

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

DATA COLLECTION COMMITTEE

Embassy Suites

Panama City Beach, Florida

October 23, 2023

VOTING MEMBERS

Susan Boggs.....Alabama
 Kesley Banks.....Texas
 Rick Burris (designee for Joe Spraggins).....Mississippi
 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
 Jonathan Dugas.....Louisiana
 Dakus Geeslin (designee for Robin Riechers).....Texas
 Bob Gill.....Florida
 Michael McDermott.....Mississippi
 Chris Schieble (designee for Patrick Banks).....Louisiana
 Andy Strelcheck.....NMFS
 C.J. Sweetman (designee for Jessica McCawley).....Florida
 Ed Walker.....Florida
 Troy Williamson.....Texas

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon).....Alabama
 Billy Broussard.....Louisiana
 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
 Tom Frazer.....Florida
 Anthony Overton.....Alabama

STAFF

Assane Diagne.....Economist
 Matt Freeman.....Economist
 John Froeschke.....Deputy Director
 Beth Hager.....Administrative Officer
 Lisa Hollensead.....Fishery Biologist
 Mary Levy.....NOAA General Counsel
 Natasha Mendez-Ferrer.....Fishery Biologist
 Emily Muehlstein.....Public Information Officer
 Ryan Rindone.....Lead Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison
 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
 Carrie Simmons.....Executive Director
 Camilla Shireman.....Administrative & Communications Assistant
 Carly Somerset.....Fisheries Outreach Specialist

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Luiz Barbieri.....GMFMC SSC
 Tim Griner.....SEFSC
 Peter Hood.....NMFS

| | | |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 1 | Michelle Masi..... | NMFS |
| 2 | Jessica Stephen..... | NMFS |
| 3 | John Walter..... | SEFSC |
| 4 | | |
| 5 | - - - | |
| 6 | | |

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Table of Contents..... | 3 |
| <u>Table of Motions.....</u> | <u>4</u> |
| <u>Adoption of Agenda and Approval of Minutes and Action Guide and</u> | |
| <u>Next Steps.....</u> | <u>5</u> |
| Final Action: Joint Amendment Commercial Electronic Reporting.... | 5 |
| <u>Summary of Public Comments.....</u> | <u>6</u> |
| <u>Document.....</u> | <u>8</u> |
| <u>Proposed Codified Text.....</u> | <u>9</u> |
| Development of Gulf For-Hire Data Collection Program..... | 11 |
| <u>Presentation: Overview of Current For-Hire Data Collection</u> | |
| <u>Programs.....</u> | <u>12</u> |
| <u>Presentation: Summary Results from SEFHIER.....</u> | <u>28</u> |
| <u>Presentation: For-Hire Data Usage and Next Steps.....</u> | <u>45</u> |
| SSC Discussions on MRIP-FES Pilot Study and Next Steps..... | 60 |
| Discussion of MRIP-FES Inventory for the Gulf of Mexico..... | 68 |
| Adjournment..... | 79 |

- - -

TABLE OF MOTIONS

PAGE 10: Motion to recommend the council approve the Joint Amendment on Commercial Electronic Reporting and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial license to make the necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to the codified text as necessary and appropriate. The motion carried on page 11.

- - -

1 The Data Collection Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
2 Management Council convened at The Embassy Suites in Panama City
3 Beach, Florida on Monday morning, October 23, 2023, and was
4 called to order by Chairman Susan Boggs.

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

10 **CHAIRMAN SUSAN BOGGS:** Good morning. I would like to call the
11 Data Collection Committee to order. The members of the Data
12 Collection Committee are myself, Susan Boggs, as Chair, Captain
13 Walker as Vice Chair, Dr. Banks, Chris Schieble, Dave Donaldson.
14 J.D. Dugas, Bob Gill, C.J. Sweetman, Michael McDermott, Dakus
15 Geeslin, Rick Burris, Andy Strelcheck, and Troy Williamson.

16
17 With that, I would like to have a motion to -- Has everybody had
18 an opportunity to review the agenda? Are there any additions
19 that need to be added? May I get an approval for the agenda?

20
21 **MR. DAVE DONALDSON:** So moved.

22
23 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Second.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Any opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the
26 motion passes. The next item on the agenda is the Approval of
27 the August 2023 Minutes. I hope that everyone has had an
28 opportunity to review those, and may I have a motion to approve?

29
30 **MR. BOB GILL:** So moved, Madam Chair.

31
32 **MR. DONALDSON:** Second.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing
35 none, the motion passes. Okay. The next item on our list is
36 the Action Guide and Next Steps. We have a pretty full agenda
37 today, and so we're going to take this item-by-item, and so, Dr.
38 Hollensead, I will turn this over to you for Agenda Item Number
39 IV, Joint Amendment for Commercial Electronic Reporting.

40
41 **FINAL ACTION: JOINT AMENDMENT COMMERCIAL ELECTRONIC REPORTING**
42

43 **DR. LISA HOLLENSEAD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This first agenda
44 item before the committee today is going to deal with final
45 action for this joint amendment, and so, as many of you are
46 aware, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center is working towards
47 implementing electronic reporting for the commercial coastal
48 logbook program for the South Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico.

1
2 This is a joint amendment being developed with the South
3 Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and they approved this for
4 final action at their September 2023 meeting, and so council
5 staff are first going to present the summary of public hearing
6 comments that we received, including comments that we also
7 through received through other means, and then the latest draft
8 of the document. Then we will also work through the codified
9 text, to review that, and so the committee should review those
10 materials, ask any questions of staff, and, if desired,
11 recommend that the council take final action on this amendment,
12 and so that would be Emily with a summary of the public comment.
13

14 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENT

15
16 **MS. EMILY MUEHLSTEIN:** Why thank you, Dr. Hollensead. Okay, and
17 so we hosted a couple of webinars on this issue, and, at the
18 first webinar, we had six members of the public attend, but no
19 comments were received during that webinar. In the second
20 webinar, we had also six members of the public attend, and we
21 did receive one comment, and that comment said that the
22 Shareholders Alliance specifically is very supportive of the new
23 program and has advocated for this update for a very long time.
24

25 It was acknowledged that the transition is complicated, and that
26 it takes a lot of effort to build and integrate an electronic
27 reporting program, but there are numerous fishermen that are
28 ready to test the program, when the time comes, and there was an
29 emphasis on the fact that we are going to need a lot of training
30 and outreach, when this program is implemented, to make sure
31 that we don't leave anybody in the dust, and we want to make
32 sure that our transition to this new electronic reporting
33 program is very smooth and that the people who are expected to
34 report through this program are comfortable with it before they
35 are forced to do it.
36

37 Our third webinar, we had one member of the public attend, and
38 he said that this program is a long time coming. While he used
39 to be one of those guys that was not very interested in
40 technology, he's a late adopter of that technology, he told me,
41 and he has adapted to the electronic world, and he thinks it's
42 about time for us to transition this reporting program to that.
43

44 He also asked that the rollout give plenty of time for folks who
45 need to adapt to the new platform, and he also commented that he
46 liked the feature that will not let users submit incomplete
47 reports. He said that he thinks that's going to be really
48 valuable, because, at this point, if you have an incomplete

1 report, it takes weeks for it to get sent back, and then, by the
2 time you get it, your memory about that specific trip is
3 probably really wrong, and so he thinks that's really going to
4 improve the quality of the data that's collected.

5
6 We did have forty-nine folks watch our public hearing video, and
7 we received three comments. Of those comments, those that
8 supported the transition noted that reporting on paper is
9 archaic, slow, and fraught with errors, and that this is a long
10 time overdue, and it will strengthen our reporting.

11
12 There was one comment that was written by letter, as a testament
13 to this person's use of technology, and he said that it would
14 really adversely impact him, and the older generation of
15 fishermen, that don't have access, or the desire, to use new
16 technology. He essentially sent in a plea asking that we do not
17 transition to electronic reporting, because he has no internet
18 access, no computer, and no smartphone, and he suggested that
19 the council should at least consider grandfathering-in some of
20 the older participants, like himself, because this will
21 essentially stop him from fishing, you know, through his
22 retirement, because he is not going to be able to transition to
23 electronic reporting, and that's it.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Any questions from the committee? We don't
26 have anybody here from the Science Center? Mr. Strelcheck.

27
28 **MR. ANDY STRELCHECK:** Unfortunately, Clay is arriving later this
29 morning, or early this afternoon, and John Walter may be online
30 today.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Well, I had some questions, but I guess I will
33 wait, unless John Walter is on the line, and do we know? Dr.
34 Walter, thank you for joining us.

35
36 **DR. JOHN WALTER:** Good morning, Chair. How are you?

37
38 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Good morning. Thank you, Dr. Walter, and so
39 some of the comments that we've heard were about the rollout of
40 the program, and has there been any discussion, within the
41 agency, about how this would roll out? Is there going to be a
42 period of time in which to get the commercial fishermen set up?
43 I know like, with the SEFHIER program, when we were doing it, it
44 seems like we had almost a year, and I don't know that it would
45 take that long with this particular program, but has there been
46 any discussion, within the agency, about how this would work?

47
48 **DR. WALTER:** Yes, and there's been substantial discussion about

1 how this rollout -- I think there's going to be a fair bit of
2 overlap between the two, the paper and electronic, and it's
3 going to be some time before we go 100 percent electronic. I am
4 checking in on this comment about grandfathering, for
5 participants who might not have cellphones or computer access,
6 but does that answer your question, at least as far as I know
7 right now?

8
9 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Yes, sir, and you did answer my second
10 question, which would be about this gentleman that doesn't have
11 the electronic capability to handle the new commercial logbook,
12 and so, Dr. Hollensead, what else do you require from this
13 committee? Where is the South Atlantic on this?

14
15 **DR. HOLLENSEAD:** They elected to go final on this document at
16 their September meeting, and so then we would follow-up with
17 that consideration to then go final. There's a couple of
18 sections in there, in the document, public summary comments and
19 things like that, to go in. Then, once we have that, the
20 document will be ready for transmission.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Okay, and so what is the pleasure of this
23 committee? Do you all want to go final, or do you want to wait
24 until -- Do we need to maybe send a recommendation to Full
25 Council? Dr. Hollensead.

26
27 **DR. HOLLENSEAD:** If the committee wanted to consider also the
28 codified text, just to make sure that -- You know, review that,
29 and make sure that that is also what you're sort of expecting
30 with this document, and then decide from there. I can also
31 review the purpose and need and the document, if you would like.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** So I think that would be a good idea, if you
34 could review the purpose and need. If there is no more
35 discussion, then maybe we review the codified text, and that may
36 be putting the cart before the horse, but that might garner us
37 the motion that we're looking for.

38
39 **DOCUMENT**

40
41 **DR. HOLLENSEAD:** Bernie, actually, if you wouldn't mind pulling
42 up the document first for me, please, ma'am. Then go to PDF
43 page 14, and document -- It would be page 27 of 113. Here is,
44 again, what the document has for the purpose and need. The
45 purpose is to modify the reporting for commercial fishing
46 vessels, and all of those fishery management plans are lined up
47 there for the Gulf and the South Atlantic, and then the need is
48 to improve the timeliness and efficiency of the commercial

1 logbook data collection.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Does anyone have a question about the purpose
4 and need? All right. Dr. Hollensead, I guess do you want to
5 skip to the codified text?

6
7 **PROPOSED CODIFIED TEXT**
8

9 **DR. HOLLENSEAD:** Yes, ma'am. I think that would be a good idea.
10 I would defer to Ms. Levy, if she had any comments on the
11 codified text.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Ms. Levy.

14
15 **MS. MARA LEVY:** Well, I guess I would just encourage you to look
16 at it, and so, in each applicable section related to the plans
17 that we're amending -- It's essentially just changing the
18 current codified text to indicate that it's electronic fishing
19 trips, records for each trip, and also noting that, if selected,
20 the permit holder has to submit the supplemental electronic
21 discard and economic records, because that's how it operates
22 now, and we wanted to be clear, in the text, that there are two
23 requirements, right, the coastal logbook for everything, and
24 then, if you're selected, the supplemental.

25
26 It's still the same timing no later than seven days after the
27 end of each fishing trip, and, you know, you can do a no fishing
28 report, if no fishing occurred during the calendar month, and
29 then each section also had a catastrophic conditions section as
30 well, that states, you know, the Regional Administrator can
31 allow paper reporting, or maybe it doesn't even say paper
32 reporting, because we don't want paper reporting, but the RA can
33 waive, or modify, the reporting time requirements if there's a
34 catastrophic condition like a hurricane, but I think the thought
35 was, during the discussion, that paper reporting during that
36 time would not be helpful, and so we would just allow people to
37 have more time during those conditions. The sections mimic each
38 other, essentially, in the different areas of the codified for
39 the different FMPs.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** So, with this one gentleman that expressed
42 concern about not being able to electronically report, and
43 should the Science Center make some concession, would that need
44 to be addressed in the codified text?

45
46 **MS. LEVY:** Right, and so, I mean, right now -- I mean, that's
47 kind of a sticky wicket, right, and like how are we going to
48 make an exception for one or two permit holders, and how are you

1 going to identify them, and how long are they accepted, and how
2 do we indicate that in the rules, and how are you going to
3 enforce it, and, I mean, that opens like an entire can of worms,
4 and there are a lot of questions that would have to be answered,
5 and a lot of thought put into that.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** So is this something that we can go final on
8 until the Science Center makes that call? Mr. Strelcheck.

9
10 **MR. STRELCHECK:** It's not the Science Center's call, and it's
11 the council's call, in terms of whether you want 100 percent
12 electronic reporting or something else that would grandfather
13 individuals in, and I would not encourage that. We had similar
14 concerns raised when we rolled out the IFQ program, and that was
15 sixteen years ago, and we're now fully operational, 100 percent
16 electronic submission of permits, and so nearly all of our
17 systems now are operating in an electronic environment, and I
18 think we can work with individuals that maybe are having
19 problems reporting, and figure out how we can help them to get
20 online and submit reports.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Well, and I appreciate your comments, and I
23 only ask because, based on what Mara just said, and not knowing
24 -- I guess I look to you, the RA, and you've answered that
25 question, but there is no really reason to slow this process
26 down, and you all will just work with that one individual, and
27 so, with that being said -- Mr. Gill.

28
29 **MR. BOB GILL:** I take it, Madam Chair, that you're looking for a
30 motion?

31
32 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** I think that would be appropriate at this time.

33
34 **MR. GILL:** If you would like, I would proffer the bare bones of
35 one, which was that we recommend to the council to -- Then use
36 all the standard verbiage of the motion that we use at Full
37 Council, if you could put that up, Bernie.

38
39 **MR. ED WALKER:** I will second the motion.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you, Captain Walker. I was waiting to
42 get it on the board. **We have a motion on the board to recommend**
43 **the council approve the Joint Amendment on Commercial Electronic**
44 **Reporting and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce**
45 **for review and implementation and deem the codified text as**
46 **necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial license to**
47 **make the necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair**
48 **is given the authority to deem any changes to the codified text**

1 as necessary and appropriate. Is there any opposition to this
2 motion? Dr. Walter.

3
4 **DR. WALTER:** Sorry, Madam Chair, and I don't have any opposition
5 to this, and this was about the previous topic on allowing for
6 grandfathering of the paper, and that would not be the
7 preference of the Science Center, to have to maintain two
8 separate systems, and sorry to come in late here, but this is
9 not pertinent to the voting. Thanks.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you, Dr. Walker. All right. **Seeing no**
12 **opposition to this motion, this motion passes.** All right. Dr.
13 Hollensead, if there's no more discussion on this issue, would
14 you please take us through Agenda Item V, Development of the
15 Gulf For-Hire Data Collection Program?

16
17 **DEVELOPMENT OF GULF FOR-HIRE DATA COLLECTION PROGRAM**

18
19 **DR. HOLLENSEAD:** Yes, ma'am. As many of you are aware, the
20 council has expressed interest in developing a for-hire data
21 collection program in the Gulf, something to replace the
22 Southeast For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting, or SEFHIER,
23 program.

24
25 To do this, we're going to actually take it hopefully in some
26 bite-sized pieces over the course of three presentations, and so
27 the first presentation is going to review existing for-hire data
28 programs, including the MRIP for-hire telephone survey, the
29 Southeast Regional Headboat Survey, LA Creel, and the Texas
30 Parks and Wildlife Department's angler survey. That
31 presentation will be given by Dr. Stephen.

32
33 The second presentation will provide some initial results from
34 data collected in 2022 from SEFHIER, and that will be presented
35 out by Dr. Masi, and then our third presentation will provide an
36 overview of usages for the for-hire data and provide some
37 discussion questions for some next steps, and that will also be
38 provided by Dr. Stephen.

39
40 The committee will have an opportunity to ask questions of staff
41 between each presentation. Any technical questions that you may
42 have about the presentations, please feel free to ask at that
43 time, and the committee should consider all the information and
44 provide any feedback to staff on any additional directives,
45 perhaps, for the For-Hire Data Collection AP, if desired, in
46 addition to the charge statement that's already been approved.
47 Madam Chair.

1 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Okay. We have a lot to digest today, and I
2 really would like to get a lot of feedback, if we can, when we
3 get through with these presentations. Dr. Stephen, it's nice to
4 have you in-person. Thank you for joining us, and whenever
5 you're ready.

6
7 **PRESENTATION: OVERVIEW OF CURRENT FOR-HIRE DATA COLLECTION**
8 **PROGRAMS**
9

10 **DR. JESSICA STEPHEN:** All right. As Lisa said, we're going to
11 kind of go over three different presentations, moving forward,
12 and I just wanted to give, again, an overview. We're going to
13 have the three different presentations, and this one, in
14 particular, is going to concentrate on the background of why we
15 collect for-hire data, the different sampling methodologies we
16 use, and review some of those current programs and identify some
17 of the different data gaps, or needs, within each program.

