, from my perspective, as with the previous
29 considerations we had, I think I would want to see more specific
30 analysis on this proposal, to really feel that we, as the SSC,
31 should support or not support it, because, yes, okay, we know
32 there is some migration going on, but that should be viewed in
33 the context of the fishing that is ongoing and the stock status
34 and so on, and I think Doug's comment that there is really no
35 connection between the impact assessment and our stock
36 assessments, for example, and I think that, in the future, we
37 would want to see more connection and more integration of those
38 things. Any other comments or anything else we should discuss
39 with respect to the corridor?
40

41 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** If you give me just one second, I will send
42 kind of subset of comparing all four alternatives for the
43 Tortugas corridor, and maybe that can help kind of guide your
44 discussion, and I have the slides already made, and I just need
45 to send them over to Meetings.
46

47 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay. Does anyone feel strongly that
48 we should be making a motion with respect to the corridor?

1 Seeing no great scramble --

2
3 **MR. SCHMAHL:** I don't feel strongly either way on this, but I
4 think that you could, I guess, make an argument on the
5 socioeconomic side, if there is an impact to fishing vessels,
6 for example, that now are required to idle speed only through an
7 area where they would typically run faster, and that would
8 affect their bottom line in some way, and that is maybe a
9 possibility, where there's a hook.

10
11 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you. Natasha, do you want to
12 take us through your slide?

13
14 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** This is a draft, and I am still working on
15 this before the next council meeting, and so what you see here
16 is a comparison of the changes being proposed for all four
17 alternatives.

18
19 You can see like in Alternative 1, there is the Tortugas
20 Ecological Reserve North, and then the Tortugas Ecological
21 Reserve South is that rectangle at the bottom, and there is no
22 corridor. For Alternatives 2 and 3, that yellow polygon, that
23 would be the Tortugas corridor, and, like I have mentioned, this
24 will be idle speed no wake and no anchor in the SPA, no fishing.

25
26 What I was trying to explain earlier is, if you look at that
27 green rectangle on the bottom, that is the Tortugas Ecological
28 Reserve South, and so that one-mile expansion -- Yes, it applies
29 to the overall sanctuary boundary, but that particular now
30 called conservation area will also be one mile to the west, and
31 so that little piece in the water will have restrictions for
32 fishing. It's not just that -- It will be part of the overall
33 sanctuary, but it will have additional restrictions, because it
34 will be part of the Tortugas Ecological Reserve South. Doug,
35 does that answer the question?

36
37 **MR. GREGORY:** Yes. Thank you.

38
39 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Jim.

40
41 **DR. NANCE:** It seems like, with these alternatives, that we're
42 adding both areas and restrictions kind of piecemeal, and so you
43 might like one where you're adding something, we're adding an
44 area, but it's got different restrictions that you don't like,
45 and so it's so complex here that it's hard to say that I like 3
46 better than 4, and it's just difficult.

47
48 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Echoing the stakeholder comments that

1 this is quite difficult to get through.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN POWERS:** In the original presentation, she said that
4 you could mix and match, and so I think we ought to think about
5 it that way, but let me ask a more basic question. If you were
6 transiting that corridor at idle speed, how long would it take
7 you to get across it?

8
9 While somebody is figuring that out, my point is that, if you
10 start on one side and it takes you a long time to get to the
11 other side, you may be eliminating fishing on the other side,
12 and so there are some ramifications there that are beyond just
13 safety issues, and safety issues would be an issue too, but, if
14 you can't get back to where you started from in a reasonable
15 amount of time without it getting dark or something like that --
16 There is a lot of issues there that I'm not exactly sure what's
17 going on with the idle speed, and, if that basic question is how
18 long would it take you to get across it at idle speed, I would
19 like to know.

20
21 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Doug.

22
23 **MR. GREGORY:** There are no measurements in the document as to
24 how long or wide these areas are, and there are no lat/longs in
25 the document, and so it's hard to determine on the fly like
26 this.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN POWERS:** I guess I'm making Doug's point about the
29 documentation. Thank you.

30
31 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** I guess if we reflect the concerns
32 about the idle speed in the summary. Camp.

33
34 **MR. MATENS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am curious. Why is idle
35 speed being considered? Can anybody help me with this?

36
37 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Doug.

38
39 **MR. GREGORY:** It's a technicality. They decided to call this a
40 sanctuary preservation area, and they automatically have decided
41 that all sanctuary preservation areas should be idle speed and
42 no anchoring, and so it's just that's the logic.

43
44 **MR. MATENS:** To that point, I mean, in open ocean, I'm just not
45 sure that I see that, and idle speed -- What is idle speed? If
46 what you're really concerned about, if you do have an idle speed
47 issue, is the damage from the wake or the propeller wash, and,
48 if you're in the open ocean, and you've got a two-foot chop,

1 you're not doing too much, and so I'm a little confused about
2 why this is important.

3

4 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Bob.

5

6 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is kind of like
7 calling the question, but the idle speed issue, though we
8 personally may disagree with it, is a council question, and it's
9 not an SSC question, and so I suggest we move on.

10

11 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** I agree, and I think it can be
12 reflected in the discussion and in the summary, but I don't
13 think we should spend more time on it.

14

15 **MR. GREGORY:** Just, to Joe's point, in the interactive graph,
16 they are showing the state boundaries, and we know, in the Gulf,
17 the state boundary is nine nautical miles, and so that corridor
18 -- The length of the corridor is more than nine nautical miles.
19 The width is probably half that.

20

21 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** That's a long time idling. I think the
22 comment is right that this can be reflected in the summary, but
23 I don't think we have to spend more SSC time on the idle speed
24 issue. Anything else to this point, or can we wrap up this
25 expansion point? There is a little bit -- The next point on the
26 agenda is the Special Coral Reef SSC and AP Meeting, and so
27 we're not completely leaving that topic, but I think it's time
28 to move on to that. Any disagreement? No. Cool. Natasha.

29

30

SEPTEMBER 2019 CORAL SSC RECOMMENDATIONS

31

32 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I will go through
33 this fairly quickly, and I know that we're short on time. We
34 convened the Shrimp AP, Coral AP, and Coral SSC back in
35 September, and I have provided the summary, the meeting summary,
36 as background materials, and I kind of wanted to highlight a few
37 of the Coral SSC -- Some of the joint motions that were brought
38 up during the meeting.

39

40 One of them was regarding the language for transiting through
41 the sanctuary, and this was during the Flower Garden Banks
42 expansion, and Mr. Schmahl provided us with the language, and
43 this has been brought up at council, and we're working on a
44 letter to provide to the sanctuary to provide to the sanctuary
45 that would explicitly request that -- Provide more clarification
46 on the transiting through no-activity zones with fishing gear
47 onboard.

48

1 The next one, the next joint motion, was, when we were first
2 evaluating the Keys expansion, the stakeholders wanted to see a
3 more detailed amount of data on the shrimp ELBs, and that has
4 also been incorporated into some of the maps that we'll be
5 presenting at the council meeting, and so I don't know if we
6 want to elaborate on that, for the shrimp ELBs and kind of
7 evaluating the amount of use and fishing effort within the
8 proposed areas.

9
10 Then there were two other motions, and one of them was to update
11 the Kemp's ridley stock assessment, and so there is a new study
12 that will be funded by the council for Kemp's ridley sea
13 turtles, towards completing an assessment of the species, and
14 this was one recommendation by the Coral SSC, Coral AP, and
15 Shrimp AP.

16
17 Then the last one was to initiate work on Coral Amendment 10,
18 and this was a Coral SSC motion, Coral AP and Coral SSC motion,
19 and it's been brought up to the council, and the recommendation
20 to staff was to begin looking into new research that might be
21 included in a future Coral Amendment 10.

22
23 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay. Thank you, and so this is a
24 short item, and it's really are there any comments? This has
25 already been presented to the council, I understand, right?
26 Okay. Any comments or questions on this from the panel? Seeing
27 none, anyone in internet land? Okay. Well, thank you.

28
29 I think that closes the coral-related issues for today, and so
30 next on the agenda we have the Update of SEDAR 49, Lane Snapper,
31 with the new MRIP-FES data, including OFL and ABC
32 recommendations. I believe we will be joined by the Science
33 Center.

34
35 **UPDATE OF SEDAR 49: LANE SNAPPER WITH MRIP-FES DATA INCLUDING**
36 **OFL AND ABC RECOMMENDATIONS**

37
38 **DR. NANCIE CUMMINGS:** Thank you, and Happy New Year, and welcome
39 back to work for the SSC, and I'm glad to be here, and this will
40 be a pretty brief presentation, and it's going to build on the
41 presentation that we presented in September, and I think I did
42 it remotely, and it was an update of the SEDAR 49 lane snapper
43 that was the data-limited evaluation.

44
45 I think it was around 2017, with Skyler Sagarese and team, and
46 what came out of that in March of 2017, and so it was in the
47 fall that the DLM was presented, and then, the following spring,
48 you got your OFL and ABC estimates, and the data that went into

1 those estimates were from the MRIP system, and so, since then,
2 we've got the new recreational catch estimates from the FES, and
3 so we're going to build on that.

4
5 As a tiny bit of background, and not very much, assuming that
6 everybody remembers everything from September, and we'll update
7 the OFL and ABC using MRIP-FES estimates for recreational catch,
8 and all other inputs remain the same.

9
10 As a quick review, in September, I presented the updated
11 headboat index that went into the statistical method that was
12 used to actually calculate the OFL and ABC, and what was the
13 Itarget DLM Tool. Specifically, that updated headboat index,
14 the index was chosen as the most representative index to use for
15 the lane snapper DLM evaluation, and we added four new years of
16 catch per unit of effort data, 2015 to 2018.

17
18 The procedure for standardizing the index followed the approach
19 of Adyan Rios and Matthew Smith, and that was presented in SEDAR
20 49, and so that remained the same, and that index is being used
21 today, and then, in addition, there was a second paper and a
22 presentation presented coming from Skyler Sagarese which gave
23 you the updated OFL and ABC from the application of the Itarget
24 method. Just as a reminder, that application of the Itarget
25 method utilized the recreational catches through 2018 from MRIP.

26
27 In both the update and before, the commercial landings remain
28 the same, and they were update through 2018. The inputs for the
29 commercial landings and recreational catches are presented in
30 the paper that I provided to you, but, primarily, those were
31 made available from and including NOAA Southeast Fisheries
32 Science Center and Ryan Rindone, and he also provided me some
33 data that went into that, and here is your references for those
34 two papers, the updated headboat index and then the actual
35 updated calculations of OFL and ABC.

36
37 The purpose today then is to repeat the update of the OFL and
38 ABC calculations using the DLM method, Itarget, and following
39 the procedures that were given and specified in the SEDAR 49
40 evaluation. Like I said, the index remains the same, and the
41 commercial data remain the same. The only thing that has
42 switched today, or that has changed, is that I have used the
43 MRIP-FES estimates from the recreational catch. Again, we
44 followed the Itarget method procedure and application, as
45 described in Cummings and Sagarese in September of 2019.

46
47 I will give you a tiny bit of review, in terms of the index.
48 Again, it remained the same, and it was updated since the SEDAR

1 49 evaluation to include five additional years of data, and so I
2 have given you the nominal index and then the standardized index
3 from SEDAR 49 in orange, and I believe you can see that. The
4 nominal is in blue, and the SEDAR 49 update is this sort of
5 chocolate brown index.

6
7 Just to let you know, the index briefly increased from the
8 beginning of the headboat series, which is in 1986, through
9 1993, followed by a sharp decline, which ended around 2001, and
10 then, over this last set of years, we see a gentle increase,
11 maybe a medium increase, and then sharp increase in 2014 and
12 2017, followed by a decline. These results were presented to
13 you in September, and so they remain the same, obviously.

14
15 Then I am just providing you also a series of headboat effort
16 estimates, and these are the normalized effort estimates for
17 that same period, just so you can get that, and the total
18 headboat effort is in blue, followed by the lane snapper
19 headboat effort.

20
21 Then I will give you a series of the recreational landings, and
22 so the point to take home here is that I've given you the series
23 MRIP series, that was provided to you in blue in September, and
24 also the series with the FES estimates, and, as you see, and as
25 we've seen for a few species, a number of species, the FES
26 estimates are normally larger.

27
28 If you look at the document that I provided you, the Word
29 document, you can actually see the individual yearly estimates,
30 or the annual estimates, and you can see that they range from
31 around 9 percent larger to around 70 percent larger, and so they
32 vary by year, which we would expect.

33
34 Then, likewise, the total lane snapper total landings, which is
35 the commercial plus the recreational MRIP, AB1 plus the dead
36 discards, and, obviously, the trend is similar as before, and
37 you can see that from looking at your Word document, and this is
38 just to frame what the total landings are, and the total
39 landings are what is used in terms of updating the OFL, as well
40 as the index. I will just point out that the reference period
41 for using the DLM Tool Itarget method was chosen as 1999 through
42 2008, and a recent period is the five years from 2008 back.

43
44 We are not going to go through application of the method,
45 because the SEDAR 49, the panel, the assessment panel, and then
46 the review panel, reviewed this extensively and chose these
47 scalars, the smoothing parameters and so forth, and what we'll
48 just point out is that we're in the situation here of the target

1 with the index, and, if you go back to the slide, you can see
2 that the recent index is larger than the target index, and so
3 then we adjust using this formula here, and I have some slides
4 at the end of your presentation that go into detail in terms of
5 the effects of the smoothing parameter, if you want to look at
6 that in more detail, but we discussed that a little bit in
7 September, but, again, that presentation was also -- The purpose
8 of it was to update the OFL using the agreed-on method, and that
9 was the method agreed on in March of 2017 by the SSC.

10
11 What I have done here, similar to September, is I have given you
12 a calculation of the OFL and ABC, and here now we've added an
13 additional row. Before, it was just using the MRIP estimates,
14 and then I had showed you the SEDAR 49 estimate, and so I've
15 added a third row at the top, and the OFL was the 50th percentile
16 of the fishing limit, and these are the associated statistics on
17 the OFL. The standard deviation is that error on the CV, and
18 then the -- At the March 2017 SSC meeting, they determined that
19 the 30th and 40th percentiles would be the ABC, and so the OFL is
20 the 50th, and the ABC was the 30th percentile, I believe it was.

21
22 As you would think, or as you would assume, given the method
23 that was used in updating the OFL according to the index, the
24 recent index, against the target, you can see that there was an
25 increase from the OFL that was calculated for using just the
26 basic MRIP estimates, as opposed to the FES estimates.

27
28 Just a point of reference is the OFL that was calculated from
29 SEDAR 49 in March of 2017 was 364,000 pounds, and it increased
30 to 603,000 with the update, using the basic MRIP estimates, and
31 now, using the MRIP-FES estimates, it has increased to a little
32 over a million pounds.

33
34 I am not too hung up on the exact numbers, but, just to give you
35 a point of reference, the index for the recent period has -- I
36 pointed this out in September, but it was an increase of about
37 57 percent against the reference period, the reference period
38 being 1999 to 2008.

39
40 This is the relative frequency of the distribution, the OFL,
41 that results from incorporating the new FES estimates for the
42 recreational catch. Again, the commercial catch remained the
43 same.

44
45 Then, again, just thanks to everybody that provided input, as
46 well as everything that we do at the Center builds off of a
47 historical continuity of a number of people. Samplers and
48 officers are always involved in putting these datasets together.

1 At the end of your presentation, you will have some extra
2 slides, if you would like to look at them in the back, and that
3 wasn't the point of the presentation, but I included those, for
4 comprehensiveness. Thank you very much, and are there any
5 questions?

6
7 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you, Nancie. Are there
8 questions? Luiz.

9
10 **DR. BARBIERI:** Can you refresh my memory about the reference
11 period that was chosen for lane snapper and the criteria used
12 for that choice of that reference period?

13
14 **DR. CUMMINGS:** Just a couple of statements. I was not involved
15 in SEDAR 49, but Skyler Sagarese is on the call, I believe, and,
16 in going back and rereading all of the SAR report, the stock
17 assessment report, a very thorough examination was made in terms
18 of reviewing the catch history, and so these were the catches,
19 the total catch, in thousands of pounds, recreational plus
20 commercial plus dead discards, and what we're looking for in the
21 application of the target, of the Itarget method, is a period of
22 time through which you might consider that the stock is stable,
23 and that does not necessarily -- You can't say this is a period
24 of MSY, but that it's a period of not declining or increasing
25 catches, and, as you see, the period here that's reflected on
26 the screen with the red dots, red circles, it appears to be a
27 period of stable -- A stable period in the stock condition.

28
29 That would not change through the update. The only way that
30 that would change is if it was reconsidered in terms of another
31 evaluation period, and so what we're looking at here is we would
32 be looking at -- You would extend this time series, and it's in
33 your updated -- If you look at the index paper, you can see the
34 CPUE, or you can actually go back and look at the slide here,
35 and you can see that the index -- This period would be right in
36 through here, 1999 to 2008, and then we see this increase, both
37 in the nominal CPUE and in the standardized index, followed by a
38 recent decline. I hope that answered the question.

39
40 **DR. BARBIERI:** It did, Nancie, and thank you. I was just trying
41 to see if including the new FES estimates -- Because the
42 distribution, the time series, is more jagged and more variable,
43 and if that had influenced at all the choice of the reference
44 period. Looking at what you're showing there, it looks like it
45 didn't.

46
47 **DR. CUMMINGS:** Let me just show you the formula. I have another
48 presentation that I'm just going to show you real quick. It

1 does not have any effect, because we are referencing the change
2 in the CPUE to the reference period. The only way it would have
3 an effect is if that period changed, if your reference period
4 changed.

5
6 **DR. BARBIERI:** Right, and that makes sense. I was just trying
7 to evaluate to find out whether addition of these new numbers,
8 or substitution from the old to the new FES-based MRIP had
9 changed. I mean, when you look at the updated recreational
10 landings in your Slide 7, you can see, for that earlier period,
11 all the way to 2000, and look how much more variable.

12
13 **DR. CUMMINGS:** Of course, but we are not adjusting -- We are
14 only adjusting the catch by the change in the index, and so the
15 only thing affecting the change here -- The index has stayed the
16 same, and the amount of change in the index has stayed the same.

17
18 **DR. BARBIERI:** That's correct, but, Nancie, what I'm saying is
19 the choice of the reference period was based on a presumed
20 stability, right?

21
22 **DR. CUMMINGS:** Yes.

23
24 **DR. BARBIERI:** That stability could have changed, and not the
25 recent versus the reference period, but actually where the
26 change in the distribution in the time series of data would have
27 changed our choice of what the reference period would be, and,
28 in this case, it did not, because --

29
30 **DR. CUMMINGS:** Right, and that's outside the scope of the
31 update. However, if one looks at the updated -- This is the
32 updated recreational landings, and let's look at the total. If
33 we continue to look at the change in total landings, that is
34 something that could be considered, if there was a regime
35 change.

36
37 I mean, you see this spike here, and we also see it -- You know,
38 we see that no matter what. Obviously, this is the change only
39 in recreational, but the commercial didn't change, and so we can
40 assume that this picture -- I mean, with this spike here, I
41 think we would still say that this is -- I am not going to go
42 out and try to make a conversation on should be the reference
43 period be redefined.

