

**Data Collection Committee Report**  
**August 14, 2019**  
**Dr. Greg Stunz, Chair**

The agenda and minutes of the June 2019 meeting were approved.

***NOAA Fisheries Permit Office 101 Presentation (Tab F, No. 4)***

Mr. McIntosh presented a procedural overview of the NOAA permitting office. The presentation included an introduction to the application process and online permit system along with information regarding logbook reporting, Office of Law Enforcement issues, and Individual Fishery Quota (IFQ) reporting. The Committee inquired whether hardship considerations were provided for stakeholders involved in limited access fisheries who may experience difficulty with timely renewal of their permits. Dr. Crabtree stated that hardship considerations are not usually granted; however, extreme circumstances have sometimes warranted exceptions. The Committee asked how many permit staff were responsible for processing the thousands of permit applications received annually. Mr. McIntosh indicated that 7 staff members were employed in the permit office.

***Discussion of Commercial Fishing Unique Trip Identifiers (Tab F, No. 5)***

Dr. Stephen presented information highlighting data gaps associated with linking vessel monitoring systems with federally permitted reef fish and IFQ participants. She also presented some possible solutions for addressing challenges in creating unique trip identifiers. The Committee asked if switching entirely to electronic reporting would be helpful to create unique identifiers. Dr. Stephen stated that paper reporting can be used to generate unique identifiers but that electronic records would reduce time lags in data management processing. The Committee also asked if any other regions in the country were working on these issues. Dr. Stephen indicated she was aware of current work being conducted by the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office and the Northwest Fisheries Science Center to develop solutions for generating unique trip identifiers and that she would monitor their progress.

***Net Gains Alliance Presentation (Tab F, No. 6)***

Mr. Lapointe presented the overview on the objective and mission of the Net Gains Alliance which is a global initiative committed to accelerating the modernization, implementation, and adaptation of robust information systems to support sustainable marine management. The presentation also outlined grant making procedures to complement current funds for established data collection programs. The Committee agreed that an approach to potentially include some business incentives for fishing captains to increase data collection participation may be an effective approach. Mr. Lapointe agreed and reiterated the importance of communication with stakeholders is critical for achieving Net Gains Alliance's goals.

***Update on SEFHIER (Tab F, No. 7)***

Ms. Gerhart gave a progress report updating the Committee on the implementation timeline for the Southeastern For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting (SEFHIER) program. She indicated that outreach would continue into the fall of 2019 with a two phased roll out of the program tentatively set to begin in early 2020. The Committee asked whether NOAA had considered implementing the program in a single phase. Ms. Gerhart stated that while a single phase implementation had been considered, several challenges such as approval of VMS and non-VMS units, have caused for delays to the initiation of the program. Ms. Gerhart highlighted that a two phase implementation did allow for both for-hire stakeholders and NOAA staff to adjust to the new rules before the program is fully implemented.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.