18
19 I'm going to start off with kind of the basic concept of why we
20 collect fisheries data in general, and it's typically used in
21 order to collect information to inform not only stock
22 assessments, but management advice, and to monitor catch
23 overall. Typically, when we're looking within this, it's a
24 combination of looking at your catch data, which is informing
25 you about the fish that were caught within the trip, and then
26 using that in conjunction with your effort data, how many trips
27 have been taken, to give what we call kind of the total catch,
28 or the final estimations, of the fish caught over time.

29
30 Within the catch data, we collect information directly from the
31 anglers, and this is often during fishing trips, and you can see
32 this as information collected on the logbook, and it frequently
33 has some supplemental information that comes from field
34 samplers, or from observers or intercept surveys.

35
36 When we're looking at the effort data, effort data is typically
37 collected in in-person interviews, or maybe phone calls or
38 emails, or some type of electronic reporting, to collect more
39 information on effort, and I want to remind everyone that each
40 survey does have its own different methods of data collection,
41 but, typically, when you're looking at effort data, you have
42 questions such as how long have they fished, what are they
43 targeting, how many trips have they taken overall.

44
45 Honing-in, in particular, into recreational fisheries data use
46 within management, what we want to get is high-quality catch and
47 effort data, so we can actually determine the effects of fishing
48 from the for-hire fleet and develop sound management strategies,

1 moving forward, and this is typically done through some type of
2 continuous monitoring of catch and effort data, and we might be
3 looking at different trends, in order to predict what would be
4 happening, or we would be evaluating different management
5 impacts, such as changing bag or size limit, or even looking at
6 different management scenarios, which is a combination, and so,
7 often, that's what you see when we bring decision tools in front
8 of you that combine different elements together.

10 Really, the quality of that fishing catch and effort
11 information, and statistics that are generated, do depend
12 strongly on the sampling design, and so that is the sample
13 framework, the data collection methodologies, and how you do the
14 final estimations, and so types of different sampling methods.

16 When it comes down to it, there are really two larger categories
17 of sampling methods, and there is a census, where you're going
18 to collect all the information directly from members of the
19 targeted population, and then there's a sampling design, when
20 your population is so large that collecting a full census is
21 more difficult.

23 Sampling design can be broken down into non-probability and
24 probability sampling, and these are two different statistical
25 methodologies. When you're thinking about non-probability
26 sampling, one of the concerns is that a non-probability sampling
27 may not be representative of all the different components of
28 your population that you're sampling.

30 It's more of a chance that any member will be sampled, and
31 that's not well known, and examples of what you see as
32 convenience sampling, when someone stops you out on the sidewalk
33 and asks you to take a survey, or you're looking for something
34 where you're having to just volunteer information, or another
35 example would be what we call snowball sampling. If you ask one
36 person, they refer on to other people, who refer you on, and the
37 problems with a lot of these is that you may be missing areas of
38 important portions of your target population.

40 When you're looking at probability sampling, you're using a
41 random selection that will ensure that you have representation
42 at each of the different portions of your population. You're
43 making sure that they have a known chance for sampling, and it
44 doesn't necessarily mean it's equal for everyone, but knowing
45 what the chance is can then be applied statistically to move
46 forward. A typical example of what that would be would be the
47 MRIP APAIS survey.

1 I also want to point out that there is a difference between what
2 we call data collection and sampling methodology. An electronic
3 logbook is data collection, and it's a tool in which we collect
4 the data, and it is not a sampling method, in and of itself,
5 but, when you're looking at different sampling methods, you
6 would use the appropriate survey design to use those different
7 data collections, in order to gather the information you need on
8 fishing, catch, and effort. A lot of times, your data
9 collection maybe looks to facilitate more timely or better-
10 quality data, but it's only one portion in the aspect of how you
11 get to final estimations.

12
13 When you're looking at probability sampling, which is what we'll
14 kind of concentrate on for the rest of this presentation, it
15 does require a well-designed sampling frame. It does allow you
16 to get final estimations with some statistical relevance, some
17 confidence around those, and it can handle what we call
18 incomplete coverage, or non-responses, and so, even though you
19 might design a census-like program, you could have non-
20 responses, and so probability sampling helps you adjust for
21 those.

22
23 Back in 2019, a group of people got together, and this was both
24 federal agencies and state partners and then our FIN partners,
25 to talk about what would be good for-hire data collections, and
26 we had the 2019 for-hire data collection and validation method
27 workshop, and I'm going to go over some of the highlights that
28 came from this, and some of the highlights were why we built the
29 SEFHIER program the way we had.

30
31 One of the main parts that came from it is that the quality of
32 your survey design really depends on not only your data
33 collection methodology, but your estimation and your validation
34 methods, and so three different kind of overall components, in
35 order to get to a good survey design. They have recommended, at
36 the workshop, that data collection and survey design should have
37 two or more types of data collection, so that you can validate
38 self-reported data, and so, for example, you could have
39 logbooks, whether they're from commercial or for-hire, and then
40 you would have the second methodology, and that could be a
41 report from a dealer, an observer onboard, or a port sample
42 interception.

43
44 Just to explain, in our commercial sampling, we do use two data
45 collection methods for validation, and we have a logbook from
46 the fishermen, and then we have the trip tickets from the
47 dealer. Dockside sampling survey is also a critical component
48 that was decided, particularly for the for-hire data collection,

1 because you need to look not just at mandatory reporting, but
2 how is the compliance relating to it, and so, by having a
3 dockside survey, this would be a second kind of data collection
4 methodology to get to your estimation. It would include methods
5 that would account for trips, or catch, that were not reported
6 or misreported.

7
8 When they looked at the overall kind of standard that would come
9 out for a design from the workshop, these were some of the
10 recommendations that came through.

11
12 For a logbook, being electronic was considered better, and to
13 have built-in quality controls, and so that would mean things
14 like your end date could not be before your start date, when you
15 were submitting information, or having different quality
16 controls that wouldn't let you enter a species that didn't exist
17 within the system.

18
19 They also recommended that we should have timely reporting and
20 that timely reporting should not only be required for
21 regulation, but in an enforceable manner, and so something to
22 ensure the compliance with it, which leads into the next bullet
23 point, making sure you have high compliance, and "compliance" is
24 a really broad, generic term, and we'll get into it in some of
25 the other presentations, to look at the different elements to
26 compliance.

27
28 Then the last thing they recommended really was a validation
29 survey, use of what they call a capture-recapture estimation
30 procedure, and this was taken originally from how we tag fish
31 and then recapture fish, to identify things like movement for
32 the entire population, just based on a few. In this case, the
33 capture component is the logbook that would be required from the
34 vessel, and the recapture is the dockside intercept. It is
35 critical, in this methodology, statistically, that you have the
36 recapture being fully independent of the capture and that the
37 recapture is probability-based.

38
39 I would like to remind everyone that the original SEFHIER
40 program was built on a lot of these components, and it is that
41 quality of the data, in combination with the survey design, the
42 compliance, and the accuracy of the reporting that leads to
43 good, sound management.

44
45 I'm going to take a little different step here, and I want to
46 just kind of remind everyone of how our for-hire fleet is
47 composed, and so, typically, we talk about the for-hire fleet in
48 two components, the headboat and then the charter boat. Keep in

1 mind that, even within the subsectors, the vessels may differ by
2 the size and number of passengers, the fee structure, the
3 different types of angler experiences, what they're selling the
4 trip to do, and the different types of fishing activity.

5
6 Typically, in general, we consider a headboat a vessel that is
7 going to take multiple individuals, and they may not know each
8 other, and there could be small groups of anglers who do know
9 each other, and they're going out with a licensed captain and
10 crew, and they're charged a kind of fee, a per-head fee, in
11 order to get on the boat. This is typically headboat trips are
12 more than six passengers, and they can be fairly large within
13 some of the vessels within the federal fleet.

14
15 On the charter boat, this is typically more people who know each
16 other, and they are hiring the vessel and the crew to take them
17 out, and so they are chartering the experience to go out, and
18 there's typically a fee for the entire charter, versus a fee per
19 head, and they can engage in different types of fishing
20 techniques, because it's typically a smaller party size, and so
21 they might do drift fishing, trolling, as well as bottom
22 fishing.

23
24 The next thing we're going to delve into is the different types
25 of existing surveys within these, and so I'm going to kind of go
26 over them, identify some of the data gaps within it, and I want
27 to remind people that, just because a data gap exists in the
28 survey, it doesn't mean that survey is not doing what it was
29 intended to do, and so building a comprehensive survey that
30 would do everything would be fairly intensive, and most of these
31 surveys have achieved their purpose with their design.

32
33 I'm going to start off with our Southeast Region Headboat
34 Survey, and you might also hear it called SRHS. This is one of
35 our older programs, and it began in the Gulf in 1986. It was
36 paper at the time, and they moved fully electronic in 2013.

37
38 One of the key factors about the headboat survey is that it has
39 a small sampling frame overall, and so there's only around
40 seventy vessels in it, throughout the entire existence over
41 time, and this survey design, because of the small sampling
42 frame, is probably not going to be scalable to the larger
43 federal for-hire fleet.

44
45 The headboat region survey uses a three-part survey design. It
46 uses a trip logbook, and that was designed to be a census,
47 although, over time, it has not always been a census. They had
48 a lot of compliance issues early on, but, in recent years,

1 they've gotten to 95 to 99 percent compliance. They have a
2 dockside intercept. During the dockside intercept, which is
3 considered a systematic opportunistic sampling, and one of the
4 reasons that they use the systematic opportunity sampling is
5 that there's a small ratio of vessels to port agents, and so a
6 regional port agent is systematically going through to ensure
7 that there are different -- To ensure that all the vessels in
8 their region are sampled approximately the same amount of times
9 per month, and, again, it's that small ratio that allows this
10 opportunity.

11
12 Those dockside samplers also collect for us biological samples.
13 Biological samples are critical, when we're looking at stock
14 assessments, to have otoliths for ageing, or histological
15 samples, to understand maturity and transition of fish. Then
16 the third component is an activity report that they use to help
17 verify fishing activity.

18
19 Breaking the headboat survey down a little bit further, we have
20 the effort portion of the collection, and so, when we're looking
21 at effort within the survey, we have information coming from the
22 logbook, and that's providing us the number of people onboard,
23 the numbers of anglers onboard, because this often can be
24 different, the fishing location, the trip duration, and we did
25 instill four economic questions back in 2014.

26
27 There is also -- When I talk about the third component, the
28 headboat activity report, this is where the port agents are kind
29 of recording all known vessel activity information that's
30 occurring, and they're using it to help track compliance and
31 correct for different types of misreporting. What they use is
32 direct observation while they're waiting for the vessels to come
33 back, and so they're looking at who went out and making sure
34 that, oh, if that vessel went out, then I should be expecting a
35 trip report, and they're also doing things such as contacting
36 ticket offices, to ensure the economic information, looking at
37 websites, looking for different types of information presented.
38 Again, some of this is doable because of a small sampling frame
39 with this survey.

40
41 When it comes to the catch collection, once again, they are
42 using the trip logbook, and that provides your catch, which is
43 your landed and discarded by species, and so how many did you
44 land and discard, and they also have the dockside intercept
45 which is in there, and the dockside intercept allows
46 verification of that logbook and collects additional information
47 that may not be in the logbook, such as the weights and the
48 lengths, so that we get length-weight regressions and, again,

1 the biological samples.

2
3 For each of these surveys, I have identified the timeframe, and
4 I apologize, and I was trying to get 2022 data in here in time
5 for the council, and I couldn't get it across all the programs,
6 and so what you'll see is a five-year display of data, from 2015
7 to 2019, and we purposely were excluding 2020 and 2021, due to
8 COVID, and the numbers were different.

9
10 Looking kind of over here at the overall average, you can see
11 that there is fluctuation in the number of trips, and the number
12 of trips sampled over time, which means that the percentage of
13 sampled trips may vary each year, but, on average, the headboat
14 survey is probably intercepting, and looking at, eight-and-a-
15 half percent of the trips each year.

16
17 What are kind of some of the data gaps that might be seen in
18 utilizing this design on a larger full-scale basis? One is that
19 this was considered to be census-like, and, though it was
20 required reporting, reporting did not always occur, but we have
21 seen that, in recent years, particularly once we put in a permit
22 requirement, that, in order to renew your permit, your logbook
23 had to be there, and that's when we see a really drastic upshoot
24 in compliance, and, as I mentioned before, depending on the
25 year, 95 to 99 percent compliance, and so this is a strongly-
26 compliant program.

27
28 When there was not compliance, we did provide a correction
29 factor, what's called a K factor, and so the data the council
30 receives from the agency does have these factors applied to
31 correct for non-reporting in the headboat survey, and we also
32 have access to the raw data, to look at different information
33 going through.

34
35 Program participation does vary by state, and so we don't
36 necessarily maybe have equal representation across all the
37 states, but it was strong enough that we felt that it is a good
38 index for our stock assessments, moving forward, and, of course,
39 some of the things to consider is this program is not likely
40 scalable the way it is, due to what that ratio is of vessels to
41 samplers, and so they might have three to four vessels to one
42 sampler.

43
44 With the amount of federal permits that we have out there, that
45 would be a rather high cost for the agency, to put that many
46 boots on the ground. Again, just remember that the early
47 compliance challenges have been largely resolved for quite a few
48 years now, due to that permit requirement.

1
2 I am going to move to probably our next-most well-known survey,
3 which is the MRIP for-survey design. Just a reminder that it is
4 only conducted in Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. It is
5 based on both the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey, or
6 APAIS, as well as the offsite for-hire telephone survey, which
7 largely collects effort information.

8
9 Within the for-hire telephone survey, approximately 10 percent
10 of the vessels are selected for a phone survey, and this does
11 include both state and federal vessels, and so this is not an
12 apples-to-apples comparison of SEFHIER to MRIP, because SEFHIER
13 was federal only. There is a mandatory response required from
14 the federal reef-fish-permitted for-hire vessels. This
15 information is collected directly from the captains, and it asks
16 some questions about the number of for-hire trips within that
17 week.

18
19 On the catch side, we use the APAIS survey to collect catch
20 information, and it also collects information on the general
21 area that's fished and what your catch is. In this sense, we
22 are looking not only at landed and discarded, but discard
23 disposition, alive or dead discarded, and it provides an
24 opportunity for biological sampling. This information is
25 collected directly from the anglers.

26
27 Once again, I kind of show a five-year timeframe overall, and so
28 you can see, in the second column, the number of vessels that
29 have been selected for the for-hire survey, and we have seen a
30 decrease in that overall, and then the number of reported trips,
31 and reported trips are when a vessel was called, the captain
32 answered the phone, and he answered the survey.

33
34 We also have telephone response rate, and how often did they
35 actually pick up the phone, and you can see that that changes a
36 little bit over time, and then, for those who do pick up the
37 phone, there are refusals that are allowed, and refusals tend to
38 be low, around 13 percent, and refusals can come from state
39 vessels or federal pelagic for-hire vessels. I will point out
40 that the person calling may not always know what permits a
41 vessel has, and so we could potentially have refusals from
42 federal reef-fish-permitted vessels as well.

43
44 Then, overall, there's a non-contact rate that's around 25 to 30
45 percent overall, and you can see the number of APAIS trips that
46 have been sampled.

47
48 Looking within the MRIP program, what are some of the data gaps

1 that we see in looking through it? One is that it is voluntary,
2 for state and for the federal coastal migratory species, or
3 pelagics, permit. When you have a voluntary survey, you could
4 have trips tabulate that as maybe an underestimate of the total
5 effort across all state and federal waters, or across different
6 geographical stratum, as you're looking through. The other
7 part is that this is not a Gulf-wide survey, and it has to be
8 combined with other state surveys to get a full-Gulf picture.

9
10 The last point is, early on in MRIP, or when it was in MRFSS,
11 the identification of species was a little bit suspect early on,
12 and so think about some of the amendments we have in front of
13 the council, like what's the difference between black and gag,
14 or scamp and yellowfin, and, over time, that has become less of
15 a problem, because the surveyors who are working for APAIS are
16 trained in species identification and able to help make sure
17 that we are correctly identifying them.

18
19 I'm going to move on to the LA Creel survey, and so Louisiana
20 participated in MRIP in its previous incarnation as MRFSS, all
21 the way up through January of 2014, when they started their own
22 survey. LA Creel was looking to provide more reliable landings
23 of different individual species in a timely manner, and they
24 were using a two-part survey design.

25
26 Within the effort survey, they did weekly phone, or emails, to
27 licensed Louisiana charter captains, to interview them and ask
28 questions about their fishing activities from the previous week,
29 and these captains were contacted at random, with the goal of
30 roughly 30 percent of the offshore, or what they call the ROLP
31 holders, and about 10 percent of their inshore-licensed
32 captains. I want to point out that, during red snapper season,
33 LA Creel does do 100 percent contact of captains with those
34 offshore permits.

35
36 When we're looking at the collection, they do have a weekly
37 access point survey. Some of the data gaps here are that there
38 are no access point surveys at private landing locations, and,
39 when they're collecting discard information, it's only on eleven
40 critical species and not on the whole suite of them.

41
42 Moving on to Texas creel, and I believe this is our oldest
43 survey, and it began in 1974. I want to point out that we
44 didn't get landing estimates starting until 1983 from Texas.
45 They do what we call a boat survey, and it includes sampling of
46 the for-hire vessels and well as those guided inshore and
47 offshore vessels.