44
45 I think it's outside the scope of the update, but it's something
46 the SSC could consider, but I think we would also want to
47 consider that, given the additional new data on catch and
48 biological information, size frequencies and so forth, is there

1 a reason to look at other methods as well, because we are better
2 informed at this point. The only thing that has changed in this
3 update is the FES, substitution of the FES.

4

5 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Paul.

6

7 **DR. SAMMARCO:** You had a graph up there which was points, and I
8 don't have your numbers here, and I don't know which one was
9 after that.

10

11 **DR. CUMMINGS:** Right. It's the reference catch from SEDAR 49.

12

13 **DR. SAMMARCO:** You have a correlation between your mean and your
14 variance there, and this is just a biostatistical comment, which
15 might help you. If you use the log transform on your Y-axis, it
16 would make your data homoscedastic, which simply means it will
17 make your variances or standard deviations more sort of solid
18 and even, and you might get a little bit of a clearer picture of
19 what's going on, because it's a beautiful dataset.

20

21 **DR. CUMMINGS:** It's a great suggestion, and I could go back and
22 I could re-look at what exactly the assessment panel looked at,
23 in terms of further exploration that they did to determine this,
24 and I'm going to open this also to Skyler, because she's on the
25 call, and so she probably remembers -- I did the update for
26 them, but I wasn't involved in the -- I am not tossing this down
27 the path either, but she might be more privy to if some other
28 explorations were done, and I don't recall looking at a log
29 transform, but that's a good suggestion, and so thank you.

30

31 I just want to add that it is a good dataset, and what I find
32 also is that now we are better informed, because we have another
33 five years, six years, of data, through 2019, and so it's -- You
34 know, the next update or benchmark possibly could be even more
35 fruitful.

36

37 **DR. SKYLER SAGARESE:** I just wanted to add on here that, for
38 SEDAR 49, we never reevaluated the decisions of the reference
39 period, because that was thoroughly evaluated back in the ACL
40 documentation that the SSC and the council had put together, and
41 so there was a lot of discussion at that time, when ACLs were
42 being set, about reference periods and were they appropriate and
43 the assumptions that Nancie touched on earlier, but we basically
44 just wanted to just look at this and say, yes, there's no
45 relationship, but, at SEDAR 49, we did not reevaluate these
46 decisions.

47

48 It seems like, given the new MRIP-FES data, that could be a

1 recommendation the SSC makes, but, as Nancie mentioned, that
2 really is beyond the scope of this evaluation, because these
3 reference periods are being used to set ACLs for the other data-
4 limited stocks, and so, if it's a concern for this species, we
5 have concern for others as well. Thanks, Nancie.

6
7 **DR. CUMMINGS:** Right, and I want to add one other thing for Luiz
8 and whoever the other person was, but Skyler brought up the part
9 about the ACL and the ACL determination period, and that was --
10 To give you a little bit more context, and I'm always interested
11 in all the context behind it, and I covered this in the
12 September document, if you will go back and re-read it.

13
14 What they did, the evaluation team and the panel, is they
15 evaluated what were the methods from the DLM Toolkit, or any
16 other DLM method, for that matter. It could have been coded in,
17 but what were the methods that would be applicable, or feasible,
18 given the data available, number one, and then, number two, they
19 evaluated the results of the evaluation, in terms of MSE,
20 management strategy evaluation, versus what they called the
21 reference method, which was the only reliable catch method, and
22 so that is the context set up for identifying which DLM Tool
23 methods were useful.

24
25 I think, if you go back and look at the document, the SAR
26 report, there were about three that were useful, and then they
27 were evaluated against each other, in terms of which one would
28 lead to possibly sustainable catches over the long-term, and
29 they looked at that in terms of short-term and long-term, and
30 they looked at a suite of performance metrics also, and so the
31 context is quite important, that this DLM Tool Itarget was
32 chosen against the council method, if you will, which was the --
33 I think it was basically catches only, and so important in
34 deciding on what the reference period was was identifying that
35 set of years that they thought the condition of the stock was
36 being maintained in a consistent way, or it was maintaining
37 itself in a consistent way.

38
39 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay. Thank you, Nancie.

40
41 **DR. CUMMINGS:** The devil is always in the details, and it's
42 always very interesting. You have to go back and look at the
43 development of how Method A, B, or C was chosen.

44
45 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you. Any more questions, or are
46 we getting ready for a motion?

47
48 **MR. MARESKA:** This may be for Ryan, and so, the current ACL

1 that's in place, is that FES-adjusted or not, the 301,000
2 pounds?

3

4 **MR. RINDONE:** No.

5

6 **MR. MARESKA:** It's not, and so that gives me grave concern, and
7 so the catch was exceeded in 2018, and the ACL that was set was
8 set on the APAIS-adjusted MRIP and not the FES-adjusted, and so
9 that was 301,000 pounds. It closed this year, December 13,
10 because we had reached the limit, but that's using the FES-
11 adjusted MRIP, and so it looks like we might be in a situation
12 where we're overfishing. Did everyone follow that? Does that
13 make sense? The ACL was done using APAIS-adjusted numbers, but
14 the current catch that's coming in is using the FES-adjusted
15 numbers. It sounds like we're operating in two currencies.

16

17 **MR. RINDONE:** The current quota monitoring for lane snapper is
18 still done using the APAIS-adjusted FES, and it's not -- They
19 are not doing quota monitoring in FES using an APAIS-adjusted
20 ACL, and so it's still apples-to-apples, as far as the quota
21 monitoring is concerned.

22

23 **MR. MARESKA:** All right. Good. Thanks for that clarification,
24 and yet we're going to jump this up, possibly, and so okay.
25 Thank you.

26

27 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Any other questions? Doug.

28

29 **MR. GREGORY:** This may have been stated and I just missed it,
30 but, in September, we saw this document with APAIS numbers, and
31 now it's coming back to us in FES, and why, I guess, one, we
32 didn't wait until we got the FES numbers, if that was important,
33 or why did we change it just between two meetings?

34

35 **DR. CUMMINGS:** I was asked, Doug, to present information to the
36 council in October, and then it was decided to wait using the
37 FES update, and then we were informed that the council just
38 preferred to let the SSC look at it first, and so I think that's
39 what's going on here, because the council has not seen the FES.

40

41 **MR. GREGORY:** It's a shame you had to do double work. Thank
42 you.

43

44 **DR. CUMMINGS:** It's just practice.

45

46 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Doug.

47

48 **MR. GREGORY:** The change is dramatic, and it's almost double the

1 OFL, and that's disturbing. I asked questions about FES at the
2 last meeting, and some of you all have been involved in multiple
3 meetings with the MRFSS or MRIP people in going through this and
4 developing the calibration, but a lot of us have not, and, to
5 those of us on the outside, these calibrations just don't look
6 right.

7
8 The lane snapper variability in the early years is very similar
9 to the variability we're seeing with red grouper, and I wonder
10 how much of that is across-the-board and why the apparent
11 inconsistencies in the magnitude of the differences from year to
12 year, because I don't understand -- I don't know the model
13 that's being used, and it's obviously not a simple ratio, or a
14 change in ratio.

15
16 **DR. CUMMINGS:** No, it's not, but the question of the OFL update
17 between March of 2017 and September and now, what you're seeing
18 is a reflection of the change in the catch, as well as the
19 index, but, between September and this, the index did not
20 change. I mean, it's the same index.

21
22 The effect of here's the formula, and this was the methodology
23 chosen through the review of the DLM Tool and evaluation, and it
24 was a very extensive review, and that same method was used in
25 September with the MRIP estimates, and then the FES estimates
26 basically changed it, and so the result you're seeing here is
27 totally a result of the FES estimates. Between these two times,
28 January and now, or September or whenever it was, the
29 methodology did not change, and so I don't think the method is
30 being tested or challenged here in this last little bit of
31 conversation.

32
33 I mean, we were asked to update the March 2017 SEDAR 49 OFL
34 calculations, using the procedures that were adopted and agreed
35 on by the SEDAR 49 review panel, and then it went through the
36 CIE, and then the SSC agreed on those, endorsed them rather, and
37 then -- I mean, it's basically the objective in September was to
38 carry out the OFL update using the procedures agreed on by the
39 SSC. Between these two times, the only thing that changed was
40 the substitution of the FES for the basic MRIP.

41
42 **DR. BARBIERI:** Right, Nancie, and, just to clarify, we are not
43 questioning the methodology, which we had already reviewed.
44 SEDAR 49 already had extensive review of the same methodology.
45 Last September, we had another presentation that refreshed our
46 memories about the methodologies that had been used in SEDAR 49,
47 and it was a data update to then provide the newly-estimated OFL
48 and ABC, and so all of this is fine. Some of the questions that

1 we're asking is we're trying to get a feeling of how much use of
2 the new FES-calibrated data might be impacting the outcome of
3 the analysis and the results.

4
5 **DR. CUMMINGS:** Well, I think we can see that. It's pretty
6 straightforward, because the update from September to 2017 did
7 show quite an increase in the index, and that was then adjusted
8 to the catch, the recent catch, period. I think some of the
9 answers are straightforward, and I was basically responding to
10 Doug's question that he wasn't familiar with the method, and so
11 I think, in another conversation, you could re-address the
12 method, but I'm not sure that that's part of the update.

13
14 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** The result we have now is the MRIP-FES,
15 and I think it brings the actual catches closer to the ABC, and
16 so, for example, the 2017 catch was in excess of the new ABC.

17
18 **DR. CUMMINGS:** I have just a couple of references here. Across
19 the entire time series, your average across the entire time
20 series has been around 385,000 pounds, and that was across the
21 entire time series, and, obviously, you're above that now, but
22 it's not -- The average across this reference period is much
23 lower.

24
25 **DR. TOLAN:** To that point, not being in the room and not seeing
26 how many of the commercial guys and the recreational guys are
27 still there, I am going to address this purely anecdotal
28 question to Ryan for this species, not having the species on
29 this side of the Gulf. Do you think the numbers we're coming up
30 with now of a million pounds is reasonable for this species?
31 It's a huge jump.

32
33 **MR. RINDONE:** From what we hear from the fishermen, particularly
34 the headboat fishermen, with respect to lane snapper is they do
35 catch them, and they have been catching them with increasing
36 frequency, to the extent that they have noticed. They do note
37 that, when the bite for red snapper is hot, that the bite for
38 lane snapper drops off almost entirely, and they have commented
39 that they think that's just because red snapper feed more
40 aggressively. That is their observation.

41
42 My personal experience is I have caught more of them in the last
43 couple of years than I have in previous years, but I'm only one
44 person fishing in one small tiny little area, and so it's less
45 than a pinprick, but, from several headboat captains that we've
46 talked to, they've said that they have noticed an increase in
47 the number of lane snapper that they're catching.

1 **DR. TOLAN:** I certainly thank you for the honesty. Just having
2 been part of the SEDAR 49 and worked on this originally, moving
3 from these different MRIP to FES adjustments and seeing how
4 these numbers are just dramatically increasing -- I am just
5 wondering if we think this stock can sustain tripling the catch
6 on the OFL number, and that's really my basic question.

7
8 **MR. RINDONE:** We don't have like a long-term examination of what
9 the charter captains, what the headboat captains, have been
10 seeing, to be able say, oh, over the last twenty years, this is
11 what I have seen on a year-to-year basis. The comments that
12 we've received were just that they're catching more recently,
13 and it's been consistent, based on what they have said, and so
14 it's not to say that the stock can or cannot sustain the current
15 level of harvest, which is not the point of the Itarget model,
16 to be able to inform stock status, but harvest has increased,
17 which infers that there must be enough of them out there to
18 catch.

19
20 **DR. TOLAN:** Thank you.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN POWERS:** The slide you see there is basically what the
23 assessment is. All it is is an index of abundance, and you are
24 specifying a period of time where you think it was sustainable
25 and close enough to maximum sustainable for approximation
26 purposes, and so you could argue about whether that was the
27 appropriate reference period, but, really, what we're talking
28 about here is the difference in catches, and, if in fact those
29 differences in catches went throughout that whole period, then
30 it sort of changes your perception of how much you can remove,
31 but, still, the index is going to be the same.

32
33 What we're really talking about here is how to react when you
34 get a huge change in your whole perception of the time series of
35 catches, and, if you go strictly by the methodology, this is the
36 methodology, and this is what we're left with, but then what to
37 do when like you said, that you're doubling or tripling the ABCs
38 or OFLs, and so I don't know. I don't have a strong feeling
39 about where to go here, but the issue is the catches.

40
41 If there is some -- I don't know enough about the data that's
42 been collected since the DLM work was being done, but one thing
43 one could do is try to use a more standard kind of assessment,
44 but I'm not sure that there's enough data to actually do that,
45 and so I think our recommendations really ought to be sort of
46 two-fold. If you apply the methodology as we stated here, it's
47 the results, but this is a big change in catches, and it's
48 probably going to be some sort of a ubiquitous sort of problem

1 that we're going to face in the future, and so we have to start
2 dealing with it. Thank you.

3

4 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thanks. Will.

5

6 **DR. PATTERSON:** I mean, it's concerning, or head-scratching, to
7 look and see that we're saying that the historical landings
8 estimates, at least for that time series, have tripled, but it's
9 not like we're saying that -- It's not the intercepts. It's not
10 the estimated catch per trip, but it's the effort scalar that's
11 being changed in this estimation procedure, and so, basically,
12 we're saying that, if the fishery continues to operate with this
13 level of effort, given where the productivity or the biomass of
14 the stock is today, which is referenced by that trend in CPUE,
15 then we expect the catches to be more or less the same in the
16 near future, and so I'm not as concerned about that magnitude of
17 difference.

18

19 Going back in time, the squiggles are more concerning to me, the
20 variability, where you have five-fold differences between years,
21 but, you know, back before the early 1990s, we don't have a
22 whole lot of confidence in the data anyway, and, when we get
23 into more data-rich time periods, there is less variability from
24 year to year, and so it's not like we're saying that next year
25 the fishery can catch three-times as much fish. What we're
26 saying is we estimated they were catching, or killing, three-
27 time as much fish, and, if they keep operating in a similar
28 manner, then this is what the landings should be.

29

30 **DR. CUMMINGS:** Also, just to point out that, with the
31 application of the method, these squiggles aren't -- This
32 variability is not affecting the model. What is important is
33 like Joe talked about, in terms of what the reference period was
34 here, and then that we are using the index in the recent five
35 years as the reference period. Thank you, Will. Those were
36 good points. Is there any other slide that anyone would like to
37 look at closer?

38

39 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Are we getting ready for a motion on
40 this? Nancie, are you preparing to show something else, or --

41

42 **DR. CUMMINGS:** No. I am finished. I just moved the slide so
43 that you can possibly have that as a reference for any motion
44 that might be made. Thank you very much. Great questions.

45

46 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you. Does anyone feel -- I know
47 this is complex, because the analysis is fine, and the question
48 is what we think of the adjusted data.

1
2 **DR. CUMMINGS:** I would also not advise, but recommend -- It's
3 interesting, but it's a lot of work to read through the SAR
4 report and all the work that was done, in terms of the
5 management strategy evaluation, but the application of the
6 method versus the -- You know, the constant catch method, or the
7 only reliable catch series, and the MSE was actually conducted
8 over, like we said, short and long-term periods, and so you can
9 actually get a sense of how that application of various methods
10 were performing by going back and looking at those MSE summary
11 outputs, and I know it's tedious, but you can actually -- I
12 mean, the method, Itarget, was not just applied to the next five
13 years. It was actually a whole series, and it might have been
14 thirty to five years, and Skyler can chime in there, but that's
15 one of the important things, in terms of the performance
16 statistics, is how do the various methods behave, short-term and
17 long-term?

18
19 **CHAIRMAN POWERS:** I don't really remember about lane snapper
20 specifically, but I remember, in general, the DLM analysis
21 actually looked at what happens if you get the catches wrong and
22 whether those scenarios included three-times wrong I don't
23 remember, but still --

24
25 **DR. CUMMINGS:** Yes, it did. Yes, it did, and so that's more
26 meat for conversation and discussion, but it did. It looked at
27 that variability.

28
29 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Jim.

30
31 **DR. NANCE:** Just what it basically comes down to is the
32 methodology we accepted, and we've got new data that now are
33 being input, and so do we accept this new data? If so, then
34 these are the new numbers.

35
36 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Correct, and it seems -- I mean, we
37 have no information specifically to judge the data. I mean, we
38 just have new data, but I believe this is -- I mean, this is the
39 data stream that we will be using in the foreseeable future,
40 presumably.

41
42 **DR. NANCE:** One thing is we can see what was passed. If this
43 was just data being put in, this would be the data we're
44 accepting, and so having the old data and now we're looking at
45 the new, and we're having an issue with the number change, but,
46 basically, what we're saying is we have underestimated the catch
47 through time.

48

1 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** I think the number change as such
2 doesn't really worry me. It just scales everything up, but it
3 does change a little bit where we stand at the moment with
4 respect to the ABC, but that in itself is not a criteria to cut
5 into our judgment. Bob.
6
7 **MR. GILL:** Yes, Mr. Chairman?
8
9 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** I am looking for a motion.
10
11 **MR. GILL:** All right, Mr. Chairman. I will make one, just to
12 get something on the board. **My motion is that the updated Gulf**
13 **of Mexico lane snapper assessment using the Itarget model is**
14 **considered the best scientific information available.**
15
16 **DR. NANCE:** I will second that, Mr. Chairman.
17
18 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Is there discussion? Should we say for
19 what purpose? I think we've been asked to be more specific than
20 just saying the best scientific -- No? Okay. It doesn't bother
21 me, but are we meant to say specifically for the purpose of OFL
22 determination and --
23
24 **MR. RINDONE:** You can make that as part of this motion, or you
25 can make it as a separate motion, but letting the council know
26 whether or not it's suitable for management is very helpful.
27
28 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** What this doesn't give us is a stock
29 status determination, but we're saying we find it suitable for
30 catch advice.
31
32 **MR. GILL:** But I thought we had gone the route of utilizing that
33 as a second motion, to separate out from BSIA. Correct?
34
35 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** We can do that. Thank you. Any more
36 discussion on the motion? Will.
37
38 **DR. PATTERSON:** **Should we qualify this as to the total kill data**
39 **stream utilized here?**
40
41 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay. That's a friendly amendment.
42
43 **DR. NANCE:** Should it be Itarget model with FES data?
44
45 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Any more discussion?
46
47 **MR. MARESKA:** The FES numbers, I guess, do give me quite a bit
48 of concern, and so we've seen the letters from the managers

1 about how implausible, in reality, some of these landings
2 numbers are when the FES is applied, and so it doesn't make them
3 relevant, in reality, under the best scientific information
4 available, and I don't think these numbers have actually been
5 validated or verified, and so, again, I just don't think that
6 they're going to fit under the criteria of best scientific
7 information available, and, for wordsmithing, these are
8 projections and not really an assessment.

9

10 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** It is an assessment.

