

1 GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL  
2  
3 SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES COMMITTEE  
4

5 Marriott Courtyard Gulfport, Mississippi  
6

7 April 17, 2018  
8

9 **VOTING MEMBERS**

10 Paul Mickle (designee for Joe Spraggins).....Mississippi  
11 Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon).....Alabama  
12 Roy Crabtree.....NMFS  
13 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi  
14 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC  
15 Tom Frazer.....Florida  
16 Campo Matens.....Louisiana  
17 Greg Stunz.....Texas  
18 Ed Swindell.....Louisiana  
19

20 **NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

21 Patrick Banks.....Louisiana  
22 Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi  
23 Doug Boyd.....Texas  
24 Phil Dyskow.....Florida  
25 Johnny Greene.....Alabama  
26 Martha Guyas (designee for Jessica McCawley).....Florida  
27 Robin Riechers.....Texas  
28 John Sanchez.....Florida  
29 Bob Shipp.....Alabama  
30 LT Mark Zanowicz.....USCG  
31

32 **STAFF**

33 Steven Atran.....Senior Fishery Biologist  
34 Assane Diagne.....Economist  
35 Matt Freeman.....Economist  
36 John Froeschke.....Fishery Biologist-Statistician  
37 Douglas Gregory.....Executive Director  
38 Beth Hager.....Administrative Officer  
39 Morgan Kilgour.....Fishery Biologist  
40 Ava Lasseter.....Anthropologist  
41 Mara Levy.....NOAA General Counsel  
42 Ryan Rindone.....Fishery Biologist & SEDAR Liaison  
43 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager  
44 Camilla Shireman.....Administrative and Communications Assistant  
45 Carrie Simmons.....Deputy Director  
46

47 **OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

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1 Greg Ball.....Galveston Professional Boaters Association, TX  
2 Luiz Barbieri.....GMFMC SSC  
3 Ryan Bradley.....MS Commercial Fisheries United, MS  
4 Eric Brazer.....Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance  
5 J.P. Brooker.....Ocean Conservancy, St. Petersburg, FL  
6 Mark Brown.....SAFMC  
7 James Bruce.....MS  
8 Gary Bryant.....Gulf Shores, AL  
9 Dan Buckley.....Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance  
10 Blake Compeant.....St. Larose, LA  
11 Laura Deighan.....Audubon Institute  
12 Michael Drexler.....St. Petersburg, FL  
13 Mike Falgout.....New Orleans, LA  
14 Traci Floyd.....MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
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18 Rick Hart.....NOAA Fisheries, Galveston, TX  
19 Dylan Hubbard.....FL  
20 Mark Kelley.....Panama City Beach, FL  
21 Alicia Paul.....Panama City Beach, FL  
22 Ruth Perry.....Shell, Houston, TX  
23 Laura Picariello.....Audubon Institute  
24 Clay Porch.....SEFSC  
25 Lance Robinson.....TX  
26 Ashford Rosenberg.....Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance  
27 Jessica Stephen.....NMFS  
28 Donna Tryon.....Gulf Breeze, FL  
29 Mark Tryon.....Gulf Breeze, FL  
30 David Walker.....Andalusia, AL  
31 Bob Zales.....Panama City, FL

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33  
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TABLE OF MOTIONS

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[PAGE 12](#): Motion to accept the suggested revisions to the Gulf Council Policy Statement and the Gulf Council Purpose Statement. [The motion carried on page 13.](#)

[PAGE 15](#): Motion to have staff provide a summary table that includes discard mortality estimates used in the current assessment and average, approximately five years, discards by sector (private recreational, for-hire, headboat, and commercial) for red snapper and other key reef species (as available). [The motion carried on page 18.](#)

[PAGE 18](#): Motion to have staff provide a preliminary estimate of the reduction in mortality (numbers of fish) for red snapper and other key reef species (as available) by sector that may occur if these devices were actively used in the fishery. [The motion carried on page 19.](#)

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1 The Sustainable Fisheries Committee of the Gulf of Mexico  
2 Fishery Management Council convened at the Marriott Courtyard,  
3 Gulfport Mississippi, Tuesday morning, April 17, 2018, and was  
4 called to order by Chairman Paul Mickle.

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

10 **CHAIRMAN PAUL MICKLE:** I would like to convene the Sustainable  
11 Fisheries Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Committee  
12 with myself as Chair, Dr. Stunz, Mr. Anson, Mr. Constant, and  
13 Dr. Crabtree are the members. We will move on to Item I on the  
14 agenda, Adoption of the Agenda, Tab E, Number 1. Do I have a  
15 motion to adopt the agenda?  
16

17 **DR. GREG STUNZ:** So moved.  
18

19 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** It's seconded by Dr. Frazer. Any objection?  
20 The motion passes. Item Number II is Approval of the January  
21 2018 Minutes, Tab E, Number 2. This was a longer agenda back in  
22 January for Sustainable Fisheries. I need a motion to approve  
23 the minutes.  
24

25 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** So moved.  
26

27 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Is there a second? Mr. Anson seconds. Any  
28 opposition? The motion carries. Item Number III is Action  
29 Guide and Next Steps, Tab E, Number 3, and Mr. Atran.  
30

31 **MR. STEVEN ATRAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My computer crashed  
32 just as I was about to move up here, but, fortunately, I'm old-  
33 school, and I think I have enough papers to get by. There is  
34 just three items on the agenda, and hopefully none of them will  
35 take a long time.  
36

37 We have brought back a revised policy statement on the use of  
38 descending tools and venting, and we would like you to review  
39 that and decide whether or not to approve it, and then we have  
40 initiated a five-year review on the inclusion and exclusion of  
41 species and species groupings in the fishery management plans.  
42 In other words, is there anything that we want to add or is  
43 there anything we want to take out? Then the third item is  
44 going to be a discussion of historical captain permits by Dr.  
45 Froeschke, and, as I said, I don't think any of those will take  
46 much time.  
47

48 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Thank you, Mr. Atran. All right. Any

1 discussion on the Action Guide or the Next Steps? All right.  
2 Let's move on. Item Number IV is Revised Policy Statement on  
3 the Use of Descending Tools and Venting Devices, Tab E, Number  
4 4, and Mr. Atran.

5  
6 **REVISED POLICY STATEMENT ON THE USE OF DESCENDING TOOLS AND**  
7 **VENTING DEVICES**  
8

9 **MR. ATRAN:** Thank you. While I'm talking, we're going to need  
10 the slideshow of Tab E, Number 4(a) in just about two minutes.  
11 Tab E-4 is a slight rewrite of the draft policy statement that  
12 you reviewed in January, and we've been working with Dr. Stunz  
13 on getting some changes into it. There is some minor editing  
14 changes.

15  
16 In terms of what's been added, the main thing is at the bottom  
17 of page 3, and one of the problems is we had no documentation in  
18 the scientific literature of the effects of descending devices  
19 on the species that we tend to fish for in this area, and there  
20 was just recently published a paper looking at the effects of  
21 descending devices on deepwater grouper in the South Atlantic.

22  
23 It wasn't a huge study, but it looked at nineteen individual  
24 fish, scamp, snowy grouper, and speckled hind, that were caught  
25 in depths of 200 to 400 feet, and they were tagged with acoustic  
26 transmitters and released using the Seaqualizer device, and they  
27 were tracked for fourteen days to determine how many were still  
28 alive after fourteen days.

