

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

GULF SEDAR COMMITTEE

Marriott Plaza

San Antonio, Texas

August 7, 2017

**VOTING MEMBERS**

- 10 Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi
- 11 Pamela Dana.....Florida
- 12 John Greene.....Alabama
- 13 Campo Matens.....Louisiana

**NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

- 16 Kevin Anson (designee for Chris Blankenship).....Alabama
- 17 Patrick Banks.....Louisiana
- 18 Doug Boyd.....Texas
- 19 Glenn Constant.....USFWS
- 20 Roy Crabtree.....NMFS, SERO, St. Petersburg, Florida
- 21 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
- 22 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
- 23 Tom Frazer.....Florida
- 24 Martha Guyas (designee for Nick Wiley).....Florida
- 25 LCDR Stacy McNeer.....USCG
- 26 Paul Mickle (designee for Jamie Miller).....Mississippi
- 27 Robin Riechers.....Texas
- 28 John Sanchez.....Florida
- 29 Greg Stunz.....Texas
- 30 Ed Swindell.....Louisiana
- 31 David Walker.....Alabama

**STAFF**

- 34 Steven Atran.....Senior Fishery Biologist
- 35 Assane Diagne.....Economist
- 36 Matt Freeman.....Economist
- 37 John Froeschke.....Fishery Biologist-Statistician
- 38 Douglas Gregory.....Executive Director
- 39 Beth Hager.....Administrative Officer
- 40 Karen Hoak.....Administrative & Financial Assistant
- 41 Ava Lasseter.....Anthropologist
- 42 Emily Muehlstein.....Public Information Officer
- 43 Ryan Rindone.....Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison
- 44 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
- 45 Carrie Simmons.....Deputy Director

**OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

- 48 Pam Anderson.....Panama City Beach, FL

1 Charlie Bergman.....NOAA  
2 Chris Bianchette.....USCG  
3 Eric Brazer.....Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance  
4 Chester Brewer.....SAFMC  
5 Bubba Cochrane.....Galveston, TX  
6 Connor Cochrane.....Galveston, TX  
7 Susan Gerhart.....NMFS  
8 Shepherd Grimes.....NOAA GC  
9 Dylan Hubbard.....Madeira Beach, FL  
10 Mark Hubbard.....Madeira Beach, FL  
11 Alison Johnson.....Oceana  
12 Jason Klosterman.....Destin, FL  
13 Jack McGovern.....NOAA Fisheries  
14 Bonnie Ponwith.....SEFSC  
15 Lance Robinson.....TX  
16 Andrew Ropicki.....Texas Sea Grant  
17 Jessica Stephen.....NMFS  
18 Kevin Wheeler.....  
19 Jim Zurbrick.....Steinhatchee, FL

20  
21  
22

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PAGE 28: Motion to delay the current red snapper standard assessment to 2018 and to make 2017 the terminal year. The motion carried on page 33.

PAGE 36: Motion to move the cobia stock assessment to 2019 with a terminal year of 2017. The motion carried on page 36.

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1 The Gulf SEDAR Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery  
2 Management Council convened at the Marriott Plaza, San Antonio,  
3 Texas, Monday afternoon, August 7, 2017, and was called to order  
4 by Chairman Leann Bosarge.

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

10 **CHAIRMAN LEANN BOSARGE:** The Gulf SEDAR Committee is Tab I in  
11 your briefing book. I am going to chair that session, and are  
12 we ready with Mr. Rindone on the line as well, Doug?  
13

14 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DOUGLAS GREGORY:** Yes.  
15

16 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Rindone is ready when we call on him, and  
17 so Tab I, Number 1, you will find your agenda for our SEDAR  
18 Committee. Are there any additions or revisions to the agenda  
19 as presented? Seeing none, the agenda is approved.  
20

21 Next, on Tab I, Number 2, you will find our minutes from our  
22 June 2017 SEDAR Committee meeting. Were there any revisions to  
23 those minutes? Yes, Mr. Anson.  
24

25 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** I'm not on your committee, but I do have a  
26 few. That would be page 13, line 23, change "that" to "they".  
27 Page 14, line 14, change "them" to "those". Page 15, line 20,  
28 change "tell" to "take". Page 24, line 17, change "dusky" to  
29 "dusty".  
30

31 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. We appreciate it. With  
32 those revisions, is there any opposition to accepting the  
33 minutes as revised? All right. The minutes from our last  
34 meeting are approved. Under Tab I, Number 3, you will find our  
35 Action Guide and Next Steps. Mr. Gregory, I will turn it over  
36 to you, sir.  
37

38 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Okay. As with all the action  
39 guides, this just summarizes what we're trying to do with this  
40 committee meeting. Agenda Item IV, and there's no tab number to  
41 it, as far as in the documents, but this is a Discussion of the  
42 2017 Extended Recreational Red Snapper Season. The timeline  
43 status is immediate, and we included this in SEDAR rather than  
44 under Reef Fish because it could affect the red snapper stock  
45 assessment and the schedule of other assessments.  
46

47 For council input and next steps, one, the National Marine  
48 Fisheries Service Southeast Regional Administrator will present

1 an overview of the 2017 extended recreational red snapper  
2 season. The committee will discuss the potential impacts on the  
3 2018 season and any necessary council actions.

4  
5 Three, the committee will also discuss with the Southeast  
6 Fisheries Center the pros and cons of possibly delaying the red  
7 snapper assessment until the 2017 landings data can be  
8 incorporated or consider requesting a subsequent update  
9 assessment immediately after the 2017 landings are available.

10  
11 Some things for the next steps for the council to consider is to  
12 consider writing a letter to the Department of Commerce  
13 regarding the extended recreational red snapper season  
14 expressing concern about circumventing the Magnuson-Stevens Act  
15 council process and the potential impacts on future ACLs and the  
16 red snapper rebuilding schedule. Two, consider writing a letter  
17 to the Southeast Fisheries Center requesting a delay in the red  
18 snapper assessment, so that 2017 landings can be incorporated.

19  
20 Agenda Item V is the SEDAR Schedule Review, and the timeline  
21 status for that is that we need to have proposed changes  
22 solidified before the September 2017 SEDAR Steering Committee  
23 meeting.

24  
25 The committee will review the current SEDAR schedule and discuss  
26 with the Southeast Fisheries Science Center the feasibility of  
27 including a cobia assessment in 2018 as well as a red grouper  
28 and gray triggerfish assessment. This is a discussion carrying  
29 over from the last meeting, which this has not been resolved.

30  
31 Two, identify modifications to the SEDAR schedule and direct  
32 staff to notify the SEDAR Steering Committee of any suggested  
33 changes. Now, Ryan will walk us through the SEDAR schedule  
34 review after we have the discussion about the 2017 extended red  
35 snapper season.

36  
37 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Crabtree, would you like to start off  
38 that discussion? I'm sure you would.

39  
40 **DISCUSSION OF THE 2017 EXTENDED RECREATIONAL RED SNAPPER SEASON**

41  
42 **DR. ROY CRABTREE:** I don't have a whole lot to say about it.  
43 The Secretary determined and extended the season out to weekends  
44 for what I think became a total of forty-some days. There were  
45 a number of discussions with state fisheries departments on the  
46 course of this, and the states did change their regulations to  
47 adopt a compatible season, at least during the summer months.

1 There was an analysis done that showed that if this approach was  
2 employed for a short period of time that there would be a delay  
3 in the ultimate rebuilding of the stock by as many as six years.  
4 There is some likelihood that the private sector could exceed  
5 its annual catch limit this year, but the analysis shows, and  
6 Bonnie is going to go over this in a moment, that the stock  
7 would continue to grow, although at a more modest pace.

8  
9 The Secretary was concerned about the drop in red snapper  
10 fishing days for private anglers and the economic impact of  
11 that, but also about the current disparate approaches to  
12 management, which, in the Secretary's view, are undermining the  
13 integrity of the management structure, and so the Secretary  
14 determined that the more modest pace of rebuilding was a risk  
15 worth taking in order to achieve closer integration of state and  
16 federal seasons.

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Banks.

19  
20 **MR. PATRICK BANKS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Dr. Crabtree, we  
21 were worried about the same thing when we discussed with the  
22 Secretary, or with his designee, this idea. The concerns about  
23 an overfished situation were brought up by a number of folks on  
24 those calls, but what we have found, since we brought our state  
25 season into alignment with this thirty-nine-day federal season,  
26 is we -- The staff at Wildlife and Fisheries, as well as myself,  
27 we all thought that we would be closing down our complete state  
28 waters within just a few weekends, and it was pretty clear, from  
29 our commission, that they wanted us to stick with our original  
30 self-imposed limit, which certainly had me worried at first,  
31 because I was afraid that, within a couple of weekends, we would  
32 hit that mark and we would make it illegal to hold a red snapper  
33 in state waters and our folks would be sitting at the dock  
34 watching the rest of the Gulf fish for thirty-nine days.

35  
36 What we found is that, either through the weather scenario or  
37 just the fact that folks feel like they have more opportunity,  
38 so that they're not rushing out to get it, our effort has been  
39 extremely low, and I say that just comparative to what we  
40 expected, and so, based on the rates right now, the fishing  
41 pressure and the effort, it looks like we're actually going to  
42 make it to thirty-nine days, at least based on the most recent  
43 effort data we have.