1 Their strategy is to intercept and interview boats while they're
2 at the ramps and marinas. They collect landings information and
3 effort information, as well as angler information, and they
4 typically collect in a two-season style, and so they have the
5 high-use season of May through November and then a low-use
6 season of November through May of the next year, and they use a
7 random sampling, based on relative site pressure.

8
9 One thing to take note of is that, while they collect lengths of
10 fish within Texas creel, they do not collect individual weights,
11 but we use the lengths then to estimate the weights, and there
12 is no collection of discards. The estimates that are from the
13 high and low season are sent to the agency twice a year, and
14 then the expansion of those catch estimates are using fishable
15 days, instead of total effort, and they also use estimates that
16 are based on the empty boat trailer counts, and so, again, like
17 we've said before for activity, like can we determine when a
18 boat should be out.

19
20 Some of the data gaps, in relation to this, is that the sampling
21 is limited just to those sites within and times covered by the
22 survey frame, and, once again, no private locations are captured
23 within it, and there's no separate survey that helps to account
24 for those off-frame trips.

25
26 The last one that I'm just going to briefly go over is our
27 counterparts in the Northeast do require vessel trip reports
28 from their federal-permitted vessels, and, up at GARFO, the
29 Greater Atlantic Region, that information is used solely to
30 supplement MRIP in the Northeast, and so, if a vessel has been
31 identified in MRIP's FHS survey, they are not called, because
32 they already turned in their effort, through the logbook to
33 GARFO, and that is used instead.

34
35 Your question might be why are they only using it as
36 supplemental, and one of the reasons, and a similar problem down
37 here, is the mandatory reporting doesn't cover the entire
38 region, because the mandatory reporting does not cover the state
39 vessels, and so they wanted to just use this as a way to
40 supplement and get better information from the federal vessels.

41
42 The other problems considered were that the vessel trip reports
43 are self-reported, and GARFO does not have a mechanism to
44 validate those trips, and so they don't have a second survey
45 design, which kind of wraps us up to where we are with SEFHIER
46 when it was built.

47
48 When we designed the SEFHIER program, it was built to include a

1 number of those data and accountability reporting standards that
2 we've gone over in this presentation. We largely built it to
3 mimic the commercial fishery sampling design, to the extent
4 that's practical, understanding that there are differences
5 between the two trips.

6
7 Some of the things that we did to mimic it were utilizing hail-
8 outs, which help with trip auditing, using VMS for validation,
9 as well as positioning, seeing geographically where we're going,
10 and then the mandatory vessel trip reports.

11
12 To account for the validation, we did use the capture-recapture
13 survey design, and that was in place through our partners in the
14 commission, in GulfFIN, and then the state partners who assist
15 with that, to intercept and help understand what might be the
16 unreported and the accuracy of any self-reported trips.

17
18 Then we did build it to have adequate enforcement to help ensure
19 compliance, and everyone is probably aware that we did have that
20 logbooks had to be turned in before you could renew your permit,
21 and that was just one of our compliance tools.

22
23 With regard to the capture-recapture in general, there are some
24 challenges to doing this type of validation, or second-survey
25 methodology. It does require that you have a registration of
26 each trip being taken, and so you need to know what the total
27 sample is and then what proportion of that your capture-
28 recapture works within, and it also requires that that vessel
29 trip report, or logbook, is submitted prior to intercept, and
30 that's largely due to the nature that we have to have the two
31 surveys independent of each other, and we don't want to have
32 someone changing their records because they think they're going
33 to be encountered.

34
35 Then, finally, sufficient enforcement and compliance monitoring,
36 to help reduce that number of unreported trips. The goal really
37 is to reduce that number as possible, but still have an
38 estimation procedure in place, so that we can have final
39 estimates, and, finally, observers could be another way, in a
40 capture-recapture, that would increase the accuracy,
41 particularly if the council is interested in discard mortality,
42 and so what does the release look like, dead or alive discards.

43
44 What were some of the known gaps within SEFHIER? As we were
45 analyzing the data, which you will see from Dr. Masi next, we
46 kind of noticed a few different things that were going on that
47 could be up for council consideration.

1 One thing is, like some of the other surveys, we did not have
2 the ability to sample or to enforce at private landing
3 locations. We did not collect the discard disposition or
4 mortalities, and we were kind of trying to balance the burden in
5 just collecting kept and discarded.

6
7 We had very limited weight and length data for the collection,
8 and that's a little bit more of the boots on the ground and
9 needing people taking those hard parts of the fish, and, of
10 course, SEFHIER is only sampling the federally-permitted
11 vessels. I will take any questions now, and then we'll go into
12 the next presentation from Dr. Masi, and that will actually show
13 you some data results from what we've analyzed of the program
14 to-date.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you for that, Dr. Stephen. Does anyone
17 on the committee have any questions? Captain Walker.

18
19 **MR. WALKER:** Could you tell us what defines fishable days in
20 Texas? Is there a certain wind speed, or wave height, or how do
21 they determine what is a fishable day versus a non-fishable day?

22
23 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Banks.

24
25 **DR. KESLEY BANKS:** I think I can answer that question for you.
26 We get what's called the washing wishing effect in Texas, based
27 on how the Gulf of Mexico is set up, and so most -- At least in
28 my area, charter guys can go out in about four, or maybe five,
29 foot waves. Anything over that is a pretty sloppy sea, and
30 we're also pretty breezy, and so anything over twenty-mile-an-
31 hour winds is pretty -- Your customers are going to stay pretty
32 seasick the whole time, and you're not going.

33
34 **MR. WALKER:** But is there a specific -- Do you know if there's a
35 specific number? I mean, they have to cut it off at a certain
36 point, or it's just subjective? Is there a defined number, and
37 I'm just thinking about this for other applications, and so I
38 wondered if there was a definition of what is a fishable day,
39 versus not a fishable day.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Banks.

42
43 **DR. BANKS:** It's pretty much up to the captain. I would say we
44 can probably get out maybe 80 percent of the time, in the
45 summer. Dakus.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Mr. Geeslin.

1 **MR. DAKUS GEESLIN:** To Captain Walker's point, there are
2 definitions that we define, and it identifies non-fishable days,
3 Ed, and I would have to look back into those, but our creel
4 survey agents have codes that they mark down, and it does have
5 to do with wave height and windspeed and offshore conditions,
6 and I can get those for you though, Ed.

7
8 **MR. WALKER:** Sure. Thank you, and so the actual sampler checks
9 fishable days, versus non-fishable, or the captain of the boat
10 says -- Well, I guess you wouldn't have anything for talking to
11 the captain if it was a non-fishable day.

12
13 **MR. GEESLIN:** Correct, and so, for our creel surveys, they are
14 determining that, but, as Dr. Banks suggested, those often too
15 are very much aligned.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** I would think it would have to be subjective,
18 too. I mean, the captain, versus what Texas creel is saying,
19 and, I mean, because a fishable day to you may not be -- I think
20 it could be very subjective, because I know, in our area, it is.
21 Captain Walker.

22
23 **MR. WALKER:** Right, and that's why I asked. It's an interesting
24 term, and, coming off of our abbreviated gag grouper season
25 here, we had a lot of wind at the end, which a lot of us would
26 call unfishable days, and so I'm just kind of bouncing that
27 around in my head, and is this actually a thing that you can
28 figure-in anywhere or -- I don't know, and I'm just thinking out
29 loud here.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** I agree with you. I mean, in our area, I know
32 there's days that we don't fish, when other boats go out, and so
33 it is the choice of the customer saying that we don't care, and
34 we want to go, because you see people like that, and they don't
35 care, and they want to go, or is it the captain erring on the
36 side of caution, and so I could see where that could be very
37 subjective. Any other questions from the committee? Mr.
38 Donaldson.

39
40 **MR. DAVE DONALDSON:** So you mentioned, for the headboats, that
41 they're sampling about eight-and-a-half percent, and is that --
42 Have they determined that that's an adequate sample percentage,
43 that they're getting an adequate number of trips to be
44 representative?

45
46 **DR. STEPHEN:** So I don't have a definitive answer on that, but I
47 will say, based on kind of my experience of how small the number
48 of vessels are, and then the number of trips taken with that

1 smaller sampling frame, that eight-and-a-half percent has seemed
2 to lend itself well, when we're looking at management, of being
3 truly indicative of what's occurring, as well as within stock
4 assessments, and it is considered one of our stronger indices in
5 stock assessments.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Mr. Gill.

8
9 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and so, in the for-hire
10 telephone survey, and given the FES current situation, where we
11 found the results may well be highly sensitive to simply the
12 order of the questions, has the agency made any effort to see if
13 a similar problem exists on the for-hire side?

14
15 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Stephen.

16
17 **DR. STEPHEN:** I will have to defer that to any of our Science
18 and Technology -- Or, Andy, do you have an answer for that?

19
20 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Mr. Strelcheck.

21
22 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I mean, I'm going to speculate a little bit
23 here, Bob, but the for-hire telephone survey of the captains is
24 a weekly survey, right, and so the challenge that we were having
25 was with reporting effort over a two-month period and the order
26 of questions, two months relative to the entire year, and so my
27 expectation is the bias would be considerably less, just because
28 of the shorter timeframe that we're sampling, but I can confirm
29 that with our Science and Technology office.

30
31 **MR. GILL:** If you would, sir. Thank you.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Mr. Gill, to your question, I know the State of
34 Alabama, and I don't know if it's for every state, but we get a
35 form in the mail, like a week or two weeks prior to the week
36 that we're required to report, and it asks all those questions,
37 and so, basically, you can fill the report out, and so, when
38 they call, you have that information. In other words, if you
39 fished a day, you can go, on that day, and fill it in, and so,
40 therefore, your recall is not as biased. Mr. Donaldson, did you
41 have a question? Mr. Anson.

42
43 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not on your
44 committee, but, Dr. Stephen, on the known SEFHIER gap slide, it
45 mentions that does not collect discard disposition for mortality
46 estimates, and was that a -- What was the reasoning behind that?

47
48 **DR. STEPHEN:** We'll get to a little bit in the third

1 presentation, but one of the aspects, when we were building the
2 program, is we were trying to balance the burden on the
3 fishermen and what the intended use of the data was, and so I
4 think we landed -- The council had landed on just doing landed
5 catch going forward, and it was something that I think, as we
6 got more compliance, or got further in the program, it could be
7 something that you would want to adjust, or modify, to get more
8 discard information.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Any other questions from the committee? Okay.
11 I do have one, and Mr. Gill actually touched on one of them,
12 with the FES. You talked about that the states don't collect
13 this data from CMP permit holders, but there's not that big of a
14 gap between CMP permit holders versus reef fish, is there?

15
16 **DR. STEPHEN:** That's correct, and we almost have -- A for-hire
17 vessel that is federally permitted typically has both, and there
18 are a few instances where they don't, and I would have to
19 double-check the data itself, and there might be more instances
20 that they have the reef fish without the pelagic, versus the
21 other way around.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** That's what I thought, and then I have a
24 question, and I don't know, Dakus, if I can put you on the spot,
25 but how can you identify it's a charter boat out fishing by an
26 empty trailer?

27
28 **MR. GEESLIN:** So we don't identify -- We count all boats, but we
29 do -- There is a proportion that you can reasonably assume, over
30 time, given our long history of our program, that you could say,
31 okay -- That's based on our dockside surveys, where you have a
32 period of record, where you would say that 30 percent, or 20
33 percent, is attributed to the charter/for-hire sector, and so
34 it's not -- You're exactly right, and you can't tell by a boat
35 trailer.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** I was going to say, man, you all are good out
38 there, and so -- Then, Dr. Stephen, I do have one question, and
39 maybe I have missed something, but, on your last slide, with the
40 gaps in SEFHIER, that it only samples federally-permitted
41 vessels, and I thought that was the point of SEFHIER.

42
43 **DR. STEPHEN:** Yes, and so that was the point of SEFHIER, and
44 it's one of the considerations when you're looking at overall
45 management though, overall stock assessments, is you do want to
46 identify the catch and effort taken from the state vessels as
47 well, and so, while this adequately looks at the federal
48 portion, when we're looking at overall management, we have look

1 overall at everything being removed from it.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** So, when you say "state vessels", you're
4 specifically talking about state charter -- Excuse me. State-
5 permitted charter boats, and not federally-permitted?

6
7 **DR. STEPHEN:** Yes, that's correct.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** That's not data that can be drawn from the
10 state collection surveys and the MRIP that the states
11 participate in?

12
13 **DR. STEPHEN:** Yes, it can be drawn from those, and then you have
14 to integrate in these different data streams that might be
15 sampled in different ways, and so it adds a layer of complexity
16 when you're moving forward, but what SEFHIER was doing is giving
17 us more accurate and timely information on the federal, which
18 was probably the larger proportion of what was landed as a
19 species, and so it gave us a better indicator of what was going
20 on, but, overall, when you're looking at management, you have to
21 combine a lot of different data streams together, and so, for
22 recreational, we combine state surveys, the headboat survey, and
23 it would be SEFHIER down the road, as well as MRIP together, and
24 so that's a lot of data streams, as you're moving together, and
25 one of the ideas is to hopefully start to get them closer to
26 where we have apples-to-apples comparisons.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** So last question, and, I mean, the agency is
29 not looking to bring the state guideboats, is what I was trying
30 to come up with, into the SEFHIER sampling, are they?

31
32 **DR. STEPHEN:** That's correct, and it was just like the overall
33 scheme things and where data gaps occur, and so, even up in the
34 Northeast, right, they had to combine their federal logbooks
35 with MRIP to get the overall total estimates, and so a similar
36 process would be here, and the gaps are, again, not necessary to
37 the intent and purpose of that program, and it's just the
38 overall need of how you look at information coming through.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Okay. I'm just making sure that I have a clear
41 understanding of what is coming at us. Mr. Strelcheck.

42
43 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I mean, just to put some further clarity on
44 that, if you think about red snapper currently, a lot of the
45 state surveys sample not only private vessels, but state-
46 licensed charter vessels, right, and we then monitor the catch
47 limits with private and state-licensed vessels combined, and
48 then federally-permitted vessels are separate for their quota,

1 but, for a lot of species, that's not the case, and a lot of
2 species are caught in state waters, like gag grouper off of
3 Florida, and gray snapper, just to name a few, and so, the
4 greater the proportion of landed catch that comes from state
5 waters, right, the more we're having to kind of patch together
6 both state and federal surveys, in order to get the full picture
7 of what's been landed.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** So, ideally, all the states, as well as the
10 SEFHIER, the headboat survey, all your datasets, they would
11 collect information on all species, and is that a fair
12 assumption?

13
14 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I mean, that's certainly the gold standard, and
15 the desire, right, that we want to have catch and effort for all
16 areas fished and all waters fished.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Okay. Anything else on this presentation? All
19 right. Dr. Masi, are you with us?

20
21 **DR. MICHELLE MASI:** Yes, Madam Chair. I'm here. Thank you.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** All right. Dr. Masi, whenever we -- I don't
24 know, and do we have the slide presentation to bring up here?
25 Okay, Dr. Masi. Whenever you're ready.

26
27 **PRESENTATION: SUMMARY RESULTS FROM SEFHIER**

28
29 **DR. MASI:** Okay. Thank you. Before we begin the conversation,
30 I just wanted to remind everyone that, before 2021, we had
31 absolutely no SEFHIER data in order to improve our understanding
32 of how the for-hire fishery was operating, and, also, just
33 recall that the SEFHIER program began in January of 2021, and
34 so, in that first year, with the new program in place, when we
35 had pretty low compliance, and we didn't have good compliance
36 really until our constituents became familiar with the new
37 reporting requirements, and so the SEFHIER data that we did
38 collect in 2021 is also unusable.

39
40 All right, and so, by 2022, as you can see in that middle donut
41 there, we had over 100,000 SEFHIER trip reports that had been
42 submitted to us, and, really, the important point just being
43 that those trip reports help us better understand how the for-
44 hire fishery is operating, in both space and time, and remember
45 that it's the declarations that are providing the enforcement
46 officers with the information on where and when to meet a vessel
47 at the dock, and SEFHIER actually used the declarations as well,
48 in order to know when a logbook was required, and we used that

1 for program compliance tracking purposes. Then, of course, it's
2 the logbooks that give us the information needed to estimate
3 catch and effort for the fishery.

4
5 Now, the other two figures on this slide are just showing the
6 total number of vessels that declared at least one time, and
7 that's the figure on the left, and the total Gulf-permitted
8 vessels that submitted at least one logbook in 2022, and that's
9 the figure on the right, and so, from these two figures, you
10 can, of course, clearly see that we still have over 500 Gulf
11 SEFHIER vessels that never submitted either a declaration or a
12 logbook in 2022, and so that's where having VMS, or at least
13 some sort of comprehensive trip validation program in place,
14 really becomes truly critical in our ability to understand if
15 those 500 vessels were either inactive in 2022 or if some of
16 them were actually just not reporting.

17
18 Before we dig more into the SEFHIER program compliance for 2022,
19 I wanted to just show this breakdown of the number of Gulf
20 SEFHIER logbooks that we received by month in 2022, in order to
21 just emphasize that, with this SEFHIER data, we can actually
22 begin to better understand the peak months of effort for the
23 Gulf for-hire industry, where you can clearly see that the
24 months of June and July are really standing apart from the other
25 months, in terms of the fishing activity for the year.

26
27 Here, we're using the declaration data, in order to better
28 understand the effort across days for an average week in 2022,
29 and so, based on the figure, you can see that the busiest day,
30 on average, was Saturday, and, of course, that's probably not
31 too surprising for most, but what's interesting, to me, is how
32 closely the other days actually trail behind Saturday, just
33 meaning that really any day could be a good day for business, on
34 average, and, you know, this figure actually reminds me as well
35 why it is that my for-hire captains call me and say they can't
36 make any of our daytime meetings, or webinars, because, you
37 know, you can clearly see that they're definitely a hardworking
38 bunch, on average.