29  
30 The average was about 50 percent survival, but with a very wide  
31 confidence interval, anywhere between 10 percent and 90 percent,  
32 and so, even if they only had 10 percent survival, we've been  
33 assuming zero percent survival at those depths, and so this  
34 study did conclude that there was some benefit to using the  
35 descending devices with the deepwater fish.

36  
37 One of the things that Dr. Stunz had asked for was, beyond  
38 seeing simply what is the percentage mortality rates that we get  
39 with the various fish that we assess, what does that translate  
40 to in actual numbers of discards and could we dig up some  
41 information on that, and so what I did was I went to SEDAR 31,  
42 which was the previous red snapper stock assessment was done in  
43 2013, and it had some very comprehensive tables showing the  
44 numbers of total discards from the private recreational fishery,  
45 from the headboat fishery, and from the commercial fishery. I  
46 combined those together into a couple of graphs. While we're  
47 waiting for those, these graphs have discard data from 1981 to  
48 2011, and, during the period --

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Mr. Atran, I apologize for interrupting, but  
3 Dr. Stunz had some additive material prior to before you get  
4 into the data discussion, and is that okay? I apologize for  
5 interrupting. Dr. Stunz.  
6

7 **DR. STUNZ:** Thanks, Steve, and before we get into the --  
8 Certainly I wanted to get into those tables and the data that  
9 you've got, but I had some recommended suggestions to the policy  
10 statement and also the purpose statement to that document.  
11

12 I sent them back to the staff here, and I don't know if they're  
13 going to have trouble pulling those up as well, and they're kind  
14 of editorial, but the notion of those edits were -- I still,  
15 even though the document has moved along really well, I still  
16 felt that the general public or our constituents viewing this  
17 document still may not be getting quite the feel for what the  
18 real purpose of this policy was, and so I wanted to just make  
19 that a little clearer by this verbiage, and, also the whole idea  
20 of, if you're using these devices and they're working, as some  
21 of the science is showing, what are you getting for doing that?  
22 You are saving fish, and what does that mean, and so that's what  
23 I think these edits will help clarify. The issue is -- I don't  
24 know if we can pull them up or not. Mr. Chairman, if we need to  
25 go on, I will come back to that, too.  
26

27 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Let's go ahead and move on and we'll come  
28 back.  
29

30 **MR. ATRAN:** Mr. Chairman, while we're waiting, one other item I  
31 meant to discuss was, after the first version of this was put  
32 out, I did talk with a partyboat captain and owner of a marina,  
33 and he told me that venting tools -- They will work on the  
34 partyboats, but, when they get large fish, and he was talking  
35 about thirty to fifty-pound fish, none of the venting tools  
36 currently on the market are large enough to be able to use with  
37 that size of fish, and so his operation -- I guess they've got  
38 some homemade devices, but he also indicated, in that case, a  
39 small knife is probably the most effective way to vent a fish.  
40 That wouldn't be the normal case with most fish, but there are  
41 exceptions, I guess, when the venting tools that are available  
42 are not adequate.  
43

44 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Is there any information on these alternative  
45 venting tools for these large fish? Don't we have -- I'm sorry,  
46 sir, but would you mind coming up? I saw you out there in the  
47 audience, and so the question is, with large fish, how does the  
48 large fish venting tool differ from a standardized venting tool

1 that I think the council members are accustomed to?

2  
3 **MR. DYLAN HUBBARD:** It would differ in the fact that it enables  
4 more air to escape more quickly. For example, a large gag  
5 grouper, especially goliath grouper and amberjack and lots of  
6 different species of fish, the typical venting tool that you're  
7 used to seeing just simply will not work.

8  
9 What we have done is we have a guy who fishes with us quite  
10 frequently owns a metalworking shop, and his shop has created  
11 some large, super large, venting tools that were similar to the  
12 normal venting tool that you are used to seeing, the cylindrical  
13 handle with the needle at the tip, hollow all the way through,  
14 and he just made that bigger, with maybe a quarter-inch diameter  
15 across the tube, and that worked very well for venting some of  
16 the larger species, but it was still too large of a hole.

17  
18 What we had leaned towards was those wooden-handled Dexter  
19 Russell knives that we use to skin fish. Over time, they become  
20 super, super, super thin, through repetitive sharpening, and  
21 then, eventually, they get so thin that they break. One day I  
22 was holding one of those, and it had a broken tip, and the blade  
23 was only about two inches long, and a very thin diameter, and it  
24 works very well, once it has a point, to simply insert into the  
25 area where you would vent the fish and just merely turn the  
26 blade just a minute amount.

27  
28 That way, you end up with this little triangle-shaped hole that  
29 enables air to escape really quickly and with just simply  
30 putting your thumb and forefinger on the blade as a guard, it  
31 prevents you from stabbing the fish. It's just enough to enter  
32 the fish and allow that gas to escape had kind of been the rule  
33 of thumb that we have used, especially on the larger fish, for  
34 example, when you do catch goliath grouper in 120 foot of water.  
35 I mean, the air bladder is huge, and so using a typical venting  
36 tool -- We have a ladder on the back of the boat where we're  
37 able to climb down and vent the fish while it's still in the  
38 water.

39  
40 Obviously, we're not able to pull those on the deck, but like,  
41 for example, gag grouper, you would hate to see one of those go  
42 floating off, especially those big breeder females and the big  
43 rusty-belly males, and so we work really hard to try to make  
44 sure those fish go down, and a typical descending device is not  
45 large enough.

46  
47 I mean, you would have to put a hundred-pound weight on some of  
48 those descending devices to descend some of these larger species

1 of fish, and so we keep these special venting tools around just  
2 for those type occurrences. That's why, when the policy was  
3 initially brought to the council at the January meeting, those  
4 specific definitions caused a little bit of worry for me, just  
5 because that would prevent us from utilizing those -- I guess  
6 you would say the unique venting techniques that we've become  
7 accustomed to.

8  
9 Then also the flexibility to choose whether to vent or to  
10 descend, depending on the situation. For example, when we're on  
11 one of our smaller charter boats and we only have four people on  
12 the board, it's very easy to use a descending device, but, on  
13 that same charter boat, if you're out there and there's a bunch  
14 of sharks around you, you don't want to have to be forced to use  
15 that descending device and basically feed the sharks.

16  
17 The flexibility to use either one was very important to us, and  
18 also the flexibility to choose which venting tool would best  
19 suit the fish, because, ultimately, as a charter boat captain or  
20 a headboat captain, our ultimate goal is to preserve the  
21 fishery, and so we utilize whatever resource we feel is going to  
22 get that fish into the water and produce the least amount of  
23 dead discards.

24  
25 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Thank you for that information, Mr. Hubbard.  
26 It's very clear that there's a lot of variability in venting  
27 strategy and descending strategy in size and season and depth  
28 and age, and I guess density of fishermen on a vessel, and  
29 efficiency of venting and all of that.

30  
31 **MR. HUBBARD:** Water temperature and air temperature and all of  
32 that has to do with it as well and what's around, and the  
33 outreach, I think, is a big portion of this policy, because  
34 outreach is so important. As I do seminars around the State of  
35 Florida, often most people at the seminar have no idea what a  
36 descending device is, and a small amount of people are familiar  
37 with how to properly vent a fish. They have all heard of  
38 venting, but how to properly do it, but there is a big gap in  
39 knowledge there.

40  
41 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Thank you, Mr. Hubbard. I appreciate it.

42  
43 **MR. HUBBARD:** No problem. Thank you.

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Dr. Stunz has a follow-up comment.