11

12 **DR. CUMMINGS:** The request to the Center I believe was an update
13 of the application of the method, and so it wasn't to do a re-
14 evaluation, which would take quite a number of additional months
15 of time.

16

17 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay.

18

19 **DR. CUMMINGS:** That's just a question, in terms of assessment
20 versus an alignment with the request of an update.

21

22 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Yes, but it's an assessment, and it's
23 not a projection. Are we ready to vote? **All in favor, raise**
24 **your hand.**

25

26 **MR. RINDONE:** Twelve in the room. On the webinar.

27

28 **DR. ISELY:** Yes.

29

30 **MR. RINDONE:** Thirteen.

31

32 **CHAIRMAN POWERS:** Yes.

33

34 **MR. RINDONE:** Fourteen.

35

36 **DR. POWERS:** Yes.

37

38 **DR. ROBERTS:** Yes.

39

40 **MR. RINDONE:** Sixteen.

41

42 **DR. TOLAN:** Yes.

43

44 **MR. RINDONE:** Jim Tolan is yes.

45

46 **MR. MARESKA:** No.

47

48 **MR. RINDONE:** All right, and so let me make that separately.

1 John Mareska is no. Is there anyone on the webinar that has not
2 voted? Ken, did I hear you?
3
4 **DR. ROBERTS:** I said yes.
5
6 **MR. RINDONE:** Ken said yes. Benny. Benny is not on there
7 anymore, and so I have seventeen in favor and one on the webinar
8 against. **In the room against, one; abstain, three abstain.**
9 **It's seventeen in favor, two against, and three abstentions.**
10 **The motion carries.** Mr. Chair.
11
12 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay. So then we need the next motion
13 about management advice.
14
15 **DR. BARBIERI:** If I may, we don't need actually that motion
16 separately. Actually, if we made this one saying that this is
17 considered the best scientific information available, it is
18 implicit that --
19
20 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** It covers everything.
21
22 **DR. BARBIERI:** That means that, yes, it can be used for
23 management advice, and this is what General Counsel told us.
24
25 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay. It's good with me. Then do we
26 need to specify the OFL and ABC? It's a golden opportunity for
27 a motion maker, and I am not meant to make motions, as the
28 Chair.
29
30 **MR. RINDONE:** The recommended OFL from Nancie's presentation was
31 1,094,324 pounds at a 50 percent probability of overfishing, and
32 then your options for ABC from Nancie's work were 1,068,508
33 pounds at a 30 percent probability, or 1,081,903 pounds at a 40
34 percent probability, and so the difference is approximately
35 13,000 pounds between a 40 and a 50 percent probability of
36 overfishing and about 25,000 pounds between a 30 percent and 50
37 percent probability of overfishing.
38
39 **MS. SUSAN GERHART:** This may or may not help, but I just got the
40 landings from 2018. Right now, the ABC, or the ACL, is set in
41 MRFSS units, and so, first of all, understand that the number
42 that you're seeing up there from I think the previous assessment
43 -- There has been several conversions since then, and so it's
44 been updated for APAIS and updated for FES, and so there are
45 several steps that have taken place, but the landings for 2018,
46 in MRFSS units, were around 300,000 pounds.
47
48 Now, the thing is that's back-calculated from the FES, and it's

1 actually collected -- All this data is being collected in FES
2 right now, and so it's been converted back to the MRFSS units.
3 If we look at what the FES landings were for that same year,
4 they were 2.7 million pounds, and so you can see that there is a
5 huge difference between those landings, and so, when you're
6 looking at these OFL changes, those are consistent with the
7 changes in the collection of the data as well, and, yes, we were
8 over the OFL in 2018. Thank you.

9
10 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Doug.

11
12 **MR. GREGORY:** Does anybody on the prevailing side want to
13 reconsider?

14
15 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** This is what, two million, and so we're
16 like twice the --

17
18 **MR. RINDONE:** 2.7.

19
20 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** 2.7.

21
22 **MR. GREGORY:** Versus 300,000.

23
24 **MR. MARESKA:** We went from 300,000 pounds to 2.7 million, and
25 that's nine-times the difference, and that's substantial.

26
27 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** This is actually slightly worrying,
28 because it's a much bigger inflation that we see even in the
29 recent past, and so I'm not quite sure -- Can anyone explain
30 that?

31
32 It did seem, even looking at the last couple of years, it seemed
33 that the difference was widening, but this is much, much bigger
34 than what we've had in the recent past, and obviously that would
35 have major management implications.

36
37 **DR. NANCE:** I think the question is not on the assessment, or
38 even the numbers from the assessment, but it's how comfortable
39 we are with FES numbers. I mean, that's really the question.

40
41 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Right, and because that would be what
42 is used going forward, and it seems we're running into a
43 problem. Doug.

44
45 **MR. GREGORY:** Just one more thing. I mean, if I understand this
46 correctly, if we were managing this fishery using MRFSS, it
47 would stay open year-round, given those numbers, but, if we're
48 managing it under FES, we would close it in June, and, I mean,

1 that's the impact.

2
3 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Actually, that's why I think this
4 latest number is putting a spinner in the works, as far as I am
5 concerned. Luiz.

6
7 **DR. BARBIERI:** That was the level of discomfort that I decided
8 to abstain from voting, because I just -- There are a number of
9 questions that I still feel have not been answered, not to my
10 level of satisfaction, and we don't want to be disruptive, and
11 we understand that the process needs to move forward, and that
12 perhaps there is no other way to get this addressed in the short
13 term, and management is continuing, and we need to continue
14 conducting this analysis, but, to me, as we sit in this
15 committee as scientists evaluating objectively what is being put
16 in front of us, it is difficult to just look the other way and
17 say damn the torpedoes and full speed ahead.

18
19 It is unsettling to see. Therefore, a species that is a minor
20 species, that really is a bycatch species already being
21 evaluated through a data-poor methodology, because there is no
22 targeted fishery, and it's primarily bycatch, and that we have
23 two-and-a-half million pounds in recreational landings, and it's
24 just -- I don't know if that's conceivable, really. Now, I
25 couldn't tell you what is wrong or what might be causing this,
26 but, as a scientist, I am not going to be proceeding with this
27 based on faith, because that's not what we are here for.

28
29 **DR. KATIE SIEGFRIED:** Can I make a comment? I'm the Acting
30 Branch Chief for the Gulf, and I just wanted to comment that the
31 FES is not something that the assessment group here should be
32 considered experts of and really should have to defend. We
33 really recommend that any questions be directed to the
34 recreational stats experts in Headquarters, or we do have some
35 here, and it sounds like you all aren't asking Nancie for the
36 answers, and so I appreciate that.

37
38 There has also been a workshop in the South Atlantic that it's
39 super unfortunate that the Gulf wasn't part of it, although I
40 know Luiz was part of that group, and that workshop report did
41 deem the FES as BSIA, but it sounds like the SSC here still
42 needs to either work through that report or get some other
43 expert input from Headquarters from the recreational statistics
44 experts. Thanks.

45
46 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you. Sue.

47
48 **MS. GERHART:** I guess I just thought this needed a little more

1 excitement when I came up here and told you that number. It
2 turns out that our staff back at the office had misunderstood
3 what we were looking for. The number is actually more like
4 800,000 for the FES number, and so it's not the two-million
5 number. Sorry, everybody, that I threw that in there, and so it
6 was more of a little over a doubling of the number, which is
7 more consistent with what you see up here.

8
9 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay. Thank you. That was good news.

10
11 **DR. ROY CRABTREE:** That is good news, and, coming back to Luiz's
12 comment that no one is targeting these, I can tell you, when we
13 closed the fishery, I got emails from people implying that they
14 were, and I pulled one up here where they say that lane snapper
15 is their bread-and-butter species for charters over Christmas,
16 and so there are people targeting these, apparently.

17
18 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Dave.

19
20 **DR. CHAGARIS:** Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to make a
21 comment and remind everybody that, I think a couple of meetings
22 ago, we made a motion to actually bring people in for the state
23 surveys and give us a real thorough presentation on all these
24 data sources, and I think how those could maybe help us
25 understand or add some credibility to these FES estimates and
26 doing something similar to what the South Atlantic had.

27
28 I think that is even more critical now, having gone through this
29 conversation, and we're going to be faced with this again and
30 again on a species-by-species basis, and I think it's best to
31 have something where we can look at multiple species
32 simultaneously and try to understand really what's going on.

33
34 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thanks. Will.

35
36 **DR. PATTERSON:** It's important to know how the catch estimates
37 per trip may or may not have changed at the state level, but
38 also what is it in the effort calculation that can drive the
39 squiggles that we see in some parts of the time series? I mean,
40 that was really disheartening, to think 2.7 million, but 800,000
41 is really consistent with what we've been seeing, and it says
42 that this was the time period of stability, but CPUE has been
43 going up, and now the scaling says this isn't overfishing at
44 this level, and so I'm glad that I voted yes.

45
46 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Roy.

47
48 **DR. CRABTREE:** Just so I understand, Sue said eight-hundred-and-

1 some-odd thousand pounds, and so, coming back to the
2 conversation a minute ago, lane snapper did close last year, and
3 not for long, but it closed for a couple of weeks. Under this
4 ABC, and using the FES, it would not close, because we aren't
5 catching that, and so it's very different than what you
6 discussed a minute ago.

7
8 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Yes, I think we understand. Are we
9 ready to move on the next motion? What did we decide on the
10 ABC, 30 or 40 percent, last time?

11
12 **MR. RINDONE:** 30.

13
14 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** 30. Okay.

15
16 **DR. NANCE:** Mr. Chairman, I agree with Dave. I mean, we really
17 need to have maybe a couple-day presentation on this, because
18 this is really the crux of what's happening. The assessments
19 are one thing, but having confidence in the data input is, I
20 think, paramount.

21
22 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Yes, absolutely. Ryan.

23
24 **MR. RINDONE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to that point, I was
25 able to attend the South Atlantic workshop with Luiz, and Luiz
26 can correct or validate this, but the South Atlantic SSC was in
27 agreement that the method that's being used in the FES survey is
28 superior to the old Coastal Household Telephone Survey.

29
30 There is a lot of biases in the old telephone survey that are
31 eliminated with the FES method, but they expressed the same
32 concerns as you all as far as the extrapolation of the estimates
33 of the landings based on this new effort survey, which, in some
34 cases, can be several-fold higher than what they were under just
35 the APAIS-adjusted MRIP values, and so they had made several
36 requests of NMFS Science and Technology for different tests to
37 apply to these extrapolation methods and simulation testing, to
38 try to determine the accuracy and precision of the estimates
39 that they are generating, and I have not heard yet as far as any
40 of the results of any of those requests, but know that -- That
41 workshop report is available, and I can dig that out and send
42 that everybody, if you like, so that you can dive headfirst into
43 it. You won't need a helmet. It's deep, and you won't hit the
44 bottom, but there's a lot of information in there about their
45 deliberations, and so, for the sake of not duplicating effort, I
46 would encourage you to read the South Atlantic's meeting summary
47 first, and then perhaps go from there.

48

1 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Doug and then Paul.
2
3 **MR. GREGORY:** I thought the problem was the calibration aspect
4 and not the direct application of the new effort survey to the
5 data, and maybe they are twisted up into the same, but it was
6 the historical calibration that has obviously got to be the most
7 challenging. Thank you for that though.
8
9 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Paul.
10
11 **DR. SAMMARCO:** Following on from that, I mean, we're blessed to
12 have those data, and they are great data over a relatively long
13 period of time, and, as I have heard this morning, it's very
14 important that whatever decisions are made, or recommendations
15 are made or whatever, that they are on solid ground when you
16 make them, and there are, I think, some issues with what's
17 coming through the data and perhaps how they're analyzed and how
18 the reference years have been chosen and so forth, historically,
19 and all of those are important, because the message that I'm
20 getting, and not so much listening, but just watching the data,
21 because that's how we're all trained, is the two aren't
22 necessarily the same, and it's not hard to clear it up, and I
23 have offered my services to Ms. Cummings to help her reanalyze
24 the data, if she wants, because I've been doing that for a long
25 time.
26
27 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you. I think we are ready to put
28 the second motion on -- This would be just the OFL and ABC
29 recommendations. Do you want to have a go? It's just the
30 numbers.
31
32 **MR. GILL:** I have two holes boring into me as you look down my
33 way. All right, Mr. Chairman. I will give it a whirl. **Could**
34 **you repeat the previous motion and then delete all after "is"?**
35 **That will work. Then considered useful for management advice.**
36
37 **MR. GREGORY:** Aren't we looking for actual numbers?
38
39 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Yes, and I think -- Wasn't it Tom who
40 suggested that we don't -- Numbers would be next, and I guess
41 they could be put in the same motion, to speed things up a
42 little, or just say the OFL is ABC at 30 percent.
43
44 **MR. GILL:** Mr. Chairman, before we get there, I've got a
45 question in terms of process. We don't have before us a series
46 of projections for future years, and so, if we accept the OFL
47 and ABC that we have as part of this analysis, that stays until
48 we change it the next time, correct?

1
2 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** I believe that's correct.
3
4 **MR. GILL:** There's nothing that beyond that, until we do this
5 again.
6
7 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** That's all the method produces, right?
8 It produces a static --
9
10 **DR. CUMMINGS:** If you look at your March 2017 SSC meeting, you
11 will see that the SSC agreed to use the calculations of the OFL
12 and ABC for a short period of time, and they recommended three
13 years. Thank you.
14
15 **MR. RINDONE:** Just to that point, you guys can request that you
16 be able to review an additional update of this very model again
17 at some point in the future, and the council can send that
18 request to the Science Center.
19
20 **MR. GILL:** I will give it a whirl, Mr. Chairman. **The**
21 **recommended OFL utilizing the 50th percentile of the PDF is 1.09**
22 **million pounds, and the recommended ABC utilizing the 30th**
23 **percentile of the PDF is 1.07 million pounds.**
24
25 **DR. ISELY:** Second.
26
27 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Any discussion? Will, you look like
28 you want to say something.
29
30 **DR. PATTERSON:** It's not that we're recommending OFL. It's just
31 OFL utilizing the 50th percentile PDF is this. The ABC utilizing
32 that is the other. I would scratch the "recommended".
33
34 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** We are determining it. Anything else?
35
36 **DR. ISELY:** Do we add a specific time period to this, to the
37 motion?
38
39 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** It seems to me that typically this
40 would stay in place until we do something else. Are we ready to
41 vote? Carrie.
42
43 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is this
44 whole weight or gutted weight?
45
46 **MR. RINDONE:** Nancie, it's whole weight, right?
47
48 **DR. CUMMINGS:** Yes.

1
2 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay. With that little clarification,
3 I think we're ready to vote. **Everyone in favor, please raise**
4 **your hand.**
5
6 **MR. RINDONE:** Twelve in the room. On the webinar.
7
8 **CHAIRMAN POWERS:** Yes.
9
10 **DR. ISELY:** Yes.
11
12 **MR. RINDONE:** Jeff Isely is yes. Anybody else on the webinar?
13
14 **DR. TOLAN:** Yes.
15
16 **MR. RINDONE:** Jim Tolan is yes.
17
18 **DR. POWERS:** Yes.
19
20 **MR. RINDONE:** Sean Powers is yes.
21
22 **MR. MARESKA:** No.
23
24 **MR. RINDONE:** John Mareska is no. Anyone else on the webinar?
25
26 **DR. ROBERTS:** Yes.
27
28 **MR. RINDONE:** Ken Roberts is yes. That's it? Okay. **In the**
29 **room, no, one; in the room abstain, two. The motion carries**
30 **seventeen to two with two abstentions.**
31
32 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Roy.
33
34 **DR. CRABTREE:** I guess, given the concerns about FES, and there
35 seems to be questions, I suppose my question to you would be
36 whether you would want to ask the council to arrange like a one-
37 day workshop associated with your next meeting, where the MRIP
38 folks, John Foster and Richard Cody and whoever else, come in
39 and go through the methodology and the calibration and give you
40 a chance to ask questions.
41
42 I think the South Atlantic did that with their SSC, and it
43 seemed to -- I think it was two days, and I think that's
44 possible, because these kind of questions -- I mean, the FES is
45 what we're using now, and so this is just going to come up with
46 virtually everything you see.
47
48 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thanks, Roy. Luiz.

1
2 **DR. BARBIERI:** Roy, we did bring a motion like that before the
3 council in my last report, SSC report, to the council, and I
4 think it was during the Data Collection Committee, but it is in
5 the presentation that was given, because I think it was a motion
6 by Jim Tolan, and it was part of our report, understanding that
7 the MRIP office is now having to go to different councils and
8 give the same presentation to different SSCs and different
9 groups, and so it's stretched thin, and so we didn't put a time
10 limit on it, but, basically, that's what we were requesting,
11 given the discussion that had taken place in the Southeast.

12
13 **DR. CRABTREE:** I know, Tom, that we talked about trying to
14 facilitate some of the state survey calibrations towards red
15 snapper, but I don't remember if we discussed it having a more
16 general session with the SSC over the FES survey. If we did, I
17 don't recall it.

18
19 **DR. FRAZER:** I don't think we had that discussion, but we could
20 certainly do that. Carrie, do you have any problem with that?

21
22 **DR. TOLAN:** Thank you, Luiz. I was about to jump in and say we
23 had wanted this very same thing at the last meeting, simply
24 because, from my perspective, there is just so much play in the
25 difference between the MRIP and the FES-adjusted numbers,
26 especially going back through time. If we're going to use these
27 FES numbers going forward, like has been pointed out, then I
28 think getting us comfortable with them at this SSC level is
29 important, and I'm pretty sure we asked for that last time.

30
31 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Tom.

32
33 **DR. FRAZER:** I just wanted to circle back on this particular
34 motion, because, when we go to the council meeting, I mean,
35 you've got to realize that you removed the word
36 "recommendation", right, but did you -- We're going to be
37 confronted with this 30th percentile, or 40th percentile, and the
38 value that is on the board there is the most conservative, and I
39 guess the impression of the SSC is that they have opted for the
40 most conservative value because of the uncertainty circulating
41 around the whole issue.

42
43 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Doug.

44
45 **MR. GREGORY:** In that respect, yes, it's the most conservative,
46 but it's really not that far away from the OFL, because of the
47 PDF, and it was good to take out the word "recommendation",
48 because we set the ABC, and we don't recommend it. If the

1 council was unhappy with it, they would have to send it back to
2 us and say will you all please reconsider, which happens very
3 seldom, but it does at times.

4
5 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** I think the key is that, indeed, it's
6 not very far from the OFL. I mean, it's a very, very tight
7 distribution, probably unrealistically tight.

8
9 **MR. RINDONE:** Just, I guess, for some edification, the council
10 could opt to use an annual catch target for determining the
11 season duration for lane snapper, if it thought that the pace at
12 which landings come in and the processing and precision of those
13 landings was such that 20,000 pounds is a little on the narrow
14 side, and so maybe having an annual catch target set at some
15 value below the annual catch limit, or say an annual catch limit
16 set below the ABC and an annual catch target below that, and
17 there are options that the council has for being a little bit
18 more conservative, to make sure that landings don't end up just
19 blowing the ABC and the OFL, with that narrow margin there.