39
40 Now let's jump to a look at the overall 2022 Gulf SEFHIER
41 program compliance, with regard to the reporting requirement,
42 and so, in this figure, we're showing the percent of compliant
43 Gulf SEFHIER vessels, and that's the light-blue bar, versus non-
44 compliant vessels in 2022, and, now, there's a couple of things
45 that you should consider before trying to interpret this figure.

46
47 The first is that this analysis only tells us compliance in
48 relation to if the vessel declared that they were intending to

1 fish, and did they then submit an associated logbook for that
2 trip, and so what it's not telling us is anything about non-
3 reporting, and that's definitely where we would need VMS, or at
4 least some sort of trip validation program, in order to capture
5 the non-reporting vessels, and the second thing to consider here
6 is something that we actually learned through operating the
7 program, is that vessels can be non-compliant up until permit
8 renewal, and then, at that point, they will submit all their
9 outstanding trip reports, and so they do that in order to come
10 into compliance through any other permit.

11
12 Unfortunately, that can actually impact data usability, but we
13 can't capture that here, just by looking at a snapshot of the
14 reporting compliance in 2022, and so what we wanted to do is
15 take a deeper look at any late reporting, and I will show that
16 analysis in a couple of slides, but, importantly, I do want to
17 just note that we do try to circumvent that issue of late
18 reporting, and the SEFHIER team does actively call and email our
19 constituents when we come across any non-reporting vessels in
20 our database.

21
22 Then a final point here, on this figure, is just that, of the 22
23 percent of non-compliant vessels in 2022 -- A vessel may only be
24 missing just one report, in just one month of 2022, and so,
25 really, we can't show that here, just by looking at the overall
26 compliance for the year, and so let's jump to the next slide.

27
28 What we did here is we quantified the percent of non-compliant
29 vessels by month, and just a few things to consider here, and so
30 the first is that the percent of non-compliant vessels is
31 actually distinct from month to month, just meaning that a
32 vessel may be non-compliant in January, but then be compliant in
33 every other month of 2022, and another key point is just that
34 the overall trend, across all of the months of 2022, is showing
35 that, in any given month, there's never more than 9 percent non-
36 compliant, and you can see that based on the figure.

37
38 Importantly, we also did look at this week to week, and we saw
39 that even fewer vessels were non-compliant on a week-to-week
40 basis, and this just means that most Gulf SEFHIER vessels that
41 were reporting were actually reporting correctly most of the
42 time, and, of course, that's great news.

43
44 Now, some final considerations are that remember it's not
45 accounting for any non-reporting vessels, and we need VMS, or
46 validation checking, for that, and then this is just a snapshot
47 in time, and so it's based on when we pulled the data from our
48 database, meaning that, if we pull the data late in 2023, which

1 we actually do that, then a vessel could have submitted their
2 late reports between the end of 2022 to the date that we pulled
3 the data, and so, considering that, we wanted to delve further
4 into this issue of whether or not there was any late reporting,
5 and so let's jump to that in the next couple of slides.

6
7 All right, and so, in these figures, we're showing the
8 proportion of one-time versus late declarations, and that's the
9 figure on the left, and on time versus late logbooks, and that's
10 the figure on the right. Now, here, we can actually quantify
11 whether a report is late, using the transmission date and time
12 fields, which we actually require our reporting application
13 vendors to send us, along with every trip report that we
14 receive, and remember that a Gulf SEFHIER declaration was
15 considered late if it was transmitted from the app after the
16 vessel moved on water, and so, here, we quantify late
17 declarations as those that were transmitted after the reported
18 trip's start time.

19
20 Given that, you can see that about 30 percent of the
21 declarations that we received in 2022 were sent to us late, and
22 so that would be, you know, obviously an issue for enforcement
23 officers, as the declarations were meant to alert them in
24 advance on where and when to meet the vessel at the dock, and so
25 that's definitely a compliance issue that the council should
26 consider as we look to stand back up a Gulf SEFHIER program.

27
28 Now, for late logbooks, recall that a Gulf logbook was
29 considered late if it was transmitted to us after the landings
30 were offloaded, or more than thirty minutes after arrival, if
31 they didn't land anything, and so, that said, there really isn't
32 a robust way to determine if they followed those requirements
33 without doing a detailed analysis that also looked at VMS
34 positional data, and so we need to have actually more boots on
35 the ground to know when they were offloading their catch.

36
37 Here, what we did is just assume a twenty-four-hour buffer,
38 given that actually some captains have told me that they may not
39 offload their catch until as far out as the next day, depending
40 on when a trip returned, and so, here, in this analysis, any
41 logbook that was sent to us more than twenty-four hours after
42 the reported trip ended is being considered late. Given that,
43 you can see that only about 17 percent of the logbooks that we
44 received in 2022 were sent to us more than twenty-four hours
45 after a trip ended, which, you know, is pretty good news.

46
47 All right, and so now let's consider data usability. All right,
48 and so another thing that we wanted to better understand, in

1 reference to late reporting, is whether the late reports were
2 submitted within thirty days of the trip ending, and so this
3 analysis is considering two things. The first is data
4 usability, just noting that most trip reporting programs aren't
5 going to make use of any trip reports that are submitted more
6 than thirty days after a trip ends, and this actually has to do
7 with what's called recall bias, and so just trying to minimize
8 the error in our final analyses and estimates.

9
10 The second reason we wanted to look at this, and I kind of
11 mentioned it already, is that we noticed an issue, which
12 actually happens to be more widespread in the South Atlantic
13 SEFHIER program, where permit holders were waiting until permit
14 renewal to submit their trip reports, and so what this analysis
15 is showing is that less than 5 percent of the late logbooks were
16 submitted more than thirty days after the trip ended, which
17 means that most of the 2022 Gulf SEFHIER program logbooks would
18 be useable for analyses, and it also suggests that most of our
19 Gulf constituents weren't waiting until permit renewal to come
20 into compliance with the reporting requirements, and so, of
21 course, both of these findings are very positive for the Gulf
22 SEFHIER program.

23
24 On this slide, we wanted to show the 2022 Gulf SEFHIER program
25 compliance in relation to the South Atlantic SEFHIER program
26 compliance, and, now, remember that the Gulf program did have
27 the stricter requirements, with the VMS and declarations, which
28 were required for every movement on the water, and the
29 requirement to submit the logbook prior to offloading, and then,
30 of course, the requirement to complete the validation survey if
31 the vessel was intercepted at the dock.

32
33 Now, the South Atlantic SEFHIER program may have fewer permit
34 requirements, but, as you can see from the figure on the right
35 there, which is showing that nearly 58 percent of the South
36 Atlantic SEFHIER program vessels are non-compliant in 2022, that
37 having a more lax program does appear to come at the cost of
38 data integrity, and so that's something that the council should
39 definitely consider.

40
41 A final point that I just wanted to make on this figure, or this
42 slide here, is that the South Atlantic Council is actually in
43 the process of considering how to improve the South Atlantic
44 SEFHIER program, and so it's likely to increase the South
45 Atlantic program requirements, and so, again, just something to
46 consider.

47
48 Now let's consider VMS compliance in 2022, and so just to note

1 that, for this council meeting, we really didn't have time to
2 get into analyzing VMS compliance related to if positional data
3 suggested that, if a trip occurred, did the vessel actually
4 submit their trip report, but we did want to show, just
5 generally, what the VMS compliance looked like in 2022.

6
7 Here, the donut on the left of this slide is just showing the
8 proportion of the total Gulf for-hire permitted vessels that
9 were VMS compliant by the end of 2022, and you can see that's
10 about 84 percent, and I do want to note that, in February of
11 2023, when the program was set aside because of the lawsuit,
12 that the number of non-compliant vessels was actually down in
13 the single digits, and the figure on the right there is just
14 emphasizing the ramp-up of vessels who had a positioning VMS
15 following the VMS requirement taking effect, which, if you
16 remember, was on March 1 of 2022.

17
18 All right, and so now jumping to the SEFHIER validation survey,
19 and so, here, we're quantifying the rate of completed validation
20 survey dockside intercepts, and that's being shown actually by
21 that red-dashed line across all months, and, here, the overall
22 SEFHIER validation survey interception rate, in 2022, is being
23 calculated as the average of the number of completed validation
24 survey interviews, and those are the light-blue bars, divided by
25 the total number of Gulf logbooks per month, shown by the dark-
26 blue bars, and so, based on this, we found that the mean SEFHIER
27 validation survey interception rate in 2022 was 5.2 percent,
28 which actually seems pretty reasonable, when we compare that to
29 other programs.

30
31 In addition to telling you all how much data that we
32 successfully collected, and also, of course, how great our Gulf
33 constituents were doing with meeting the reporting requirements,
34 I want to just delve a little bit more into really the utility
35 of the SEFHIER data.

36
37 On this slide, I mapped the approved landing locations for the
38 Gulf SEFHIER program, and just remember, of course, that the
39 Office of Law Enforcement used the reported landing locations to
40 know where to meet a vessel at the dock. Now, here, the map is
41 also delineating the private, or what I'm calling likely
42 inaccessible landing locations, from those are public marinas or
43 boat ramps.

44
45 The underdetermined just means that, using Google Earth, I
46 wasn't able to determine if that private business, or private
47 marina, was actually accessible or not for in-person officers,
48 and, importantly, these private landing locations, since they

1 may be inaccessible to law enforcement -- It's definitely a
2 discussion that we need to delve further into as the council is
3 developing new requirements for the Gulf program.

4
5 In this figure, we're showing the range and frequency of
6 reported values for two of the logbook fields, and those are
7 fuel used and trip fee, and, you know, based on the data that we
8 collected, we can use this to then determine the mean, or, in
9 other words, the average, fuel used in 2022 for our charter and
10 headboat trips, and you can see those numbers at the top of the
11 figure, and so the mean fuel used was about seventy-five
12 gallons, and the mean trip fee was about \$1,300.

13
14 You know, this analysis is definitely informative, but I just
15 want to say that it's really scratching the surface, and showing
16 you all the total utility of collecting economic data in the
17 SEFHIER logbooks, and, you know, the economic data that we
18 collect, or collected, in the SEFHIER logbooks is definitely a
19 huge improvement over any existing economic data collection
20 programs in the Southeast, and, of course, the intention is to
21 use that data to better inform things like disaster
22 declarations, which, of course, would directly benefit our for-
23 hire permit holders.

24
25 On this slide, we're showing a heatmap of the reported trips by
26 our Gulf-SEFHIER-permitted vessels in 2022, and, here, we've
27 mapped those trips using the latitude and longitude coordinates
28 that actually get reported in the primary area fished field of
29 the SEFHIER logbook, and just noting that we also limited this
30 map to show only the trips that occurred within the Gulf
31 Council's jurisdiction.

32
33 Now, in order to interpret the figure, the color scale that we
34 used to map the trips is shown at the top of the figure, and so
35 you can see that the scale ranges from one to the total number
36 of logbooks, and that's at a five-by-five-minute square, which
37 essentially just means all the trips that are within about a
38 twenty-five to thirty square-mile box, and so, based on the
39 darker-purple colors that are shown in the map, you can see the
40 areas in the Gulf that had the highest SEFHIER fishing activity
41 in 2022.

42
43 We can compare that previous figure to the SEFHIER declaration
44 data, where, here, we're mapping the latitudes and longitudes of
45 the reported landing locations from the SEFHIER declarations.
46 Now, in this map, the legend is showing the scale of those
47 declarations, which here it's ranging from 1,000 to 9,000
48 declarations, and the 9,000 is shown by that darker-purple

1 color, and so, comparing this map to the previous slide, you can
2 see those same hotspots being emphasized, even though we're
3 using the different datasets, and so that's, of course, good
4 news, that the declarations, and the logbooks, are telling us
5 the same story about the for-hire trip activity in 2022.

6
7 All right, and so, in this figure, I wanted to show an
8 illustration of the recorded targeted species from the logbook
9 data, and so, here, I aggregated most individual species into
10 what I'm calling a species guild, and that's color-coded and
11 defined in the figure legend over there on the right, and so
12 remember that we don't have any final catch and effort estimates
13 yet from SEFHIER, but we can use the raw data to get a
14 preliminary understanding of what the fishery was targeting in
15 2022, and just noting that the primary targeted species is
16 actually a required field in the SEFHIER logbook, and it's
17 separated from the required caught and discarded species field.

18
19 That distinction between what was targeted, versus what was
20 caught, is actually important in deriving the final effort
21 estimates for each species, where, in general, if you think
22 about it, if you're targeting something, but you're not catching
23 it, then effort is higher, and vice versa, and so, in this
24 figure, each bar is showing the proportion of the total number
25 of Gulf logbooks that targeted the species guild shown, and then
26 the data is split across four quarters, on the X-axis, in order
27 to show you all some seasonality in the data.

28
29 Now, the months that are included in each quarter, and also the
30 total logbooks in each quarter, are also shown along the X-axis,
31 and so, basically, the figure is illustrating that, for example,
32 in the first quarter, we received 5,204 logbooks, of which 1
33 percent of those logbooks told us they were going to target red
34 snapper.

35
36 All right. Finally, in this figure, I'm showing a preliminary
37 look at the catch reported in the logbooks. Now, the
38 interpretation of this figure -- It's pretty much the same as
39 the previous slide, but, here, the proportion shown are out of
40 the total caught species for that quarter, and so, for example,
41 in the first quarter, 5 percent of the 230,000-ish caught
42 species were red snapper, which is roughly 12,000 red snapper
43 that were reported as either landed or discarded in that first
44 quarter, and so, in general, the relative trend, if you're
45 comparing this figure to the previous, it's pretty similar
46 across quarters, which just suggests that they are catching
47 typically what they're targeting, for most species, and across
48 most quarters, with some exceptions, of course, which would be

1 more easily teased out at a species-by-species level, and that's
2 something that we can do, once we have our final catch and
3 effort estimates.

4
5 To wrap up, I just wanted to remind some of the key takeaways
6 from the presentation, and so, overall, the 2022 Gulf SEFHIER
7 program compliance was reasonably good, and 100,000 trip reports
8 were received, and we had more than 91 percent of our vessels
9 comply in each month, at least with the reporting requirements,
10 and 83 percent of the logbooks were submitted within twenty-four
11 hours of the trip ending, and less than 5 percent of the
12 logbooks were submitted more than thirty days from the trip
13 ending, which just means that most of the data that was reported
14 would be usable for analyses, and 84 percent of the vessels were
15 VMS compliant by the end of 2022.

16
17 Now, in comparison to the South Atlantic SEFHIER program, 59
18 percent of the South Atlantic SEFHIER vessels were non-compliant
19 in 2022, and, finally, without VMS, we would really need some
20 sort of a comprehensive trip validation program, in order to
21 determine any non or misreporting vessels.

22
23 I just want to take a quick moment to acknowledge that I was not
24 the only one doing these analyses, and all those great folks
25 there contributed to this presentation, and so I wanted to take
26 a moment to thank them, and also the IPT members, because they
27 helped to determine which analyses were going to be most useful
28 today, but, most importantly, I want to especially thank our
29 Gulf for-hire constituents, because, of course, without you all,
30 we would not have any of this data to share, and so truly thank
31 you for your time and support in the Gulf SEFHIER program, and,
32 with that, I'm going to open the floor to questions, and just a
33 brief reminder that there's still one more presentation to go.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Does anyone have any questions for Dr. Masi?
36 Captain Walker.

37
38 **MR. WALKER:** Thank you. I think I already know the answer to
39 this question, but, using this data, we should be able to see
40 how many vessels, charter vessels, participated in each
41 particular fishery, and like you could say 325 boats
42 participated in the gag fishery, or 700 boats participated in
43 the red snapper fishery, and, you know, perhaps you could
44 identify -- I would be interested to see that, actually,
45 because, you know, we have discussions about other things, that
46 we argue about how many people participate in each of the
47 different species fisheries, and so I'm sure that data is in
48 there, and could easily be parsed out to -- I would be

1 interested in seeing that. Also, a question, and what other
2 purpose, other than disaster declaration, is the fuel used an
3 important data point?

4
5 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Masi.

6
7 **DR. MASI:** Thank you for that question. I am not an economist,
8 and so I don't want to answer that and have it be a wrong
9 response, and so, if somebody else wants to take that question,
10 that would be great.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** I knew that Dr. Diagne would raise his hand.

13
14 **DR. ASSANE DIAGNE:** Yes, Madam Chair. Fuel use, essentially, is
15 one of the main costs of a trip, and so, at the end of the day,
16 you would like to have a good sense of the difference between
17 the revenues and the cost of a trip, and the other thing
18 collected there that she showed is the price, of course, which
19 is essential to determining the revenue side of things, and, on
20 the cost side, you need to have essentially fuel costs.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Captain Walker.

23
24 **MR. WALKER:** I thought that I might point out that it would be
25 my estimation that some of the compliance problems in the South
26 Atlantic are because those permits are not on moratorium, and
27 you can have a permit for twenty-bucks in the South Atlantic,
28 and so there's a lot of people that just have one to have, or
29 they're banking on it going on a moratorium, and they'll have an
30 investment, or something like that, and so I know -- I fish in
31 the South Atlantic somewhat, and I can tell you there's a lot of
32 guys that don't really even charter fish that much that are
33 sitting on those permits, and so that may well be showing up in
34 the compliance estimates for the South Atlantic.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Mr. Gill.