44  
45 This turned into what we thought was going to be within just a  
46 few weekends of hitting our self-imposed limit to we might not  
47 hit it in thirty-nine days and still have the ability to go to a  
48 fall season, and so I was curious to know, from the other

1 states, are you all seeing some of the same thing? Are you all  
2 seeing a lot lower effort than maybe what we all were fearing,  
3 or is what we're seeing in Louisiana similar to what you guys  
4 are seeing in the other states?

5  
6 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Anson.

7  
8 **MR. ANSON:** We had similar thoughts too during those  
9 conversations, of the Gulf exceeding the recreational quota and  
10 such, and we've been monitoring, through Snapper Check, landings  
11 in Alabama, and this is our fourth year, and we noticed a  
12 dramatic shift in effort.

13  
14 It's interesting, because we have the announced three-day season  
15 now that everybody was anticipating would be the only access  
16 really to the fishing for red snapper in federal waters, and  
17 then, with the additional thirty-six days being announced,  
18 spread over a longer time period, obviously, it had a dramatic  
19 shift, and it's approximately -- Our effort has shown, between  
20 the first three days and subsequent through the end of July, for  
21 those weekend days that occurred, transpired, after that point,  
22 the effort went down 67 percent, on average, for those weekends,  
23 for those three days, and so we have noticed a dramatic drop-off  
24 as well, and we're tracking our landings too, to our quota that  
25 we have identified as one of the preferreds that was in the  
26 regional management document, and we're tracking that we will  
27 not reach that quota either, come the 4<sup>th</sup> of September.

28  
29 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Crabtree.

30  
31 **DR. CRABTREE:** We don't expect to have landings from Wave 3, and  
32 so through June, and we will probably get those in mid-August,  
33 and so a couple of weeks from now. There has long been  
34 speculation that, if the season was longer, that you wouldn't  
35 compress the trips as much and some of the derby fishery --  
36 Maybe we'll get some insight to this.

37  
38 For some time, the main thing that would get us to a longer  
39 federal season was closer coordination between the state and  
40 federal seasons, and, if we did have some evidence that the  
41 derby fishing race would cool down after that, and if the states  
42 were willing to make some changes, maybe there is a way from all  
43 of this to get to a longer federal season.

44  
45 Also, bear in mind that the projections we've seen in the past  
46 have shown that, at least in the eastern Gulf, the stock  
47 potentially was going to go down a little bit, because of the  
48 recruitment patterns, but it's interesting that we're hearing



1 that even west of the river that the catch rates have come down  
2 some, and so I imagine we'll have quite a bit more to look at  
3 when we get to the October council meeting.

4  
5 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Stunz.

6  
7 **DR. GREG STUNZ:** I certainly don't want to speak for Lance and  
8 Robin's official state numbers, but, as many of you know, we're  
9 piloting iSnapper along with their program, and have been for a  
10 while now, in a partnership, and, just like what Kevin and  
11 Patrick are saying, we're seeing a substantial drop in effort.

12  
13 I personally was one of those speculators Roy was talking about  
14 that if we could expand the season that you would get a  
15 redirection of effort, and we've still got time to go. Our  
16 first two weeks of that extended season were some pretty bad  
17 weather in this region, and so that was part of it. I don't  
18 expect that to go up too much. We have school starting and  
19 people are thinking about hunting season in this region of the  
20 Gulf, and so we have definitely seen a drop, based on those  
21 numbers, but, again, we still have a ways to go.

22  
23 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Mickle.

24  
25 **DR. PAUL MICKLE:** I guess Mississippi is last, but I will chime  
26 in, similar to Kevin's comments. We had similar trip rates.  
27 They were very high in the beginning, with the three-day season,  
28 and then tapering off later on. In the past, we have expected a  
29 little rise towards the end of the summer, within our past  
30 seasons.

31  
32 Before the kids go back to school, we see an increase in effort  
33 a little bit, and, interestingly, our reporting accuracy,  
34 although it's been high the whole time, when you get into the  
35 dogdays of summer, it gets really, really high, because the real  
36 hardcore offshore anglers are participating, and we've seen that  
37 this month, especially in July, in the reporting.

38  
39 The data increase from longer seasons is really on a bunch of  
40 different levels. You have, of course, more robust data, but  
41 then, when you have the longer seasons, you're having those more  
42 diehard fishermen participating in the fishery and, of course,  
43 in the data programs as well.

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. We have heard from all five of  
46 our states, and we appreciate that.

47  
48 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Not Florida.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Oh, excuse me. Martha, we have not heard  
3 from you. Did you want to contribute?  
4  
5 **MS. MARTHA GUYAS:** I don't have much to contribute at this  
6 point, but that's what I have to say. I don't have the data for  
7 what Florida has done so far.  
8  
9 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Let me give you my data. It's not quite as  
10 rosy. I am encouraged though to hear that it sounds like the  
11 private anglers are going to exceed their quota still, more than  
12 likely, but maybe it won't be as bad and overrun as we thought,  
13 and that's good, and I'm trying to find some good news. You  
14 know I like to stay positive, and so that's good.  
15  
16 I do want to make sure that we stay realistic about this, and we  
17 are still going to exceed some quotas. We read that oath this  
18 morning, and one of the tenets of Magnuson that -- I realize  
19 that we did not do this. This was not the Gulf Council that did  
20 this. This was a decision by the Secretary, but, ultimately,  
21 whatever the fallout is from it, it will be our job to right it  
22 and to make sure that we have sustainable fishery for the  
23 fishery, putting the fish first, and so I do think we have to  
24 discuss it.  
25  
26 I had a gentleman call me, and he's a commercial fisherman, but  
27 it's a commercial fisherman that's not involved in our  
28 management process. He doesn't dabble in politics, and he  
29 doesn't dabble in the management side of things, and very rarely  
30 does he ever call me. I see him socially from time to time, and  
31 we talk, but we don't talk fishing very often, and so for him to  
32 call me was out of the ordinary.  
33  
34 He said, Leann, I just want to tell you what we're seeing out  
35 there. He said -- Let me preface this by kind of telling you  
36 where he fishes and what he's aiming for. He fishes from the  
37 Panhandle of Florida all the way to Louisiana, and so we're  
38 talking about four of the five Gulf states, and so it's not one  
39 little area that he is fishing, and they fish different spots  
40 each time. That's the way they operate. They don't go hit a  
41 spot hard every single time. It's very similar to farming,  
42 where you let the field rest. You do something different and  
43 give that ground a break. They do the same thing.  
44  
45 They fallow certain areas, but he said that we're pulling up at  
46 spot after spot and we're catching lane snapper. We're out  
47 there fishing for red snapper, but we're catching lane snapper.  
48 He said, that tells me that we have an issue here, that we have

1 fished those red snapper down.  
2  
3 His particular boat is I guess what you would call a day boat.  
4 He goes out for one day at a time. It's not a red snapper boat  
5 that goes out multiple days, and he said, we're usually trying  
6 to hit about 1,000 pounds.  
7  
8 I know, for you recreational people in the room, they're going,  
9 oh my God, I would love to catch a thousand pounds, but there's  
10 only about a thousand or less commercial fishermen, and there is  
11 millions of recreational, and so try not to get thrown off by  
12 the 1,000-pound number.  
13  
14 That's about what they're trying to hit in a day's time. He  
15 said, yesterday, we were only able to catch 360 pounds of red  
16 snapper, Leann. They are professionals. This is what they do  
17 for a living, and so, for them to go out and catch a third of  
18 what they're out there to catch, that's something to think about  
19 and to be weary of and to try and be cognizant of as we move  
20 forward and try and think how rosy or not rosy is this picture  
21 of what's going on out there right now.  
22  
23 He said that they tried going out to deeper water. He said, you  
24 know, we're going to go out to some spots that are deeper and  
25 maybe we can get away from a little bit of this pressure that is  
26 being put on these sites by this extended season. He said, we  
27 went to deeper water and the same thing.  
28  
29 He said that, really, besides that, the other major thing that  
30 concerned him were the discards that he was seeing. He said  
31 that he was seeing five to six red snapper floating behind some  
32 of these -- I don't want to make this a recreational/commercial  
33 battle. I don't, but I need to put this on the record, so that  
34 we're all understanding what's being seen out there.  
35  
36 He said, I see five to six snapper floating behind the boat, and  
37 I said, oh my gosh, are we to the point that we're catching that  
38 many undersized fish before we get a legal-sized fish? He said,  
39 no, Leann, that's why I am telling you this. They are legal-  
40 sized fish that are floating behind the boat, and so I think  
41 we've got keep our discards in mind as we go through this  
42 process and what effect that's having on the stock, and I don't  
43 say that to put some negative impetus on it, but more to look  
44 for the positive, maybe, in some of the ideas that Dr. Stunz  
45 passed around the table at our last meeting.  
46  
47 Some of these barotrauma devices may become much more important  
48 and much more useful if this is the road that we're going to be

1 taking down, and we need to keep those kinds of things in mind,  
2 and so, again, we're trying to find the positive in this, right?

3  
4 I think the part that -- This is me speaking as a council member  
5 and not as your Chairman. The thing that bothers me most about  
6 the thirty-nine-day season, or the extension of the season, is I  
7 hope that something positive comes out of it. I hope that maybe  
8 we will see that it's okay to unroll that season back out and  
9 that effort will not be as great as it was in the three-day  
10 season and everything will be fine. That would be wonderful.