46  
47 **DR. STUNZ:** Thank you, Captain Hubbard, and that's exactly the  
48 type of advice we need, and you brought up the outreach, and I

1 think, as Emily with the council starts doing this kind of  
2 thing, you being involved, and others, is really going to help  
3 get the word out. What you just mentioned there at the last,  
4 about many people not knowing what to do, whether it's the  
5 actual venting or descending devices, is completely true and  
6 what a lot of studies are beginning to show.

7  
8 The good news there is that anglers are more than willing to use  
9 it though, and, once they learn it, it came become very  
10 effective, and so I appreciate that, but my comment related to  
11 these special circumstances that he is pointing out in this  
12 policy document, and I think Steven has written this broad  
13 enough, for example in the venting tool that he just described,  
14 to accommodate those circumstances for bigger fish like that.

15  
16 **MR. HUBBARD:** I actually sent an email to him thanking him for  
17 the changes, because I read the policy this morning, and it was  
18 much more flexible, and I feel it would better suit that  
19 situation.

20  
21 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Mr. Atran.

22  
23 **MR. ATRAN:** I think we incorporated some of what Captain Hubbard  
24 has told me into the revision. However, I think we still have a  
25 definition of a venting tool at the bottom of this that might be  
26 a little bit in conflict. It talks about a venting tool being a  
27 sharpened, hollow instrument, and it ends up by saying a device  
28 that is not hollow, such as a knife or an ice pick, is not a  
29 venting tool and will cause additional damage. That may be true  
30 for the smaller fish, but, based upon what Captain Hubbard has  
31 said, we may need to revise that definition somewhat to say that  
32 there could be exceptions to that.

33  
34 **MR. HUBBARD:** I didn't catch that in there on the revised  
35 version, but I definitely agree with what you were saying, Dr.  
36 Stunz, about adding to the purpose, because a big part of the  
37 outreach will be telling anglers what they get out of this and  
38 why they should be paying attention to it, and I think  
39 Seaqualizer, as a company, does a really good job of this. At  
40 ICAST, that's a big portion of what their booth was geared  
41 towards, is not only selling their product, but also educating  
42 the general public on why descending devices are very important.

43  
44 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Thank you, Captain. I appreciate it. All  
45 right. Mr. Anson.

46  
47 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** I have one question for Captain Hubbard.  
48 Thank you, Dylan, for coming and providing some comments on this

1 issue. You mentioned you're working with a person who owns a  
2 metal fabrication shop, and so I was curious. I thought that it  
3 would be relatively easy to find the tube that would be the  
4 right diameter, a similar diameter, to what's currently being  
5 used for a venting tool and that all you do is you just buy it  
6 and you cut it to the length you want based on your observations  
7 for those larger fish, and is it just not available in that size  
8 diameter for that length?

9  
10 **MR. HUBBARD:** I mean, it's so variable, and that's why we prefer  
11 the use of the knife that I talked about earlier, because, as  
12 that knife gets longer, it gradually gets wider, and so, if you  
13 have a large fish, you're able to just move your thumb and  
14 forefinger down the blade a little bit, in order to get a bigger  
15 hole to release more gas, whereas with the venting tool tube,  
16 you would literally have to be like, well, that's a thirty-pound  
17 fish and let me go grab this one or that's a fifty-pound fish  
18 and I'm going to have go grab this one.

19  
20 Your flexibility is greater with the tool that I'm discussing,  
21 but, yes, that same gentleman that I'm working with with the  
22 venting tools has also helped me, because some of the stuff that  
23 Mr. Atran was talking about in the sea turtle stuff, the  
24 dehookers, that company has gone out of business, and so now  
25 that dehooker that we utilize very often to, again, be a part of  
26 minimizing dead discards and getting that fish back into the  
27 water quickly is now out of business, and so we're working to  
28 try to fabricate our own model of that, so that, when we come  
29 into red snapper season, we can get those fish back into the  
30 water as quick as possible by dehooking them quickly and venting  
31 them quickly and getting them back in the water.

32  
33 **MR. ATRAN:** Thank you.

34  
35 **MR. HUBBARD:** Thank you.

36  
37 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** All right. I appreciate it. Also, now that  
38 we have the suggested revisions up on the screen, and I think  
39 these are coming from Dr. Stunz.

40  
41 **DR. STUNZ:** They are coming from me, but I'm just championing  
42 what a lot of other discussion has been among several groups and  
43 that kind of thing, and so I'm proposing that. I have put up  
44 here the -- There is the actual policy statement and then the  
45 purpose statement.

46  
47 In red, I put what I am recommending that we change to each of  
48 those, and obviously the policy has changed a little bit, and

1 then I just wanted to add a last sentence to the purpose  
2 statement, and, essentially, what these are saying is that -- I  
3 think it clarifies to the public what we're trying to gain by  
4 implementing these policies, and I am not tied to any particular  
5 text there if that's giving some folks heartburn or something  
6 like that. Mr. Chairman, I don't even know if we need a motion  
7 to push these through or if these are just edits. I am not sure  
8 how to take that, but I'm happy to do whatever.

9  
10 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** I would think this would need a motion, if I'm  
11 not incorrect. Yes, this would require a motion. Do I have a  
12 motion to request the suggested changes from our discussion here  
13 today and these additions?

14  
15 **MR. DIAZ:** Can you read them? I can't see them on the board.

16  
17 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Absolutely. We don't have a motion yet, but  
18 can we pull up the suggested changes, please? Right there.  
19 Thank you. I will read this into the record.

20  
21 The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council strongly  
22 encourages the use of descending devices and/or venting tools as  
23 appropriate when releasing deepwater fish, such as snappers,  
24 groupers and other reef fish, whenever necessary. Proper and  
25 widespread use can significantly increase the likelihood of  
26 survival of released fish and in turn contribute to the overall  
27 stock productivity and sustainability. As such, decreased  
28 levels of fishing mortality through higher survivorship of  
29 released fish should lead to increased fish population abundance  
30 and more fishing opportunities.

31  
32 Suggested Revisions to the Gulf Council Purpose Statement are to  
33 add as last sentence: Implementation of the council's policy on  
34 the use of descending devices and venting tools is intended to  
35 reduce bycatch and discard mortality, which may lead to  
36 increases in abundance and eventually higher allowable catch  
37 limits. Those are the proposed changes, and it's been read into  
38 the record. Do I have a motion to accept these changes?

39  
40 **MR. TOM FRAZER:** So moved.

41  
42 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** There is a motion by Dr. Frazer for  
43 discussion. Ms. Bosarge.

44  
45 **MS. LEANN BOSARGE:** I think I like the changes, except for maybe  
46 just the last couple of words on the policy statement of "and  
47 more fishing opportunities". We hope that that would be the  
48 case, but, as we know, sometimes that's not the case, and so

1 maybe if we could just delete those last four words, and so it  
2 would end at, "As such, decreased levels of fishing mortality  
3 through higher survivorship of released fish should lead to  
4 increased fish population abundance." I think we're skipping  
5 from biology to management if we leave those last four words in.  
6 The maker of the motion has to agree to that, but that's just my  
7 two-cents.

8  
9 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Dr. Frazer, you provided the motion to accept  
10 the suggested changes for the revisions of the Gulf Council  
11 policy statement and the Gulf Council purpose statement. The  
12 amended language, as proposed, you have to accept within the  
13 language, and I am correct in that, Madam Chair?

14  
15 **DR. FRAZER:** Sure, and so I will amend the motion, I guess, to  
16 accept the changes provided by Chairman Bosarge.

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** All right. With that, we have this motion on  
19 the board with this discussed terminology and text. Do I have a  
20 second? Second by Mr. Diaz. **Any objection to the proposed  
21 language and suggested changes? The motion passes.** Mr. Atran.