20
21 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** I think we can note in the report a
22 request to have a workshop, and I don't think we need a motion
23 for that. Okay. Bob, you look unhappy.

24
25 **MR. GILL:** Not at all, Mr. Chairman, but, for clarification, are
26 we agreed on this presentation by the MRIP folks, and then, in
27 accordance with Dave, also something that compiles the states
28 approach to the same data, and so they're two different things,
29 in my mind, and it's not clear to me that that's how we're going
30 forward with both.

31
32 I heard the MRIP team duplicating the South Atlantic, and I
33 understand, but I didn't hear, with clarity, that we're
34 considering, in addition to that, the state landings approaches
35 and differences and how that may impact as well.

36
37 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** I think it makes sense, also because we
38 know, I think, that the state surveys come up with quite
39 different numbers, and so I think it would be good to consider
40 those together. Also, I don't know, and I seem to have a
41 recollection that we had a long series of presentations on the
42 MRIP adjustment not long ago, but --

43
44 **DR. NANCE:** I think for an hour that gave some --

45
46 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay. Was it short? Okay, but I think
47 we should have the state surveys together, because, in terms of
48 the methodology they are applying to the FES, you can't really

1 argue much with the methodology, and it seems fine, but the
2 startling part is that it produces quite different numbers from
3 the state surveys, and somehow we need to wrap our heads around
4 that. Doug.

5
6 **MR. GREGORY:** Let's think about that. If they're two separate
7 things, can they both be handled in the same workshop? At the
8 September meeting, we made a motion for the state MRIP
9 calibration thing, to be an in-person workshop, but we -- In the
10 staff report, it just kind of says something to the effect of
11 the SSC thinks it would be helpful to have a workshop similar to
12 the South Atlantic Council for MRIP-FES, and so they were
13 addressed in different places in our report in September, but
14 you seem to be suggesting to combine them all into one workshop,
15 and I don't know if the state data is ready for that sort of
16 calibration yet, and I don't know.

17
18 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** I think we'll be struggling with the
19 differences between the state survey and the MRIP-FES, and we
20 should consider them together. Luiz.

21
22 **DR. BARBIERI:** I think that what has generated some of these
23 questions is this does not really compare the state surveys to
24 the MRIP-FES. The idea of what we are calling state surveys is
25 really a suite of surveys that were jointly developed with the
26 Office of Science and Technology, and we're using the NOAA
27 Fisheries statistical consultants basically to address that
28 small portion of the fishery that represents only about 5
29 percent of the total saltwater fishing intercepts, and it's
30 therefore not properly sampled by a general survey that's not
31 stratified for the other components.

32
33 The idea is to have supplemental surveys, and NOAA Fisheries
34 conducts this in the northeast U.S., and they are called the
35 Large Pelagic Survey, that is now being integrated, actually, in
36 a way with the general MRIP survey for that reason,
37 specifically, and it's because portions of the fishery -- A
38 general random sampling survey that is supposed to be general
39 cannot really properly address that, and so you develop a
40 supplement.

41
42 It's putting icing on the cake, so to speak, that you say now
43 you stratify, and you generate a mini-FES-type, or a mini-MRIP
44 survey, that is addressing just targeting that -- It's the
45 difference between simple random sampling and stratified random
46 sampling, just to increase your precision in your estimates for
47 poorly-sampled components of the fishery.

1 The idea, when this whole effort started back six or seven years
2 ago, was to work together and get those surveys to work in
3 concert as supplemental to each other and address this component
4 of the fishery better, and so, to me, they are not independent,
5 and I don't see them that way, and this is not to compare the
6 two as contrary to each other, but it's really -- The advantage
7 of moving from a total sample, simple random-sampling-type
8 survey, to a stratified one that is focused on that component of
9 the fishery, and so that discussion is much more meaningful, in
10 my view, if that discussion is included in it.

11
12 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Agreed, yes, and so I think that's what
13 we should be asking for. Okay. I think we are getting to the
14 end of this one stock, and I would suggest that we've been at it
15 for two hours. We'll have a ten-minute break, and then we'll
16 get to red grouper.

17
18 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

19
20 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Next up is the SEDAR 61 red grouper
21 projections and discussion of the red grouper interim analysis,
22 and I believe we'll get Skyler.

23
24 **SEDAR 61: GULF RED GROUPER PROJECTIONS WITH MRIP-FES REVISED**
25 **ALLOCATIONS AND PROJECTIONS**

26
27 **DR. SAGARESE:** Today, thanks for hanging on and taking a break.
28 I benefited from that very short break too, and, in this case,
29 we're sort of following up with SEDAR 61, and so the Gulf red
30 grouper assessment.

31
32 The purpose of this presentation -- It's fairly short, and we're
33 going to sort of touch on some of the topics that we, as the
34 Science Center, as well as with the IPT work that's being done
35 for Amendment 53, and we've had quite a few discussions
36 internally with the council and with SERO, and so I'm just going
37 to kind of briefly go through some of the issues that we've
38 discussed and some of the decisions that have been supported and
39 why we ran into these issues and why the recommendations we
40 made, particularly looking at which landings time series to use
41 for this evaluation of the allocations, as well as the time
42 series, the length of the time series.

43
44 Then, ultimately, what my job is here, in this role, is
45 providing the new projections for OFL and ABC using the new
46 allocation fraction that comes out using the information from
47 SEDAR 61.

48

1 Then the second part of the presentation is really just a --
2 It's essentially the update, or the interim, analysis that was
3 done and presented by Matt Smith last year, but, again, you will
4 note that the results I'm going to show are based on the results
5 that were recommended in the September meeting, and, again, if
6 any changes are made to those ABCs in the interim analysis, we
7 would have to just update that with the new ABC information.

8
9 Just starting, hopefully this will just give you a refresher on
10 where we left off with SEDAR 61 and some of the allocation
11 discussions, and so, when this assessment was reviewed back in
12 September -- This is one of the first Gulf assessments where we
13 used the MRIP Fishing Effort Survey landings, and so this model
14 used all recreational data from the FES survey and all of the
15 additional calibrated data that was required that was provided.

16
17 At the assessment, at the outcome, the SSC did recommend setting
18 the OFL and the ABC, in this case assuming that the 2018 red
19 tide event was similar to the 2005 event. If you remember with
20 this assessment, our terminal year was 2017, and we had a fairly
21 uncertain red tide in 2018, and there was a lot of discussion,
22 back in September, about how to treat that, and so the SSC
23 agreed to assume that it was like the worst event we've seen in
24 the past, which was 2005.

25
26 The projections that were shown at that meeting were based on
27 the previous allocations of 76 percent commercial and 24 percent
28 recreational, and these numbers are what came out of that
29 evaluation.

30
31 In terms of -- If you will remember too, at the end of that
32 marathon presentation for red grouper, we did have a slide
33 looking at re-estimating what the fraction would be with the new
34 MRIP-FES data.

35
36 At that time in the assessment process, that ratio that came out
37 was based on the expected landings from the stock assessment,
38 and so the first thing I want to caveat is, in the stock
39 assessment, our recreational landings and discards that are
40 input into the model are as numbers, and we're not using the
41 estimates of landings or discards in terms of weight that are
42 currently being used to monitor. That is how most of the
43 assessments in the past have been run, and we generally use
44 numbers, and that's how those surveys are really designed, to
45 sample the numbers and give some sort of estimate of
46 uncertainty.

47
48 In this case, the assessment used the numbers, and the

1 information you saw at the assessment -- The projections were
2 based on this allocation, but we did try to develop the
3 allocations, however, and so why are we here today and why is
4 additional work needed?

5

6 The previous allocation was from the Reef Fish Amendment 30B,
7 and, basically, it was set as an interim allocation between the
8 recreational and commercial sectors, and it was based, at the
9 time, on the average share between 1986 and 2005, and, at that
10 time when the analysis was done, that was the entire time period
11 that was available, and so it was all of those years.

12

13 When this was done back in the mid-2000s, the data were taken
14 from the SEDAR 12 stock assessment, and to note, at that time,
15 the recreational data was being provided by the MRFSS survey, at
16 that time, and so I think this is maybe 2006 or 2006, and that's
17 about twelve or thirteen years ago. There have been a lot of
18 improvements and modifications to how these data are collected,
19 as we all know, and so, just to keep some context in terms of
20 what was used last time, the data, in many cases, the sources
21 have changed.

22

23 Now this is sort of rolling into where we currently are, and
24 Amendment 53, and I'm part of the IPT team, and we've had a few
25 calls, a few email exchanges and other such communications, I
26 would say over the last few months, and one of the first issues
27 that we wanted to discuss was, in terms of setting the
28 allocations and re-estimating what the fraction would be, which
29 source of landings should we be using?

30

31 As I mentioned, landings are provided for the stock assessment.
32 The commercial landings that are provided are in weight, and we
33 used those landings in the assessment. The recreational
34 landings that we used in the assessment are in numbers, and so,
35 in this case, we generally input numbers, and the model
36 estimates the estimated weight, and that is where -- At that
37 time, when I had developed that last almost an extra slide, for
38 the last presentation, that 68 percent, I believe, commercial
39 was based on the expected landings.

40

41 However, because that was sort of a last-minute analysis I had
42 done at the request, to sort of just have it ready and
43 available, since then we've done a considerable amount of re-
44 evaluating decisions and looking at our options, and,
45 ultimately, the IPT, at the direction of a subset of council
46 members, Science Center folks, and SERO folks, have decided
47 that, at this time, the ACL monitoring databases for the IFQ for
48 commercial, as well as the MRIP-FES data that's currently being

1 used to monitor, really reflects best available science at this
2 time.

3
4 For example, the data that was provided for SEDAR 61 was back in
5 mid-2018, and, since then, as the recreational stats experts
6 have been further evaluating and getting their codes ready to go
7 and their standardizations, there have been changes to the
8 methodology, such as, for example, the change in the sample size
9 they use to estimate weight.

10
11 Just to give you an idea, the ACL monitoring, at this point,
12 really represents the most up-to-date methodology, and that's
13 the recommendation by the Science Center, to use that source of
14 landings for the decisions to set the new allocation.

15
16 The second issue that's come up, that we're just not necessarily
17 making recommendations, but, however, we're proposing different
18 options for the IPT, is essentially just what range of years to
19 use, in terms of developing the allocation. As I mentioned
20 earlier, last time, the full time series, when that amendment
21 was developed, was 1986 to 2005. At this time, we've gotten
22 many more years of data, and so there are additional options,
23 and one recommendation could be to use the entire time series
24 before the IFQ went into place, and so from 1986 to 2009.

25
26 Then another recommendation that was discussed at the IPT was
27 basically to use the entire time series we have available right
28 now, which would be 1986 to 2018, and, in this table, in
29 addition to just kind of giving you a run-down of what those
30 years represent, you can see that that fraction -- The
31 allocation changes very slightly depending upon those decisions,
32 and so it ranges for commercial from 59 to 60, 60.5, and so
33 those decisions, in this case for red grouper, do not seem to
34 have a large impact.

35
36 I think one cause for concern that's come up with the IPT is,
37 because this is the first species we're doing this analysis
38 with, there is a concern that whatever decisions we make now are
39 essentially going to set up similar decisions for other species,
40 but, in terms of -- Just, as the assessment analyst here, I
41 would just like to caution that there may not be a one-size-
42 fits-all for all the species.

43
44 For example, red grouper, we had some discussions with the IPT
45 group about the landings, and so, for example, the stock
46 assessment -- We exclude the shore mode of landings, because
47 they are extremely sporadic and less than 1 percent, and so we
48 also, in the assessment, exclude the commercial other landings,

1 just because it's sort of a mish-mash of selectivities, and it's
2 hard to capture that in the stock assessment.

3
4 There was some concern that we were excluding data in the
5 assessment, but just to reassure you that those landings were
6 excluded in the stock assessment. However, they made up less
7 than 1 percent of the landings, for the most part, and so it was
8 very minor, and that was another reason why the recommendation
9 was to use the ACL monitoring dataset, in this case excluding
10 the shore mode for recreational, just given the very sporadic
11 landings and the low probability of landing legal red grouper
12 from shore, and so just to kind of caution that, in terms of red
13 grouper, those are just some tidbits specific to this stock.

14
15 It's likely that, when this analysis is done for other species,
16 the ratios may not be as similar, but, at least for this
17 species, we can see, across the different assumptions and
18 different time series, that it's going to have a fairly small
19 impact on the allocation ratio. However, it does come down to
20 76 and 24, using the new MRIP-FES data.

21
22 In this slide, we're just going off the same assumptions we made
23 from the previous projections that were shown, that the 2018 red
24 tide was similar to 2005, and what you can see in this table now
25 is the different time series with those allocation fractions and
26 then the OFLs, defined by the P^* of 0.5, and then different
27 versions of the P^* .

28
29 I know, at the last meeting, we looked at the 0.4 and 0.3, and
30 so, to just give you an idea of how the OFL changes, it's very
31 small changes across those different time series periods, and
32 then different values of the P^* to discuss when deciding how to
33 set the ABC. That's kind of the conclusion of what I have here
34 with the allocations. Are there any questions or discussion?
35 If anyone else that's part of the IPT wants to chime in on
36 anything, please feel free.

37
38 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Any questions on this part for Skyler?
39 Steven.

40
41 **MR. ATRAN:** Thank you. Just a couple of observations, from a
42 management standpoint, looking at these time series. You
43 already know, I think, that, in 2005, we had a massive red tide
44 event, and the gag stock, which at the time had been borderline
45 overfished, was driven deep into an overfished condition as a
46 result of that, and then the stock was declared overfished in
47 2009, and we started putting a rebuilding plan into effect a
48 year later. We put the most restrictive regulations in effect

1 in 2011.

2
3 Between the red tide event in 2005 and the highly-restrictive
4 recreational restrictions that went into effect in 2011, those
5 may have had some effect on those changes in the recreational
6 proportion of landings.

7
8 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thanks, Steve. Anything else? Not
9 seeing anything, I think, Skyler, we're ready to move into the
10 next part.

11
12 **DR. SAGARESE:** Okay. Moving on, as I had mentioned earlier, to
13 the interim analysis, what we have done for this meeting is
14 basically just update what was done by Matt last year for red
15 grouper and to adjust the harvest recommendations, essentially
16 looking at the trends and the current stock condition.

17
18 As I mentioned earlier, the terminal year for SEDAR 61 was 2017,
19 and there has been quite a bit of concern during the SEDAR
20 process and outside, talking to stakeholders at council meetings
21 about what is the current stock status and what's going on with
22 the stock after that year, largely due to the 2018 red tide.

23
24 As I mentioned earlier, we did account for that potential 2018
25 red tide in our projected catch advice through SEDAR 61, but
26 what we have now is we have a few years of data, and we can see
27 this figure is just showing -- One the left, it's the commercial
28 landings in millions pounds gutted weight on the top, and the
29 landings are the dashed, and the thick line is just the quota,
30 and so you can see how the quota has changed over time.

31
32 Recreational is on the right, and so the big increasing quota
33 was following SEDAR 42, which we have discussed in detail
34 previously, and that was due to a change in how the model was
35 done, and it was a mistake. What we see now is 2019 is the
36 reduction, and it's basically the 2019 emergency ACL rule that
37 went in, and so we can see the landings are declining, and
38 they're not even being able to get close to the quota, and so we
39 know there's problems going on.

40
41 What we did for this analysis was Adam Pollack at the Pascagoula
42 Lab updated the NMFS bottom longline index of abundance that was
43 used in SEDAR 61 and updated it through 2019, and so this is
44 essentially as real-time a dataset as we can get, and so what
45 we're seeing in this figure is -- Adam's updated index is that
46 thick line, the thick red line at the top, and what we're seeing
47 in the dashed line is essentially -- It's the forecasted index,
48 and so the index of abundance for the bottom longline survey

1 that the stock assessment expected, assuming that that 2018 red
2 tide was similar to 2005.

3
4 What we see here is, in the most recent years, we do see fairly
5 good agreement, and we see that both of these indices show very
6 low levels in 2018 and 2019, and so, essentially, the
7 assumptions that we made, there seems to be support that, yes,
8 the red tide did have an impact on the stock, based on the
9 trends in this index.

10
11 When we apply -- Just to reiterate the harvest control rule that
12 we've used to date for this interim analysis is just essentially
13 just the ABC recommendation that the SSC made, and, again, this
14 is now the 4.9 million pounds from the September meeting, based
15 on the 76 commercial and 24 percent recreational allocation
16 fraction, and it essentially adjusts that based on how the
17 observed index relates to the forecasted index.

18
19 As we saw the last time this was presented, it's basically a
20 function of a scalar value, which represents how responsive the
21 change in catch advice is to the noise, or the variability, in
22 the index, and that also accounts for the standard error that
23 accompanies the index, and so the index is an index of
24 standardized relative abundance with a standard error.

25
26 One decision that's been made in the past is essentially just to
27 change -- Have this method change the ABC every other year, and
28 there's been some feedback from stakeholders that they don't
29 necessarily want year-to-year changes, but, for now, following
30 essentially all the assumptions and decisions made from the
31 previous interim analysis, it's just being changed every other
32 year.

33
34 What we're looking at in this slide is essentially the update of
35 what the interim analysis shows. Number one, it's under the
36 same assumptions that were shown previously, where we're
37 excluding the ABC change following SEDAR 42, and so basically
38 the dashed line is what we're working with, and we're not
39 jumping up to that increased TAC.

40
41 Also, at the previous interim analysis review by the SSC, a beta
42 of one was chosen, and basically what that beta does is, the
43 lower the beta value, the more it changes with the index of
44 abundance, and so, in the figure on the bottom -- This is just
45 the change in the total allowable catch, basically the adjusted
46 ABC value, over time, and so, basically, the red line that you
47 see there is the largest change in the catch advice, because
48 it's changing as that index changes. Then, as your beta

1 increases, you see it kind of gets closer to the actual catch
2 recommendations, and so you're not seeing as large of a change
3 in your catch advice as a function of the index.

4
5 One thing to note here is, for this interim analysis, we're
6 showing those different levels, but these are the kinds of
7 decisions, such as the frequency of when to change and
8 potentially how much variability in interannual catch would be
9 accepted, and some of these decisions really are going to have
10 to come out of the potential MSE that currently we're working
11 towards the process of being able to do that, but a lot of the
12 decisions about not only specific to this harvest control rule,
13 but potentially other harvest control rules, that's where, when
14 we're able to present the results from the MSE, we'll be able to
15 talk more about some of these decisions about the beta or other
16 harvest control rules and the other criteria that are most
17 important when making these decisions.

18
19 For now, this is basically the update of the interim analysis
20 that was done last time, and so, from that 4.9-million-pound
21 ABC, essentially with a beta of one -- Again, you can see that
22 you would get a slightly adjusted ABC, and that's just based on
23 -- When you look at the change in the index, that's the
24 forecasted index, and it's very, very slightly lower than the
25 actual observed index.