11  
12 My issue is that it circumvents the system that everybody else  
13 has to live by. It circumvents the science. That should have  
14 been vetted through our scientific bodies. They should have  
15 looked at that and said, you know what, yes, we think there is  
16 some room here and they looked at all the information and came  
17 back to us and not on a whim of, well, we think it will work and  
18 it's worth the risk. Well, what if it doesn't, because there  
19 are more people involved than just the portion that you're  
20 looking at that are going to have to pay the price if it doesn't  
21 work.

22  
23 I understand that getting down to a three-day season that many  
24 people feel that's unacceptable, and I get that. That's pretty  
25 tough. That's a tough pill to swallow, but I would like to  
26 remind people that there were other fisheries that went down  
27 that same road.

28  
29 The commercial fishery, in 1990, had a 365-day season. In 1998,  
30 it was down to sixty-seven days. In 1999, it was down to sixty-  
31 four days. In 2000, it was down to fifty-nine days, and,  
32 actually, in 1990, when they had a year-round season, in 1994,  
33 they got down to a little over a two-month season, and so they  
34 went from twelve months to two months.

35  
36 Now, if we had changed nothing about the way that forecasted  
37 their season, based on their projections, if we were still  
38 managing in that same way, what kind of season do you think the  
39 commercial fishermen would have right now? Probably less than  
40 three days, but we didn't. They said, man, this is  
41 unacceptable, and we can't live with this. We can't deal with a  
42 two-month season and seeing it going down further and further  
43 every year. We've got to try something different.

44  
45 There was not a circumvention of the system. It was through  
46 this body, around this table. It was not pleasant. It was  
47 painful for a lot of people. My father used to be a red snapper  
48 fisherman. He shrimped during part of the year and he did

1 fishing during the other part of the year.

2  
3 We implemented a system that made it where it wasn't really  
4 economical for him anymore to fish red snapper part-time, and so  
5 he's one of those fishermen that people say got driven out of  
6 the system, and so it wasn't -- Now, looking back, he will tell  
7 you that was the right thing to do. We had too many hooks out  
8 there, and we had to do something.

9  
10 If somebody had to survive and be able to continue to fish that  
11 species, it should have been those men that relied on it for  
12 their entire livelihood and not me who had something over here  
13 that I could fall back on, but the point is we changed the  
14 system. We didn't circumvent it. We didn't throw the science  
15 out the window when we didn't like what it said.

16  
17 We have no control over what happened, but I hope that we will  
18 look at it and be realistic about it and take the things -- The  
19 Secretary said that consistency -- The reasons he was doing  
20 this, right, is because consistency was important between the  
21 states and the fed. I guess I see it as the states and this  
22 council, because we're kind of the federal entity, right? That  
23 consistency is important. We need to focus on that, and we need  
24 to make sure that gets better. That's what I try and take away  
25 from this.

26  
27 He said that there is some data issues, and the states have all  
28 implemented their own data collection programs, but he says that  
29 that's not the most efficient way to go about it. All right.  
30 Well, if that was one of the reasons for this, and it  
31 circumvented the system for something like that, then it's time  
32 for us to do our own data collection on the federal side around  
33 this table. If that was one of his issues, it's an issue with  
34 the recreational public for sure, and okay. That's it. We're  
35 not going to wait anymore for the states to get up and do our  
36 data collection for us. We'll do it right here. We'll make it  
37 what we need it to be. We are going to make this better, and  
38 that's what I took away from what he did.

39  
40 It helped me to focus on what the major issues were and really  
41 light a fire to fix those, and so I hope we can do that. Our  
42 next discussion will be, unfortunately, what may come of this  
43 that we're going to have to try and deal with and make sure that  
44 we manage by the science and get us back on the trajectory that  
45 we need to be on to rebuild this stock, but let's do it around  
46 this table. All right. Were there any other comments? Yes,  
47 Mr. Walker.

48

1 **MR. DAVID WALKER:** Thank you, Leann, and I agree with what Leann  
2 had to say, too. This is my last opportunity to speak a lot,  
3 and the commercial industry -- If you look at the record, we  
4 have never tried to harm the -- The commercial fishery has never  
5 tried to harm the recreational fishery, and you can look at our  
6 voting record, and you can see that I have always supported  
7 developing APs and working forward on solutions to avoid things  
8 like what has happened with the extension of the thirty-nine  
9 days.

10  
11 I think you can look and see the charter industry has tried to  
12 help the private anglers, and this council has had a bumpy road  
13 getting the APs warmed up and moved along, but I just want  
14 everybody to know that the commercial industry -- We don't want  
15 to harm the recreational. We have wanted to help, and the  
16 record reflects it.

17  
18 She spoke about some of the high-grading, and that's been a  
19 problem, but, when the CPUE, the catch per unit of effort, has  
20 been going down -- It's been decreasing. There's been a lot  
21 more effort to catch less fish per trip, I'm saying. They're  
22 taking more trips.

23  
24 I think it's important, and I have worried about this thirty-  
25 nine days and what are the uncertainties in this thirty-nine  
26 days and how it's going to affect SEDAR 52, and one of the  
27 questions I have is are we going to include this 2017 catch into  
28 SEDAR 52 and how that affects it and what are the consequences  
29 if we don't down the road, and I'm looking at long-term.

30  
31 That's basically what I wanted to get on the record about it.  
32 The commercial industry looks forward to working with the  
33 private anglers to develop a better system that gives it more  
34 access, and that's basically what I had to say. Thank you.

35  
36 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Banks.

37  
38 **MR. BANKS:** Some of the comments that you made, Leann, leads me  
39 to a question, and, unfortunately, I don't know that I'm very  
40 clear on exactly what legal mechanism was used to allow this  
41 thirty-nine days outside of this process, and can somebody  
42 explain that to me, please?

43  
44 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** I forgot to introduce that we have Mr.  
45 Shepherd Grimes back at the table with us for this meeting. I'm  
46 sure most of you are familiar with him, but I guess I should  
47 formally introduce him, and so now to put you on the spot, sir.

1 **MR. SHEPHERD GRIMES:** Thank you, especially Mr. Banks here. I  
2 don't know what to tell you. I was not involved in it, and  
3 there hasn't been much involvement at my level, but, if you look  
4 at the Federal Register notice itself, like most of our rules,  
5 it cites the Magnuson-Act generally as the source of authority.  
6 There are multiple provisions in it, and so it isn't clear as to  
7 which specific provision was intended to be the underlying  
8 source of authority.

9  
10 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Banks.

11  
12 **MR. BANKS:** Spoken like a true attorney, and I appreciate that.  
13 Roy, in your estimation, or anybody at NMFS, do you think it had  
14 to do with protecting the economics of the fishery? Does that  
15 seem to be a consideration? Is that what they're basing it on,  
16 that it was going to be of great detriment to the economics of  
17 the fishery if the Secretary did not make such a move?

18  
19 **DR. CRABTREE:** Well, economics are always a concern and taken  
20 into account, and I can read you a sentence from the rule that  
21 came out in the Federal Register. It says that, given the  
22 precipitous drop in federal red snapper fishing days for private  
23 anglers, notwithstanding the growth of the stock, the increasing  
24 harm to coastal economies of the Gulf states, and that the  
25 disparate approaches to management undermining the integrity of  
26 the management structure, and so clearly the economic impact of  
27 the seasons was on the Secretary's mind.

28  
29 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Sanchez.

30  
31 **MR. JOHN SANCHEZ:** Yes, but Magnuson also states that we  
32 shouldn't use economics as the sole, which arguably it will be  
33 argued it's not the sole motivation for decision-making, but it  
34 does kind of walk like a duck and quack like a duck.

35  
36 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. I am going to turn to Dr. Ponwith  
37 now, if there are no other comments at the moment, and I will  
38 let you give us a little bit of your information.

39  
40 **DR. BONNIE PONWITH:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to pull  
41 up some slides that will make it easier to walk through. We  
42 were asked what the implications of the longer season might be  
43 on this stock, and so we ran some projections on that.

44  
45 Just to tee-up the conversation, what we did was use the most  
46 recent stock assessment model and updated it with 2015 and 2016  
47 data. We used a forecast for the population with two scenarios  
48 for 2017, what it would look like in a three-day season with

1 total recreational landings of a little over 800,000 fish and  
2 then a second one with a forty-five-day season with total  
3 recreational landings estimated to be a little over two-million  
4 fish.

5  
6 The estimates for both scenarios, again, projections were  
7 estimates that were generated by our colleagues in the Southeast  
8 Region. For the commercial, we worked under the assumption that  
9 the commercial landings in both of these scenarios would be  
10 about 99 percent of the commercial quota.

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Bonnie, I noticed that last slide says fish,  
13 and my brain works in pounds, because we have quotas and ACLs  
14 that are in pounds, and so can you give me an average weight on  
15 that 2,159,623 fish, so that, in my mind, I can convert that to  
16 pounds?

17  
18 **DR. PONWITH:** No, I can't give you that off the top of my head,  
19 but I can talk to the analysts and get that number. I don't  
20 have that number. If we go to the next slide, this is what the  
21 expanded red snapper season looks like, and so you will see, in  
22 the next slide, three lines there.