22  
23 **MR. ATRAN:** I was just going to ask -- I pointed out that there  
24 may be an issue with the definition of a venting tool that I  
25 have in here, and could I have editorial license to maybe see if  
26 I could revise that slightly?

27  
28 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** I see no problem, and that doesn't need a  
29 motion for editorial license, and so sure. All right. I assume  
30 that concludes Item IV?

31  
32 **MR. ATRAN:** It does unless you wanted to see that discard  
33 information.

34  
35 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** I'm sorry. Can you continue with the  
36 discards?

37  
38 **MR. ATRAN:** Okay. Well, if we could put up, as I said, Tab E,  
39 Number 4(a), and it's just a couple of slides, and they might  
40 end up being useful in the outreach program. As I said, this is  
41 discard data that came out of SEDAR 31, which was done in 2013  
42 using data through 2011.

43  
44 There is a new red snapper stock assessment underway right now,  
45 and it's not currently available. It will be available in June,  
46 and so just -- Don't try to read this, but I was trying to take  
47 information from about three or four separate tables and  
48 consolidate it into one table, and this is just the different

1 types of fishing, MRIP east, MRIP west, Texas data, headboat  
2 east, headboat west, and what the estimated total discards, and  
3 that includes all fish that went back overboard alive, were for  
4 each of these from 1981 to 2011.

5  
6 The highlighted years at the bottom, 2008 to 2011, are the years  
7 when we had a venting tool requirement, and, rather than try to  
8 read all those numbers, I've got a simplified graph on the next  
9 slide, and this shows -- What I did was I took the total number  
10 of discards and I multiplied that by the discard mortality rate  
11 to calculate what the dead discards were for each of those  
12 years, and then I just plotted those out.

13  
14 This is for the recreational fishery, and you can see that,  
15 starting around 1989 or so, which was really when our first  
16 rebuilding plan began, there is a pretty consistent increase in  
17 dead discards, which was probably related to just an overall  
18 increase in the stock abundance, and, then, in 2008, when the  
19 venting tool requirement went in, the stock assessment folks  
20 assumed there would be a reduction in the number of dead  
21 discards due to that requirement, and you can see there was a  
22 dramatic drop in the estimated dead discards.

23  
24 Then there was another smaller drop in 2010 that was probably  
25 related to the oil spill, but, in general, it looks like we've  
26 gotten a huge reduction just from the use of venting tools, and  
27 the venting tool requirement was withdrawn in 2012, and so now  
28 we're talking about an outreach program not to require the use  
29 of venting tools or descending devices, but to encourage their  
30 use and provide outreach programs to let people know the  
31 benefits. The descending devices, I don't think they were that  
32 popular in these previous years, but they seem to be becoming  
33 more and more popular, and so it looks like maybe we can get  
34 those discards down even further.

35  
36 The next slide shows the commercial numbers. Again, we just had  
37 that from 2007 through 2011, and that was divided into handline  
38 east and handline west and longline east and longline west.  
39 Each of these had a separate discard mortality rate associated  
40 with them, which is why they had to be in separate columns, and  
41 the far-right column was the sum of those.

42  
43 Now, if we go to the graph of this data, you don't see -- Of  
44 course, this is fewer years than we had for recreational, but  
45 you don't see that pattern that we saw in the recreational  
46 sector. We actually saw, if anything, maybe a spike in 2009,  
47 which was the second year after venting was required, and then  
48 we started to see a gradual decrease, and so I don't know what

1 to make of this, if that's just noise or if we just don't have  
2 enough data to be able to see any trends, but we were not seeing  
3 in the commercial sector the same results that we were seeing in  
4 the recreational sector.

5

6 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Dr. Stunz.

7

8 **DR. STUNZ:** Thanks, Steven. I really appreciate you gathering  
9 this information, and I know, just from myself looking through  
10 it, how difficult it is to pull all of that together, and I  
11 think that this type of information is important for us around  
12 this table, but, also, I wanted to add one thing to it, because  
13 it may not be as appropriate for the general public looking at  
14 this that is not as familiar with these documents like we are.

15

16 The reason I am bringing this up is because I had some  
17 discussions with Emily, talking about outreach plans and that  
18 sort of thing, and the number-one question I think people are  
19 going to ask, if she was to give a presentation, is, okay,  
20 what's the discard mortality like, how many fish are we talking  
21 about, and then how does that change if I choose to vent or  
22 descend or whatever, and, while that is embedded in this  
23 information that Steven has here, I don't think it's quite  
24 digestible for someone like that.

25

26 She is surely going to get that, and, I mean, we don't want to  
27 have this policy backfire and not have that information readily  
28 available when this occurs, and so I'm recommending that -- I  
29 have a motion prepared for that, if necessary, and I think that  
30 will really help, and so I have two motions, but, if it's  
31 appropriate for me, Mr. Chairman, to make a motion now.

32

33 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Sure.

34

35 **DR. STUNZ:** Essentially, what I'm asking, while they're pulling  
36 this up, is that the staff condense this down into an easily  
37 digestible table. For example, Steven, you had years from the  
38 1980s or something, and I don't remember, up to our latest data,  
39 and that's probably a little too much, and then venting occurred  
40 there, and you had huge drops, and so I'm thinking maybe average  
41 that, or perhaps maybe Clay could tell us, and I'm not sure, in  
42 the new assessment what discard mortality is being used, since  
43 that will be out soon, as all of this is happening, but that's  
44 essentially what this -- It will just provide all this  
45 information in sort of a one-stop shop.

46

47 **I am talking about red snapper, and then there's a problem if**  
48 **you go beyond red snapper to other key reef species, because**

1 that data may or may not be as refined and available, and so I  
2 know there is some issues with that, but that's the motion, and  
3 I can explain that further, if you want me to read it into the  
4 record.

5  
6 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** That's all right. We have a motion on the  
7 board to have staff provide a summary table that includes  
8 discard mortality estimates used in the current assessment and  
9 average, approximately five years, discards by sector (private  
10 recreational, for-hire, headboat, and commercial) for red  
11 snapper and other key reef species (as available). That's the  
12 motion on the board. Do I have a second for discussion? It's  
13 seconded by Mr. Anson. Is there discussion? Mr. Anson.

14  
15 **MR. ANSON:** Well, I guess -- Greg, you probably were going to  
16 talk about it a little bit more, but I guess I don't want to --  
17 I hate to use the phrase, but I don't want to dumb it down too  
18 much if there's other information in how it's presented and  
19 everything, and it might -- There is some interpretation there,  
20 I guess, that could be lost, or the product may not be as useful  
21 if you put too much constraint on how that will shape, and I  
22 know we'll probably review it and everything, but maybe if you  
23 wanted to talk about that, if you had other ideas.

24  
25 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Dr. Stunz.

26  
27 **DR. STUNZ:** Well, I'm happy to restructure the motion, and I  
28 certainly don't want to dumb it down, but, right now, you sort  
29 of have to go to four different documents, and you've got  
30 different fleets, and it's just not right there front and  
31 center, and that's what I'm looking for. If we want to give the  
32 staff editorial license or whatever to do what they think, but  
33 I'm looking for a little bit more simplified picture of what's  
34 going on. I noticed that I have a little bit of bad grammar in  
35 that motion there that I might need to fix, but, anyway, I'm  
36 happy to do that.

37  
38 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** All right. We have a motion on the board with  
39 some editorial license, and we are looking for a second at this  
40 point. I'm sorry. It was seconded. I apologize. Dr. Frazer.