26
27 Again, another potential way that these methods could be
28 modified is if you, as the SSC, if there were decisions to say
29 set a threshold criteria, where you make no change until you see
30 a large enough change, and those are the kinds of issues that I
31 think, when we get into the MSE and can really thoroughly test
32 some of these decision points, that kind of information might be
33 useful.

34
35 For example, here, you can see that it's a very, very small
36 increase compared to what is on the books, given the SSC's ABC,
37 and that is largely just because we are pretty much where we
38 think we would be, but there is a very slight difference, and,
39 even with the different beta values, there is a very slight
40 change in that ABC coming out of it.

41
42 Just to summarize, basically, this is what we have for now, and
43 we really are working on being able to thoroughly evaluate some
44 of these decision rules, and I know Clay presented, at the past
45 council meeting, sort of a update on where we are with the
46 different stocks and species, and we at the Center are working
47 towards this, and essentially, this will be a really thorough
48 investigation of this harvest control rule, in addition to

1 others, as well as getting stakeholder input and input from
2 other folks and just kind of thoroughly evaluate these, but, for
3 now, this is basically the interim analysis advice that would
4 come out of the recommendation from September.

5
6 If the SSC made any recommendations for selecting a different
7 ABC value, we could very quickly just make those changes and
8 develop new catch advice, and so, with that, that's what I had
9 to present, and I'm happy to take any questions or comments.

10
11 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you, Skyler. Bob.

12
13 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Skyler, on your last slide,
14 the ongoing work, could you give us a slag as to the schedule
15 you're thinking about relative to that?

16
17 **DR. SAGARESE:** I can't speak to the schedule yet. What I can
18 say now is we do have -- Internally, we're working on
19 essentially a framework that would help us turn our stock
20 assessment models into operating models, and so part of the
21 hindrance to doing an analysis like this is we want to be able
22 to simulate the actual behavior of the indices we have, and so
23 we want to be able to account for the variability as well as the
24 autocorrelation.

25
26 It's not as simple as doing like a DLM Tool type of quick-and-
27 dirty simulation, and I think there has been some work by Quang
28 Huynh, who has kind of done sort of generic type of evaluation,
29 but, in terms of being able to address specific questions for
30 each of our stocks, as well as which index to use and the
31 different characteristics of that index, where we're working on
32 developing that first part of setting up the operating models,
33 and then, once we can turn our assessment models into that
34 operating model and extract the information we need, then we can
35 fairly quickly test some of these harvest control rules, but I
36 don't have a date of when we'll be able to present that, but we
37 are definitely -- It's ongoing, and it's one of the high
38 priorities, in terms of the research we're currently conducting.

39
40 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Will.

41
42 **DR. PATTERSON:** When you exclude the ABC change after SEDAR 42,
43 which was that big uptick up to nearly fourteen million pounds,
44 you definitely re-scale estimates of productivity, but, even
45 with the ABC, adjusted ABC, estimates for the various betas that
46 you use, the recent catch has still only been about 50 percent
47 of even those values, and so I'm curious what you think about
48 that.

1
2 **DR. SAGARESE:** You are correct, in that current ACLs -- I
3 believe it's 4.16 million pounds, although that would be
4 potentially adjusted, given the MRIP-FES data. I know, in 2019,
5 which we've just completed, their quotas are maybe 60 to 70
6 percent met, and so, yes, we're still not getting at the ABC
7 level here.

8
9 I would also -- In this case, going back to the allocations, I
10 think part of the need to potentially evaluate the allocation
11 fractions is given that 76 to 24 percent. One thing I forgot to
12 mention was that the reason why you see the big change in that
13 projected ABC, in terms of dropping from 4.9 -- If we do change
14 the allocations to about 4.28 or 4.3, part of that is the change
15 in selectivity, and so, as we increase the amount of fish that
16 are being caught and encountered by the recreational fleet, they
17 are targeting smaller individuals, and so, ultimately, as the
18 catch of the smaller fish goes up, the overall stock abundance
19 is going to go down.

20
21 I think, even in that case, we're getting -- If the allocation
22 is changed and the projections are lower, we are still not quite
23 at the recent catches. I would caution, just given the
24 uncertainties with what we've heard from fishermen, and not just
25 the red tide issues, but the depredation, and that it's very
26 difficult to go out and catch red grouper, and it seems like
27 this is still a potential area to caution, that in the catch
28 advice anything essentially -- I think it's going to be very
29 important to look at those allocations, because I do think, if
30 you maintain the current allocation, given the new data and
31 given the use of MRIP-FES, we're essentially reallocating
32 anyway, saying that the commercial fishery is going to get more
33 of the landed catch, or more of the allowable catch, just based
34 on the previous version, and so I think those are things to
35 consider, in terms of setting a catch level.

36
37 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you. Any other questions or
38 comments for Skyler? This is all you need from us, right, is
39 basically feedback, and we don't have to do anything else, and
40 is that right, Ryan? We don't really have to make decisions
41 here, other than provide feedback?

42
43 **MR. RINDONE:** For the interim analysis, the Science Center could
44 always benefit from the feedback that you guys have, especially
45 as they work to try to better understand the application of the
46 beta scalar and developing the harvest control rules.

47
48 However, for the allocation scenarios, what we would be looking

1 for is for you guys to determine whether you approve of the
2 method that's being used to determine OFL and ABC, based on the
3 time series, and the time series that you use determines what
4 the allocation should be, and the allocation determines what the
5 OFL and ABC is coming out of the projections.

6
7 The decision of which time series to choose to determine the
8 allocation is a council decision, but the decision of the OFL
9 and the ABC befalls you all, and so I guess there's a couple of
10 ways maybe that you could approach this, and probably the
11 simplest would be to determine whether you think the method that
12 is used to do this, to present these numbers to you, is
13 appropriate, and then, if so, that the values for OFL and ABC
14 that are shown are appropriate, considering the landings time
15 series used to determine the allocation. You guys should also
16 determine what you think the relevant P* value should be for
17 determining the ABC. Right now, you have it set at 0.3, and
18 then, after SEDAR 42, I think it was 0.427.

19
20 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you, Ryan. Will.

21
22 **DR. PATTERSON:** I mean, we're using this word "allocation", but,
23 really, what you're doing is saying, given the time series of
24 landings estimates that were utilized to estimate the ratio
25 between the two fisheries, and updated recreational estimates
26 using FES, this is how that estimated historical percentage
27 changes.

28
29 Then the other two time series basically show that, given that
30 change, and management as it occurred in the period before the
31 IFQ and then since, that all three time series provide more or
32 less the same estimates of a 60/40 split, right?

33
34 As far as using the word "allocation" and us blessing or not
35 blessing that component of it, that's a really charged word, and
36 I think we need to be careful with that, and I don't think that
37 we should consider anything along those lines until we have this
38 discussion with the folks from the MRIP group and actually dive
39 into the FES and what are the things that are driving estimates
40 of effort changing over time.

41
42 The second thing is the second component of looking at this
43 interim analysis is, and this could be cleared up very quickly,
44 I think, by Skyler is, for the recreational landings in this
45 analysis, as well as the estimates of what the ABC is, are these
46 using the FES data, or are these using the pre-FES data?

47
48 **DR. SAGARESE:** The results for the interim analysis are based on

1 the assessment projections that were presented in September, and
2 the assessment only used all of the MRIP FES data, so the ABC
3 and OFL that came out of SEDAR 61 is based on the new MRIP FES
4 data.

5

6 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Luiz.

7

8 **DR. BARBIERI:** My question is a little outside of that topic,
9 Will, but I was just trying to clarify, Skyler, if the outcome,
10 the result, of the interim analysis is basically you added
11 another year of data, or you applied the interim analysis as a
12 way to generate more up-to-date -- Update the ABC value that
13 comes out of it?

14

15 **DR. SAGARESE:** Yes, and so the interim analysis is using the
16 index values from 2018 and 2019 to just provide more context on
17 what is going on in the real conditions for red grouper, but I
18 think the important point here is that what the model was
19 forecasting would happen with the relative abundance is what
20 we're seeing with the observed index that's going in, and so it
21 really is essentially a more real-time value than the
22 projections for red grouper, where the data that we used in the
23 assessment ended in 2017, and then we made the assumption that
24 that 2018 red tide was very severe, and we do see that in the
25 interim analysis, in terms of the index, that we're seeing the
26 decline that we expected. Does that clear up your question?

27

28 **DR. BARBIERI:** Yes, Skyler, and that was spot-on, but, within
29 the spirit of what the interim analysis is being able to do for
30 us, it's to say, okay, if we had a terminal year of data that
31 was 2017, and now here we have an analysis now that can provide
32 a fresher, more up-to-date catch level recommendation, ABC
33 estimate, that's coming out of there, and so that will be the
34 5.097, right, instead of the other options that were in your
35 Slide 8, and is that correct?

36

37 **DR. SAGARESE:** Yes, assuming a beta of one, the adjusted target
38 level would be 5.097, but that is using that ABC that was
39 determined using the 76/24 allocation, using the projected ABC
40 that the SSC decided upon in September, as essentially the point
41 that we're adjusting up and down, and so, yes that 4.9 then,
42 assuming you would go with the same beta, would become 5.097,
43 and that's just based on that we're seeing a slight uptick in
44 terms of where the observed index is compared to where we
45 forecasted that index.

46

47 Now, another possibility is that maybe that the 2018 red tide
48 was potentially a little more severe than 2005, but I would

1 caution that we really don't have the data to evaluate that yet,
2 but at least we can use the interim analysis to say we've got
3 additional newer data in the model, and this is where this
4 approach is basically saying we can bump it up slightly, but
5 we're basically in a similar situation to what the assessment
6 was saying, and so it's not a very large change.

7

8 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Doug.

9

10 **MR. GREGORY:** This is a question for Ryan. We looked at this,
11 and not the interim, but 61 at our September meeting, with I
12 guess the APAIS data, with the 76 percent commercial ratio, and
13 then it went to the council, and it's coming back to us. Did
14 the council say they wanted to use the FES data for the
15 allocation, and they're simply asking us to confirm what the ABC
16 should be, so that we don't get tangled up in it, and we just
17 have to set the ABC?

18

19 **MR. RINDONE:** SEDAR 61 used FES data and not APAIS, and the
20 reason why you guys are seeing this as it is is because the
21 change in the weight estimation procedures means the data that
22 were used in SEDAR 61 don't represent the best scientific
23 information available anymore. The ACL monitoring dataset
24 hosted by the Southeast Regional Office constitutes that, and,
25 as Skyler said, we had these discussions with the IPT and then
26 with SERO about this, and the Science Center, and the agreement
27 was that this ACL monitoring dataset is the one that should be
28 used for this purpose.

29

30 Those are the data that were used to -- Skyler, if you can go
31 back to the table that shows the time series and whatnot. Those
32 are the data that are used to generate the values that you see
33 in front of you, and, again, the decision of which time series
34 to use is under the -- It's the council's purview.

35

36 The decision that you guys are making is whether the resultant
37 OFL and ABC that corresponds to the allocation that the council
38 selects is appropriate, and so that value will change based on
39 whatever the allocation is, but the allocation is not the
40 decision that you guys are making.

41

42 You're not picking the time series, and you're not picking the
43 allocations, and, even though they are nuanced in difference by
44 tenths of a percent, to members of the recreational and/or
45 commercial industry, that may matter, and so that decision is
46 the council's to deal with. You guys are tasked with setting
47 appropriate OFLs and ABCs based on the information you have, and
48 so that's what we're looking for.

1
2 **MR. GREGORY:** Okay, and so the answer is yes, because, in
3 September, we looked at the projected recreational FES ratio,
4 and it was 31 percent to 69 or whatever, and we didn't go that
5 way, because we didn't have any clear guidance from the council.
6 We just had Amendment 30B that says we're going to do this, and
7 so now we've got clear guidance from the council that they're
8 going to apply the ratio using FES numbers for that. Okay.

9
10 **DR. SAGARESE:** Doug, if I could just clarify, just to reiterate
11 what we saw at the September SSC meeting, at the end, that ratio
12 of 31 percent to 68 percent, again, was not using the
13 recommended observed landings from the ACL monitoring system.

14
15 It was using the expected outputs from the stock assessment of
16 the landings in weight, because, in the assessment, we input the
17 numbers of fish for recreational landings, and we never
18 thoroughly vetted, during the SEDAR 61 process, the recreational
19 landings, in terms of weight, and so we really -- We used the
20 best available data at the time for recreational, but, again,
21 that data was provided mid-2018, but just to clarify that the
22 ACL monitoring data that's currently being used to monitor --
23 That was the decision to use those datasets, and that's where
24 the 59, essentially, to 31 percent comes from. This is the
25 recommendation of the best available data for this analysis.

26
27 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** A follow-up, Doug?

28
29 **MR. GREGORY:** There has always been that difference between the
30 data coming out of the assessment and the data used for
31 monitoring, the way the weights are handled, and I guess, going
32 forward in the future, if we can make that a clear distinction
33 whenever we're looking at data, as to where it came from,
34 because there's a third dataset which comes out of Washington,
35 D.C. that doesn't try to adjust weights, and so it's been
36 confusing to a lot of people.

37
38 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Are we getting ready for a motion on
39 this? Bob. Doug, you could make a motion.

40
41 **MR. GILL:** Mr. Chairman, I am probably going to go on a tack
42 that you're not looking for, but let me address it anyway. It's
43 clear that this whole interim analysis process is a strong work
44 in progress, and so we started from nothing, and now we're
45 working our way up to whatever we get to, and we're not there
46 yet.

47
48 At the September meeting, we chose a beta of one, and, at the

1 time, it seemed like the best choice, but, as noted on Slide 14,
2 that's the one that follows the index, and, if you look at the
3 updated index that Adam created, over time, that's really noisy,
4 and, as a consequence, the interim analysis will be just as
5 noisy with a beta of one. It's following the index.

6
7 On the other hand, if you go too far, basically you negate the
8 purpose of the index, and so I think we need to modify our
9 choice of beta, and, based on Slide 14 -- First of all, there's
10 not a whole lot of difference in the adjusted ABC, roughly
11 150,000 pounds over the entire beta from one to nine, and so
12 it's not a huge impact, in terms of which beta, but you can see,
13 from the graph, that it does moderate the swings considerably,
14 and it seems to me that that's something we need to do. In that
15 light, I would like to move that we utilize a beta of five, and
16 so that's my motion.

17
18 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** You are also then suggesting to use the
19 interim analysis for the ABC setting?

20
21 **MR. GILL:** Yes.

22
23 **DR. POWERS:** Kai, I have a question. When we're setting this,
24 Bob, are you just talking about this assessment or in general,
25 because I'm hesitant to change anything, because we would be
26 changing this harvest control rule and the allocation and the
27 discussion that we had for multiple stocks, and I would hate to
28 set anything in stone while just looking at one stock.

29
30 **MR. RINDONE:** To the point of both of them, the interim analysis
31 assumes the current allocation scenario, which I think is an
32 important thing to remember, and so, if the allocations are to
33 change in any way from 76 percent commercial and 24 percent
34 recreational, the adjusted ABC that you see there in the upper-
35 right-hand table on Slide 14 would also change for each of those
36 scalar values.

37
38 **MR. GILL:** Correct, and that's my assumption, and so it's the
39 methodology that I'm talking about here, as opposed to the
40 decision on what the OFL and ABC ought to be for a given year
41 choice.

42
43 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Will.

44
45 **DR. PATTERSON:** I think it would be useful to read the scope of
46 work for this agenda item, because it seems like we're kind of
47 lumping two things together that the scope of work doesn't lump
48 together.

1
2 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** The scope of works asks specifically
3 for us to evaluate the materials and determine values for OFL
4 and ABC for the three allocation scenarios, and so this is about
5 the full model, so to speak, and then separate from that is a
6 review of the interim analysis, but we are not being asked to do
7 anything more with that, and so my assumption was that we would
8 address the OFL and ABC questions with respect to the full
9 model. Luiz.

10
11 **DR. BARBIERI:** If I may, Mr. Chairman, this was the nature of my
12 question before, and I was trying to understand why we were
13 presented the interim analysis, in this case, and I thought it
14 was to kind of take into account the index data from 2018 and
15 updated data series, so we have something, but I think, in this
16 case, it was actually used more, and correct me if I'm wrong,
17 Ryan, to basically validate the scale, the magnitude, of the
18 values that come out, to say when, after the assumptions that we
19 made about the 2018 red tide, when we looked at the actual index
20 data that came out of that, through the interim analysis, we
21 were right on target of what was recommended coming out of the
22 assessment.

23
24 Basically, it was a way to validate where we were there, that
25 the assumptions were met, and, according to the scope of work, I
26 guess we are looking at those three values, three ranges, of OFL
27 and ABC that align with different time series for allocation.

28
29 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Correct, and I think that was my
30 reading as well.

31
32 **MR. RINDONE:** Yes.

33
34 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** It seems to me that one of the nice
35 things about the interim analysis is that it reassures us
36 somewhat that our assumptions in the full model were not
37 completely off, and I think we could probably let off the very
38 low P*, on that a little bit, given the additional information
39 that we have, and that would be my take.

40
41 **MR. RINDONE:** Just to the point about the interim analyses, the
42 council, on behalf of the SSC, requested to get interim analyses
43 annually from the Science Center, and so you guys will be seeing
44 one of these every year for red grouper for at least the next
45 few years or so.

46
47 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Will.
48

1 **DR. PATTERSON:** I'm curious, and this is a question for Skyler,
2 if you or Matt or whoever is performing the interim analysis
3 actually did an analysis with the 60/40, instead of the 76/24.

4
5 **DR. SAGARESE:** I did this interim analysis, and I haven't done
6 that yet, because of all the potential combinations, and it
7 could very simply be done, but what I can say is that, given how
8 similar the observed and forecasted indices are, that your
9 adjusted ABC would change -- The change would be fairly small
10 from whatever value here that ABC was set at, and so, depending
11 upon the P*, I could very easily revise the interim analysis and
12 provide, across the different data values, what that would be,
13 but I didn't do it for this meeting, because it seemed like an
14 enormous amount of work, considering the different combinations.

15
16 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** I was going to say that we still have
17 no second, and would you like to withdraw this motion, or do you
18 want to -- Then it dies for lack of a second. Luiz.

19
20 **DR. BARBIERI:** Not to overextend this conversation, but, Bob,
21 the issue here -- This is why we're trying to understand the
22 purpose of all of this, because it's new, this interim analysis
23 coming before us, especially in a situation where we just had an
24 assessment presentation at our last meeting that generated an
25 ABC and OFL recommendation.

26
27 This is why I was trying to understand and to wrap my brain
28 around whether we're going to use what is on Slide 8, those
29 values that were there from her Slide 8, or if we're going to
30 actually go through the interim analysis and, if my
31 understanding is correct, we decided the intent of the interim
32 analysis was just to confirm the assumptions made about the 2018
33 red tide were met and that the values that came out of the
34 assessment are meaningful and our previous recommendations are
35 meaningful, so we can go to looking at the options that are
36 there in that Slide 8.

37
38 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** I think that we need a motion based on
39 that. Bob.