23  
24 The blue line is the rebuilding plan line, and so that's the  
25 line that is smooth and slightly sloping downward. The gray  
26 line is the line that has the dip below in 2017, if you are  
27 having trouble with the colors, and then the red line with the  
28 big spike in it is the forty-five-day season.

29  
30 Those are the total retained yield in millions of pounds, and so  
31 what you will see is, in the forty-five-day season, the result  
32 is a total yield of 20.1 million pounds of Gulf of Mexico red  
33 snapper, and so this represents an increase of 8.3 million  
34 pounds over the yield predicted to be the result of the three-  
35 day season, and it's a six-million-pound increase over the yield  
36 specified under the rebuilding plan.

37  
38 If we take a look at the lower slide, what you're seeing there  
39 are reductions in average weight due to the forty-five-day  
40 season, and so you see on the top are the years, running from  
41 2014 to 2022, and then you will see different colored lines.  
42 You will see the different colors represent the different gears  
43 or sectors of the fleet.

44  
45 Essentially, the model predicts that the increased fishing  
46 pressure in 2017 will result in an 8 to 12 percent decrease in  
47 the average weight of red snapper in the eastern Gulf of Mexico,  
48 and so that's what this slide is. Then, if we go to the last



1 slide, the last slide is essentially the punchline, and so how  
2 do all of those changes influence the status of the stock?

3  
4 What this is, it's the X-axis is years, going from 2015 out to  
5 2039, and the Y-axis is the spawning potential ratio, and so  
6 what these lines show is the spawning potential ratio under  
7 those three scenarios. The blue line is the rebuilding plan,  
8 the gray line is the three-day fishery in this year, and the red  
9 line is the forty-five-day fishery, and so, essentially, these  
10 are projections. If you catch this, this is what the rebuilding  
11 plan or this is what the stock status would look like as a  
12 result of that.

13  
14 The bottom line to this is that the forty-five-day season was  
15 predicted to delay the rebuilding of the stock until 2036, which  
16 is four years later than the rebuilding target of 2032, and it's  
17 six years later than the predicted rebuilding assuming the  
18 three-day season, which would have carried us out to 2030.

19  
20 Those are the predictions that we have, the projections that we  
21 have, based on the last stock assessment and plugging in  
22 assumptions about what would be landed in 2017 under this  
23 assessment and how it would influence the stock in the long-  
24 term.

25  
26 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Sanchez.

27  
28 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Did this incorporate  
29 discard mortalities? I am assuming it did.

30  
31 **DR. PONWITH:** Yes.

32  
33 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Dana.

34  
35 **DR. PAMELA DANA:** Thank you, Chairman Bosarge. Dr. Ponwith,  
36 this is just looking at this year's forty-five days, correct?  
37 In subsequent years, if there were a repeat of any number of  
38 days, thirty days or forty-five days, then would that -- I'm  
39 assuming that would impact the rebuild timeframe, too?

40  
41 **DR. PONWITH:** That's correct, Dr. Dana. The projections are  
42 based on what the SPR response would look like in response to  
43 the forty-five-day season this year, and one of the things that  
44 you have to keep an eye on is the change in average weight, and  
45 so the change in average weight changes because of the extension  
46 of the season, and one thing we know about red snapper is, the  
47 bigger they are, they more productive they are, and it's not a  
48 linear relationship. It's a cubed relationship, because of the

1 relationship between volume and weight and length.

2  
3 Essentially, if you start trimming back the number of larger  
4 fish in your population, the productivity of that population  
5 eventually starts to decline, and so, essentially, that's what  
6 we've been trying to do in our rebuilding, is round out from not  
7 just the number of fish but make sure that that number of fish  
8 represents a broader number of year classes, including some of  
9 those older, more productive adults.

10  
11 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Crabtree.

12  
13 **DR. CRABTREE:** If you look at this, if this is a one-time deal  
14 and if these estimates of what the anticipated catch are -- When  
15 we get to the end of the rebuilding plan in 2032, rather than  
16 being at 26 percent SPR, we would be at 25 percent SPR.

17  
18 Bear in mind that projections into the future have huge amounts  
19 of uncertainty to it, and the levels of recruitment we see and  
20 all sorts of other things have a lot of bearing on this, and so  
21 it slows rebuilding down a little bit, but we were a couple of  
22 years ahead on the rebuilding schedule, and now we're maybe a  
23 couple of years behind, but it's subject to a tremendous amount  
24 of uncertainty when you start projecting fifteen or sixteen  
25 years out into the future.

26  
27 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Gregory.

28  
29 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** I remember the early days of red  
30 snapper, when Dr. Goodyear and I sat around the table with the  
31 model, and it was running different scenarios. If we had a  
32 scenario that got us to our goal one year too late, the lawyers  
33 said, no, no, no, no, you can't do that, despite all the  
34 uncertainty, but a question and a follow-up.

35  
36 In your forty-five-day season, I guess you assume that the state  
37 seasons would end on September 4 and would not continue  
38 throughout the year? Was that factored in or --

39  
40 **DR. CRABTREE:** I think they -- I would have to ask, Doug,  
41 exactly what was assumed about that. I am guessing they assumed  
42 that Louisiana would catch their share, and I think that it was  
43 assumed that Texas would reopen after this was over and that  
44 Alabama and Florida would remain closed, but I would need to ask  
45 to be certain about that.

46  
47 Bear in mind that the projection of what would be caught is an  
48 extremely uncertain thing, because, as we've heard, there was a

1 lot of uncertainty about how the level of trips would change  
2 without the derby fishery and how much and to what extent the  
3 stock would be fished down closer to shore off of Alabama and  
4 Florida and how that might affect catch rates, and so it's --  
5 There is a great deal of uncertainty in the projections of how  
6 many pounds of fish would be caught, and we're just going to  
7 have to wait until we get some actual numbers to look at, which  
8 we should have by October, and see what really happened.

9  
10 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Ponwith.

11  
12 **DR. PONWITH:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Dr. Crabtree is exactly  
13 right. There is a huge amount of uncertainty, and, the farther  
14 you get into those projections, the more uncertain they are.  
15 The one thing that it does do is create a scenario where, if you  
16 treat the three-day season and the forty-five-day season exactly  
17 the same and change only those two things, that's how different  
18 the result would be, and so that gives you a relative change to  
19 be able to look at this.

20  
21 In terms of their raw numbers, absolutely, because the estimates  
22 of what are going to be caught are essentially that. They are a  
23 prediction of the future based on fishermen behavior in the  
24 past, and those things can change very, very quickly, but it  
25 does give you a good comparison of one relative to the other.

26  
27 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** I have Mr. Atran.

28  
29 **MR. STEVEN ATRAN:** Thank you. The 2032 target date that we have  
30 right now, that's what the SSC and the SEDAR assessment is going  
31 to use when they come out next year to do their ABC projections,  
32 and so, if you want to exceed that 2032 target date, we would  
33 need to start a plan amendment to change the target date,  
34 because that's a fundamental part of the rebuilding plan, and,  
35 right now, that is the maximum that is allowed under the  
36 National Standard 1 Guidelines, and so we would have to exceed  
37 the guidelines in order to do that.

38  
39 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Crabtree.

40  
41 **DR. CRABTREE:** Yes, and that poses a problem to try and do that.  
42 If you want to look at it, we can look at it, but we did -- When  
43 we put the rebuilding plan together, we chose Tmax, which is the  
44 maximum amount of time.

45  
46 It may well be that there will have to be an adjustment to the F  
47 rebuild estimate that's used, and it may be that the TAC will be  
48 somewhat lower than it otherwise would have been when we get the

1 new assessment. It's just hard to estimate what effect this has  
2 until we see what was actually caught, because that's what is  
3 going to drive it.

4  
5 The new assessment though is also going to factor in the  
6 recruitment levels and all of those things, and so we would  
7 expect that the TACs would have changed anyway, but we don't  
8 have any way of knowing whether the TACs would have gone up or  
9 down or what they would do.

10  
11 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** But, by new assessment, you mean the one that  
12 we're going to get the results of in 2021, because the  
13 assessment that we have on the table right now is not going to  
14 take any of this into account.

15  
16 **DR. CRABTREE:** Well, I think we need to talk about that, because  
17 I don't -- I think, with the new assessment, even if we don't  
18 delay it, when you do the projections from which the catch  
19 levels would come, the projections can take into account the  
20 preliminary landings estimates, and so I think there are ways to  
21 factor this into the catch level recommendations, and I know  
22 Bonnie has talked to her staff about that and can address that,  
23 but there are ways to handle that outside of delaying the  
24 assessment.

25  
26 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Robinson.

27  
28 **MR. LANCE ROBINSON:** I had a quick question for Bonnie. When  
29 these projections were done, where did the forty-five days come  
30 from?

31  
32 **DR. PONWITH:** The forty-five days was put forward as a  
33 hypothetical.

34  
35 **MR. ROBINSON:** Is there any talk about rerunning this under the  
36 forty-two days that we saw in 2017?

37  
38 **DR. PONWITH:** It could be rerun, but, quite honestly, I think it  
39 would be more informative to actually -- Since the fishery  
40 underway, let it play out and see what the actuals are and then  
41 plug those actuals into the projections going forward. That, I  
42 believe, would be a much more informative analysis.

43  
44 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Greene.