41  
42 **DR. FRAZER:** I was just wondering real quick, Steven, if we  
43 could go back to those two figures that were up there, and I was  
44 just unclear. Those were the number of discards and not the  
45 number of dead discards, and is that correct?

46  
47 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Mr. Atran.

1 **MR. ATRAN:** No, the graphs were the number of dead discards.  
2 The tables included total discards, the mortality rate, the  
3 discard mortality rate, and then multiplying those together to  
4 get the dead discards, but these graphs were just dead discards.  
5

6 **DR. FRAZER:** Okay, and the reason I just wanted to draw  
7 attention to that, as we move forward, is those were number of  
8 fishes, but, when you put weight to those fishes, they're a  
9 significant amount of the overall quota. They are millions and  
10 millions of pounds of fish that are being lost.  
11

12 **MR. ATRAN:** I think most of the discards are assumed to be  
13 undersized fish, although some of them may be out of season or  
14 the commercial guys didn't have the IFQ allocations, but I think  
15 the majority of them are considered to be undersized fish, and  
16 so it's a large number of fish, but the average size and weight  
17 per fish is probably less than that of the retained fish. It's  
18 too bad that Dr. Porch isn't in the room. He might be able to  
19 explain what's going on with the stock assessment.  
20

21 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Dr. Stunz, I do want to remind you that we're  
22 getting real far behind schedule, and I would love to vote on  
23 this one and then move on, because we still have some meat left  
24 on the bone for Sustainable Fisheries. Dr. Stunz.  
25

26 **DR. STUNZ:** Thanks, Dr. Mickle. I am not helping your agenda  
27 timeline here, but Tom is hitting on a really important aspect  
28 here, and this is why I'm saying to refine these tables, and so  
29 Steven reported this sort of in dead discards, but it's still  
30 even really confusing to me. You've got total discards and then  
31 all the whatever, the B1 and B2 and sub-categories within that,  
32 and I don't really even understand, when you release a live fish  
33 that's not part of some of those estimates, what does that  
34 really mean.  
35

36 Does that mean a fish that wouldn't have needed to be vented or  
37 discarded? I don't know, and this fish might die, and so, in  
38 other words, I don't know what number we should be -- In other  
39 words, we probably should be venting or descending all of the  
40 fish that need it.  
41

42 In other words, there is some apples-and-oranges comparisons  
43 there that we needed to work through, and I'm not going to go  
44 through the whole thing here, but, whether you're talking about  
45 released alive or released dead, does that released dead that  
46 you used, were those going to die no matter what you do, and so  
47 it's pointless, and so I don't know. There is some nuances that  
48 I think we need to work out with those data, and Tom was really

1 getting to that, that it's beyond what's here.

2

3 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Mr. Anson, quickly.

4

5 **MR. ANSON:** I understand we're under some time constraint, but,  
6 to that point, and maybe to Dr. Frazer's point, is there might  
7 have been some analysis done, or maybe it's relatively easy, and  
8 Clay is not here to talk about it, but, as far as the impact, if  
9 we determine what it is actually and what the benefits are from  
10 the venting and then maybe do a projection as to what those fish  
11 would have done if they were to -- If they were actually  
12 quantifiable and they stayed in the water, what do they  
13 contribute to the annual catch limit, going back in time and  
14 then coming up with ACLs and such, a comparison. If you had not  
15 done that, or if there was no venting during that time period,  
16 what would have been the outcome?

17

18 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Dr. Stunz, to that point?

19

20 **DR. STUNZ:** Kevin, you're jumping ahead to my next motion here,  
21 which is still going to slow us down.

22

23 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** All right, and so we have a motion on the  
24 board, and it's been seconded and discussed. **Is there any**  
25 **opposition to the motion? The motion carries.**

26

27 All right. I guess the discussion at this point sounds like  
28 there is an additional motion to be made. Is there any other  
29 motions to be made?

30

31 **DR. STUNZ:** Okay, and hopefully this one will be quick, because  
32 it's just a follow-up, and I didn't want to make this complex  
33 motion. They are pulling it up on the board.

34

35 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Thank you, Dr. Stunz, for emailing them to  
36 make this faster.

37

38 **DR. STUNZ:** While they're pulling it up, I put the word  
39 "preliminary" in here intentionally, because this could be quite  
40 the challenge, but I think exactly what Kevin was pointing out,  
41 that we needed to get a little more information about what these  
42 mortality rates look like, and so, if you want me to read it --

43

44 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** I will read the motion. Have staff provide a  
45 preliminary estimate of the reduction in mortality (numbers of  
46 fish) for red snapper and other key reef species (as available)  
47 by sector that may occur if these devices were actively used in  
48 the fishery. Do we have a second for this motion for

1 discussion? It's seconded by Mr. Anson. Is there any  
2 discussion? Mr. Anson.

3  
4 **MR. ANSON:** I guess my point was to see if the ACL could have  
5 been calculated assuming the mortality without the use of  
6 venting tools and then what that projection would have been  
7 based on the other available data that was already collected,  
8 and so you're just putting the fish back in the water or taking  
9 out more fish, depending on how you look at it, but, at this  
10 point, if there was a reduction in the number of fish that were  
11 killed because of the use of the venting tool, and if we had not  
12 used a venting tool during that time period it would have caused  
13 increased mortality, which then would have slowed the rebuilding  
14 plan and all that stuff that goes with it, and so, to me, it  
15 seems like it would be an easy analysis, but it takes the staff  
16 time to do that, to go back in time and then change those  
17 numbers to make that, and that's a little bit more than what you  
18 have provided here, from what I'm reading.

19  
20 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Dr. Simmons.

21  
22 **DR. SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. After this motion passes, I  
23 just had some questions. Is this going in the actual policy  
24 statement, or will this in the outreach materials, or you would  
25 like to see this as a stand-alone document before it goes into  
26 the outreach materials? I am just not quite clear on what you  
27 would like to see next with this.

28  
29 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Dr. Stunz, to that point.

30  
31 **DR. STUNZ:** I wasn't envisioning -- I would like to see the  
32 policy document move on from some of this, but I don't know how  
33 long it would take. I guess it just depends on what the timing  
34 is like. If it's available, yes, but I wouldn't want it to slow  
35 it down at all. Kevin, I'm happy for a friendly amendment if  
36 you want to get your thoughts into that motion there, but I'm  
37 not sure how to structure that.

38  
39 **MR. ANSON:** Well, thank you for the offer. In lieu of time, and  
40 in lieu of Dr. Porch not being at the table to kind of get some  
41 feedback as to staff time, I will talk to him between now and  
42 when we come back with the committee report and maybe add to  
43 this or a new motion.

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** All right. With that, we have a motion on the  
46 board. We have a second and discussion. **Is there any**  
47 **opposition to the motion? The motion carries.** Ms. Bosarge.

48

1 **MS. BOSARGE:** Number one, I do want to keep plugging along.  
2 We're going to go until at least twelve o'clock, and that still  
3 gives you and an hour-and-a-half lunch break, but I was going to  
4 bring this up earlier, and I didn't want to interrupt  
5 discussion.

6  
7 The numbers you put up on the commercial side only went back to  
8 2007, and you were talking about how there really wasn't a lot  
9 of trend that you could see. I think, if you're going look at  
10 commercial discards, that you have to go back pre-IFQ, because  
11 that's where you see your trend. That's where you see your  
12 change.