37
38 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Dr. Masi, for the report. There's a lot
39 to absorb here, and a point that struck me was, on slide 15, it
40 was the absence of reported fishing in the western Louisiana
41 area, and then you go to slide 16, and, if I read that
42 correctly, it looks like there's a lot of landings there,
43 relative to on either side, and so that suggests, relative to
44 Dr. Diagne's comment, is they're fishing in one place and
45 landing in a place that is quite a ways from where they're
46 fishing, and has any analysis been done of this phenomenon of
47 fishing versus landing locations, to see how much of this back-
48 and-forth may be done?

1
2 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Masi.

3
4 **DR. MASI:** I would say there hasn't been any formal analysis
5 done. We have taken a look at the nuances between, for example,
6 where they started and where they ended, but I don't have any
7 formal answer, as far as what that data looks like. If that's
8 something the council is interested in, that's something we can,
9 you know, definitely come back to you all with, maybe in
10 January, or whenever the next council meeting is.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Okay. Any other questions from the committee?
13 Mr. Strelcheck.

14
15 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I guess I just wanted to make a couple of
16 additional comments and takeaways, based on my review of this
17 presentation prior to the meeting, and slide, I think, 10,
18 showed the comparison between the Gulf and the South Atlantic,
19 and Ed raises a good point, right, and we have open-access
20 permits in the South Atlantic, which can affect, obviously,
21 compliance, because what's the penalty?

22
23 If you lose your permit, you can go and apply for a new permit,
24 but I will say that the accountability measures in the South
25 Atlantic, and I use the term "accountability measures" maybe
26 differently than we're talking about, you know, catch limit
27 monitoring, is very different, right, and you have a week,
28 essentially, to report your trips, which is a long period of
29 time, and then, if you are not met at the dock, or if you're not
30 doing any sort of hail-in or hail-out, reporting is much more
31 difficult than for us to determine was a trip made, was that
32 trip reported, is there information about that trip.

33
34 I know we've kind of talked about the Gulf as kind of the gold
35 standard, the way that it was previously set up, and then
36 there's been a suggestion of moving towards the South Atlantic
37 model. There's more to dig into here with the South Atlantic
38 model, but I would caution, obviously, based on our experience
39 with the South Atlantic right now, that we don't think that that
40 program is functioning the way it could, and we do have a lot of
41 gaps, in terms of non-reporting and non-compliance.

42
43 The other comment I will make is we did not present any landed
44 catch statistics, right, actual total catches or discards here,
45 and that is something we're continuing to work on, and,
46 essentially, we're driving the car as we're -- We're building
47 the car as we're driving it, or trying to drive it, and,
48 ultimately, at the end of the day, that is what our goal is, is

1 to get to actually some catch statistics.

2
3 With that said, the program is set aside, and so any sort of
4 catch statistics that we derived for 2022 will likely look
5 different, relative to any new program that's designed by this
6 council going forward, but, overall, I was pleased with the
7 level of compliance, and I think the compliance -- Ultimately,
8 one of the questions I asked was did that change as the VMS
9 requirements came online, and that would be another area to look
10 at, and, unfortunately, those VMS requirements and the whole
11 program has been set aside, but the VMS, I think, was going to
12 be an important tool to, obviously, help us with compliance and
13 knowing when trips were occurring and ensuring that those
14 reports were being made. Thanks.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Mr. Anson.

17
18 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Andy, and you may have answered this
19 question that I had, but I was wondering if maybe, either you or
20 Dr. Masi, you could indicate whether or not there has been any
21 analysis, up to this point, that looked at the validation, the
22 dockside survey, and the compliance, if you will, of the report,
23 and the timeliness of the report, to see what kind of
24 proportion, what adjustment, could be made based on 2022 data,
25 for those trips, on those vessels that had VMS and didn't have
26 VMS, and I'm just curious.

27
28 **DR. MASI:** I can respond to that, and so that was one of the
29 things that was on our list, and, unfortunately, we just -- We
30 only had three months to get this data analyzed and have it
31 ready for presentation, and so we didn't get to that one, but,
32 again, if that's something the council is interested in seeing,
33 we can definitely put that on our radar and get that done for
34 potentially the next council meeting.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you, Dr. Masi. Any more comments from
37 the committee? Mr. Donaldson.

38
39 **MR. DONALDSON:** Thank you, Dr. Masi, for the presentation.
40 About the compliance, that's Gulf-wide, and I was wondering if
41 you had looked at -- If you're able to break it down and see if
42 there were areas, specific areas, that had higher non-compliance
43 than others, and I was just curious if that would help focus
44 some efforts on getting compliance better.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Masi.

47
48 **DR. MASI:** Great question, and we have, again, informally looked

1 at it, and we haven't done anything formal. You know, if the
2 program was set back up, then definitely I agree with you that
3 that would be a great thing to look into, to determine where we
4 might be able to focus our outreach efforts.
5

6 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Any other questions? So I have a couple, Dr.
7 Masi. Some of them may be obvious, but I do want to get it kind
8 of on the record, so that, as we continue to have these
9 discussions, we have the history of what we've done, and how we
10 got to where we got, and so, on slide 3, you have the declared,
11 versus never declared, and 533 that never declared, and is there
12 any way to determine latency, or I suppose that comes when the
13 permits are due for renewal?
14

15 **DR. MASI:** I probably would turn that over to Dr. Stephen. I'm
16 not great with latent permits, but, essentially, you know, the
17 way that we would determine it is using the VMS, right, and so,
18 if we could take their year's worth of VMS data, and it showed
19 that the vessel never moved on water, you know, then we would
20 say that that was for sure a person sitting on their permit, and
21 just holding onto a latent permit, but, other than that, I think
22 maybe Dr. Stephen, or Mr. Strelcheck, have a response.
23

24 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Stephen.
25

26 **DR. STEPHEN:** As Michelle said, we're trying to look at it as
27 whether someone is not reporting at all or is latent, and the
28 typical way we identify latent is by who has turned in a logbook
29 and who has not, and so, going outside, some of the other tools
30 that potentially are in there, that we could start to
31 distinguish, is VMS, obviously, and positioning, and that
32 requires a VMS to be turned on, and so, if someone didn't have
33 it installed, and was not reporting, it makes it more difficult.
34

35 If you have the VMS installed, we can also probably look at some
36 analysis of power-down exemptions, and the length of time for
37 those, and that would be a strong indicator, if you have a
38 power-down exemption, that you're not out fishing, at least for
39 a portion of the time, or for a long period. As Michelle
40 mentioned, we're really scratching the surface of all of this
41 that we're going through, but some way to identify whether a
42 vessel has left or not is really going to be critical as we move
43 forward.
44

45 In the South Atlantic, we also had did not fish reports, and so
46 you're submitting some legally to us that's either I did not
47 fish or a fishing report. Once again, without boots on the
48 ground, it could be difficult to maybe distinguish whether did

1 not fish is latency or something else was occurring within that.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you, and I bring that up because, as I
4 recall, when SEFHIER was being developed, one of the things was
5 to address the latency of permits, to get some of these permits
6 out of the system that are not fishing, and to see what we're
7 really dealing with, and so that's why I wanted to kind of bring
8 that up. Again, on slide 11, SEFHIER compliance with VMS
9 requirement, my assumption is this would include dually-
10 permitted vessels, because they are part of the SEFHIER program,
11 correct?

12
13 **DR. MASI:** That's correct.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Then, with regard to the disaster declaration
16 and the need for the economic data, which I'm supportive of
17 that, and I know a lot of the fishermen are not, but is there an
18 example, that either you or maybe Dr. Diagne could give us,
19 where this information has actually been used in some kind of a
20 situation that might encourage the fishermen to buy into this
21 economic reporting? Dr. Diagne.

22
23 **DR. DIAGNE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. What I would say is that,
24 typically, in our amendments, we use, on the charter/for-hire
25 side of this, a measure that is called a producer surplus,
26 meaning the surplus above and beyond the cost of providing a
27 trip, and, obviously, for you to get that, you need to have a
28 clear understanding of both sides, meaning the revenue side.

29
30 Revenue, total revenue, in the simplest way, I guess, is price
31 times the number of trips, and so, if you don't have the price,
32 it's impossible for you to get there as directly as you could,
33 and that's the thing, and, on the other side of it also, to
34 begin to get to some sense of profitability, you have to have
35 some measure of the costs, the variable costs that is, and fuel
36 costs is one of the key drivers of that, and so that is the
37 reason why you need, at the minimum, price of the trip, and also
38 the price of fuel, and, typically, we use measures now that are
39 based on studies that have been conducted, but it would be
40 really nice, going forward, to be able to base our estimates on
41 actual data collected in the Gulf. There has been, prior, some
42 limited sampling, right, production of economic data, but this
43 program here would be very helpful to help us firm up those two
44 estimates, if you would.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** I know we have another presentation to get to,
47 and so I won't delay this too much, but I don't know if
48 something like what the commercial logbooks require, where you

1 take a sampling, and I don't know how they do it, month or
2 quarter, of -- I know, during the Headboat Collaborative, we did
3 -- Again, it's, you know, recall, but you should have the
4 records, and I know, at the end of the year, we were sent a
5 survey and asked to complete it with some of the economic data,
6 and so maybe that's another way that we could look at it, either
7 by sampling or an annual type of estimation, and I don't know,
8 and those are just a couple of suggestions. Mr. Strelcheck.

9
10 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Madam Chair, do you report economic questions
11 to the headboat survey?

12
13 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Yes, sir, we do.

14
15 **MR. STRELCHECK:** How long have you been reporting those to the
16 headboat survey?

17
18 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** We bought our headboat in 2021, and we started
19 reporting economic data, I believe, five or six years ago.

20
21 **MR. STRELCHECK:** What do you estimate is the burden on your time
22 to complete that information for each logbook?

23
24 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** For just that portion of the logbook, maybe
25 fifteen seconds.

26
27 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Okay. I raise that, obviously, and I think
28 it's an important discussion to have, and I'm not trying to
29 dismiss, obviously, the concerns that have been raised, and so I
30 think that's just something to keep in mind, and we do have the
31 South Atlantic SEFHIER program that collects that data, and we
32 have the headboat survey that collects that data in the Gulf
33 already.

34
35 I was going to add that -- You mentioned about examples for
36 disaster determinations, and keep in mind that the 2023
37 appropriations language modified our disaster determination
38 requirements, and it now includes for-hire vessels. Previously,
39 for-hire vessels were excluded, and it was only for commercial
40 fisheries that we could do disaster determinations, and so this
41 is new territory that we're entering into, and so certainly I
42 see that as a benefit, going forward, is to have that
43 information, and data, for future disasters.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you for that information, and I think
46 that is important, and I appreciate the questions about the
47 headboat survey, because a fisherman, and I have said this in
48 the past, and I happen to do it for our vessel, but I promise

1 you that any captain on their vessel knows what the cost of fuel
2 is, and it does not matter, and it doesn't take long to fill
3 that in, and you know what you charged for that trip, or what
4 you bartered for that trip, and so those are very easy questions
5 to answer, but, with what you just brought up, Andy, and without
6 this information, and now that the charter/for-hire is
7 recognized, I think this will be very essential, and, you know,
8 I look at it too as we talk about, with the commercial fleet,
9 with the loan programs that are available, you know, SBA loans
10 that are available, and all this information, in my mind,
11 becomes very critical for those types of things, and so I really
12 think it's something we need to look at and encourage the
13 fishermen to think about, how it can be helpful, and it doesn't
14 take long to do.

15
16 I will move on, and I do want to ask one other question, and,
17 actually, I've got a couple more, but one in particular, and Mr.
18 Gill kind of brought it up, and this has been a discussion also
19 at the onset of designing the SEFHIER program, is those boats
20 that are trailerable, and so how many boats have multiple
21 landing locations, and that would be something, in the future,
22 that I would be interested in. Is your homebase, and I'm going
23 to pick on them, because I always do, but, in Louisiana, you
24 trailer your boat to Orange Beach, because I see that quite
25 often.

26
27 That is impactful, in my mind, to see how many of these boats
28 are moving, but, on the flip side, we have boats from Orange
29 Beach, and I don't know so much that they do now, but we go to
30 Venice, in the winter months, and fish out of Venice, and so I
31 think it's kind of important to see where these vessels are
32 based, and where they're actually fishing, and so thank you for
33 that, and so we have one more presentation, if there's no more
34 questions. Dr. Frazer.

35
36 **DR. TOM FRAZER:** Thanks, Susan. I'm not on the committee, but I
37 just wanted to follow-up on the discussion, as it relates to the
38 economics, and, you know, when Dr. Stephen gave her
39 presentation, she gave a justification for data collection, and
40 there was no socioeconomic justification in that presentation,
41 and then, when we get to Dr. Masi's presentation, there is a
42 mention that the reason that we collected the economic data, or
43 the primary reason, was for disaster declarations.

44
45 Not exclusively, right, and I get that, but, in the months, and
46 years, that we've been working on this, part of the pushback for
47 the SEFHIER program has been the data reporting burden, right,
48 and it seems, to me, that -- I'm all for the economic data,

1 right, because part of our charge as a council, obviously, is to
2 make decisions that are in the best economic -- Or the best
3 interest of the nation, and part of the way that you do that is
4 by putting a value on those fisheries.

5
6 What is not clear to me, in this process, is why the questions
7 are asked specifically, and are the data that might be collected
8 from this survey collected in a manner that allows you to make
9 an apples-to-apples comparison, for example, of what's generated
10 in the commercial sector or in the true recreational sector?

11
12 I'm not sure how I can use this information, even though there
13 are sections of the amendments that report on the economics,
14 right, and they're not extremely helpful in that regard, and so
15 what I'm asking for is, when we're thinking about how to develop
16 the questions, can we more clearly articulate why we're asking
17 those questions, right, and then might we be able to provide
18 examples of how we could compare the output, or the results that
19 are generated, right, to make some comparisons, and there's a
20 number of comparisons that you could make, but that's what I am
21 asking, moving forward, and, again, I'm not on this committee,
22 but I'm just trying to better understand how we collect the
23 economic data and how we use it, moving forward.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** So I thank you for those questions, and that's
26 one of the reasons I was glad that Dr. Diagne kind of gave us an
27 explanation as to why the data is needed, and, I mean, I will
28 look to Dr. Stephen to maybe, in the future, address your
29 question, and, you know, do we look at how it is being asked in
30 the commercial logbooks, and do we modify how we ask the
31 questions, or the order we ask the questions, and there's a lot
32 of things in what you said that I think we can look at and
33 discuss, and I don't know, Dr. Stephen, in your next
34 presentation, if this -- My mind is so full right now, but if
35 you will address any of that, but, if you have a response to
36 that, and then, if not, or after so, please proceed with your
37 next presentation.

38
39 **DR. STEPHEN:** I will say what you guys saw was my biologist bias
40 in doing the reports, and so we'll get together with our
41 economists, to make sure that we have more information on all
42 that information for another presentation.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** I agree, Tom, that that's very important,
45 because, without that, to get the fishermen to be responsive to
46 that, and willing to answer the questions, and we need to be
47 able to justify it and make it very clear as to why that
48 information is needed, and so thank you for that. Dr. Stephen.

1
2 **PRESENTATION: FOR-HIRE DATA USAGE AND NEXT STEPS**
3

4 **DR. STEPHEN:** All right, and so we're up to our third
5 presentation, and I would like to just kind of acknowledge that,
6 for all these presentations, as Michelle did, there was a core
7 group of us working on it, and so it was not just the Regional
8 Office, and we had the Science Center working with us, the
9 Office of Science and Technology, and council staff.

10
11 Now we're going to kind of get into where we want to go into
12 discussion within what the council would like to do, and so, to
13 start that off, I wanted to bring up the original program's
14 purpose and. The original purpose was to improve the accuracy
15 and the timeliness of the landings, the discards, the effort,
16 and the socioeconomic data of the federally-permitted for-hire
17 vessels participating both in the reef fish and coastal
18 migratory pelagic fisheries. The need was to improve management
19 and monitoring for the Gulf fisheries.

20
21 I would ask that the council think about these purpose and needs
22 and any modifications that you might want with the different
23 presentations that we have going forward.

24
25 To start assisting with where we want to go, with how we're
26 going to use the data, or what we would do to rebuild it, I want
27 to go over a couple of different points within this
28 presentation, looking over the different data needs for stock
29 assessments versus management, looking at those comparisons of
30 the different data streams that we would have to combine
31 together for management, and then different components of how
32 you would want to think about building a data collection program
33 or survey, and then the different components that assist with
34 validation and compliance.

35
36 I am going to start off here with a slide that I've been doing
37 for a while now with a couple of other groups, is looking at the
38 differences between the needs for stock assessments and the
39 needs for management. While they both need a lot of data, there
40 are some slight nuances within that.

41
42 When we think of a stock assessment, we're examining what's
43 happening with the overall trends of the fishing, and so looking
44 at the current and past statuses of fish stocks, and we're
45 trying to answer information about overall stock size and
46 provide enough information that we can set criteria to make
47 sound management decisions.

1 When you're looking in a stock assessment, you utilize both
2 fishery-dependent, and that's collection directly from the
3 fishermen, as well as fishery-independent data, and independent
4 data could be the NOAA white ships or other research-oriented
5 data collections.

6
7 You're typically looking at overall catch, relative abundance,
8 and different biological information, such as life history, in
9 order to drive that stock assessment, and you're primarily
10 looking at an annual level scale when you're working within a
11 stock assessment.

12
13 When you flip over to management, we have a slightly different
14 purpose, and we're using that information from the stock
15 assessments, but we're also challenged with being able to
16 predict different changes in management, and do we want to
17 change a size limit, a bag limit, and how are we going to
18 monitor within season, using the data we get?