45  
46 **MR. JOHNNY GREENE:** Well, this is a tricky situation, and I  
47 really don't know what to say or how we're going to move forward  
48 with it, and we'll get into the scheduling part of this here in

1 a few minutes, and I'm going to have some more comments about it  
2 at that point, but, since we were here last, I have missed only  
3 five days of fishing since we were here.

4  
5 I fished through some of the tropical storms and it was pretty  
6 nasty, and it's been a rough year. All in all, it's been three  
7 to four foot and fifteen knots out of the southwest and a lot of  
8 rain and a lot of dirty water and a lot of rain. The fish were  
9 moving a lot, and it kind of ties into what Leann said earlier.

10  
11 I have covered everywhere from twenty-miles off of South Pass to  
12 south of Destin and off of Panama City, and fishing has been  
13 tough. I am not going to lie about it. I'm just telling you  
14 the facts. I have not seen a lot of recreational boats on the  
15 weekends, probably due to the weather, probably due to some of  
16 the effort, or lack of effort compression, or whatever you want  
17 to call it there, but just spreading it out and not being such a  
18 derby, and so I do agree with that.

19  
20 Now, what will happen from now until September 4, who knows? I  
21 hope it continues to be low, because, as a charter/for-hire  
22 fisherman, I am obviously worried about a payback fishery and  
23 numbers like 8.3 million pounds over quota, because it does  
24 affect the charter industry moving into next year.

25  
26 I sincerely hope that this works, and I hope that we don't go  
27 over the quota, and I truly hope that we don't go over the quota  
28 in such a manner that it affects another industry, because, if  
29 the shoe was on the other foot and it was the other way around,  
30 how would that go over?

31  
32 While we're around the table, and I think we're all trying to be  
33 very cautiously optimistic, and I am just telling you the facts  
34 of what I've seen, and I'm not trying to embellish them. I am  
35 just telling you the boats I've seen and the boats that I  
36 haven't seen.

37  
38 I saw charter boats this year that came in without a limit of  
39 snapper that could have had twelve or fifteen and maybe they  
40 only had seven or eight, and a lot of them weren't all that big,  
41 and so those are good things. Those truly are good things, and  
42 so there was not a lot of charter boats that were running two  
43 trips a day. I didn't see a lot of them in the afternoons.

44  
45 Now, other areas of the Gulf might tell you a little different  
46 story, but, at your angle of trajectory to Orange Beach,  
47 Alabama, I have covered a pretty good range of geographic area,  
48 and I haven't seen a lot of boats, but I just want to point out

1 the facts, that there is another component to the recreational  
2 fishery, and I hope that we take this into consideration,  
3 because, when we get into scheduling stock assessments here in a  
4 few minutes, how do we handle this -- I hate to call it a  
5 bombshell, because that sounds kind of bad, in Leann's spirit of  
6 trying to remain positive, but how do we handle this surprise  
7 that was dropped on us?

8  
9 Now, I do think that, with a three-day season, you're going to  
10 have a lot of people take off of work, and you're going to have  
11 everybody in the world there loading up, and I do think that the  
12 thirty-nine days will spread it out, because I can hear my wife,  
13 in some sense, say, well, you can go next weekend and you don't  
14 have to go this weekend.

15  
16 If she is listening, she will probably kill me for that, but  
17 it's one of those things that is a true fact, and so I think  
18 that trying to find something good coming out of this -- I think  
19 that maybe having the season spread out over time might be a  
20 good thing, but I do want to weigh into concerns that I have  
21 laid out before you.

22  
23 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Anson.

24  
25 **MR. ANSON:** Dr. Ponwith, I might put you on the spot, and you  
26 can certainly confer with staff if you need to, but one of the  
27 issues I find that will need some attention during the  
28 assessment, red snapper assessment, coming up is this issue of  
29 here in the recent years and recent trend of information that  
30 will be available for the next assessment.

31  
32 We've had these short derby seasons, and that has an impact on  
33 fishermen behavior. When you couple that with the reduction in  
34 the availability of species, at least in the eastern Gulf, when  
35 you've taken away amberjack and triggerfish in that same time  
36 series, and so people are now, at least off of Alabama, people  
37 are spending the least amount of time and money to go and access  
38 the open red snapper fishery, and so they are not traveling the  
39 distances like they used to, and they are fishing those spots  
40 that are much shallower, much closer in, and typically will hold  
41 a younger, smaller fish, and so, in light of our reduced funding  
42 through the FIN, through the commission, for otolith collection  
43 and the potential for there being holes in that data over this  
44 same time period, and that you have mentioned in the past the  
45 importance of having age data to help kind of reconcile some of  
46 this information that potentially is going to be lacking now for  
47 the recreational fishery, do you anticipate there will be much  
48 discussion on that topic, or I hope there will much discussion

1 on that topic and how to address that in the next model.

2  
3 **DR. PONWITH:** Certainly the assessment is strengthened by the  
4 fact that it is an age-structured model, and age matters a lot  
5 in the way the assessment is done, and so, to that extent, good,  
6 solid, reliable, unbiased age composition data is really  
7 important to the assessment, and so, yes, I anticipate that will  
8 be a topic of conversation in the assessment.

9  
10 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. I see our conversation is  
11 starting to kind of delve into the schedule and the stock  
12 assessment, and that is the next item on our agenda, but, before  
13 we move formally on to that, were there any other comments that  
14 anybody wanted to make regarding the extended recreational  
15 season? All right. That sounds good. Maybe we'll be consulted  
16 as a group next time. All right. Mr. Gregory, would you like  
17 to lead us into the next topic, or maybe is Mr. Rindone going to  
18 lead us through that?

19  
20 **POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON THE SEDAR SCHEDULE**

21  
22 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** In this section, before we went to  
23 the schedule as a whole, I had included some discussion of the  
24 red snapper assessment independently of the overall schedule and  
25 cobia and gray triggerfish, and I think Dr. Crabtree and Dr.  
26 Ponwith may have answered that, and that is I get the impression  
27 there's not an interest in putting the assessment off until we  
28 can get 2017 data, but rather that there is some way to  
29 accommodate this by including the 2017 data in the projections,  
30 because it's really critical to try to get an understanding of  
31 the effect of what this year's harvest is going to have on the  
32 rebuilding schedule.

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Ponwith.

35  
36 **DR. PONWITH:** Thank you, Mr. Gregory. Yes, and so it's a simple  
37 question about 2017 or 2018 as the timeframe for the stock  
38 assessment. The answer is anything but simple. It's quite  
39 convoluted, and you're absolutely right.

40  
41 Typically, the way we would accommodate landings information in  
42 an assessment that's already been done is to use the landings  
43 information -- Well, let's just say, for this assessment, if we  
44 did the assessment as scheduled, we would be conducting it right  
45 now, and the data workshop is in -- We're in the middle of it  
46 right now.

47  
48 Essentially, what we would do is have a result, and then we

1 would generate the projections. When we did the projections  
2 going forward, instead of including assumptions about what was  
3 caught in 2017, we would put the actuals of what were caught in  
4 2017. Therefore, the impact of the extended season would be  
5 incorporated into those projections.

6  
7 It is different than actually doing the stock assessment with  
8 the 2017 data already in the assessment, because one is you kind  
9 of drop them in after the fact and the other one is they are an  
10 inherent part of the assessment at the onset, and so the real  
11 question is should -- Is there something to be gained by  
12 postponing the red snapper stock assessment to next year?

13  
14 Let me walk through -- As always is the case, there are some  
15 costs to that, and there are some benefits to that, and what I  
16 will do is walk through what I view and what I have gathered  
17 from my team and from the SEDAR staff of what some of the costs  
18 are and then what some of the benefits are.

19  
20 First of all, we are actually in the stock assessment right now,  
21 and so, if we were to postpone the stock assessment, we would  
22 have to cancel a meeting venue, and we would lose money, because  
23 we're close enough to the date of that meeting that we wouldn't  
24 be able to recover the funding, and so those are real dollars.

25  
26 We have staff who are working on the data analysis to support  
27 the stock assessment right now, and some of that analysis, of  
28 course, can be put on the shelf and then dusted off and  
29 continued next year, and some of that analysis you would have to  
30 essentially start all over again, and so you have a team of  
31 people who have been working to prepare for the assessment  
32 that's underway right now that would have to do parts of that  
33 all over again next year, and so you will lose some efficiencies  
34 in that.

35  
36 It's too late to add another assessment, and so, if we took this  
37 year's red snapper stock assessment and moved it to 2018, you  
38 don't get another assessment, because it's too late to start  
39 one, essentially, the lead time that it takes to get the data  
40 prepared and the otoliths read and everything, and so,  
41 essentially, that would be an empty slot.

42  
43 It would also potentially cause a perturbation to the schedule  
44 in 2018, because the red snapper assessment is too big to kind  
45 of just shoehorn in. It would have to bump something to be able  
46 to make the room, and so those are the costs of moving the  
47 assessment that I could think of. There may be more, but those  
48 are the ones that came to mind.



1  
2 Now let's talk about the other side of the equation, and those  
3 are the benefits. One of the benefits is, instead of  
4 incorporating the impact of the prolonged season in the  
5 projections, the impact of the prolonged season would be part of  
6 the initial stock assessment, and that's a benefit. It would be  
7 because you would know if selectivities changed or the locations  
8 of the fishery.