13  
14 There was a change in discards after the change in management,  
15 which, on the commercial side, was an IFQ system, and so, if you  
16 want to try and see how many fish were saved and changes were  
17 made by some change in management on the recreational side, the  
18 change in management would have been implementing some  
19 descending device rules and the change in management on the  
20 commercial side was the IFQ, which had an impact on discards.

21  
22 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Mr. Atran.

23  
24 **MR. ATRAN:** Actually, wasn't the red snapper IFQ program  
25 implemented in 2010, or am I incorrect?

26  
27 **UNIDENTIFIED:** It was 2007.

28  
29 **MR. ATRAN:** Okay, and so we would have to go back further.

30  
31 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Good point, Madam Chair. That makes a lot of  
32 sense. All right. Any other further discussion? Dr. Simmons.

33  
34 **DR. SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think we are going to  
35 have to have the Science Center staff help us with this,  
36 especially for red snapper, because, looking at the assessment,  
37 they have estimates of discard mortality by east and west for  
38 the various components by depth, et cetera, venting and non-  
39 venting, but I don't know what years of information that  
40 includes to make those comparisons, and I'm not sure exactly how  
41 that's been updated in the standard assessment, and so we most  
42 definitely will have to reach out to the Science Center staff  
43 and get some help with this, I think especially for red snapper,  
44 because it gets fairly complicated pretty quickly.

45  
46 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** It does. Thank you for that. All right. I  
47 think, with additional discussion, I suggest we carry to Full  
48 Council on that and move on. I see that should be our

1 conclusion on Item IV. Moving on to Item V, Five-Year Review of  
2 Inclusion/Exclusion of Species and Species Groupings in Fishery  
3 Management Plans, Tab E, Number 5, Mr. Atran.

4  
5 **FIVE-YEAR REVIEW OF INCLUSION/EXCLUSION OF SPECIES AND SPECIES**  
6 **GROUPINGS IN FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLANS**  
7

8 **MR. ATRAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is on the agenda  
9 because, back in 2011, when we were working on the Generic  
10 Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures Amendment, we  
11 took a number of species out of federal management. I believe  
12 there were roughly a dozen or so species all together, and the  
13 majority of them were removed because they were species that had  
14 very low landings and they weren't targeted species, and they  
15 weren't considered by the SSC to be in any danger of undergoing  
16 overfishing.

17  
18 We also had some other reasons. The Stone Crab FMP was  
19 withdrawn in its entirety, because it was basically redundant  
20 with the stone crab program that the State of Florida was using,  
21 and I think there were a couple of other reason for some other  
22 species over time, and so the council, realizing that it was  
23 removing a bunch of species from management in the Generic  
24 ACL/AM Amendment, felt that they were justified. However, they  
25 wanted to have a periodic review, about every five years, of the  
26 species that we have under management to determine whether or  
27 not we needed to add or remove any species.

28  
29 Five years was actually last year, and so we're a little late on  
30 the start of this, but I started out by going to the SSC, and I  
31 put together a list, which is on the screen right now and in  
32 your handout materials, and I tracked down every species in  
33 every FMP that we have ever had listed in the fishery, and the  
34 ones in yellow are the ones that are still listed as being under  
35 management, and the ones in white are ones that had been put in  
36 either in the original FMP or sometime later and then  
37 subsequently removed at some point.

38  
39 You can see that we have a lot of species that we no longer  
40 manage that we did at one time, and, where to go beyond this, I  
41 wanted to ask the SSC for their guidance, and, if Dr. Barbieri  
42 is here, rather than steal his thunder -- Do you want to me to  
43 go ahead and fill in for Dr. Barbieri?

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Sure. Go ahead and fill in, and I will try  
46 and go get him.

47  
48 **MR. ATRAN:** Okay. Well, the SSC agreed that this was a good

1 idea, but they felt that -- Well, here he is, if he wants to go  
2 forward. We're talking about the SSC's response to reviewing  
3 the list of species and possible inclusion or exclusion of  
4 species on a five-year basis.

5

6 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Dr. Barbieri.

7

8 **DR. LUIZ BARBIERI:** My apologies, Mr. Chairman. I was  
9 conferring with the Regional Administrator and the Science  
10 Center Director on some issues. Anyway, yes, the SSC looked at  
11 the table, and, as you can see, the table is very extensive, and  
12 there are a number of species there.

13

14 For some, you can actually conduct a quantitative stock  
15 assessment and you can provide catch advice. For many of those,  
16 you don't really have data that is sufficient even to apply  
17 data-poor methodologies, and so it was very difficult without  
18 some criteria from the council that would be recommended to us  
19 as the SSC to be able to work with that and try to provide you  
20 some advice on what species to include and which ones to not  
21 include in the FMPs.

22

23 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Dr. Barbieri, I agree with that, and so it's  
24 to identify -- The purpose of all of this, in my opinion, and I  
25 may be wrong, and I probably am, but, again, it's to identify  
26 species that are becoming more popular and that stay with the  
27 trend of harvest and identify which ones need management, and  
28 then the data requirements come along with that.

29

30 Identifying the trends and identifying a metric of a fishery  
31 coming into potentially a higher landings, and then the data  
32 follows subsequently, that's kind of a paradigm, in my mind, and  
33 so identifying a -- I think it would have to be kind of a  
34 qualitative identifier, right, and am I on the right track here,  
35 in your opinion?

36

37 **DR. BARBIERI:** Yes, and some other councils and SSCs have  
38 actually considered different levels of -- I mean, if you tier  
39 how you manage species and how you assess those species based on  
40 different types of analyses, you can have species that support  
41 quantitative assessments and species that are more, and our ABC  
42 control rule involves that, that provide catch advice based on  
43 average landings or some derivative of that, and then there is  
44 other species that don't actually have enough information  
45 content even for application of those data-poor methodologies.

46

47 In that case, some councils and SSCs have been considering what  
48 they call rumble strips, where you look at landings trends over

1 time and you try to monitor exactly what you, Dr. Mickle,  
2 alluded to, that when landings increase beyond a certain level  
3 that would trigger the need for a more in-depth analysis of that  
4 species, so we could look at what methodologies could be  
5 available to look at those. Was that right?

6  
7 **DR. MICKLE:** Yes, and I was trying to think about different ways  
8 of identifying where the targeted species changes. I am trying  
9 to compartmentalize it, and, when I think of recreational  
10 landings in MRIP, one of the questions in an MRIP survey is did  
11 you target a species, and that's a metric that you have even  
12 before quantitative data is taken in that single survey, and so  
13 you could actually pull that targeted species data out and start  
14 identifying without -- It's going to take five years after a  
15 fishery is identified as becoming a true hot fishery, and so I  
16 think there's ways that the SSC could maybe identify, in certain  
17 sectors, where you could have some of these species put into a -  
18 - Maybe entering as a fishery and to have people start thinking  
19 about doing stock assessment requirements and start vocalizing  
20 what data would be needed for those.

21  
22 Some of these fisheries are highly specialized, as we know, and  
23 the gears are going to be specialized for them, as I see this  
24 list here, and so it's things to think about, but these early  
25 metrics of identifying within the fleets of maybe a fishery has  
26 changed or maybe the target has shifted, because remember the  
27 data always comes second, and my fear is that you miss the ball  
28 because stock assessments take longer than we can fish things  
29 out sometimes.

30  
31 **DR. BARBIERI:** Right, and that is a good point. I don't think  
32 that the committee had received that perspective on the criteria  
33 that -- If that's the criteria that we are being advised to look  
34 at, we can do that, and we can look at landings trends over time  
35 and the development of new fisheries or the increase in  
36 targeting and preference for some species, but then, if all of  
37 those species are already in a fishery management plan, we  
38 didn't really have any criteria outlined to us to say which ones  
39 should be removed, and, if so, why.