19
20 In management purposes, we're typically fishery-dependent driven
21 with our datasets, and we're requiring a more finer level
22 temporal and spatial scale than what you might see within a
23 stock assessment. For example, we get data weekly, monthly, or
24 by a wave, and we might be looking at different spatial
25 considerations if you're splitting the Gulf into two sections,
26 or, at times, we've looked at Florida, and we've split it into
27 three sub-regions as we're looking at information.

28
29 We're also looking at that catch per unit effort and using that
30 to drive some of the different limitations that we might put in
31 place, and, in particular, we're interested in discard
32 disposition and how that would impact any management change. We
33 also use target species to look at the different economic
34 information as we're moving forward in management, as we have to
35 balance the social, economic, and the biological consequences
36 within our amendments.

37
38 If you think about kind of what are all the components that make
39 up the whole picture of a program survey design, there are
40 components that are pre-trip, and they occur before you leave on
41 a trip, and there are components that happen within the trip,
42 and we also have measures that we might put in place for
43 compliance or validation, different quality controls, different
44 enforcement, and then the one that is sometimes underrated, but
45 I think is highly valuable, is your customer service. Do you
46 have enough staff there to answer the questions, particularly in
47 a larger fleet, as they're going into something new or
48 different, and remember that SEFHIER went from no reporting to

1 full-on electronic reporting, which is a pretty large leap.

2
3 All of those different components actually work kind of hand-in-
4 hand together, and this is just a graphic to kind of explain
5 different elements, and I'm not going to get into a lot of depth
6 or detail, and this is one that we can use as reference, as we
7 have discussions. When you think of typical pre-trip
8 components, and so these might all relate directly to for-hire,
9 but in general to data collection, and we're looking at when is
10 someone going out on a trip, and how are they going to tell me
11 when they are, how often do I want them to tell me, at what time
12 before the trip, and wherever they might be landing at.

13
14 When you look at trip components, those also include some pre-
15 landing components, right, and they're out on a trip, and you
16 might want information, when they're coming on, of where they're
17 going, and what sort of reporting tier are you looking at, the
18 trip-level reporting tier, or do you want gear-level, if there's
19 multiple gears used, or do you want set-level?

20
21 Each of those add different components, and I will say this
22 probably a lot through the presentation, but it's finding where
23 that balance point is of what you're doing when you're
24 collecting it and where the burden is, both on the fishermen and
25 on the agency, and then you look at things like what kind of
26 fields do you want within the logbook, or how frequently do you
27 want it submitted, and you've already seen kind of the results
28 of submission prior to offload, versus weekly submission, of
29 trip-level reporting, and so you can see how that plays into
30 your overall data collection.

31
32 When you're looking at compliance and validation, you want to
33 look to account for information such as late reporting, and you
34 might want to be able to track your fleet, to identify where
35 areas are that are hotspots.

36
37 Different tools that you can use are things like did-not-fish
38 reports, that we mentioned earlier, and electronic monitoring,
39 and that is something that could be either VMS or a camera
40 system, and that's not necessarily applicable in all fisheries,
41 and then looking at validation surveys, ways you can mine
42 website data, using observers or dockside samplers, and all of
43 these provide more information on both compliance and validation
44 together.

45
46 When you look at your quality controls that you're moving
47 forward, you're looking at making sure, if you're electronic
48 reporting, you're minimizing the amount of changes to data prior

1 to submission, and so, if you remember, paper logbooks come in,
2 and the commercial is well aware of this, and you get it
3 returned to you by mail, and you make a correction, and it takes
4 a long time to get through those, and some of those are due to
5 just how something was written, and it's unclear, or a field
6 that didn't quite match what it was supposed to.

7
8 When you move to electronic, you can build those quality
9 controls in at the get-go, and, if you do it right, you can
10 actually build it where the report can't be submitted until it
11 hits the minimum validations, and it sets a warning for another
12 subset, and warnings would be where, hey, that value looks high,
13 from our range, but we're going to still let you submit it, and
14 it could be true, and it could just be an outlier.

15
16 Then you also want to look at your ability to audit and match
17 under quality control. Can I match a pre-trip component with a
18 trip component, and can I match that with an observer or an
19 enforcement action, and all these different ways in which we
20 audit to make sure that we can identify a trip throughout, and a
21 lot of that comes into play in determining do you have missing
22 reports, late reports, accurate reporting.

23
24 In enforcement, there's a couple of different tools. Our audits
25 actually really help with enforcement. It helps us identify
26 egregious offenders, and we could kind of center where your
27 enforcement activity is occurring. We have our typical summary
28 settlements, and so enforcement will fine you if you're not
29 doing something right, and then there's also the permit renewal,
30 which I think we've talked about a bunch, and that is one of our
31 measures that really seems to be very effective and with a low
32 burden.

33
34 Then, finally, there is customer service. Do you have enough
35 staff to man your phone lines, or your emails, and do you have
36 information that's available on off hours, such as on websites
37 or documents, and do you have enough people with technical
38 assistance to help someone, and particularly electronic
39 reporting can get complicated, with different ways of going
40 through, and, when you think about all of these together, do you
41 have enough assistance to ensure that someone is not fined for
42 not understanding the regulations, rather than being vocally
43 against what's going on, and you can start to see how all these
44 different components work together, and, within each of these,
45 there are many different choices the council can do to get to
46 those different components.

47
48 I am not going to spend a lot of time on this slide, but I do

1 kind of want to emphasize that, when we're looking at
2 recreational data sources, what I did here is list it in the
3 first column going down, the different types of data that are
4 useful, particularly for management, anywhere from your species
5 identification to your landings, length and weight, spatial,
6 effort, economic, and your coverage, and how large does your
7 survey cover, and I've done a kind of quick comparison of what
8 MRIP covers, what the headboat survey covers, and that the Gulf
9 SEFHIER program does.

10
11 As I said, I'm not going to spend too much time on this. I
12 think this is a good reference slide, as we're moving forward,
13 to determine what the council wants to do when they're
14 rebuilding SEFHIER, and which of these elements in the first
15 column are really critical to where we're going with management
16 and fit our purpose and needs, and then look at the different
17 ways that we could potentially get there.

18
19 As we move into the validation and compliance components, keep
20 in mind that these are often used together, and what they do is
21 help to ensure the accuracy of that data, so that we're using
22 good data for management that we feel is realistic and
23 representative of that fishery itself.

24
25 There is a suite of different types of compliance and validation
26 tools that I have listed here, and a lot of these I mentioned
27 already before. With each one of these here, it's another
28 really good reference slide, and what does each different tool
29 work towards, and so validation surveys work towards getting us
30 better catch and effort information.

31
32 When you're looking at sort of a fleet positioning monitoring,
33 where is the fleet, that might get you closer to potential
34 fishing activity, and that's someone is out there, and we think
35 they should be fishing, or where are your hotspots, or how are
36 you doing overall trip tracking from the start of the trip to
37 the end of the trip. Again, this is another reference slide
38 that we can come back to as we have discussion.

39
40 Similar to what I did with the recreational one, I kind of also
41 tried to put this into a little table, or graph, that's a little
42 easier to read and show where each different tool has a more
43 direct, or indirect, effect as you're moving forward. You can
44 see, for identifying fleet activity, your third column in,
45 there's a lot of different tools that will help us do that.
46 Sometimes we want more than one tool working together, so that
47 we can really accurately verify what's occurring at that point
48 in time.

1
2 There are other columns where there is less tools that are
3 available, and so, again, think of this as a way that we start
4 to rebuild and mix and match different aspects to the program.
5

6 Also, as I mentioned before, it's a balancing point. We're
7 trying to figure out what are these different validation and
8 compliance components available to us, and, what do they cost,
9 and, here, I broke down just roughly the cost both to the
10 fishermen and the cost to the agency, and each are critical.
11 When we see higher dollars, like more than one dollar sign, and
12 think that like when you're at a restaurant, and, oh, that's an
13 expensive restaurant, versus a not expensive one.
14

15 Then, some of the time, some of the burden is really on time,
16 and not necessarily in dollars, although you can do a conversion
17 to that, and so I wanted to kind of relay some of the different
18 aspects as you're going through it. I will pick out here a did-
19 not-fish report, and there is a time burden to the fishermen to
20 fill it out when they're not fishing, but, overall, it's
21 probably a low cost, both to the fishermen and to the agency, to
22 collect that information, and it could be extremely useful.
23

24 On the flip side, let's take observers and electronic
25 monitoring. Those are ones that have a high-dollar cost to the
26 agency, and they could have a high-dollar cost to the fishermen.
27 In some vessels, if you put an observer onboard, you're
28 displacing a crew member in order to do that, and so you need to
29 kind of weigh those different components as we're thinking about
30 how to build the program.
31

32 This other one I will touch on, is when you get done with your
33 trip components, how do you start to use that data for
34 management, and, when we look at the analysis and use, there is
35 similar -- A lot of different components that make up the whole
36 picture.
37

38 You need to have a database system to receive your electronic
39 information and have adequate infrastructure to have it.
40 Initially, when you're starting a new data program, you have
41 what is called data exploration, and so Dr. Masi's presentation
42 -- As she mentioned, you're scratching the surface of it, and
43 that's our initial feel for data exploration, is what data can I
44 get out of this dataset, what are the biases within it, how can
45 I use it with confidence, and, once you've kind of achieved that
46 point, you move into data integration, and how do I merge this
47 dataset with other datasets that I'm using, and those then come
48 together for an overall statistical analysis, how am I looking

1 at it statistically to show that we're going to have different
2 management actions that will have these different effects.

3
4 That also goes hand-in-hand if you're comparing to previous
5 surveys, or other things that were going on, and you need a
6 calibration and certification component, so that you're looking
7 at things in a timeline that's apples-to-apples, and then,
8 finally, once you're done with all that, now you're ready to
9 really use that data in management and have it structured so
10 that it's well understood and you can look at it for different
11 potential actions.

12
13 This slide here is, again, to kind of balance where those
14 different interactions are and the interplays between things.
15 With the original SEFHIER program, we attempted to really
16 balance a lot of things, and some of these have been mentioned
17 in the previous ones, and an example of where we did a balance
18 point, rather than having a separate declaration and a separate
19 pre-landing notification, is we were able to kind of merge those
20 two concepts together.

21
22 We lost a little in doing that, but what that loss was wasn't
23 really critical to what the purpose and need was of the program,
24 and so it was an adequate way to balance those different
25 burdens.

26
27 When we were looking at what they were recording, we opted to go
28 with just the landed versus discarded, rather than discard
29 mortality, and, again, at that point in time, we were moving
30 from no reporting to full reporting, and we wanted to balance
31 that, and that does not mean that you can't change these later
32 on, as people get more familiar with how the reporting occurs.

33
34 Again, in the Gulf program, we did not use a did-not-fish report
35 or observer coverage, because we had VMS, and that was the
36 alternative mechanism to get to some of those same different
37 pieces of information that we may have gotten through a did-not-
38 fish report or observer coverage.

39
40 Now we're kind of getting to the point where I'm going to have
41 some questions up for the council to consider as they're working
42 through and dealing with our discussion.

43
44 The first question will be what are the goals and objectives for
45 the revised for-hire program? You can, obviously, start with
46 what we originally had, and is there any way that we want to
47 modify those purpose and needs, moving forward, or the goals and
48 objectives? What information could a rebuilt program supply

1 that current surveys that we displayed do not capture? Are
2 there certain data priorities that might drive the different
3 goals and objectives or purposes and needs? Then the last one
4 is we do have the for-hire advisory panel coming up, and is
5 there any additional information that the council would like to
6 move on towards those?

7
8 The next steps of how we're proceeding is we have already formed
9 an interdisciplinary planning team, and that team has met
10 multiple times before this council, and we've already started
11 the data exploration that Michelle has seen, and we've got, I
12 think, quite a few requests that we can come back with more
13 information, and the council has provided some guidance on the
14 goals and objectives, moving forward, and so I think I'm going
15 to go back to the discussion, and I will leave it up on this
16 one, and we can go to any other slides, as we move forward, and
17 I will turn it over to you for discussion.

18
19 **DR. HOLLENSEAD:** Certainly any discussion that the committee has
20 in general, if they have any questions for Dr. Stephen, this
21 would be a good time for it. Just as a council staff, I would,
22 again, request that, as we begin to think about convening a for-
23 hire advisory panel, if there was any extra directives that you
24 would like us to pass along to that group, and we'll make sure
25 that those get noted and reported out to them.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Captain Walker.

28
29 **MR. WALKER:** This might be for Mara, or Andy, but could you tell
30 me again exactly what it was that we were -- The reason the
31 program was tossed originally, and like the thing that we have
32 to take out going forward, or is there -- There must be
33 something, obviously.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Ms. Levy.

36
37 **MS. LEVY:** So I will say there's nothing you have to take out,
38 but, if you were going to leave it exactly the same, we would
39 have a lot of explaining to do, mostly so -- I mean, there is
40 the risk -- Okay, and so the decision was that, given the record
41 before the court, the Magnuson Act did not authorize the twenty-
42 four-hour VMS, because the court found it duplicative, because
43 we were requiring fishing reports, and we were saying that this
44 was to validate fishing, that we were already requiring
45 information on.

46
47 We did not have a very robust record about why the VMS was
48 necessary for the program to function and why we needed it for

1 validation, to get statistically-valid data, and, now, that we
2 could fix, right, and we could have a more robust discussion
3 about why you would need that.

4
5 The trickier part is that there was a 4th Amendment argument that
6 it was a search in violation of the 4th Amendment, and the court
7 did not specifically rule on that, but did express a lot of
8 skepticism about whether this twenty-four-hour tracking, on
9 these particular vessels, would be a violation of the 4th
10 Amendment, and so that is more tricky.

11
12 I'm not sure that we can come up with an explanation that would
13 get us past that argument of requiring the twenty-four hours a
14 day, seven days a week, no matter what they're doing, kind of
15 VMS. We might need to make it more narrowly tailored, but,
16 again, the questions are, if you want a VMS, can we more
17 narrowly tailor it, and will that still give you the information
18 that you would need to validate, and so I wouldn't say that
19 anything is off the table, except perhaps we may not be able to
20 come up with a good explanation for twenty-four, seven-days-a-
21 week VMS.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Mr. Strelcheck.

24
25 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Just to add to that, I mean, I think that's the
26 question before the council, right, and so do we want to proceed
27 with looking at VMS, but in an alternative means to how we
28 implemented it in the previous program, and what would that look
29 like, from a legal standpoint, justification standpoint.

30
31 The other component of the lawsuit related to the socioeconomic
32 questions, and that was more of an Administrative Procedures Act
33 violation, and so that's something where, if we are going to
34 include those questions, and justification for those questions,
35 we just need to build a better record, and rationale, as to why
36 we would be including them in the program going forward.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Overton.

39
40 **DR. ANTHONY OVERTON:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Dr.
41 Stephen, for your presentation. A quick question, and it seems
42 like there's a new method of collecting data that's probably
43 going to get even more evolved, and that's the website data
44 mining, and what does that look like, and what information do
45 you get from it, and do you see that being kind of more
46 important moving forward?

47
48 **DR. STEPHEN:** Sure, and I will start with that, and then I'll

1 probably kick it over to someone else to answer, and so, a lot
2 of times, there is ways that you can look at data sites,
3 particularly for the for-hire fleet. You're advertising trips,
4 and you're getting information.

5
6 Some of the concerns with that though is if a website is not
7 updated frequently, and so it could be out-of-date, and it does
8 take time to go through it, and there's not necessarily an
9 algorithm that we're using to go through it, and so I think
10 those would be some of the differences, and I don't know,
11 Assane, if you have anything more to add on the economic side on
12 that.

13
14 **DR. DIAGNE:** The only thing that I would add is that Dr. Carter,
15 at the Science Center, actually looked into that, whereby him,
16 and other people working with him, went to a series of websites
17 to look at essentially the price that they advertise for charter
18 trips, and they collected those, but just, as mentioned, if the
19 websites are not updated, that's one issue, and, also, you have
20 no guarantee that the customer is actually going to pay what it
21 is advertised on the website, and it may be that this is low
22 season, and then folks show up and can get a discount, for
23 example, and that sort of thing, and so the website data are a
24 good indication to start from, when you don't have anything
25 else, but it is not as precise as actually collecting the data.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Froeschke.

28
29 **DR. JOHN FROESCHKE:** One thing I was thinking about is, when we
30 were developing the original SEFHIER document, as part of that
31 process, we had a technical subcommittee that met and developed
32 a report, and there's a lot -- I looked at this week, and
33 there's a lot of discussion, and information, about, more on a
34 higher level, what's kind of information should be collected,
35 and one of the ideas was that, if the information can't be
36 validated, it probably doesn't necessarily need to come from
37 this, because that was one of the main ideas, is to collect
38 information that you could validate somewhere, so that you knew
39 that it was accurate, and some of these other ones -- There was
40 discussion about the economic data fields and things like that,
41 and so, perhaps for the new for-hire AP or something, when that
42 is brought together, we could revisit some of that document and
43 some of the recommendations in there, which I think are still
44 highly relevant.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you, Dr. Froeschke. Mr. Anson.

47
48 **MR. ANSON:** I don't want to interrupt any discussion for the

1 committee on next steps, but I wanted to go back to one of the
2 slides from the presentation, Slide 7, and just -- Maybe Dr.
3 Stephen could consider, on the FHS column, under MRIP, and the
4 APAIS column -- I think they don't -- I think they're a little
5 misleading, I guess, as it's written, in my mind, because effort
6 -- If you look down at the effort row, APAIS is the dockside
7 portion of MRIP, and so it doesn't, by itself, give effort, but
8 FHS does, and then, also, for landings, APAIS, by itself,
9 doesn't give the landings, and it gives characterization of
10 catch, and FHS does not, and so just if you can kind of relook
11 at that, because I think there could be some changes made there.