9  
10 All of those things about the way the fish were caught and all  
11 of the things about the fish themselves could be incorporated  
12 directly into the stock assessment, and that creates a more  
13 sound assessment than just dropping in the poundage into the  
14 projections. Both are good, but doing it in the assessment is  
15 better.

16  
17 The other thing, which I think is one of the strongest benefits,  
18 is that the MRIP calibrations are slated to be ready next  
19 summer, and so, if you remember, the reason we scheduled the  
20 stock assessment for red snapper in 2017 in the first place was  
21 so that we could incorporate the calibrated data into the  
22 assessment, but then we made a decision to postpone those  
23 calibrations to make sure we had the most possible data and they  
24 had adequate time to run through peer review, and so those  
25 calibrations won't be ready until next year.

26  
27 One of the strongest benefits of waiting until next year is  
28 that, instead of doing the assessment this year and then  
29 modifying it to incorporate the calibrated data, we could do the  
30 assessment with the calibrated data at the onset, and so that is  
31 a strong gain.

32  
33 The third benefit is, because of that, we would gain some  
34 efficiencies. If we finished the assessment this year, get it  
35 started and have it ready next spring, we would follow it with  
36 an update-lite, which is essentially you take the stock  
37 assessment that you just finished and you take the calibrated  
38 data, only the calibrated recreational data, and substitute the  
39 calibrated data in for the original data and hit the go button  
40 and run it again, and it tells you how big of an influence the  
41 calibrated data had on the assessment.

42  
43 Instead of doing that in two steps, the calibrated data would be  
44 used at the onset of the assessment, and that would be done all  
45 at once, and so there may be other gains and benefits by  
46 postponing, but those are the ones that jumped off the page to  
47 me, and so there are costs to postponing and there are benefits  
48 to postponing. That's the list, and I think it would be worth

1 having a conversation about.

2

3 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, Dr. Ponwith. Mr. Walker.

4

5 **MR. WALKER:** I am not on your committee, but, to Bonnie, if  
6 you're looking at the long-term health or sustainability of the  
7 fishery, which one is going to give you the better accuracy to  
8 project all these different uncertainties that you have in it?  
9 Would you feel more comfortable delaying it? You said there was  
10 a cost and benefit, but a lot of people want better data, and so  
11 I would just kind of like for you to weigh in on that.

12

13 **DR. PONWITH:** You know, it's a -- Even there, it's a cost and  
14 benefit. Incorporating these two big changes, the MRIP  
15 calibration and incorporating the impact of the longer than  
16 expected season, into the assessment sort of organically will  
17 give you a very strong stock assessment and understanding the  
18 impact of those two things on the assessment.

19

20 Of course, continuing the assessment as scheduled gets you  
21 information on the stock of the stock sooner, and so,  
22 essentially, we would, as soon as the assessment is started  
23 being run, you would have indications of the status of that  
24 stock, and I have heard from a couple of people saying that not  
25 only is the effort lower, but potentially the catch per unit  
26 effort is lower, and that may drive you to want your answers  
27 sooner, and so, again, it's a cost and a benefit.

28

29 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Gregory.

30

31 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** I would like to just ask the Center  
32 and the Region what do you all want to do? What do you all  
33 think is the best approach forward? I don't think it's -- I  
34 mean, we make the request to explore this, but, if -- The most  
35 feasible thing to do, I think, I think is more of a science  
36 question and management question combined, but I really like the  
37 way you described the different pros and cons.

38

39 **DR. PONWITH:** We have spent a lot of time discussing this since  
40 you sent the request, and it is something that we have discussed  
41 almost daily. The answer is not a simple one. If it were, I  
42 would have come right out and said that the Science Center  
43 essentially says this is what we should do and we hope you take  
44 this advice.

45

46 The bottom line is that the assessment is underway, and  
47 postponing is a perturbation to the SEDAR process. I have had  
48 discussions with staff, and we will lose the money. Somehow or

1 another, we will make do on that, but the main concern is I want  
2 to be careful that we don't commit a process foul, and so, if  
3 the decision is to postpone, I need to consult with our SOPPs to  
4 find out whether technically we can execute that decision before  
5 the SEDAR Steering Committee meeting, because, if we wait until  
6 the SEDAR Steering Committee meeting, we're so deep into the  
7 assessment that it actually makes things worse.

8  
9 I am struggling with this answer, and we all struggled with this  
10 answer. There are some very good benefits of getting this thing  
11 done right, and there are some very good benefits and logical  
12 benefits to waiting, and, to me, the one you brought up in your  
13 message to me, the concern about the extended season, to me is  
14 probably the second-best benefit. The first-best benefit is to  
15 be able to incorporate the calibrated data at the onset, just  
16 because, that second benefit, you can actually capture what  
17 happened in the fishery via the projections.

18  
19 If you're asking me for an answer of what my advice to you would  
20 be, I am willing to give it to you, but I will tell you that  
21 it's a neck-and-neck race right now.

22  
23 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Greene.

24  
25 **MR. GREENE:** Well, I am sitting here looking at the schedule,  
26 the one that's on the board in front of you, and red snapper is  
27 a 2017 standard with a terminal year of 2016, and it starts the  
28 fall of 2017 and ends in the spring of 2018.

29  
30 I am going to assume that we're going to get that sometime in  
31 the spring. Knowing how our council meetings fall, it could be  
32 around that April council meeting that we typically have.  
33 Depending on when that is delivered, that may only leave one  
34 meeting, or potentially no meetings, before the 2018 season  
35 comes about, and so, most likely, the only way we're going to be  
36 able to use this would be for the 2019 season for management for  
37 us to handle what they bring out and lay out before us.

38  
39 I am kind of leaning that we back up and wait, because, no  
40 matter what we do, it's going to be the 2019 fishing season  
41 before we can do anything, and, with some of the changes that we  
42 have before us and the skepticism that everyone seems to have, I  
43 think that's kind of the way that we need to go.

44  
45 Now, obviously, if we wait, then that's going to push our  
46 schedule back to 2018, and we're going to have to take some  
47 action there, but, trying to stay specific to red snapper, I  
48 think I'm going to go ahead and make a motion at this point, and

1 I'm sorry. It's just kind of happening on the fly right at the  
2 moment, but I think that the motion would be to delay the  
3 current red snapper standard assessment to 2018 and make 2017  
4 the terminal year.

5  
6 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Okay. We have a motion on the board to delay  
7 the current red snapper standard assessment to 2018 and make  
8 2017 the terminal year for that assessment. Is there a second  
9 to the motion?

10  
11 **DR. DANA:** Second for discussion.

12  
13 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** It's seconded by Dr. Dana. Dr. Crabtree.

14  
15 **DR. CRABTREE:** If we delay this, Bonnie, when would we expect to  
16 have the assessment results before the council? We would be in  
17 2018, and so we would see them -- When do you think?

18  
19 **DR. PONWITH:** I would have to do some back-calculation. The  
20 wildcard on that are the calibrations, because what we wouldn't  
21 want to do is delay so that we could incorporate the  
22 calibrations and then miss using those calibrations.

23  
24 I think the whole timing of when we would finish will be driven  
25 by when the commercial and the recreational 2017 data become  
26 stable enough, final enough, to be able to incorporate into the  
27 stock assessment and when those calibrations are done and peer  
28 reviewed and able to be used to adjust those landings. This is  
29 a standard, and it would be sometime in the spring of 2019.

30  
31 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, Dr. Ponwith. Mr. Boyd.

32  
33 **MR. DOUG BOYD:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. I am not on the  
34 committee, but a couple of observations. One is we all want  
35 better data, and we all want new, current data. One of the  
36 problems I see is that, this time next year, when we're ready to  
37 do this assessment, we're going to need more and better data,  
38 and so are we going to postpone it again next year because there  
39 is some looming data out there that we don't have?

40  
41 It just stands to reason that you need to go with the  
42 calibrations, with the estimates with what you have to go with,  
43 and then you do either an update or you incorporate that data.

44  
45 The other observation is what Dr. Crabtree just said. If you  
46 wait until next year, you're not going to have this available  
47 until 2020 or 2021 to put into the quota calculations. It seems  
48 like, the more we wait, the worse it's going to get.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Ponwith.

3  
4 **DR. PONWITH:** Just more specifically, the stock assessment right  
5 now started August 1, and so that was the data deadline for  
6 bringing the data in for 2017. The report is scheduled to be  
7 available for the council in March of 2018, and so it's  
8 reasonable to expect that if you postpone to be able to gain  
9 those two big benefits, having the actual 2017 data incorporated  
10 instead of projecting it after the fact and having the  
11 calibrated data to be able to be used, and it follows that same  
12 schedule, it would begin in August of 2018 and be ready for the  
13 council in March of 2019.

14  
15 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Crabtree.

16  
17 **DR. CRABTREE:** This is how it seems to me. So we would get the  
18 assessment in March of 2019, but it would be difficult to  
19 implement a new TAC in 2019 then, because the commercial fishery  
20 would already have gotten their quota and be operating, and  
21 there wouldn't be time to go through the normal process.

22  
23 That's assuming the TAC is going down. If it's going up,  
24 obviously that's a different circumstance, and so we would then  
25 be looking at setting new catch levels for the beginning of the  
26 2020 season, and so then the question becomes, all right, if we  
27 do hold off, that's the scenario, but what do we do in the  
28 meantime?