40  
41 **MS. MARA LEVY:** Well, so, I'm just going to point out that there  
42 are criteria, and not necessarily for the SSC, meaning the  
43 National Standard Guidelines have a whole section about species  
44 in need of conservation and management and the criteria that the  
45 councils are supposed to be considering when considering whether  
46 to actually add species or remove species.

47  
48 There are criteria there, and it's a non-exhaustive list, but

1 there are factors to consider when you're saying you think a  
2 particular species is in need of conservation and management or  
3 you decide that it's not, and some of it probably goes to what  
4 the SSC does, but some of it doesn't. Some of the things on  
5 this list are not necessarily something the SSC is going to have  
6 a lot of input on.

7

8 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Thank you, Ms. Levy.

9

10 **DR. BARBIERI:** To that point, Mr. Chairman, it might be useful  
11 for the committee -- I mean, if the council, and that would be  
12 my advice to you, that the council revisits this with the SSC,  
13 and, if that's the case, if that goes back to the committee for  
14 further input, it would be good to have that list of existing  
15 criteria in NS 1 discussed by all of you.

16

17 I know that, for example, there are issues with how many of the  
18 species that qualify as ecosystem components -- There are  
19 specific criteria for that as well, what qualifies as managed  
20 species under a management unit versus just ecosystem components  
21 or not managed at all.

22

23 If there is something to that point that can be sent to us, we  
24 can look at the issues that are pertinent to our input, in terms  
25 of landing trends and targeting other things like this, but then  
26 provide some advice on the other criteria, as outlined in NS 1.

27

28 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Thank you for that. To that point, Ms. Guyas?

29

30 **MS. MARTHA GUYAS:** Yes, and thanks for recognizing me, because  
31 I'm not on the committee, but Mara brought up what I was going  
32 to bring up, and so, in my mind, this probably maybe doesn't  
33 start with the SSC. There needs to be some work done on the  
34 frontend first, and I don't know if it's council staff or  
35 whatever, going through that list of NS 1 criteria.

36

37 It includes things like is a state managing out in federal  
38 waters for that species, and so there's going to be a lot of  
39 information that probably SSC members are not going to have at  
40 their fingertips, but would be part of that decision, or things  
41 that they would need to consider, and so thanks.

42

43 **DR. BARBIERI:** Mr. Chairman, just briefly, that is exactly the  
44 point that I was trying to make, without being that direct, is  
45 that basically the SSC felt that, first, before we look into  
46 those issues of landings trends or rumble strips or whatever, or  
47 the quantitative, science-based criteria, it would be good to  
48 have from you an evaluation of the policy issues and the

1 criteria for the stocks that you feel should be managed by the  
2 council, and then we can provide technical support on the other  
3 end.

4  
5 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** All right. Thank you, Dr. Barbieri. I  
6 suggest we bring this up at Full Council to continue on. I  
7 appreciate your input.

8  
9 **DR. BARBIERI:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10  
11 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Mr. Atran.

12  
13 **MR. ATRAN:** I have nothing further on this, other than to say  
14 that what Dr. Barbieri and what a lot of you talked about -- I  
15 actually had some of those in mind, but I wanted to leave things  
16 wide open for the SSC when I brought this in. I regarded the  
17 meeting, this last SSC meeting, to be just purely an  
18 introduction to the issue, something we have never discussed  
19 before, and so I think we've got a lot of good guidance on how  
20 to proceed out of this discussion, and maybe at Full Council as  
21 well.

22  
23 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Thank you, Mr. Atran. Madam Chair is waving  
24 at me to put the brakes on, and so, at this point, I suggest  
25 turning it over to Madam Chair for lunch.

26  
27 **MR. BOSARGE:** I'm going to let you all go to lunch, and so we're  
28 going to have a lunch break from right now, 12:00, to 1:30.  
29 When we come back at 1:30, we just have one thing left on this  
30 agenda, and we'll pick that up and then move on. Thanks. 1:30.

31  
32 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed for lunch on April 17, 2018.)

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34 - - -

35  
36 April 17, 2018

37  
38 TUESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

39  
40 - - -

41  
42 The Sustainable Fisheries Committee of the Gulf of Mexico  
43 Fishery Management Council reconvened at the Marriott Courtyard,  
44 Gulfport Mississippi, Tuesday afternoon, April 17, 2018, and was  
45 called to order by Chairman Paul Mickle.

46  
47 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** We have two items left, and, on the agenda,  
48 Item V(a), SSC Comments, Tab B, Number 13, and I think Dr.

1 Barbieri -- I'm sorry. We're at Agenda Item VI, Discussion of  
2 Historical Captain Permits, Tab E, Number 6, and Dr. Froeschke.

3  
4 **DISCUSSION OF HISTORICAL CAPTAIN PERMITS**  
5

6 **DR. JOHN FROESCHKE:** Good afternoon. At the last meeting, you  
7 all asked for some options to think about regarding historical  
8 captain permits and the possibility of converting them to  
9 regular for-hire permits, and so we put together a short  
10 PowerPoint with a few items for discussion, the idea that we'll  
11 get your sort of feedback and develop this into something that  
12 you can look at at the next meeting.

13  
14 I put up here the motion made at the January meeting that  
15 essentially asked us to develop an action that considers  
16 removing the historical captain endorsement and converting these  
17 to a regular for-hire permit that is fully transferable, and so  
18 just a little bit of background on what is a historical captain.

19  
20 This title was created during the permit moratorium, and it was  
21 issued through that process in part to reduce vessel capacity  
22 and effort in the for-hire fishery, because, at the time, it was  
23 thought to be overcapitalized, and there was a subset of for-  
24 hire operators that did not own their own vessel and would not  
25 have met the criterion to remain in the for-hire fleet without  
26 this, essentially because they weren't operating on their own  
27 vessel, and so there was some criteria regarding a control date,  
28 and they had to operate as a captain on a federally-permitted  
29 for-hire vessel in the Gulf reef fish or CMP fishery.

30  
31 Essentially, they weren't operating their own boat, and so  
32 that's the primary thing, and then they derived at least 25  
33 percent of their income from this, and so the idea of the  
34 moratorium, as I indicated, was to cap both the effort and the  
35 passenger capacity, and so remember that, because we're going to  
36 come back to that a little bit later. One of the constraints on  
37 these historical captain permits is they're not transferable in  
38 the same way that a for-hire permit is.

39  
40 Just how many people does this affect or how many permits, and  
41 it's a small universe. I put together a small table here and  
42 two categories, and so, on the top row, there is reef fish, and  
43 the second row is the CMP, and the active is the permits that  
44 are just currently active, and then the expired are expired, but  
45 they're within the period which they could be renewed, and so  
46 there is active, expired, and terminated, and so those six  
47 permits essentially could be in the mail.

1 On the bottom, what you will see is it says twenty-five unique  
2 permits. If you add the columns, you will see, for example, on  
3 the active, there are nineteen reef fish and eighteen CMP. All  
4 of those eighteen CMP operators also have a reef fish permit,  
5 and so, in terms of twenty-five unique permit holders, you've  
6 got to sum the rows, and so, for example, there are nineteen  
7 active reef fish and six expired, and that's a total of twenty-  
8 five, and so it's twenty-five people. There is one person that  
9 has a reef fish but not a CMP, and that's the difference.

10  
11 What are the limitations of a historical permit, and this is  
12 sort of the rationale of why they might want to be converted, in  
13 terms of transferability, a standard for-hire permit is fully  
14 transferable, whereas a historical captain permit is not.