12
13 **DR. STEPHEN:** In particular with the landings, there was a
14 reason that we kind of had observed, because there is what was
15 observed from the person coming back, versus what was reported,
16 and so this was trying to minimize it, but, if we want to get
17 into any more discussion, I will get S&T involved, and we'll get
18 a lot more information there.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Okay. Dr. Hollensead, remind me, and we made a
21 motion, at this council, to move forward with a new document for
22 charter/for-hire data collection, correct, but we have not yet
23 reviewed, or discussed, and, Mr. Chair, I know we're at a break
24 time, and this may not be the time, but the purpose and need,
25 and so is that kind of the -- Well, not one, but I guess one of
26 the council's next steps, is to review the purpose and need, or
27 is that something that will come back from the IPT to us to
28 review?

29
30 **DR. HOLLENSEAD:** Well, Madam Chair, I think it depends on how
31 the council would like to steer some things. If the council is
32 interested in looking through some purpose and need, and
33 drafting some language, they could begin that here, certainly.
34 Also, like I said, we're talking about appointing, and
35 convening, an ad hoc group, and the council may be interested in
36 that feedback, as they begin thinking about that, and so I would
37 say, you know, council staff is ready to do either one of those
38 things, depending on how you would like to move forward.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Mr. Gill.

41
42 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and so I believe looking at
43 the purpose and need is the first step we need to do to set the
44 direction, but also to give guidance to the ad hoc AP upcoming,
45 so they understand better what our thoughts about the program
46 coming up are, and so I think that's the very first thing we
47 should do, to set that vision, if you will, for why we're doing
48 all of this. Thank you.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Froeschke.

3
4 **DR. FROESCHKE:** On that same line, the purpose and need in the
5 original one -- We have that, and I looked at it, and, to me,
6 looking at that one, the problems that were identified, and the
7 goals in there are -- I mean, it's the same thing that they are
8 now, but perhaps one way to jumpstart the conversation would be
9 to pull up the original purpose and need in that document, and
10 you could take a look at it and see if there were any things
11 that you wanted to modify or update.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Stephen, can you bring up slide 2, please,
14 and I am wary that we're going to, this afternoon, select an ad
15 hoc advisory panel, and, I mean, we have set a charge for them,
16 but I do agree with Mr. Gill that they need some direction, or
17 at least something that the council is looking to do, and maybe
18 they can provide some direction, and, I mean, it can work both
19 ways, but I would certainly like to see, if at all possible, and
20 I'm sure that we'll have Data Collection on the January agenda,
21 but a purpose and need that we can maybe move forward with.

22
23 I mean, maybe we can kind of draft it at this meeting, and we
24 may be able to come up with something that we're -- That we can
25 adopt at this meeting, but, at the very least, I think, in
26 January, we need to have a very clear and concise purpose and
27 need, and the AP, the ad hoc, will have had a chance to meet,
28 but, if we can come up with it at this meeting, and agree on it,
29 I'm very much supportive of that as well. Mr. Gill.

30
31 **MR. GILL:** I agree, Madam Chair, and whether we can come to a
32 final on that decision, I don't know, but I think we can give a
33 -- It's kind of like choosing a preferred, and we're giving a
34 sense of direction for that AP, that they know where we are at
35 the moment, recognizing that, yes, in January, we may modify it
36 some, and probably not substantially, but any advantage we can
37 give to the AP, to give that sense of focus, I think is
38 absolutely vital.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Okay. So maybe, at Full Council, we can have
41 some language prepared that someone might bring to the table and
42 discuss that would be available to give to the ad hoc AP moving
43 forward, and, again, as Mr. Gill said, it's kind of like picking
44 a preferred, and we have the ability to change our minds, as we
45 so often do at this table, and so, with that, any more
46 questions? Mr. Strelcheck.

47
48 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I like that we'll come back to this at Full

1 Council, but the way I guess I'm thinking about this, and the
2 direction to the AP, right, is I think we all are in agreement,
3 or general agreement, with the purpose of increasing accuracy
4 and timeliness, right, and that was kind of originally the
5 purpose.

6
7 We also, I think, would like input from this advisory body on
8 the adequacy of the validation and reporting accountability
9 measures, right, and then I think the third component, which is
10 something that's been overarching for a while, is the burden on
11 reporting, right, and so getting input and feedback from that
12 panel on the reporting requirements, the details of the logbook
13 form, and I think having staff provide information specific to
14 kind of how that data is used and is not used, the adequacy of
15 the data that we collected previously, and some of the
16 limitations, and that would really go a long way, I think, in
17 terms of informing us going forward, with regard to the specific
18 details of the logbook reports themselves.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** I want to direct this to you, Mr. Strelcheck
21 and Dr. Stephen, and, in looking at the current purpose and
22 need, and this is just floating some ideas, number one, do we
23 need to -- If we want to continue, which I support economic
24 data, but change that to just "economic data", or "social and
25 economic data", and, number two, do we need to be very clear, in
26 the purpose, something that has to do with validation? Mr.
27 Strelcheck.

28
29 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I mean, I think you raise a good point, given
30 the litigation about the term "socioeconomic", and that we would
31 want to modify that to, at a minimum, "economic", and I need to
32 remember if we're collecting social data as well.

33
34 To your second point, I don't have an answer yet, but I would
35 agree that I think we need to give some thought with regard to
36 the validation and accountability mechanisms as part of the
37 purpose and need.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Any other comments or questions from the
40 committee? Mr. Diaz.

41
42 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not on your
43 committee, but the burden of reporting is something that is --
44 I've been thinking about it a lot, and I'm hoping, at the end of
45 the day, that we come out with a SEFHIER lite, and when I say
46 "SEFHIER lite", I want us to try to focus on only getting data
47 that we need, because I think, if we leave this too open-ended,
48 then a lot of people is going to want data that potentially we

1 might need in the future, but we don't know if we need it, and
2 so, I mean, that's where I'm at. I would like to see us focus
3 on what we need, but I hate it to limit it too much before the
4 ad hoc AP gets it, and I would like some input from that ad hoc
5 AP, but, naturally, we need a lot of input from the agency, and
6 our other scientists, about what's needed, and take care of that
7 first, and so that's kind of where I'm at, and so thank you.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Captain Walker.

10
11 **MR. WALKER:** Thank you, Dale, and I was kind of hoping that
12 somebody besides me would say something like that. I don't know
13 that I can write it out word-for-word, but, you know, what I'm
14 hearing around the table is let's run the same thing again, and
15 I disagree with that, and I think, perhaps, we could modify this
16 purpose to keep landings, discards, and effort, and then, also,
17 have discussion, within the AP, on socioeconomic data and let's
18 just call it VMS, but, you know, the way the original is written
19 here, "socioeconomic data" was written right in there as one of
20 the goals, and that seems kind of where things started to go
21 sideways, and so, to me, you know, catch and effort and
22 discards, period, and also discuss socioeconomic.

23
24 You know, obviously there has to be some reporting, but I think
25 they should explore all avenues of, you know, reporting, VMS,
26 phone app, other options like that, and just something a little
27 different than the original, to me, would be what I would
28 prefer.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Not to prolong this, Mr. Chair, and I will try
31 to move this along, but so, I mean, without the validation
32 component, I don't know where we're at, and I heard your
33 arguments, Captain Walker, about the South Atlantic, and I
34 agree. We had a permit for a brief period, but we let it go.

35
36 You know, is that the reason that there's low reporting? Again,
37 I don't know the answer to that, but I'm going to pose this
38 question, and I don't expect an answer right now from the
39 agency, but, currently, at least in the headboat survey, and
40 it's been a while since I've looked at what the charter/for-hire
41 was doing, but we have to report our coordinates of where we
42 fished the majority of the trip.

43
44 Is that some type of an avenue for validation, because, of
45 course, I understand that you don't know that they fished or
46 they didn't fish, and that's the sticking point, is did they
47 actually fish, and they're just not reporting, and so that
48 probably won't help, because, again, we're back to -- I

1 understood what Mara said, and I don't know, and I'm not sure
2 how the commercial fleet does it, and I haven't thought to ask
3 them this, but can you have the VMS unit that only pings every
4 six hours, or -- I don't know, but I feel like -- I am very
5 strong about this validation, because that's the least expensive
6 way to validate, because you cannot have boots on the ground at
7 all hundreds of these ports, waiting for a boat to come in, and,
8 I mean, I even see it with the State of Alabama.

9
10 They're there maybe once or twice a week, and they can't be
11 there all day every day to validate that a boat actually left,
12 and so I'm probably the only one at this table that's really
13 adamant about the validation, but I really do find it to be a
14 key component to get the end result that I think the charter
15 fleet wants, which is the ability to get longer seasons, more
16 flexibility with their fishery, and I know this is going to be
17 an arguing point until the end, but I'm a proponent for some
18 kind of validation, whether it's VMS, but there has to be some
19 kind of validation, and so thank you. Any other comments? Mr.
20 Strelcheck.

21
22 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Well, in response to that, and Ed's comments,
23 and so I really appreciate Ed's comment, right, and I don't
24 think the intent here is to say we're trying to just repurpose
25 the existing program, or run it the same, with maybe some minor
26 changes, right, and I think this is a good conversation, and I
27 liked him pointing out some key components of the previous
28 program that the industry, stakeholders, had concerns with, and
29 that would be good to, obviously, bring back to the AP.

30
31 I will say I am probably even more strongly in favor of a strong
32 validation program than you are, Susan, and, if we don't put in
33 strong validation, it's not worth having this program, and it's
34 not worth spending the money to run the program, because I don't
35 think that we'll accomplish the purpose and need, right, and so,
36 to me, we need to give a lot of thought to that, in light of the
37 lawsuit and court decision, and, ultimately, see what we can do
38 to reinvent this program, but what would be really beneficial,
39 when we get into the AP discussion, and getting input from them,
40 is what they liked and what they didn't like about the previous
41 program, and why, as well as trying to answer some of the key
42 questions that they might have about the utility, or lack of
43 utility, of the data.

44
45 Dale's comments sat well with me as well, right, and so can we
46 look at all of the variables and data that we collected and
47 determine that there were certain things that maybe we don't
48 need to collect, because they're unnecessary, and, if so, what

1 would those be, and what can we eliminate from the program, just
2 to reduce the reporting burden?

3
4 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** To that, and I meant to comment to Dale's
5 comment, and, you know, but we don't want to end up in a
6 situation like we did with SEFHIER, where we had to come back
7 and make all these modifications, and I think we have a lot of
8 lessons learned from SEFHIER, and are we going to get this one
9 perfect? I think I saw someone who -- Somebody commented about,
10 you know, we want to get it right, and I don't think we're going
11 to get it right, but I think we'll be more right than maybe we
12 were before, but knowing that we're going to have some
13 challenges, moving forward, and so, if I don't have any more
14 questions, or comments, from the committee, Mr. Chair, would you
15 like to break at this time?

16
17 **MR. ANSON:** Yes, I think we need a break, but let's make it a
18 ten-minute break, and so we'll reconvene at 10:30 and start up
19 again.

20
21 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)
22

23 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** If I could call the Data Collection Committee
24 back to order, and, Dr. Hollensead, if you could please take us
25 through Agenda Item VI, SSC Discussions on MRIP-FES Pilot Study
26 and Next Steps, and this should be fun.

27
28 **SSC DISCUSSIONS ON MRIP-FES PILOT STUDY AND NEXT STEPS**
29

30 **DR. HOLLENSEAD:** Yes, ma'am, and so Dr. Luiz Barbieri, from the
31 council's SSC, is going to present discussions of recent
32 findings from MRIP's 2023 pilot study, looking into the Fishing
33 Effort Survey, FES.

34
35 The findings of the 2023 pilot study, presented by Mr. Rob
36 Andrews from the NOAA Office of Science and Technology,
37 discovered the presence of telescoping bias in FES, and so what
38 that means is the order of the questions, and regarding the
39 frequency with which the respondent went fishing within the
40 prescribed time period, results in an overestimation of overall
41 fishing effort, and, thus, the landings.

42
43 This overestimation, generalized across regions and species, was
44 estimated to approximately be 39 percent for the private vessel
45 mode and 32 percent for the shore mode, and so, in addition, Dr.
46 Barbieri will review the follow-up pilot study to be conducted
47 in 2024 by the Office of Science and Technology, and the
48 anticipated peer review process for that. Lastly, Dr. Barbieri

1 will summarize the sensitivity run for SEDAR 81 for Gulf Spanish
2 mackerel, testing the effects of the results of the pilot study.
3 This sensitivity is not intended to be used to modify catch
4 advice at this time.

5
6 The committee should evaluate the information that's presented
7 and make recommendations to the council, as appropriate,
8 especially with the consideration of the committee agenda item
9 following this one, and so that would be Agenda Item VII, Madam
10 Chair.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** All right. Thank you, Dr. Hollensead. Dr.
13 Barbieri, are you on the line with us?

14
15 **DR. LUIZ BARBIERI:** Yes, Madam Chair. Good morning, and thank
16 you. I am here and ready to go.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Well, please proceed, sir.

19
20 **DR. BARBIERI:** Thank you, ma'am. Well, first of all, I will
21 start by apologizing to all of you for not being able to be
22 there in-person. My plan was to be there this week, to
23 experience the council meeting in-person and give my
24 presentation, but this bad cold that has been going around
25 caught up with me, and so I decided that it would be best for me
26 not to be around and in a room full of people, when I am
27 coughing and sneezing, and so I'm going to be giving these
28 presentations this week remotely, and so sorry about that.

29
30 As Dr. Hollensead's introduction pointed out, I am going to be
31 presenting the results of this MRIP-FES pilot study, and mainly
32 the SSC's discussions of the study results.

33
34 In actuality, this report encompasses two studies, and not just
35 one, that focused on evaluating two potential sources of
36 reporting error that could be causing bias in FES, and so the
37 first study evaluated recall error that compared the FES
38 results, which, as you know, are based on two-month waves, to
39 those from experimental questionnaires that collected data for
40 one-month waves, and so this is something that the MRIP program
41 has been looking into, and there was a recommendation from a
42 National Academies of Science study report that came out in 2017
43 that recommended that the survey change its Fishing Effort
44 Survey frequency from two-month waves to one-month waves, and
45 NMFS has been considering this as an option.

46
47 This first part of the study was focused on that, and then the
48 second study evaluated a recall error that was related to the

1 order in which questions are presented, and so, in this case,
2 they switched the questions on fishing activities in the
3 previous two months with questions about fishing activity in the
4 previous twelve months, and this makes a difference in the way
5 that people perceive and understand the question, how this
6 triggers their memory of those fishing trips and, therefore,
7 impacts their ability to report accurately how many trips they
8 actually completed. Those are the two pilot study results that
9 I'm going to be focusing on in the discussion today.

10
11 Key points on the pilot study evaluating the one-month waves,
12 this study actually compared the current FES design, and, again,
13 that, as you know, is two-month waves, to two options for
14 reporting fishing activity for just one month, but, first, they
15 asked about fishing activity during the previous month, and so
16 that was considering just fishing activity in that single month,
17 and so, for example, for the month of July, how many times did
18 you go fishing during that month, versus another option that was
19 considered was asking about fishing activity during the previous
20 two months individually, and so, in that case, if you're
21 interested in fishing activity during the period of July and
22 August, you would ask about their fishing activity in July and
23 then their fishing activity in August, and so, again, they're
24 interested in just one month, but you're presented a question
25 asking for two months, with the report to be two months
26 individually.

27
28 The single-month questionnaire resulted in consistently higher
29 fishing effort estimates compared to the current FES design,
30 while the two individual months questionnaire produced estimates
31 that were similar to the current FES, and so, even though that
32 second set of questions was focused on just one month at a time,
33 because it involved two months, the results were similar to the
34 catch with the regular two-month wave.

35
36 These results suggest that the respondents are more likely to
37 overreport fishing activity when the reference period, and
38 that's the period that you're interested in surveying about, is
39 limited to a single month, meaning respondents tend to telescope
40 earlier out-of-scope trips into the actual survey period, and
41 so, again, the way that you ask the questions, and the order of
42 the questions, matter in whether you provide the respondents
43 with what's called an additional question, a bounding question,
44 that helps them situate their memory in the right period and,
45 therefore, report their fishing trips more accurately for the
46 period of interest, or what's called a reference period.

47
48 This, of course, brings added complexity to the design of this

1 one-month wave FES survey, because we're going to need to
2 account for that telescoping effect if we want to switch from
3 two months to a one month, and so the study was helpful in
4 pointing out these potential issues and suggesting that special
5 care needs to be taken when designing a questionnaire switching
6 from a two-month wave to a one-month wave, given the effect of
7 that telescoping reporting.

8
9 Unfortunately, this study had limitations, and it was conducted
10 only in four states, and only for half a year, and, you know, as
11 a result, it had smaller sample sizes, when compared to the
12 regular FES, and so, even though it was informative, it had
13 limited scope, in terms of the data quantity and quality.

14
15 Now a key point on the second study, which deals with the
16 question order change, and so changing the order of the
17 questions, and, for example, asking people to report their
18 fishing activities during the previous twelve months, before
19 asking them to report fishing activity during the previous two
20 months, this identified telescoping bias as well, which caused
21 an overestimation of fishing effort and landings, and so just
22 changing the order of those two questions impacted people's
23 memory of their fishing trips, and it caused them to report with
24 this telescoping bias, when, again, they were drawing, from
25 memory, from periods outside of what the reference period, or
26 the period of interest, is and reporting more fishing trips
27 during that period that they were extrapolating to the period of
28 interest.