29  
30 Now, I suppose you could take the current projections that we  
31 have and factor in the actuals into those and rerun that and  
32 take it before the SSC. That has a lot of issues with it,  
33 because you don't know what the recruitments have done and those  
34 things, but that would be the only way I can think of to somehow  
35 factor this into the setting of catch levels in a way to allow  
36 us to take action for the 2019 season.

37  
38 Even if we did that, assuming we won't have all the landings,  
39 we'll already be into next year, and so we could do that and get  
40 it in front of the SSC sometime next year, and then we could put  
41 in an adjusted catch level for 2019, but it's hard for me to see  
42 how we could make an adjustment in the 2018 catch levels to  
43 factor this in under just about any circumstance.

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** So delaying it may not have that big of an  
46 impact either way. We're probably going to have to wait a while  
47 to get something in place to address -- If there is a problem,  
48 to address it.

1  
2 I like this idea. I will speak in favor of it, because, right  
3 now on our schedule, red snapper is not going to be -- If we  
4 continue with the schedule as it is, that means we would  
5 continue with the red snapper assessment that we have on the  
6 board, on the table, right now.

7  
8 We won't get any more updated science, assessment science, on  
9 red snapper until spring of 2021, and, based on the discussion  
10 we just had, that means we wouldn't be able to actually do  
11 anything until 2022. This is 2017, and so that, to me, not  
12 seeing the true impact of -- Yes, this is updated data, but this  
13 is something outside the norm that we're about to see right  
14 here.

15  
16 We're talking about 8.3 million pounds in excess of what we  
17 thought on -- What is our quota, thirteen-point-something-  
18 million? That's a pretty big outlier that we probably need to  
19 see what impact this is going to have. We probably don't need  
20 to wait until 2022, when we really dig a hole for ourselves, to  
21 start going, uh-oh, okay, well, we see what happened now and  
22 this is where we're at and this is the hill we've got to climb.

23  
24 I would rather know sooner than later, and, if knowing sooner  
25 means that we delay it until 2018 and get those results and are  
26 able to take some action and know where we stand in spring of  
27 2018 and adjust the 2019 season, that, to me, is a better option  
28 than making adjustments in 2022, when we get the next assessment  
29 that actually incorporates that information organically into the  
30 assessment. Mr. Gregory.

31  
32 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** I just want to point out that, for  
33 2019 and onward, the SEDAR schedule is proposed. It's not  
34 fixed. The 2018 is pretty well fixed, and so we could probably  
35 do another red snapper stock assessment say at the beginning of  
36 2019, using 2017 data. Another one. Not postpone until then,  
37 but have a second assessment in lieu of scamp or vermilion or  
38 yellowedge or tilefish, which are fisheries that are not as  
39 controversial or as big in landings or fishing effort.

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

42  
43 **MS. GUYAS:** I guess that's kind of where I was going. I was  
44 going to ask Bonnie -- If we move forward with this assessment  
45 now, as scheduled, when would we actually be running this  
46 assessment-lite? Is it really a slot, or is it just plugging in  
47 these calibration numbers and adding 2017? What is the time  
48 like on that, and when could we expect a product?

1  
2 **DR. PONWITH:** The assessment-lite is a slot, and it's because  
3 it's for more than just red snapper. It would be -- Sort of the  
4 model that we created for it was for all stocks that have  
5 significant recreational landings that have been recently  
6 assessed you would do the assessment-lite, and the reason for  
7 that is because all you do -- It's not a true update assessment.

8  
9 An update assessment, you take the exact same model that you  
10 used the last time and you add the terminal year to the fishery-  
11 independent index and you add the terminal year of landings data  
12 from commercial and recreational and everything else stays the  
13 same. All the assumptions and everything else stays the same,  
14 and so you just add in those terminal data.

15  
16 For the MRIP-lite, you wouldn't touch the fishery-independent,  
17 and you wouldn't modify the age structure, adding in new  
18 otoliths. All you would do is take the same data that you used  
19 the last time around and substitute in for those data the  
20 calibrated data and see how the model results compare. That  
21 gives you a baseline and then sort of an experimental line, by  
22 putting those calibrated data in there, so you understand how  
23 the changes in the recreational landings, driven by the change  
24 in methodology, influenced the outcome of the assessment.

25  
26 That's what the update-lite is, and the species we would do are  
27 the ones that meet those criteria. They have been recently  
28 assessed and they are a significant for the recreational, and we  
29 would do all of those.

30  
31 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Mickle.

32  
33 **DR. MICKLE:** Thank you. I'm not a member of this committee, but  
34 I guess I will weigh in as well. I would like to point out  
35 Director Gregory's idea of pushing the standard, finalized  
36 standard, in 2017 and then 2019 as well. It just works out.

37  
38 We all talk about red snapper, and it's obviously a priority,  
39 and I just don't see the problem with doing two full standards.  
40 I am a state employee, and I work on red snapper, arguably more  
41 than a lot of state species, which I'm not real happy about, but  
42 it's the way it goes, and so making the justification to do two  
43 full standards -- I do want to weigh in that what we'll walk  
44 away with with these standards, set up in these ways, will allow  
45 us to manage the fishery like we're doing and to keep doing it  
46 without having bigger black boxes come before us. It allows us  
47 to really grasp what the harvest is going on in all the sectors,  
48 and it gives us the information we need, and I would like to

1 support that, of two standards in 2017 and 2019.

2

3 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Ponwith.

4

5 **DR. PONWITH:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The repercussion of a  
6 standard for red snapper in 2019 is that bumps vermilion, and  
7 it's because the analyst that works on vermilion, kind of our  
8 vermilion expert, is also the red snapper expert, and so we  
9 can't do those two in the same year.

10

11 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Greene.

12

13 **MR. GREENE:** Well, two of the reasons that I changed my mind,  
14 because I have never been one to ever push anything or kick the  
15 can down the road, as some people like to say. I have just  
16 never been one of those type of people, but the two things that  
17 caught my attention were incorporation of the MRIP data and then  
18 the potential positive impacts that may come out of this longer  
19 recreational season.

20

21 If that can somehow be captured in the assessment as a positive  
22 thing, then it may set a trend moving forward, and I think those  
23 are some things that we should really consider. I appreciate  
24 the vigor of the conversation around the table and everything,  
25 and I just -- Having the net benefit of the MRIP in there, I  
26 think Bonnie had mentioned that that was one of her big topics  
27 that she was really -- One of her big bonuses to doing that,  
28 and, while I don't want to wait, I do think this is right thing  
29 to do, but, regardless of how this goes with the vote, I can see  
30 both sides of it, but I think we're better off to just wait and  
31 get some better information.

32

33 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Dana.

34

35 **DR. DANA:** Thank you, Chairman Bosarge. In the interest of  
36 time, and knowing that we at least have two of the three members  
37 of this committee that are going to vote for this motion, we  
38 should probably call the vote and then, over the next two days,  
39 the Full Council can have discussions on it.

40

41 At least we have a placeholder with this motion for it to be  
42 brought up again in Full Council, and then, if someone on the  
43 Full Council chooses to make a motion to keep it way it was or  
44 to have two standards or whatever Bonnie wants to call it, then  
45 that can be brought up at that time.

46

47 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, Dr. Dana. Because it is  
48 important, are there any comments outside just the members of



1 this committee that anybody wants to make before we vote? Okay.  
2 All right. **The motion on the board is to delay the current red**  
3 **snapper standard assessment to 2018 and to make 2017 the**  
4 **terminal year. All those in favor, signify by saying aye; all**  
5 **those opposed, same sign. The motion carries.**  
6

7 That is going to take us to our next agenda item, which is a  
8 bigger picture of the overall schedule. Mr. Gregory.  
9

#### 10 **SEDAR SCHEDULE REVIEW**

11  
12 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** We have Mr. Rindone on the line  
13 also to help with this, but we left the last council meeting  
14 with us requesting to have a cobia stock assessment and a gray  
15 triggerfish stock assessment in 2018, and the Southeast  
16 Fisheries Center indicated, late in the discussion, that that  
17 would be a problem, since the same assessment scientist is doing  
18 both and they can't do both in the same year, which is the same  
19 problem that was just highlighted with vermilion and red  
20 snapper.  
21

22 We need to -- It seems to me, and this is my opinion, that we  
23 need to work around that somehow. We've got a prioritization  
24 program for determining when we're supposed to do assessments,  
25 but yet the council wanting assessments for various reasons at  
26 various times, and that seems to be a real constraint, and I  
27 just am recognizing that, but the real question at hand right  
28 now is the issue of doing the cobia stock assessment in 2018 and  
29 whether that can be done or not, or should it be put off until  
30 2019? I will let Ryan pick it up, if there's any questions or  
31 if he has anything to comment on the council discussion from  
32 here on.  
33

34 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Rindone, did you have any feedback for  
35 us?  
36

37 **MR. RYAN RINDONE:** I'm just listening right now, Madam Chair.  
38

39 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. Dr. Ponwith, you wanted to  
40 chime in?  
41

42 **DR. PONWITH:** Yes, and thank you, Madam Chair. On the issue of  
43 cross-training on the stock assessments, there is certainly some  
44 strong logic to having expertise in the hands of more than one  
45 analyst for a species. It's that real knife-edge of having  
46 someone who is an absolute expert on it and understands the data  
47 and understands the history of the fishery and can dive right  
48 into it very, very efficiently, versus the box you get into if

1 that person leaves or becomes ill or for any other reason, or  
2 double-booked.