40
41 **MR. GILL:** A comment. Luiz, I agree, but I was thinking of
42 we're going forward with interim analyses in the future, at
43 whatever level, and Ryan just mentioned annual, and that, going
44 forward, in my mind, the issue is do we want to continue the way
45 we had prescribed in September, and my suggestion is that, no,
46 we ought to not continue with a beta of one, and, going forward,
47 consider a different beta. Now, whether it's five or something
48 else -- That's the issue that I was trying to address and not

1 address that other issue.

2
3 **DR. BARBIERI:** I understand that, but, in that case, we will
4 have to look at the interim analyses as specific ones, one-by-
5 one, because our choice of that beta had to do with how we felt
6 about the ABC that had been set before for the previous and how
7 the index we felt was more representative of the true abundance
8 of the stock and that we were getting values that were outside
9 the scale if we used something that was too close to the ABC.

10
11 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Doug.

12
13 **MR. GREGORY:** Again, I went back to the council minutes, and
14 what I found in the minutes was a recommendation for the SSC to
15 look at the full range of the time series, 1986 to 2005, and so
16 I assume the other two rows are staff or somebody saying, well,
17 let's look at something a little different, but that's not what
18 is in the motion, and so, if we're faced with these three
19 alternatives, which are very close, and in essence aren't any
20 different, it seems to me that what we're being asked to do is
21 to say that we accept the OFL and a P* at a probability of 0.3,
22 regardless of which of the three allocations you use. We don't
23 normally do that, but --

24
25 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Correct, and I think we have a choice
26 of the P*, I guess.

27
28 **MR. GREGORY:** So I will make that motion.

29
30 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Please do.

31
32 **MR. GREGORY:** Let's see how it can be worded. **The SSC accepts**
33 **the OFL estimates of the three time series, 1986 to 2005, 1986**
34 **to 2009, and 1986 to 2018, using the FES and existing commercial**
35 **catch data, and we confirm that our estimate of ABC be based on**
36 **the probability level of 0.3. Somewhere in there, put for red**
37 **grouper.**

38
39 My only concern is, for each species we look at in the future,
40 we're going to have different sets of years for looking at these
41 ratios, and, I mean, 30B laid it out very clearly. It was 1986
42 to 2005 for red and gag, because they were separated out of the
43 shallow-water grouper complex, and so this just seems more
44 confusing, but I would rather stick with the original year
45 frame, but we have before us these three sets of years, and I
46 welcome anybody to wordsmith this, and, if you don't understand
47 what I'm trying to get at, please speak up.

48

1 **DR. BARBIERI:** Perhaps add "landings", the three landings time
2 series of 1986 to 2005 --

3

4 **MR. GREGORY:** Okay.

5

6 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Is there discussion on the motion?

7

8 **DR. BARBIERI:** I will second the motion.

9

10 **DR. PATTERSON:** I don't understand what's meant here by "accepts
11 the estimates". Secondly, it seems to me that, historically,
12 the allocation was based on landings estimates from the
13 recreational and commercial fisheries for red grouper for the
14 time series 1986 to 2005, and we haven't really been presented
15 any rationale of why we would change that time series to 1986 to
16 2009 or 1986 to 2018.

17

18 What I see is that the historical time series that was utilized
19 to compute the 76/24, updated with FES estimates of recreational
20 landings, produces ratios of about 60 to 40, and then, if you
21 look at the time series of 2009, or the time series to 2018, the
22 estimates are consistent, and so why wouldn't we just say, given
23 the time series over which the original allocation was
24 estimated, or computed, it produces a ratio of 59.3 to 40.7?

25

26 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Luiz.

27

28 **DR. BARBIERI:** Because, in this case, we are looking at the
29 actual methodologies that were used to come up with these
30 estimates of OFL and ABC, but considering the scenarios that the
31 council asked be produced, and so the council wanted to see
32 different time series there, just to see if they would have any
33 impact.

34

35 **MR. GREGORY:** I question that. In the council minutes, it says
36 to only look at the 1986 to whatever it is now, the 2005, time
37 series, and so I don't know where the other two time series came
38 from.

39

40 **MR. PETER HOOD:** I am on the team that's working on this
41 document with Matt Freeman and Ryan, and, basically, yes, the
42 1986 to 2005 is what the council used back in Amendment 30B.
43 That was the longest time series available at the time.

44

45 In trying to think about what might be some alternatives, we
46 thought that 1986 to 2018 would work, because, again, that would
47 be the longest time series, and then 2010 is when the IFQ
48 program started, and that's a change in the fishery, and so we

1 thought the council might sort of see that as a break point in
2 years, and so that's where these came from.

3

4 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Ryan.

5

6 **MR. RINDONE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and, also, the council
7 didn't make a motion to this effect, but they did ask about the
8 differences between pre and post-IFQ and whether that would have
9 made a difference or not, and so that's why -- That's another
10 reason why we have 1986 to 2009 and then 1986 to 2018.

11

12 **MR. GREGORY:** I will read you the motion.

13

14 **MR. RINDONE:** I remember what it says, but the point --

15

16 **MR. GREGORY:** We should have been presented that here's the
17 council request, and then here is some other things that staff
18 wants us to look at. That would have been clearer, but the
19 council only asked us to look at the 1986 to 2005. I have no
20 problem with the motion as it is, but now that we've got
21 clarification of where the other two came from, because we
22 should be addressing council concerns, as much as -- More than
23 anything else.

24

25 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Will.

26

27 **DR. PATTERSON:** For red grouper, what these time series show is
28 that management was effective, on average, in the 2005 to 2009
29 and the 2005 to 2018 time periods of constraining both
30 fisheries, such that the ratios of landings was 60/40. However,
31 in other fisheries, where the recreational harvest sometimes
32 wasn't effectively constrained, if we say we accept all three of
33 these, are we setting ourselves up for an issue in others?

34

35 Instead, we could say, for the time series over which the
36 original allocation was estimated, the updated estimates, based
37 on the FES recreational landings estimates, would be 59.3 and
38 40.7, and then indicate that, in the two other series, you get
39 basically the same result, regardless if you're pre-IFQ or post-
40 IFQ.

41

42 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Roy.

43

44 **DR. CRABTREE:** I don't think you're being asked right now to
45 weigh-in on which time series is the best. I think you're just
46 being asked to confirm, if you choose these time series, these
47 would be the OFLs and these would be the ABCs, because,
48 previously, all we had from you was an ABC based on the 76/24,

1 and that's difficult to defend, because, if we accept the new
2 assessment, it's based on the FES landings, and the rationale
3 for the allocation is it reflects the landings during this time
4 period. Well, it doesn't any longer, because the best available
5 science indicates the landings are differently.

6
7 Now, for NEPA purposes and things, and there were some on the
8 council who might want to explore other time series, and so they
9 put a couple of examples up, and I don't think this has any
10 precedent for what they may do down the road, and they're just
11 asking you, if we choose these time series, what would be the
12 ABCs, and what you saw is it doesn't really change things,
13 regardless of which time series you choose, but they have to
14 analyze it, and they have to look at the impacts, and then the
15 council will decide.

16
17 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Would we resolve this problem by
18 calling it not allocation, but calling it landings or something?
19 It's not in here, and that's correct.

20
21 **MR. GREGORY:** I understand what is happening now, and, given the
22 logic that Peter gave us, staff has come up with this, and,
23 rather than have us choose what the council asked us to do, and
24 we go, okay, fine, and then they go back to the council with
25 these other two time series, and the council may like one of the
26 other two time series better, and then they're in the conundrum
27 of having to come back to us again.

28
29 Staff is trying to compile it for us so that, if we're happy
30 with all three of them, then the council is free to choose
31 whichever one they want without having to come back to us for
32 confirmation.

33
34 **MR. RINDONE:** It's actually more than that, because the council
35 could determine that they want to use a completely different
36 time series than the three that are presented, but, if you guys
37 determine that the OFL should be set at 50 percent probability
38 of overfishing and the ABC at 30 percent, then, whatever time
39 series they choose, 2017 to 2018 or it doesn't matter, then,
40 whatever the projections determine results from that sector
41 allocation that comes from that time series, that's the OFL and
42 the ABC.

43
44 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** But the OFL is always at 50. I mean,
45 we don't even have to make a motion about that.

46
47 **MR. RINDONE:** Right, but --
48

1 **DR. BARBIERI:** Right, but, in all fairness here, really, the
2 Science Center and SERO are just putting together some stuff to
3 inform the council of different options that can be considered,
4 and so they put together some analysis that has a range of
5 options, and we are being asked to review them technically, for
6 the technical merit, and say is this sound enough that, when the
7 council sees it at the January meeting, they can say, oh, these
8 actually are all based on sound science, but the products were
9 developed by the Science Center and SERO to inform the council,
10 and so I don't see a problem with them going forward with all
11 three.

12
13 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Will.

14
15 **DR. PATTERSON:** I would like to offer a substitute motion that,
16 given the SEDAR 61 red grouper stock assessment, which was
17 accepted by the SSC as the best scientific information available
18 and utilized the FES recreational landings estimates, time
19 series of 1986 to 2005, 1986 to 2009, and 1986 to 2018 yield
20 estimates of OFL and ABC found in the following table, and just
21 copy and paste the table from Skyler's presentation.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN POWERS:** I second that.

24
25 **DR. BARBIERI:** A suggestion, Dr. Patterson, that we add, after
26 "yield", "scientifically-valid estimates of OFL and ABC from the
27 following table". Basically, this is what we're being asked to
28 do, is to evaluate whether this analysis follows the right
29 procedures and the estimates that are in the table can be
30 considered scientifically valid for the council to consider for
31 policy making.

32
33 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Doug.

34
35 **MR. GREGORY:** Then don't we have to specify ABC, or are we
36 leaving it up to the council to choose one of those three
37 probability levels for ABC?

38
39 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** I guess we should be selecting a
40 probability level. Paul.

41
42 **DR. SAMMARCO:** I just want to raise a question here. If we
43 could look at page 11 on this PowerPoint, or PDF, and we're
44 looking at technical questions here of models to use and years,
45 year ranges, and so forth, and I'm looking at these graphs,
46 particularly the upper two, which are upper landings and quotas,
47 as they have been defined, and I guess my question is are we
48 being conservative enough with the red grouper, just showing

1 what the trends have been since 2014 to 2019? These are not
2 models, and those are just hard numbers on landings.

3
4 **DR. BARBIERI:** Paul, to that point, if you look at Slide 4 in
5 that same presentation, that basically summarizes the suite of
6 decisions that the committee made and assumptions about the
7 impact of the red tide, and, of course, the assessment already
8 took into account all the landings for the composition data and
9 the indices, and so stock status determination that came out and
10 some yield streams for ABC and OFL that came out were adjusted
11 further to account for the 2018 red tide and provide
12 recommendations that were considered to be more in line with
13 reality and more conservative than if that assumption was not
14 made, and so I think we have addressed your concern at the
15 previous meeting.

16
17 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Doug.

18
19 **MR. GREGORY:** But we went beyond that, because we had this
20 discussion, and you made the original motion, and I went and did
21 something different, but we said this is our ABC, but we
22 encouraged the council to consider an ACL, a lower ACL, based on
23 other information, because we ran into the same thing in
24 September, that the landings were much lower than what the model
25 ABC came out to be, but the ABC is something that the council
26 cannot go above, once we set it, but they can go below it, by
27 setting a lower ACL or an ACT.

28
29 We had some verbiage that said, but we encourage the council to
30 consider a lower ACL or ACT, and they have been doing that,
31 because they passed, I guess, a framework measure a year ago to
32 lower the quota, even before we did our assessment.

33
34 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** I tend to agree. I think we've been
35 quite conservative, and should we go back to the motion?

36
37 **DR. PATTERSON:** If we go back to the motion, relative to Doug's
38 comment that we really need to pick the ABC and not give the
39 three different scenarios, it's to delete the first two columns,
40 P* at 0.427 and P* at 0.4. Then, after the table, we can simply
41 say P* of 0.3 was selected by the SSC following SEDAR 61, and
42 it's utilized here in the same spirit as it was there, or for
43 the same rationale.

44
45 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Roy.

46
47 **DR. CRABTREE:** In the table, I see the OFL, but the ABC is --
48 It's under the P*, and so the intent of this motion is that, if

1 the council chooses one of those three years, this is the OFL,
2 and this is the ABC that the SSC gives you, correct? I am
3 seeing nods.

4
5 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Was there a second for this substitute
6 motion? Was there discussion?

7
8 **DR. PATTERSON:** That should say "selected by the SSC following
9 SEDAR 61".

10
11 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Any discussion on this motion? Doug.

12
13 **MR. GREGORY:** My only concern is probably a picayune, but, in
14 the council minutes, the ratio that seems to have been presented
15 to them had a 40.5, and here we've got 40.7, and, if this
16 changes to 40.8, is it still valid, if the numbers change for
17 some reason in the next three weeks? Is that recommendation
18 still valid, or are these numbers just sacrosanct? I mean, I
19 would like for the council to have flexibility, but that could
20 be a legal decision.

21
22 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** I think the numbers are what the
23 numbers are, and I don't think it's --

24
25 **DR. NANCE:** But we're picking 0.5 and 0.3, and it may change a
26 little bit or whatever, but those are the values, depending on
27 what timeframe they pick, and then they're going to be able to
28 pick what values are underneath there, and so it's -- I think
29 it's very clear.

30
31 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** I guess, technically, they could not
32 then choose a different timeframe, and they would have to come
33 back, and we would have to give them new numbers.

34
35 **MR. GREGORY:** I am just saying the numbers are not in concrete,
36 apparently, and so, if you do the same year series, the next
37 time it's summarized, it may be 40.8 instead of 40.7.

38
39 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** I mean, we always give the numbers,
40 right? Otherwise, we could say OFL is at 0.5, and we use a P*
41 of 0.3, and you work out the numbers, and we do give them the
42 numbers.

43
44 **DR. CRABTREE:** My judgment, Doug, is, if there was a minute
45 change in it, we probably wouldn't have to come back to you, but
46 I can't tell you that the attorneys wouldn't tell me that I'm
47 wrong about that.

48

1 **DR. NANCE:** I think that's the issue with this update every
2 year. I mean, it's going to change tiny bits.
3
4 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Are we ready for a vote? I am ready
5 for a vote. Okay. **All in favor of the substitute motion, raise**
6 **your hand.**
7
8 **MR. RINDONE:** Fourteen in the room. On the webinar.
9
10 **CHAIRMAN POWERS:** Yes.
11
12 **MR. RINDONE:** Fifteen.
13
14 **DR. TOLAN:** Yes.
15
16 **MR. RINDONE:** Jim Tolan is yes.
17
18 **DR. ISELY:** Yes.
19
20 **DR. POWERS:** Yes.
21
22 **MR. RINDONE:** Jeff Isely and Sean Powers are yes.
23
24 **DR. ROBERTS:** Yes.
25
26 **MR. RINDONE:** Ken Roberts is yes. John Mareska.
27
28 **MR. MARESKA:** Yes.
29
30 **MR. RINDONE:** **All those opposed. Any on the webinar opposed?**
31 **Anybody abstain? One. It's twenty to zero with one abstention.**
32
33 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay. I think that closes this part of
34 the agenda. Thank you so much, Skyler, and also to Nancie, who
35 I think I haven't formally thanked for the presentation. If you
36 are still there, Nancie, thank you. I think we are ready to
37 move on to the next item, which is the standardized economics
38 report to the Gulf of Mexico reef fish and mackerel fisheries,
39 and we're looking for a presentation.
40
41 **NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE STANDARDIZED ECONOMIC REPORTS**
42 **FOR GULF OF MEXICO REEF FISH AND MACKEREL FISHERIES**
43
44 **DR. CHRISTOPHER LIESE:** I'm Christopher Liese, and I'm an
45 economist with the Southeast Fisheries Science Center in Miami,
46 and thanks for having me today. I wanted to present a series of
47 reports that we've been putting out recently and just get
48 basically the blessing for the methodology and just raise the

1 awareness of these economic reports a little bit.
2
3 Basically, we have been putting out economic reports for the
4 shrimp fisheries for probably a decade now, but we were lacking
5 them for the reef fish fisheries, the mackerel fisheries, and
6 the snapper grouper fisheries, which is our coastal logbook
7 program that we run out of the Southeast Fisheries Science
8 Center, and so, in the last four years, we've gotten around to
9 finally standardizing the reports, and so presenting the
10 methodology behind these reports is my goal today.
11
12 It's not just a report, and it's really a system of creating
13 these reports in the future too, annually, which is why it took
14 us three years to produce it, and these reports are really sort
15 of -- I think of them as reference manuals, in the sense that
16 they contain a lot of results. The actual underlying economic
17 data is confidential, but they are very limited on
18 interpretation and sort of prose, and so it's just data for
19 people to use, in the fishery management process, primarily.
20
21 A little bit about the survey design that's underlying all of
22 this, and we're basing it sort of on financial statements, and
23 we're trying to produce stylized financial statements for the
24 fishing industry, and we mostly collect the data that would
25 allow us to do cash flow analysis, and, obviously, that's always
26 going to be more holistic than single species, and we further go
27 to an income statement, and so, on the left-hand side, you have
28 the revenues that they are getting from fishing and other
29 activities on their vessel, and, on the right-hand side, you
30 have what's flowing out of the company, which is their operating
31 costs, variable costs and fixed costs, and some of it we have to
32 adjust for, or estimate, sort of in-kind contributions to the
33 production process, in order to estimate net revenues.
34
35 There is also -- So the cash flow and the income statement there
36 are always over a course of time, a period of time, and usually
37 it's a year, and then there is also like the balance sheet,
38 which is a typical financial statement which tells you about
39 what's invested, and so it's the assets versus the liabilities
40 and the owner's equity, and so that's the conceptual background.
41
42 The survey questionnaires we use in these fisheries are all sort
43 of linked to what we call the trip logbook that you are probably
44 familiar with in the Southeast, and it's the same logbook for
45 the Gulf of Mexico reef fish fishery, for the South Atlantic
46 snapper grouper fisheries, and for the king and Spanish mackerel
47 fisheries and the dolphin wahoo and shark fisheries, or coastal
48 shark fisheries.

1
2 It's been running since 1993, and it collects information about
3 the vessels, effort data, and then what's landed where, and, for
4 the research that I am presenting and for the economic analysis,
5 we assume that these logbooks are basically a census. For the
6 main fisheries, the reef and snapper groupers and the king
7 mackerels, the assumption of a census is pretty reasonable,
8 because most fishermen that fish those species do report these
9 logbooks. For Spanish mackerel, dolphin wahoo, and sharks,
10 there is reasons that that doesn't work so well, which is why we
11 focused on those three fisheries for reporting so far.

12
13 Since 2002 in the South Atlantic and 2005, Jim Waters and Larry
14 Perruso have added an economic section to the logbooks, and we
15 have always sampled about 20 percent of the vessels each year,
16 before the year starts, and they had to report economic
17 information for every trip they took during that year. At the
18 bottom of the logbook, there is this econ section that's asking
19 about variable costs on those trips, and so that's bait, ice,
20 fuel, the basic things, but also the revenue, as reported from
21 the fishermen themselves and some crew costs, if they know it.