15  
16 In terms of the value -- Because it is fully transferable, a  
17 for-hire permit can be sold, and there is quite a bit of value  
18 to this, whereas the historical captain essentially doesn't have  
19 any value, and so another difference is that, for the historical  
20 captain permit, they have to be on the boat actively fishing.  
21 They can't hire someone to fish on a vessel they own.

22  
23 In terms of the passenger capacity, that last row, I just put  
24 variable, and what that means is that the passenger capacity was  
25 assigned based on the capacity of the vessel at the time the  
26 permit was issued, and so it ranges from a six-pack to over a  
27 hundred passengers, in some cases. However, this was done a  
28 long time ago, and so the passenger capacity of the vessel  
29 they're on now may or may not be different from what it was at  
30 the time it was issued.

31  
32 This idea of permit capacity is something for you all to think  
33 about, and, if you recall, the options were both the number of  
34 vessels and the passenger capacity, and so, if you convert it,  
35 perhaps on one hand you are increasing the number of vessels,  
36 which is sort of opposite of the concept of reducing capacity,  
37 but, on the other hand, you could reduce the passenger capacity  
38 on the permits if you wanted.

39  
40 I have a little chart here that I will show you, but the options  
41 to think about is, one, each of these historical captain permits  
42 has a passenger capacity assigned to it now, and so, one, if you  
43 wanted to convert them, you could just convert them and keep  
44 that.

45  
46 A second option is, like I mentioned, the vessel they are  
47 working on now may have a different capacity, either lower or  
48 higher than when the vessel was originally assigned, and so you

1 could use that vessel capacity, or you could limit it to a six  
2 pack, and those are just some of the options that we came up  
3 with, and so what I've done here is I put together a little  
4 chart down here on the bottom, and so, if you look, I believe  
5 there are thirty-seven bars across the X-axis.

6  
7 What those are, the blue bars represent the capacity, and so  
8 each bar is an individual vessel, and I didn't put IDs or  
9 anything, because it doesn't matter. Each of the blue bars  
10 represent the passenger capacity that's represented on the  
11 permit. In most cases, you don't see the blue bar, because the  
12 green bar is what the current vessel capacity is, and so many of  
13 these are six-packs, but what you will see is sometimes those  
14 little tall blue bars, and that means that there are a few cases  
15 where they have quite large permits, or they could carry them,  
16 but they're on a six-pack vessel.

17  
18 That's sort of the idea that those tall blue bars perhaps could  
19 be converted equal to the green bar, and you would be  
20 effectively reducing passenger capacity, but with a small  
21 increase in the number of vessels.

22  
23 In terms of transferability, the options that we at the IPT  
24 level discussed are, one, this concept of fully transferable,  
25 and what we mean by that is essentially exactly how the for-hire  
26 permits are now. A second option, perhaps a little more  
27 restrictive, is to transfer these permits to a family member,  
28 such as father/son or father/daughter, something that could keep  
29 it in the family, but it would be less transferable than a full  
30 for-hire.

31  
32 We also talked about making this retroactive, and so, if there  
33 was someone, a widow or something, of someone who was deceased,  
34 allowing that, and that would require probably some control date  
35 to set how far back you looked.

36  
37 Then a fourth option is, if there was some discussion of  
38 converting the permit capacity to some lower number -- For  
39 example, all these were converted, but only as a six-pack vessel  
40 or something, and that would give the option of these captains  
41 could maintain their historical captain permit indefinitely if  
42 they had a larger capacity, and so those are the things that we  
43 talked about.

44  
45 What we're asking here is sort of your feedback, if you think  
46 those are the right things to think about, and what we've talked  
47 about as next steps is we could either bring back a draft  
48 document for you to look at at the next meeting, depending on

1 how involved in the CE/EA/EIS bit, it could be a CE, and so we  
2 could move this along pretty quickly if it doesn't get too  
3 complicated, and so, again, I'm looking for your feedback, and  
4 I'm happy to answer any questions.

5  
6 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Thank you, Dr. Froeschke. Any comments or  
7 questions? Mr. Diaz.

8  
9 **MR. DIAZ:** I will try to give a little bit of comment about what  
10 I'm thinking. Me and Dr. Mickle had a discussion about this the  
11 other day, and I don't really like the idea about making them  
12 take a smaller permit. To me, and this is just me talking, I  
13 think what capacity they have for that vessel as of today, as of  
14 now, where we don't increase capacity, but I don't want to put  
15 them in a situation where we hurt them, either.

16  
17 This is something we're trying to convert them over to where  
18 they're comparable to the normal permits, and so that's kind of  
19 where I'm thinking with it, just keep the effort where it's at  
20 now, but not increase it, but not try to hurt them and decrease  
21 it, and, in my mind, I would think that it would be best to make  
22 them fully transferable, like they are comparable to the regular  
23 permits.

24  
25 As far as going back in time, to do control dates, just hearing  
26 you say that for the first time, that doesn't appeal to me that  
27 much, because, if we went back a month, there would be somebody  
28 that wants to go back two months. If we went back two months,  
29 somebody would want us to go back six months, and it seems like  
30 make it be effective from this point forward and not look  
31 backwards, and that seems like the proper way to do it to me,  
32 and so that's what I am thinking about as you go through your  
33 presentation. I hope that helps a little bit, John. Thank you.

34  
35 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Yes, that's helpful, because, at this point,  
36 we're just trying to make sure that we have a range of  
37 alternatives that encapsulate what it is that you're thinking.

38  
39 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Thank you. All right. That brings us on to  
40 Item Number VII, Other Business. Is there any other business to  
41 discuss within this committee? Mr. Anson.

42  
43 **MR. ANSON:** Not necessarily other business, but, just to go back  
44 to the conversation we had prior to lunch, and Dr. Stunz brought  
45 up the motions relative to the use of the venting tools and the  
46 outreach and all that stuff, and Dr. Porch wasn't in the room at  
47 the time we had that discussion, and I brought up the additional  
48 materials, outreach materials, that could be provided based on

1 calculating the effects of the venting tool or non-use of  
2 venting tools and its impacts on discard mortality.

3  
4 I had a chance to briefly talk with Dr. Porch right before the  
5 committee meeting readjourned, and I think, Dr. Porch, you have  
6 some information on that, as to whether or not there is data  
7 available as to what impact it has on the ABC and such, if you  
8 could elaborate. Thank you.

9  
10 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Dr. Porch.

11  
12 **DR. CLAY PORCH:** Sure. The assessment looked at a couple of  
13 different discard mortality rates, basically eleven-point-  
14 something percent and then the 15 percent, and it potentially  
15 could look at even others in a separate paper.

16  
17 That hasn't been translated to ABC advice yet. That is actually  
18 in process right now, and so that should come out shortly. The  
19 assessment document is finished and about ready to be  
20 distributed, and so the next phase is developing the ABC advice,  
21 and that won't be long in coming.

22  
23 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** Thank you, Dr. Porch. Mr. Anson.

24  
25 **MR. ANSON:** Just to be clear then, as that information becomes  
26 available, I guess the staff can just keep in contact and  
27 realize that data is available and kind of use that for the  
28 development of the outreach materials. Is that right, Dr.  
29 Stunz? Yes.

30  
31 **CHAIRMAN MICKLE:** All right. Is there other business at this  
32 point? All right. Thank you. This concludes the Committee on  
33 Sustainable Fisheries.

34  
35 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on April 17, 2018.)

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37 - - -