3

4 We can make an investment in cross-training. It does take time.  
5 Essentially, what it would take is to have a lead assessment  
6 person and then someone working as their assist, so that they  
7 become familiar enough with the assessment that they could do it  
8 on their own if there was a requirement. We can talk about  
9 that, and maybe bring that to the SEDAR Steering Committee, to  
10 talk about the merits of that, and I am certainly open to that  
11 as an option.

12

13 The issue with gray triggerfish and cobia is it is abundantly  
14 clear to me how crucial it is, from the council's perspective,  
15 to get those done as soon as possible, and so I understand the  
16 pressure. Right now, the analyst who is the expert on those is  
17 currently the one who is working on the gray snapper benchmark.

18

19 The other complicating factor is that cobia is -- There are some  
20 stock ID questions that we have on cobia, and, as you know, in  
21 our SEDAR Steering Committee, we made a commitment to making  
22 sure that as much is understood about the stock structure before  
23 we dive into an assessment, so we don't have situations where we  
24 do an assessment and then after the fact ask, wow, did we  
25 actually assess that properly, given what we know now about the  
26 stock structure.

27

28 We have a stock ID workshop scheduled, and it's scheduled to  
29 start this winter. We had originally talked about doing it in  
30 the fall, but there are actually some studies that are ongoing  
31 right now that we want to reap the benefits of, because this is  
32 such a crucial issue to getting the assessment correct for this  
33 stock. We're going to wait for those studies to be completed  
34 and be able to incorporate them and be informed by them in the  
35 stock ID workshop that will be scheduled for this winter.

36

37 We can watch the way that stock ID workshop unfolds. The  
38 expectation is that the results would be reviewed come next  
39 summer, right around in the June-ish or July-ish timeframe, I  
40 think, and, at that point, we'll have enough resolution on how  
41 we should be assessing that stock that we can commence.

42

43 My concern is I would not want to start anything here in the  
44 Gulf until we reaped the benefits of that stock ID workshop,  
45 because, again, it's going to be really important. It will help  
46 us to know whether we should be conducting the assessment  
47 exactly the way we've been doing or whether this should be  
48 assessed as one large intermingling stock, and I think that's a

1 really important question.

2  
3 My recommendation for 2018 is to really focus on gray  
4 triggerfish first and then to have that followed by cobia, for  
5 those reasons. Cobia then could be conducted with the benefit  
6 of the results of the stock ID and after gray triggerfish is  
7 completed, so that we know that that analyst has had a chance to  
8 finish the gray triggerfish assessment.

9  
10 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, Dr. Ponwith. Is there feedback  
11 from the committee? What I am hearing you say, Dr. Ponwith, and  
12 we kind of left this open-ended at the last meeting, is we had  
13 both gray triggerfish and cobia on the 2018 schedule, even  
14 though you had pretty much told us that that is kind of  
15 impossible, because it's the same person.

16  
17 What you're saying is that, if we really want to get the most  
18 useable information, we need to wait for that stock ID workshop  
19 on cobia and let that feed into the assessment, which does that  
20 mean that cobia moves to 2019? Is that what you're telling us?  
21 I am not saying that's a negative thing, but I just want to make  
22 sure that I'm hearing what you're saying.

23  
24 **DR. PONWITH:** It means that -- What I am doing while you're  
25 talking is looking for the end date for the gray trigger  
26 assessment, because the timing of the start of cobia would be  
27 driven by having the results of the stock ID workshop in hand  
28 and having the gray triggerfish assessment completed.

29  
30 Now, if we discover that cobia is one giant interwoven stock,  
31 then it would be -- The stock assessment would be conducted in  
32 conjunction with analysts from the South Atlantic Council, and  
33 it remains to be seen whether the Gulf would be the lead or the  
34 Gulf would be the assist on that assessment, and that could  
35 influence our ability to get started earlier, because I know,  
36 just as you are eager to get going on cobia, so is the South  
37 Atlantic. If the South Atlantic has the opportunity to be the  
38 lead, it's possible we could get started a little bit earlier.

39  
40 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Greene.

41  
42 **MR. GREENE:** I remember the last meeting, and we were really --  
43 The cobia issue was a pretty hot topic at that point, especially  
44 with some of the Atlantic states and all of the issues that were  
45 going on with cobia up and down the eastern seaboard, and we had  
46 talked about Beaufort potentially assisting along with that as  
47 well, but, pending the findings of the stock identifier, I don't  
48 know that it's prudent, at this time, to keep the cobia in 2018.

1  
2 I think that, based on what we've talked about doing, and not  
3 necessarily what we're going to do, regardless of that, we're  
4 going to have to do something with the cobia, and I really don't  
5 want to move cobia at all, but I think that that stock  
6 identifier that you outlined is huge, because, if it is one  
7 stock, it may be more than the South Atlantic and the Gulf. It  
8 may be the Mid-Atlantic Council and Atlantic States Marine  
9 Fisheries Commission and just a whole plethora of things that I  
10 think we need to wait on.

11  
12 That's why I am pulling -- I am going to make a motion in a  
13 moment, but that's why I am pulling cobia to 2019, as opposed to  
14 one of the other fish. **It has just got some extenuating**  
15 **circumstances that is kind of out of our control that I do think**  
16 **is prudent that we wait on, and so, with that, I will make a**  
17 **motion to move cobia to 2019 with a terminal year of 2017.**

18  
19 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Okay. We have a motion on the board to move  
20 the cobia stock assessment to 2019 with a terminal year of 2017.  
21 Do we have a second for the motion? It's seconded by Mr.  
22 Matens. Any discussion on the motion?

23  
24 That does seem to follow our prior discussions as well, with  
25 triggerfish really being higher on our priority list as a  
26 concern to get assessed than cobia. We have some concerns with  
27 cobia, but, right now, I think triggerfish are outweighing it at  
28 this point. Okay. Is there any other discussion on the motion?  
29 **Seeing none, all in favor of the motion, signify by saying aye;**  
30 **all opposed, same sign. The motion carries.** Mr. Diaz.

31  
32 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** Does that leave a vacant slot in 2018 that needs  
33 to be filled now?

34  
35 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Gregory.

36  
37 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** I think we have filled it with red  
38 snapper.

39  
40 **MR. DIAZ:** We'll see.

41  
42 **MR. RINDONE:** Madam Chair, if I could pose an idea to everybody.  
43 In 2018, we have the MRIP calibration updates listed as  
44 something that we're trying to get done, and something that does  
45 remain an option to the council, as opposed to having that  
46 effort conducted there, is to have the updated MRIP information  
47 included whenever that species is assessed next on our schedule.

48

1 Dr. Ponwith could weigh in on the impact of doing this on her  
2 staff's time and deliverables and whatnot, but I would be  
3 interested to hear what the Center has to say about doing that  
4 as opposed to trying to get all of those calibration updates  
5 done in 2018. For instance, instead of getting the MRIP  
6 calibration for gag done in 2018, it would be done when we  
7 update gag in 2020.

8  
9 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Ponwith.

10  
11 **DR. PONWITH:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's an idea that we have  
12 spoken about before, and, in fact, it's the default approach for  
13 stocks that have assessments that are old. We talked about how  
14 it's important, one of the important criteria, for being  
15 appropriate for an update-lite, and it's that the stock  
16 assessment is fresh, and that is because all you're doing is  
17 substituting those data. If you have a really old assessment,  
18 you don't want to substitute the data and then say, well, what  
19 about all the rest of that stuff that could have changed, and so  
20 you really want a fresh assessment. That would be one of the  
21 criteria.

22  
23 It is possible to wait and incorporate the calibrated data in  
24 the next assessment for all stocks. What that does though is  
25 postpones you as a council's awareness of how big of a  
26 difference the calibrated data make on what the actual  
27 recreational landings are, and that has implications for  
28 potentially the status of the stock, and it has implications for  
29 the allocation, to make sure that your allocations are playing  
30 out in the spirit that the council intended them to, and so what  
31 it does is postpones that awareness. It's an option, but there  
32 are risks associated with the option.

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, Mr. Rindone, for that insight.  
35 We're a little over schedule, but not too bad, and we can always  
36 work late, right? It's Monday.

37  
38 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** That's right. We have fresh  
39 coffee.

40  
41 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Yes, we have fresh coffee, Mr. Gregory says.  
42 All right. Is there any other discussion on the schedule as we  
43 have amended it thus far? Is there anything else that we need  
44 to address on this priority list of our schedule here?

45  
46 **MR. RINDONE:** Madam Chair, part of the reason why I brought up  
47 what I did is that, by moving red snapper into 2018, it's going  
48 to eat up a lot of resources, just like it does in any year that

1 we would assess it, and so, by redistributing those individual  
2 MRIP calibrations across years, like Dr. Ponwith said, it does  
3 delay our temporal awareness of what is actually going on, but  
4 it doesn't deprive us of it completely. It would also make more  
5 time to have red snapper done in 2018, and it would decrease the  
6 probability of us losing red grouper in the process.

7  
8 Just, generally speaking, as we move these different species  
9 around, it will change the way that the schedule looks, and  
10 other species will likely also have to be moved around  
11 accordingly. That's it.

12  
13 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. All right. Seeing no other  
14 discussion, that will bring our SEDAR Committee to a close.

15  
16 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on August 7, 2017.)

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