22
23 I took over this data collection about in 2014, and, over the
24 years, the sampling methodology has changed, but, since 2014, we
25 are basically sampling people who have no history of fishing in
26 the last two years at 10 percent, and then there is two strata
27 of avid and very avid fishermen, based on the days at-sea in the
28 previous years, and we're sampling those at about 30 percent.

29
30 Again, we sample before the year starts, in November, and then
31 they are supposed to provide economic data throughout the entire
32 following year, and then, after the year concludes, we send them
33 another mail survey, which is basically a summary of the year,
34 and it's focused on the fixed costs, and so it's a little
35 redundant in that sense, that we also ask the variable costs,
36 but this time all sort of aggregated, but it's very holistic, in
37 the sense that these vessels are often doing things far outside
38 of just the snapper grouper or reef fish fisheries, and so they
39 definitely are doing some state fisheries, and they are
40 sometimes doing HMS fisheries, which are in different logbook
41 systems, and then they're just doing charter businesses and
42 other work, such as in the oil industry.

43
44 One other thing that I will point out is, obviously, economic
45 data is never single species, because, at the logbook level,
46 they are catching multiple different species on each trip, and
47 so we have one observation related to all these different
48 species, and then, when you go to the vessel level across a

1 year, a vessel might have touched hundreds of species, or at
2 least many, many species, and so economics is always more
3 holistic than any single species, in almost all cases. The
4 focus here is the fixed costs, which is sort of insurance,
5 overhead, mooring costs, those sorts of things that they pay
6 more on an annual basis rather than on a trip basis.

7
8 The nice thing, when we implement these surveys, is that we can
9 sort of piggyback most of it on the logbook system, and we're on
10 the same form, and so all of our data processing is part of the
11 logbook system, and they get scanned by contractors and data
12 entried, and we're part of a big Oracle-based system for
13 validation, but we do always have our own staff to validate and
14 then do call-backs and send-backs for the things with problems,
15 because, with economic data, you usually have to be more
16 complete, especially if you're trying to do this sort of
17 accounting exercise. You can't accept any blanks, or you have
18 to make estimations to fill the gaps. Otherwise, you are
19 comparing apples with oranges.

20
21 The annual survey data is usually -- We start it in January for
22 the past year and tell them a deadline of April 30, to coincide
23 with tax time, but we run through August with three survey
24 mailouts, because people don't respond too quickly.
25 Technically, they are required to.

26
27 This data has existed for quite a while, and it's also been used
28 in various forms. People have used it to estimate cost
29 functions, and Jim Waters used it in a simulation method that's
30 been modeled that was used for various actions over many years,
31 over decades, and, again, it's been used and published, but it's
32 never been just reported, because there is some complexities to
33 this data, which is that it really covers all these different
34 fisheries, from North Carolina to Texas, and it has many gears
35 and many different species, and there is just so many different
36 ways that you can slice the data on different time periods and
37 so on.

38
39 In the past, analysts would usually go in and grab the specific
40 data they needed for their specific question and clean it up and
41 work with it, and then all that effort would be lost when they
42 switched to a different topic, and so our goal this time around
43 was to really go in and systematically clean the entire
44 database, with the same rules and the same processes, so that it
45 would be ready to go for us then at the end, only when it was
46 clean and we felt good about it, to basically go in and pull out
47 the specific perspective that we wanted, and so the overall
48 logbooks -- For instance, I think this was 2014 data, and there

1 might be 36,000 trips in the logbook, but, if you wanted just
2 Gulf red snapper, that would be 3,700 trips.
3
4 Our economic data would just be a sample among that, based on
5 some sampling process, and so extrapolating back from your
6 economic sample to the population is also statistically not
7 entirely straightforward, and so we basically spent three years
8 building a process to extract the data, clean the data, and then
9 come up with reports for specific SOIs, and these subsets that
10 we pull out is what we're calling SOIs, which is sort of the
11 segment of interest.
12
13 The alternative of doing every report individually is just so
14 much tedious work, and it took me very long with the shrimp
15 experience, and I knew we had to find a better way, and,
16 luckily, this programming language, R, together with some
17 software packages called Knitr allows you to sort of program
18 into a LaTeX document that basically then, once it's all written
19 up, almost self-assembles. It's not quite that easy, but it
20 definitely cuts out a lot of tedious sort of effort of running
21 analysis again and again.
22
23 Luckily, I hired someone, Liz Overstreet, who was very good at
24 this, and she built a wonderful system that is still working.
25 Sadly, she left about a year ago, and so now I'm the one running
26 it, and I won't be evolving it much, because I'm just not an
27 expert in R.
28
29 Once we had the system running, we built a diagnostic report, so
30 we could evaluate how our cleaning routines are working at each
31 specific SOI, sort of segment of interest, and that was sort of
32 -- It kicks out R, with RStudio, and Markdown and LaTeX kicks
33 out the six pages PDF, which we use to sort of evaluate at any
34 one SOI, and so, more or less on a lark, this was -- I asked Liz
35 to give me the lionfish sort of SOI, which, obviously, it would
36 have been weeks of work to assemble it, if it hadn't been
37 programmed to do it automatically, the point being just that
38 that's what is in the database, and it can be pulled out, and it
39 takes sort of ten minutes to assemble.
40
41 We used descriptive graphs and so on to evaluate it in general,
42 and then since we have, on the one hand, the census of the trips
43 and the vessel characteristics, and, at the other hand, for our
44 sample, we are able to evaluate how representative our economic
45 sample is of the population on many different variables, and so
46 we go through that, to make sure that the econ data, because,
47 again, it's random sampled at the beginning of the year, is
48 actually representative, before we would use those numbers.

1
2 We then also have tables where we look at how our cleaning
3 processes that were all automated, that are sort of flagging
4 different outliers, sometimes estimating missing values, how
5 they are affecting the numbers and if they are doing it in a
6 meaningful or -- If there's a problem of any sort.

7
8 Finally, we have the statistics program, and so, again, we're
9 extrapolating from this sample in three strata, and so that has
10 to be taken account of, and we do the whole thing again for the
11 annual vessel level, which is basically almost like a separate
12 survey, and so we have these two, and that's a little bit on the
13 methodology.

14
15 That brings me to the reef fish fishery, and the last report we
16 have out is for the year 2016. In the report, we have sixteen
17 different SOIs, and so segments of interest, but, really, the
18 first SOI is the Gulf of Mexico reef fish fishery FMP as a
19 whole, and so any trip, or any vessel, that catches one pound of
20 reef fish on a trip, that trip is what we call a reef fish trip,
21 and so any vessel that catches during the year one pound of reef
22 fish, we call that a reef fish vessel.

23
24 We have other ways of defining sort of belonging to a fishery,
25 but, sort of based on feedback from the Regional Office over the
26 years, usually they want the one-pound definition, and so that's
27 what we went with here.

28
29 All the other SOIs are basically subsets of this mother SOI, and
30 so, if we break them out by gear, when there is enough
31 observations on vertical line and longline and diver, and we
32 also look at the various species subsets, or the IFQ species,
33 like IFQ red snapper, the grouper-tilefish IFQ, the individual
34 subsets, and also three species that are not in the IFQ,
35 vermilion, yellowtail, and then all the jacks combined. Our
36 sample sizes always sort of become smaller as we go into those.

37
38 After doing this report, I must say that, really, the big
39 qualitative insights can all be gained from the overall reef
40 fish FMP sort of economics, and so the economics really don't
41 differ. Longline differs from vertical line, exactly as you
42 would expect, and it's much bigger in scope, and there are
43 longer trips, but, in percentage terms, the economics are pretty
44 much the same, and all these SOIs are obviously extremely
45 overlapping, and so if people doing the red snapper fishery is
46 very much also the grouper-tilefish fishery, because many boats
47 do both of that, and, if you go at a trip level, there is a lot
48 of overlap, but, when you go to a vessel level, it's even more

1 overlap across the year, and so, really, all the numbers I will
2 be reporting in this presentation, it's all in these tech memos,
3 and it's just going to be focused on the reef fish fishery.

4
5 For every SOI in the reports, there is six pages of standardized
6 results, and they're always the same way, and the first page is
7 always just the context of the logbook, and so it summarizes
8 everything we have for that SOI in the logbook, and then the
9 second page is the economic sample on that, and I want to say
10 that, in these tech memos, this is a disclaimer, but the purpose
11 is to present the economic data, because that's my data
12 collection, our data collection, the Social Science Research
13 Group, and the rest is given as context, because, otherwise, the
14 economics don't make much sense.

15
16 These are the logbook numbers, to the best of my ability, but,
17 obviously, with some assumptions along the way, to make it work,
18 and so they are not the same thing as the numbers being used by
19 the -- At the nitty-gritty detail, they are not the same numbers
20 that -- They are not the official stock assessment numbers or
21 the numbers from Dave Gloeckner, and so, for those purposes, the
22 logbook program would provide actual counts, but, in the big
23 picture, they're always pretty close, and we try to use the same
24 methods.

25
26 **DR. NANCE:** If you take out one set or one record, then it would
27 always be less than what Dave Gloeckner's stuff is pointing to,
28 and would that be accurate?

29
30 **DR. LIESE:** On trip counts, yes. On that first summary page, I
31 think that would probably be accurate.

32
33 **DR. NANCE:** Okay, and total landings is always going to be a
34 little bit less, depending on --

35
36 **DR. LIESE:** Well, sometimes, when we go in and we look at things
37 carefully, there is people who don't have reef fish permits, but
38 they seem to be fishing reef fish, but they coded it as South
39 Atlantic, and then we realized that, okay, they are using the
40 old codes from like five years ago, but Dave Gloeckner doesn't
41 want to like change it in the database, and so we change it, and
42 so it's possible that we could inflate it, but we really do our
43 -- You know we look at the data. Liz did.

44
45 She looked at the data much closer than many others, and across-
46 the-board, and so they're pretty good numbers, but they're just
47 not the official numbers, and usually the millions and the
48 hundreds of thousands will all be the same, but it's just on the

1 back, and we did standardize with Dave Gloeckner's group early
2 on, to get it sort of -- To do the same cleaning processes.

3
4 The third page looks at the vessel level, and the fourth page is
5 the economics at the vessel level, and then we have two time
6 series, where we have the 2014, 2015, and 2016 and the three-
7 year average. I am hoping, in the next two years, to go to a
8 five-year average, and then probably stick to that, and so this
9 is, again, the 2016 reef fish, and there were about 7,000 trips
10 by about 500 vessels, and they caught about \$62 million worth of
11 fish, and I should say that that number is not directly on the
12 logbook, and so we estimate that by using the dealer prices and
13 adding them to the landings numbers, and this is a method that
14 was developed by Jim Waters and Larry Perruso over the years to
15 basically quantify the numbers, and, at the aggregate, those are
16 very good numbers, and you can see that the reef fish fishery,
17 at the trip level, is very specialized, and so 98 percent of the
18 revenue is from reef fish species.

19
20 These are selected information about the trip level, and so
21 that's coming out of the logbook, and it's census data, and, at
22 the trip-level economics, of these roughly 7,000 trips that
23 happened during 2016, we have good economic data on about 1,948,
24 and that's about 28 percent, and, again, the high-liners are
25 being sampled at 30 percent, and that's how we get to that
26 number.

27
28 Out of that, we generate sort of our summary statistics for the
29 economic results, and so these are estimates for the trip level,
30 and, hence, for the population numbers, in dollar terms, and so
31 you can see that they are making profits, and we have the
32 statistical confidence intervals, because it's fisheries data,
33 and it's always pretty noisy, and we also provide a median, and
34 all of it is in the reports.

35
36 We have some sort of more descriptive data, where we have it in
37 --At the trip level, the reef fish fishery is basically
38 generating trip net revenue, after sort of variable costs, is 50
39 percent, and so that's a very nice profit margin at the trip
40 level, and a productivity measure would be eleven pounds per
41 gallon. The implicit hired crew wage is about \$251, and so we
42 have a couple of those sort of economic measures in the report.

43
44 We have sort of the three-year averages to compare. Since it's
45 a sample, each year will be slightly off, and so we do it in
46 percentage terms, to compare the years, and then draw a three-
47 year average.

1 At the vessel level, it's the same sort of thing. It's the same
2 500 vessels now, the same trips, but these vessels also take
3 1,451 trips that are not reef fish trips, and so they don't
4 touch reef fish on those trips, but, again, if you're looking at
5 the holistic economics, you need to take a look at those trips
6 too, and so those vessels are doing \$65 million in total, and
7 that's the reef fish vessels, based on our logbook systems.

8
9 We also, at the vessel level, have permit information and vessel
10 characteristics, which we pull in from different databases, and,
11 just like on the trip level, of those 512 vessels, we have
12 completed economic surveys for 121, and so about 24 percent of
13 the population, and, based on those, we have an annual vessel
14 level economics, and, again, it's the same procedure, but it's a
15 separate survey, basically, but including the fixed costs and
16 overall costs, and so the overall cash flow for the average reef
17 fish vessel is -- The cash flow is \$37,000 per year, and the net
18 revenue from operations is \$44,000, and that was in 2016.
19 Statistically, obviously, there's quite a bit of noise for the
20 mean, not to mention that individual vessels might be making
21 losses or making huge profits, but that's on average.

22
23 We have basically the net revenue from operations is about 33
24 percent of revenue, and so that's pretty nice for any type of
25 industry, and we have the time series, where we do it in
26 percentage, and the percentages are fairly stable over time, and
27 I just sort of circled the 34 percent, and so the net revenue
28 from operations is about a third of revenue, which, on average,
29 is about \$20 million, which is pretty nice, and I think it fits
30 the anecdotes of this fishery.

31
32 I wanted to spare you all the same table for mackerel, the CMP
33 fisheries, which look very similar, and, in fact, they -- This
34 report, because it is both for the South Atlantic and the Gulf
35 of Mexico, but we didn't put in a SOI for both fisheries, and so
36 it's the South Atlantic king mackerel fishery and the Gulf of
37 Mexico king mackerel fishery, and then we break it out by
38 different gear, and we also put in the Spanish mackerel fishery,
39 but I should always say that's just the federal portion of it.

40
41 At least 50 percent of that fishery just goes past the logbooks,
42 and so it's only those people reporting logbooks, and so it's
43 not comprehensive, and it might be the best information out
44 there, in economic terms, the best economic information, but it
45 just doesn't cover the whole fishery.

46
47 **MR. GREGORY:** I've got a question. I noticed that you don't
48 have the king mackerel gillnet gear.

1
2 **DR LIESE:** That's because it's just too small of a sample size,
3 and so we looked at all of these things when we designed these
4 reports, but I think there's just so few vessels that as soon as
5 we -- We take a sample of vessels, and so it just often drops
6 out.

7
8 **MR. GREGORY:** I would hit all fifteen of them.

9
10 **DR. LIESE:** We tried to find all the SOIs that we could
11 reasonably include, where there was statistical significance,
12 where were the meaningful results, and where we felt that it
13 would be able to be reported year after year and not just sort
14 of for one year.

15
16 Again, it's the same six pages for all those SOIs. Here, I just
17 put some highlights together next to each other, and these are
18 the averages for those three years, and so you can see the
19 second column is the Gulf of Mexico king mackerel fishery, and
20 it's much, much smaller than the reef fishery, at \$5 million.

21
22 It's quite a few trips, because they are much shorter, but, if
23 you look at that number, and it's the fifth row, the percent of
24 SOI, and so the king mackerel fishery -- Only 19 percent of
25 those vessels' revenue is king mackerel, and so they're doing a
26 lot of other things, which, in the Gulf of Mexico, is probably
27 reef fishing, and so you can see that their economics, in the
28 bottom part, are very similar to the reef fish fishery, because
29 they are basically -- We're measuring the same thing here again.

30
31 Those 259 vessels that engage in king mackerel fishing, a lot of
32 those are also engaging in reef fish fishing, and because their
33 economics is special, due to the IFQ management, that is
34 swapping sort of the results for king mackerel.

35
36 You can see that on the South Atlantic side in snapper grouper,
37 which is an open-access management system, and the economics
38 look very different for snapper grouper and very different for
39 king mackerel, again because the king mackerel fishery, to a
40 certain degree, is just a subset of the snapper grouper fishery,
41 or closely linked to that, and so the king mackerel numbers are
42 basically hidden underneath the reef fish numbers.

43
44 **DR. ANDERSON:** Just off the top of my head, why is the Gulf of
45 Mexico -- Why is the net revenue 34 and 29, and it's 5 and 2 for
46 the South Atlantic? Is it the ITQ program?

47
48 **DR. LIESE:** Just the revenue numbers, or the net revenue?

1
2 **DR. ANDERSON:** The net revenue from operations is 34 and 29 and 5
3 and 2. I am hoping that's the --
4
5 **DR. LIESE:** For sure, and I should say that net revenue -- This
6 whole analysis, these reports, are agnostic between the vessel
7 owner and share owner of IFQ shares, because it's just sort of -
8 - Once you subtract the cost, it's what is left over.
9
10 Who that goes to, I don't know, and so it could be going -- For
11 sure it's going to the shareholders, and we know that, and some
12 of it probably is the crew members are making a decent living,
13 it seems these days, and it also seems like some of it is
14 probably going to the vessel owners and operators, but most of
15 it is going to the shareholders, and we do have that number in
16 there too, because we had to pull it out.
17
18 Some people always want to give us the cost of what they're
19 spending on shares, and so, in some of the tables, it does have
20 that, but it's never -- That is the weakest variable in the
21 data, because, if you're an owner-operator who owns shares, I
22 don't know how much you purchased, or you didn't purchase
23 anything, and you just have it, and I don't know what you have.
24
25 It's only the part that people -- We ask them, on this trip, did
26 you buy shares, or did you buy allocation specifically for this
27 trip, and, if they put something down, we subtract it from their
28 cash flow, and not from the net revenue of operations. In that
29 case, we are agnostic to where it goes, and so for sure it's
30 going to the shareholders.
31
32 **DR. ANDERSON:** When I was looking at this, I was confused at one
33 time, but that's the main difference between your cash flow and
34 your net revenue, isn't it, the payments for ITQ shares?
35
36 **DR. LIESE:** That's one of the differences. The other one is
37 that we account for owner-operator's sort of time on the vessel,
38 because this contains owner-operators and hired-crew vessels,
39 and so, to standardize them, we have to somehow account for the
40 in-kind contribution, and we use depreciation for the vessel,
41 which is also not in the cash flow, and so the cash flow is
42 really just sort of like inflows and outflows on the bank
43 account, and then the other one is a more economic analysis,
44 looking at the real -- I prefer the net revenue from operations,
45 because that is the true productivity of the resource.
46
47 Yes, I mean, those huge net revenue from operations, in economic
48 terms, that's what we probably call resource rent, and, in an

1 open-access fishery like the South Atlantic, we're not seeing
2 much of that, and that's sort of the opportunity cost of
3 capital, the 5 and 2 percent, and that's in the range of what
4 the value is of the vessels that are invested.

5
6 This 34 percent in the reef fish fishery is clearly far beyond
7 anything that -- Usually you would see that type of stuff in a
8 monopoly or something like Microsoft or some network effect,
9 where someone has a bit moat of some sort, and every economist
10 will tell you that's what an IFQ does, and that's good, because
11 it represents real value to society. Instead of burning more
12 fuel and building more vessels, there is just more value
13 generated, more fish for less fuel.

14
15 **DR. ANDERSON:** I agree completely, and I'm really glad that you
16 included the cash flow though, because that's very important for
17 day-to-day operations, to keep these guys on the water. If they
18 need bank loans and stuff, the cash flow is an important part of
19 it.

20
21 **DR. LIESE:** Yes, and that's why we always have both, and, again,
22 because we don't know exactly -- There is all kind of -- We
23 imagine that maybe one day we'll go to the IFQ system here at
24 the Regional Office and try to figure out exactly which vessel
25 has how much IFQ and then really trace that all back, and then
26 there's the issue of opportunity costs of your own IFQ and all
27 that, but it's very difficult to do, because the IFQ is mostly -
28 - It's entities, and it's not vessels, and it can be moved later
29 and bought and so on, and so it's not at all clear that it's
30 tied to the vessel, and so it gets very -- You have to make a
31 lot of strong assumptions to do anything, and so it's
32 questionable how -- It's a lot of work just to get it done, and
33 so maybe one of these days.

34
35 **DR. ANDERSON:** Conceptually, I think you could do it.

36
37 **DR. LIESE:** This is more aggregate, and so I think that's --
38 Again, where this money goes, it's probably mostly the
39 shareholders. That was a quick overview of these reports that
40 are out there and the numbers that are in there and the sort of
41 methodology we now have.

42
43 Sometimes people ask me to like pull out a certain subset. If
44 it's within the categories that we have sort of time periods or
45 regions in the area, or species, we can fairly quickly pull out
46 the data and provide it, and so it's hopefully going to be
47 useful in the future, plus I'm really hoping that I find the
48 time to update these, and I really want to put out these reports

1 on an annual basis and update them as we get the data in, but
2 I'm already behind a little bit. 2017 is in the works, but not
3 out yet.

4
5 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** We are open for general feedback and
6 questions, and Will was first and then Andrew.

7
8 **DR. PATTERSON:** I am curious, with the data you have here, if
9 you could estimate what the return on investment is for people
10 who buy into one of these IFQ fisheries, whether it be shallow-
11 water grouper or red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico, for somebody
12 that wasn't part of the historical fishery and had IFQ
13 allocation based on historical participation, but somebody who
14 buys a permit and buys allocation, or buys shares, and then if
15 you can compute the profitability of that, or return on
16 investment.

17
18 **DR. LIESE:** Not well, no. I mean, because of this issue with
19 the IFQ and separating out. Now, we could try to do it like for
20 certain people. First off, I don't know who those are. Based
21 on my current databases on the logbooks, I don't know who is
22 buying IFQ at all, because that's a whole different dataset kept
23 at the Regional Office in the IFQ system, and so I don't have
24 access to it, but, even if I did, there is a whole bunch of
25 conceptual problems in figuring out who is doing what.

26
27 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Andrew.

28
29 **DR. ANDERSON:** Can I jump in? If I could guess, I would say the
30 people who buy-in late are making a normal return. If the
31 market works, the people know what that thing is worth. The
32 guys who got it for free, they're the ones who are getting a
33 better deal. When you buy-in later, people know what it is, and
34 they're not going to sell it to you that cheap, and so it all
35 becomes tied up in the market value of the share, I would guess,
36 but you may find something.

37
38 **DR. PATTERSON:** If the market is efficient.

39
40 **DR. ANDERSON:** That's right, if the market works.

41
42 **DR. LIESE:** I would second that, and it might be interesting to
43 look at -- I mean, I don't know how I would know who is buying.
44 I mean, there's some people who put in big numbers, and so
45 presumably they are buying a lot of shares, and so, if they're
46 telling me that we made \$300,000 in revenue, but we spend
47 \$100,000 on allocation, then probably they bought all their
48 allocation, but I wouldn't know that for sure.

1
2 Maybe they only bought half their allocation, and that's the
3 problem, and so, to get those quantities -- Again, people are
4 buying this at an entity level, which might be a person and so
5 on, and then they shifted to vessels, and if they have a fleet -
6 - Linking it back to the vessel is the problem, really, with
7 that analysis, but generally what Lee was saying is I think that
8 the owners of shares know that this is valuable, after a while,
9 and the money you will make as a captain with a boat is probably
10 going to be much closer to what the South Atlantic is doing,
11 because that's sort of the -- The rent is dissipated, and so
12 those are the returns people are making, and so the shareholders
13 would be extracting the rent they can, because they have that
14 privilege.

15
16 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay. Andrew.

17
18 **DR. ROPICKI:** You can get -- The Southeast Regional Office puts
19 out annual IFQ reports, and you can back out what the return on
20 investment is, based off of those average prices, for sale,
21 quota, and allocation, but the thing I wanted to ask about is,
22 in the data you collect, trip-level economic data, you ask about
23 IFQ allocation purchase for this trip in dollars, and any
24 thought to asking how many pounds you purchased?

25
26 **DR. LIESE:** I would love that, but they're already annoyed at
27 filling out those three lines, and that's exactly what's
28 missing, because they might put 300 down, and I don't know if
29 that's for the 300 pounds of red snapper, or is that for 100
30 pounds of red snapper, and they had 200 left over, and see
31 that's the problem.

32
33 I would probably not just need what they purchased, but I would
34 also need to know where did the others come from, and did you
35 purchase it two weeks ago, and so, really, we've added that to
36 the trip level, only because people were putting that into the
37 miscellaneous costs, and we didn't like that, but we have it
38 there just to take it out quickly, and sometimes people subtract
39 it from the revenue they report, because they just don't think
40 that way, and so then we put it back in, and these are all the
41 cleaning things, and, if you're selling red snapper for \$2.00 a
42 pound, that's probably wrong, but then you see they spent \$4.00
43 a pound on IFQ, and so you know what they did, and you have to
44 put those \$4.00 per pound back on the revenue and those sort of
45 things.

46
47 Really, it's just that we use that as a cleaning field, more
48 than a reporting field, and we actually went back and forth

1 about if we should put it in the report at all, but we finally
2 decided that we will put it in, and, at the annual level, I'm
3 hoping it's a little bit more meaningful, because that's
4 probably what they bought across the whole year, but I still
5 don't know how many -- I mean, we could ask -- On that form, we
6 could maybe ask OMB to ask, in the future, how many pounds do
7 you buy and how much do you own, and they will definitely tell
8 us that can't you just ask the Regional Office, and they know
9 it, but we don't know at a vessel level.

10
11 **DR. MIKE TRAVIS:** I'm Mike Travis from the Southeast Regional
12 Office, who gets caught in the middle of these discussions, and
13 so, with the shares, I think we probably could do that, because
14 there's not as many transactions, and it's a one-time -- It's a
15 one-time transaction, but, with annual allocation, or annual
16 quota pounds, it becomes much more difficult, because,
17 basically, your quota pounds, they function like currency now,
18 which means they can be bought and sold and bought and sold and
19 bought and sold several times within a year, but they're not
20 like currency, in the sense that we have --

21
22 Those quota pounds are not tagged, and they're not tracked, in
23 the sense that you know that the quota pounds that Joe Smith
24 bought on January 30 are the same pounds that he used on March 1
25 or some of the pounds that he sold to someone else on April 30,
26 and it's just you can't track those specific -- We do track the
27 transactions, but you can't track those specific quota pounds
28 over the course of time, and it's just we haven't figured out a
29 way, unfortunately, to do that, and so that's part of the
30 quandary between how do we link up the data that we maintain in
31 the Regional Office with Christopher's economic survey data, and
32 we just haven't figured that out yet.

33
34 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Are there other comments or questions?

35
36 **MR. DELACRUZ:** A lot of these logbooks -- Almost every single
37 one of the boats, and we're talking fifteen boats, got picked
38 for stuff this year.

39
40 **DR. LIESE:** Well, everyone gets a logbook, but you mean the
41 economic section?

42
43 **MR. DELACRUZ:** Well, I got picked for additional, but that's
44 okay, and we have a lot of boats, and we catch a lot of fish,
45 and it's no big deal. I am more concerned with the -- Explain
46 to me the net revenue. Is it from an operation?

47
48 **DR. LIESE:** That's an accounting term, and so "operation" here

1 means we're not looking at the financing of your operation, and
2 that was the hybrid operation or the stylized operation, and so
3 interest payments are not subtracted, and so we don't look at
4 how -- It's operations of seafood.

5
6 Say, in the shrimp fishery, there was all these BP payments
7 after the claims for the damages, and they would not be in
8 operations, because it doesn't involved seafood processing.

9
10 The other thing that's big here, and I'm trying to think, is
11 many of these boats, about 10 to 20 percent, do charter fishing
12 and report sort of a tenth of their revenue is probably charter
13 fishing revenue, and that's in here, because we just ask for the
14 overall vessel-level stuff, and so that operations would be all
15 fishing.

16
17 **MR. DELACRUZ:** It seems, back to the IFQ question, that if your
18 operation was netting 34 percent, you could reinvest in your
19 IFQs, and, as that cycle continued, then that would become your
20 money, unless I'm missing something, because in a lot of the --
21 I know, when we fill out ours that way, we fill out the cost of
22 allocation, the cost of crew, the cost of all that, and so I
23 assume that revenue really, in my eyes, represents what the
24 owner receives.

25
26 **DR. LIESE:** Yes.

27
28 **MR. DELACRUZ:** Because, in most cases, all the boats, we have
29 hired captains and all that, and the owner receives that share,
30 and we still put the allocation as a separate line item, so that
31 we can see that allocation -- Most of the fellas like me that
32 own shares and boats, we do that as a separate company, to keep
33 that isolated, and so the allocation money goes over here, and
34 the money for the vessel goes into the vessel account, so we can
35 keep track of those two and how they're all performing in
36 separate models, for lack of a better phrase, if that helps a
37 little bit.

38
39 **DR. LIESE:** If everyone was doing that, it would be perfect.

40
41 **DR. ANDERSON:** I am really impressed with this work, and can you
42 tell me if the other Centers are doing this, and are you guys
43 leading the pack on this? I haven't seen anything from the
44 Northeast Center anyway.

45
46 **DR. LIESE:** We have a workgroup on returns, and we're working on
47 a tech memo, but it's been dragging on for like two or three
48 years now, and so I think other Centers are doing more of this,

1 but I don't know.

2
3 I have wondered, because I think you've also seen that like the
4 next logical thing is to calculate the rent that's being
5 generated by the fishery and sort of reporting on that itself,
6 but like Alaska, where they have a lot of IFQs, and they're
7 generating a lot of money, they seem to be -- I almost have a
8 feeling, because I asked them, and it's not in the SAFE reports,
9 and they have all that data, and so they've been collecting very
10 good data for a long time, but there might be an aversion to
11 reporting any of that.

12
13 **DR. ANDERSON:** But, if you gave them your programs, could they
14 use it with their data?

15
16 **DR. LIESE:** No, because my programs are all specific to our
17 logbook system and our Oracle databases and everything, and so
18 no. My fear is the next version of Oracle, and then I need to
19 hire someone else.

20
21 **DR. TRAVIS:** To that point, Lee, yes, some of the other regions
22 are, and you talking specifically with regard to fisheries
23 managed by catch shares or just more generally?

24
25 **DR. ANDERSON:** Just general economics.

26
27 **DR. TRAVIS:** The Northeast definitely has, and I know they have
28 produced multiple reports for the groundfish fishery, because,
29 of course, that's their big fishery, and it's managed under the
30 sector program, as you know, and probably the most, I would say,
31 impressive and somewhat overwhelming economic reports are coming
32 out of the west coast region, on their groundfish program.

33
34 They have probably more economic data than we do. They produce
35 highly detailed -- I think the last report I saw from them was
36 like 500 pages long, and so they do. Alaska, they're a little
37 bit more constrained, because they have had more difficulty
38 collecting cost information in some of their fisheries, because
39 -- Basically, because of some pushback from some of the industry
40 up there, and so they've got I think like three of their catch
41 share programs where they've got the data to actually produce
42 these kinds of reports.

43
44 I know I have seen them for the pelagic longline fishery in
45 Hawaii, and I think that about covers it, off the top of my
46 head, and there was something else you asked too that I was
47 going to respond to, but I can't remember what it was. Sorry.

48

1 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay. Any other -- I know you're about
2 to leave, Lee, and is that right? I'm glad that we fit that in.
3 Any other feedback or comments or questions? Hearing none,
4 thank you very much. Next to last, we have a discussion on the
5 joint Gulf and South Atlantic SSC meeting in May of 2020. Ryan.

6
7 **DISCUSSION OF JOINT GULF AND SOUTH ATLANTIC SSC MEETING IN MAY**
8 **2020**
9

10 **MR. RINDONE:** Thank you, sir. In May, or at our May SSC
11 meeting, which is scheduled for May 5 through 7, and that will
12 be here in the office, we'll be reviewing stock assessments for
13 yellowtail snapper, the Gulf migratory group of kingfish, and
14 vermilion snapper.

15
16 The South Atlantic Council will be sending some of their SSC
17 members to join us for the yellowtail review, and so we'll be
18 playing host to them, and so we're going to do that first on the
19 5th, and it's Cinco de Mayo, and so we'll have a taco lunch.

20
21 I just wanted to let you guys know that that's going to be a
22 joint meeting, and so we're going to have some of them in-house,
23 and so, essentially, what we'll be doing for yellowtail is, to
24 the extent practical, making motions as a group, or however you
25 guys decide you want to proceed with that procedurally, and we
26 could also do it the way we did last time, which may have been a
27 little more cumbersome than necessary, which was they made their
28 motions, and then the Gulf Council made their motions, but, if
29 there's concurrence, you guys could just move forward as a group
30 as well. The difference between our groups is that the South
31 Atlantic operates on consensus, and the Gulf operates on
32 majority vote. Are there any questions about the May meeting?
33 That is scheduled to be a full three days.

34
35 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** We could move it to Charleston, and so
36 that would be my only request, so we get out of here once a
37 year.

38
39 **MR. RINDONE:** You are not allowed to leave. Any other questions
40 about the joint meeting? All right. Other Business.

41
42 **OTHER BUSINESS**
43 **DISCUSSION OF NATIONAL SSC MEETING**
44

45 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay. Other Business, and we have two
46 items there, and one is the National SSC Meeting that will be
47 held in Sitka, Alaska on August 4th through 6th, and, if you
48 recall, this is a sort of ecosystem and climate change-focused

1 meeting, really.

2
3 What we are looking for is -- Obviously, we will be sending
4 several people from the SSC here, and I think what we're looking
5 for is some initial expressions of interest, and is that right,
6 Ryan?

7
8 **MR. RINDONE:** Yes, sir, and I will give you guys the three
9 themes that the CCC agreed to for the meeting. The first one is
10 how to incorporate ecosystem indicators into the stock
11 assessment process, the second is developing information to
12 support management of interacting species in consideration of
13 ecosystem-based fisheries management, and how to assess and
14 develop fishing-level recommendations for species exhibiting
15 distributional changes. Those are the three overarching themes
16 for the National SSC Meeting, and it's August 4th through the 6th
17 in Sitka, Alaska.

18
19 **DR. PATTERSON:** I would express interest in attending that
20 meeting.

21
22 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Chagaris.

23
24 **MR. RINDONE:** Anyone else in the room? Kai.

25
26 **DR. TOLAN:** I'm actually currently serving on the climate change
27 committee for the State of Texas, and, if there's room, I would
28 like to --

29
30 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Nobody is being forced.

31
32 **MR. RINDONE:** On the webinar? Are you guys still with us?
33 Anybody on the webinar really itching to go to Alaska?

34
35 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Jim, were you volunteering?

36
37 **DR. TOLAN:** Yes, because I serve on the committee right now for
38 the state, and there's a lot of common themes, and so, if
39 there's room, I would like to volunteer.

40
41 **MR. RINDONE:** Okay. So far, I have Will Patterson, Dave
42 Chagaris, Kai Lorenzen, Andrew Ropicki, and Jim Tolan. Are
43 there others? Paul Sammarco. Anyone else? We don't know
44 exactly what our limit is going to be yet for the number of
45 people that they will finance to go, and so, if you're
46 interested, say you're interested, and we'll figure out our
47 headcount on the backend, but -- All right. So we'll ride with
48 that count for now.

1
2 **DISCUSSION OF ABC CONTROL RULE WORKING GROUP**
3

4 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you. The last point is that we
5 are reconvening our ABC Control Rule Working Group, and we need
6 some volunteers, and I think we're looking to have a relatively
7 small group to come up with proposals that we will bring back to
8 the bigger SSC, and so we are looking for a small group of
9 committed individuals volunteering for this effort.

10
11 **MR. RINDONE:** You guys will ultimately have to approve whatever
12 new control rule you decide to put in place, but this group is -
13 - The purpose of this group is just to nail down a proposal for
14 you guys to chew on, and so, by keeping it small, it allows the
15 group to function a little bit better than it being ten or
16 twelve people trying to come to a decision and then bringing it
17 to you guys and then eighteen people, twenty people, trying to
18 come to the same decision, and so hopefully this will help the
19 process along a little more efficiently. Are there any
20 volunteers for that?

21
22 **MR. GILL:** I am not volunteering, but didn't Joe have a list,
23 and I think it was at the September meeting, of the prospective
24 working group folks?

25
26 **CHAIRMAN POWERS:** Yes, we did. There are a number of people
27 that wanted to be involved, and I don't have that list in front
28 of me, but I could probably recapitulate it, but I would want to
29 be involved. I was sort of committed to kind of chairing it.

30
31 Secondly, there were several people, when we had those original
32 discussions, that had some strong opinions, Will and Doug, and
33 we also I think suggested that Lee be on it. Regardless of who
34 signs up for the committee, I will probably approach these
35 people to give me their opinions again, so I can kind of
36 formulate it into some sort of document as we go forth, but,
37 anyway, yes, I would be one of the persons associated with it.

38
39 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** In fact, I hear you are volunteering to
40 lead that group.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN POWERS:** It was kind of -- Yes, okay.

43
44 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Thank you, Joe.

45
46 **DR. ISELY:** I would be on that group.

47
48 **DR. TOLAN:** I remember being part of it for the September list,

1 and I would definitely do it again.

2

3 **CHAIRMAN POWERS:** The other one was -- It was Shannon that
4 actually presented some of this information, and, regardless of
5 whether she wants to be on it or not, I will probably still be
6 approaching her anyway.

7

8 **MR. RINDONE:** I imagine, despite whatever efforts that she may
9 have, she may have trouble getting away from this one, or being
10 involved in it or somehow or another.

11

12 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Okay, and so we will leave that in
13 Joe's capable hands. I think we are just about done, and so I
14 am looking for a motion to adjourn.

15

16 **MR. GILL:** So moved.

17

18 **VICE CHAIRMAN LORENZEN:** Any objections? The meeting is
19 adjourned.

20

21 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on January 9, 2020.)

22

23

24

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