29
30 Changing the order of the questions in this experimental
31 questionnaire resulted in effort estimates that were generally
32 lower than the current FES design, and so, if you ask people for
33 their fishing activity first in the previous twelve months,
34 instead of just the previous two months, that caused them to do
35 what's called a bounding effect on the survey, and their memory
36 was then better structured to remember what happened during the
37 two previous months of fishing activity and not extrapolate from
38 periods before.

39
40 When you change that, you actually cause lower estimates than
41 the current FES design, which asks first a question of fishing
42 activity in the previous two months and then moves on to fishing
43 activity in the previous twelve months.

44
45 In general, the fishing effort estimates were 32 percent lower
46 for shore mode and 39 percent lower in the private boat mode,
47 but the results varied by state, by wave, and by fishing mode,
48 and, again, this high variability was difficult to account for,

1 because of limitations on how this study was conducted, and it's
2 just half a year, with smaller sizes than for FES, and so the
3 study estimates actually had lower precision than you would need
4 to really have a full comparison with the current FES design.

5
6 Given the results of these two short-term pilot studies, NMFS
7 will be conducting a more complete FES pilot study, which will
8 actually take place, concurrently with the current FES design,
9 over the entire year of 2024, and the full course of 2024,
10 which, of course, will immediately increase sample size and
11 provide longer duration, and also account for seasonal
12 differences in fishing activity as well, that, before, when you
13 were just doing a half-year study, it could not be fully
14 evaluated, and so you have larger sample size, and greater
15 statistical power, is what is planned for this next study, pilot
16 study, being conducted in 2024.

17
18 The revised design includes both questionnaire changes and
19 increasing the administration of the survey from every two
20 months to monthly, and so now they're going to be able to
21 evaluate the question order in this new study design, as well as
22 the monthly versus two-month wave in FES concurrently, and that
23 will help the study then evaluate the combined effect of both
24 changes, changes in the question order as well as changes in the
25 two-month wave to a one-month wave, and this will facilitate
26 then the efficiency of the calibration process.

27
28 Now, keep in mind that this study will be conducted in 2024, and
29 it will be in 2025 that the data analysis and evaluation of all
30 the data and the results of that sampling, and then the report
31 will have to be reviewed by a panel of experts, and so the
32 expectation now is that the revised survey is expected to be
33 completed no earlier than 2026, right, and so, whatever the
34 benefits might be of this more complete result, I mean, this
35 more complete study conducted in 2024, it will not really become
36 apparent until 2026, given the time to have full sampling, data
37 analysis, and a review, and then proceed with a calibration
38 process for implementation of the survey.

39
40 That's just something for you to keep in mind, because, of
41 course, that will impact, as you know, our assessment and
42 management process.

43
44 Madam Chair, I think I'm going to stop there, and I'm going to
45 be moving on to talking about the results of the sensitivity run
46 on SEDAR 81 that was done using the lower MRIP-FES estimates,
47 that was suggested by this pilot study, but, because that's a
48 little different than what you've been hearing, I'm going to

1 pause to see if you want me to address any questions that
2 committee members may have. Madam Chair.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Yes, sir?

5
6 **DR. BARBIERI:** I am going to pause there, before I start on the
7 discussion of the FES sensitivity run of SEDAR 81, to see
8 whether committee members have any questions over this first
9 part of the presentation.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Right, and so, Dr. Barbieri, I don't have any
12 questions at this time, and so, if you would, go ahead and run
13 us through the sensitivity run for the Spanish mackerel.

14
15 **DR. BARBIERI:** Excellent. Thank you. The Science Center
16 actually conducted a sensitivity run of SEDAR 81 that was Gulf
17 Spanish mackerel, to allow us to look into the potential impact
18 of data changes in the MRIP-FES, right, and so that reduction,
19 potential reduction, in the landings estimates by about 40
20 percent, and what would be the impact of that on the assessment
21 results, right, the catch advice, and the stock status
22 determination resulting from that assessment. I am going to
23 just summarize those results for you now.

24
25 Before I go into that, let me first refresh your memory on the
26 SEDAR 81 assessment. The SSC reviewed that assessment back in
27 July, and I think that you looked at this back at your August
28 meeting, and so a reminder that that stock was deemed to be not
29 overfished and not undergoing overfishing, as of 2021, which was
30 the terminal year of the assessment. The stock status was
31 healthy, but the biomass estimates were thought to be declining,
32 and it's probably just a natural up and down cycle, the natural
33 fluctuations that you would expect.

34
35 Then another point that I thought was important to be aware of
36 is that the Gulf of Mexico fishery for Spanish mackerel is
37 largely recreational, and it's approximately a 90 percent
38 component of that fishery is recreational, and so we would
39 expect this stock to actually show potentially greater impacts,
40 in terms of changes in the FES data, regarding assessment
41 outcomes, or outputs.

42
43 The sensitivity run was using the same SEDAR 81 base model, and
44 so the model is configured the same way, but using lower,
45 decreased, private vessel and shore landings, right, according
46 to the 2023 MRIP-FES pilot study, and so the private and shore
47 catches and discards were actually multiplied by 0.6, and so
48 there was a 40 percent reduction in the total landings and

discards, and the assessment was rerun using the same model configuration that was used for the SEDAR 81 base run, and then the results, of course, were compared, as well as projections and estimates of stock status and catch advice that came out of the SSC.

Looking at some graphs comparing outputs from the base SEDAR 81 model, which is shown here in blue, the blue lines on these graphs, and the FES sensitivity model, which is in red, and the graph on the top right shows the trajectory of fishing mortality during the entire time series of the assessment run, and it's from the mid-1980s all the way to 2021, and you can say that, in terms of fishing mortality estimates, you really cannot detect a big difference between the two model runs, and they were basically the same, but, when you look at the two lower graphs, on the left, you have the stock biomass trajectory, again, from 1986 to 2021, on the left graph, but, on the right graph, you have the recruitment time series over the same time period.

In this case, although the trends are exactly the same, you can actually see that there was a scaling factor, right, there. The reduction in the FES landings caused the results, in terms of SSB and recruitment, to also be reduced by a fair amount, and so no changes in fishing mortality estimates, no detectable changes, or significant changes, but then a reduction in scaling of the biomass of the stock and the productivity, in terms of recruitment.

The main takeaways, or key points, of this sensitivity run result is it really shows a similarity in trends, and the estimates were fairly close to each other, but there was that scaling factor reduction in SSB and recruitment that you saw in the graphs. No change in stock status was detected, and so, even if you run the assessment with lower landings, resulting from the lower fishing effort estimates, the Spanish mackerel stock remains not overfished and not undergoing overfishing, but the catch limit projections decrease by approximately 25 percent, and so let's look at that in more detail in the next slide, please.

I know that this is really busy, but let me draw your attention, right, and this is some tables comparing projections, with yield streams on the top table, and then constant catch on the bottom table, right, and so, if you look at the top table, you can see estimates of OFL here, right, that came out of SEDAR 81, and that OFL on the FES sensitivity, which was the reduced recreational fishing landings due to FES, compared to what came out of the assessment, and then the percent change in OFL, which

1 varies from about 36 percent to -- I mean, from about 23 percent
2 to about 36 percent.

3
4 Then the two columns right there are the optimum yield, which
5 changes also over time, from SEDAR 81, from the sensitivity run,
6 and, again, you can see the percent change in OY as a result of
7 the reduced landings. Again, the variability is similar to what
8 it was for OFL, but then, when you look at the constant catch at
9 the bottom, this is the constant catch that the SSC provided to
10 you as management advice for Spanish mackerel, and, for the
11 three-year or the five-year constant catch estimates, you end up
12 with a reduction of about 25 percent in the estimate of OY,
13 right, and so it's about three-million pounds. For the three
14 year estimate, you have about twelve-million pounds to about 9.6
15 million pounds, and so it's close to three-million pounds
16 difference between the two, which the SSC thought was not
17 irrelevant.

18
19 Then some comments on the results of this, and, first of all,
20 given the proportion, the high proportion, of recreational
21 landings and total landings for Spanish mackerel, of course,
22 changes in recreational fishing landings are going to be more
23 meaningful for those species, and the SSC pointed this out, and
24 we need to be cautious when we're evaluating differences between
25 different stocks, because, of course, for stock that are
26 primarily driven by commercial fisheries, they're not going to
27 be as severely impacted as some that have a higher proportion of
28 recreational landings.

29
30 Fortunately, there was a minor impact, if at all, on the fishing
31 mortality estimates that came out of the sensitivity run, and so
32 that remained relatively constant, but there was a 25 percent
33 change, a reduction, in the catch limit projections, which the
34 SSC felt to be considerable, and so the trends were similar, but
35 their magnitude can be impactful, when you're talking about
36 three-million pounds, and discussions then focused on -- Because
37 this was a generalized discussion, but what would be the
38 potential mitigation of these situations for species where you
39 have state data, state survey data, that can be used instead of
40 the MRIP-FES-based survey.

41
42 In that case, this may help, you know, this process, by allowing
43 the assessment to be conducted without being impacted by these
44 changes in FES, and the SSC was also trying to have a broader
45 understanding of what would be all the potential impacts that
46 could be had and how do we account for those impacts in the way
47 that we assess uncertainty in our assessments and the way that
48 we provide management advice.

1
2 As you know, the SSC is charged in providing that ABC
3 recommendation, with a reduction from OFL to ABC that is scaled
4 by the uncertainty in the assessment, and our interpretation of
5 these results of the FES pilot study is that we know that things
6 may not be completely defined yet, because of the short-term
7 pilot studies, but we do know that we have higher uncertainty in
8 the recreational landings. There is more here that we don't
9 know than what we do know, and we still need to kind of wrap our
10 brains around that, in terms of how do we account for that
11 uncertainty, in terms of assessment and management advice.

12
13 We asked the Science Center for some discussion on these points,
14 and the center told us that they are developing a plan
15 themselves, looking into this in more detail, and this has been
16 fairly recent, and it hasn't been fully evaluated, but they're
17 going to get back with us with a more in-depth discussion of the
18 potential impacts of this FES landing -- I mean, effort and
19 landings scaling down on our assessments and management advice.
20 That, Madam Chair, completes my presentation, and I will be glad
21 to answer any questions, if there are questions from the
22 committee.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** I don't see anyone with their hand up, Dr.
25 Barbieri, but I think, if you are able to stay on the line, when
26 we get into this conversation with Dr. Froeschke, there may be
27 some questions that may come to light that you can help us with,
28 if you're willing to hold on the line.

29
30 **DR. BARBIERI:** Absolutely, Madam Chair. I will be here.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Okay. Dr. Froeschke.

33
34 **DISCUSSION OF MRIP-FES INVENTORY FOR THE GULF OF MEXICO**
35

36 **DR. FROESCHKE:** All right. Good morning. At the last council
37 meeting, there was a recommendation that we develop some
38 analyses, or at least thoughts, about the relative amounts of
39 exposure of various activities the council is working on, or
40 perhaps planning to be working on, and to inform what, if
41 anything, we might do going forward.

42
43 I worked with the council staff, the Science Center, and the
44 Regional Office a little bit, and we tried to put this together.
45 This is draft, more of a thought process, and there is no
46 recommendations, per se, but some things to think about.

47
48 This is the motion, and, essentially, the key points of this

1 that I wanted to focus on are the actions in the foreseeable
2 future, and so, to that end, we did not go back and consider
3 what the effects, if any, on actions that we've already
4 completed, and that's not to say that there are none, but we
5 didn't do that.

6
7 The other part of this is we looked at both ongoing management
8 actions and things that are on the SEDAR schedule, and so that
9 was sort of the realm of things that we're looking at.

10
11 The assumptions that we made, of which there are -- Depending on
12 what you assume and what you get to, but, based on the previous
13 report, it's that the changes to the FES -- It's a scaling issue
14 only, and so it's not going to have cascading effects on if the
15 stock assessment -- Or we think that particular stock is
16 overfished now, making a modification to this is not going to
17 change that perception, and so that's one assumption.

18
19 The other assumption is, if we were to undergo a management
20 action that would reconsider allocation for a particular stock,
21 that it would be a mechanism similar to what we've done in the
22 past, i.e., looking at historical landings and that kind of
23 thing. If you were to do something else, it may differ.

24
25 Another assumption is that stocks that are Gulf-wide -- For
26 example, Spanish mackerel might have different outcomes, or
27 exposure, than something that's more localized, like a Florida-
28 only species, and then the final kind of thing is the stocks
29 that are offshore, for example red grouper or something, and
30 they don't really have a strong shore component, and they may
31 have less exposure, because so much of the changes are contained
32 within that mode.

33
34 The next slide here is just I tried to put together a rubric, if
35 you will, of four different levels of exposure, and none of
36 these are, again, tied to if it's Level A that you must do this
37 or that, and it's not that, but it's just trying to bin them,
38 and I'm not confident that these bins encapsulate every possible
39 scenario or things like that, but I think it was a useful
40 exercise, at least for us to think about.

41
42 These are what we call the tiers, ranging from Tier 1 being the
43 least effects from potential changes, and Tier 4 being the most,
44 and I will just kind of go over them a little bit, but Tier 1 is
45 essentially considering that this likely doesn't have any direct
46 implications on stocks that were classified as Tier 1.

47
48 Tier 2 is some exposure, and we called it low, and perhaps

1 there's something that could be done, or perhaps it's a stock
2 that doesn't have a lot of recreational, or any recreational,
3 harvest. Medium is kind of moving down that threshold, and
4 stocks likely must use FES, or at least we think so, and perhaps
5 not as much as some of the other ones, or they don't have sector
6 allocations, which will come in in Tier 4, and they're stocks
7 that are not under rebuilding programs, and they're probably
8 less impacted, and stocks that we're not anticipating additional
9 management changes.

10
11 Then Tier 4 is where sort of the things that we all might think
12 about that keep us up at night, and so these are the stocks that
13 we think that we're going to work on that are going to use FES,
14 and these are the stocks, perhaps, that have a lot of inshore
15 landings. They have sector allocations, and they're stocks with
16 complex management, and they may be under rebuilding plans, and
17 they may have mixed use, and so these are the factors that, at
18 least in our discussions, seemed to contribute to the stocks
19 that would likely be most problematic to figure out what to do,
20 and then that asterisk, again, is that, the more shore mode
21 landings you have -- At least our thinking is that's likely to
22 be more problematic.

23
24 This is what we came up with, and we might have to shrink this
25 down or something as we go along, and so we tried to just come
26 up with a flow diagram, and I had a number of other staff and
27 things that helped me simplify this, because it started out more
28 complicated than I hoped was necessary, and so what we tried to
29 do is just come up with some sort of flow diagram, such that,
30 whatever exposure we might rate a particular activity, and it
31 wasn't subjective so much, and it wasn't just, oh, I think
32 that's a lot, and we tried to figure out why.

33
34 Kind of the first decision tree node we went to is does the
35 action affect the annual catch limits and require the use of
36 fisheries data, and so what I did, from this, is, you know,
37 meaning, once we have a particular node -- I took a look at all
38 the actions on our actions schedule, and all the actions on the
39 SEDAR schedule that we have for the next couple of years, and I
40 tried to start looking at those and kind of running it through
41 this.

42
43 Tier 1 here is, it doesn't affect the annual catch limits and
44 require the use of the recreational fisheries data, I would
45 classify that as a no, as no exposure, and I just put a couple
46 here, and this is by no means exhaustive, but just to kind of
47 see the kinds of actions that might filter out, and so, for
48 example, the shrimp research track stock assessment is not going

1 to use recreational fisheries landings data, and the same as the
2 coral amendment, for example, that we might start working on
3 next year.

4
5 Those are a couple, and there are several other actions, and
6 there's a spreadsheet that I have next, and we can look at that,
7 that fall into this, more than I anticipated when I started
8 looking, and so I think that's a bit of good news.

9
10 If you switch to the yes or no here, that would get you down to
11 the next question of is MRIP-FES data required for use, and what
12 I mean by that is there are some stocks that, and, for example,
13 gag, that we just converted to SRFS, and there are other stocks
14 that we've contemplated on the SEDAR schedule, like mutton
15 snapper, that we might use SRFS, and you can see that there
16 might be other stocks, or situations, where a different
17 currency, that we don't know about the issues that we just kind
18 of are learning about through MRIP-FES, and so we might be able
19 to work around that.

20
21 For some of those stocks, or assessments and things, if you
22 answer no, and I put here the mutton snapper assessment, which
23 we may be able to do in SRFS, or yellowedge grouper, which is a
24 stock with extremely low recreational landings, and it's almost
25 all a commercial fishery, because it's a deepwater stock, and so
26 I put those two as examples in the no category, and so a low
27 exposure. Again, low exposure doesn't -- At least the way we've
28 discussed it, it doesn't recommend a particular action or not,
29 and it's just kind of a way to rank these.

30
31 If you go to the yes, that the MRIP is required for use, that
32 gets you down to the next question of does it need to consider
33 allocation. You know, thinking about allocation, when you scale
34 the landings up or down, you often need to reconsider what your
35 landings are, and these are informed by recreational landings,
36 and we've done this a number of times for MRIP-FES, and so, if
37 you were to change it again, you could see how that is, and, if
38 you recall, those are difficult amendments and things to work
39 through.

40
41 The inverse of that is, if you don't have to do that part, it's
42 a less -- It's a simpler process, perhaps, if you're just
43 changing annual catch limits and things, and so you don't have
44 to figure out the allocation component, and so, for example, the
45 Spanish mackerel stock assessment, that we just talked about,
46 does require the first node of ACLs, and it does affect those,
47 and it does affect recreational landings. There's not an
48 alternative currency for use, but it does not affect sector

1 allocations, and we do not have that defined for Spanish
2 mackerel, and so I would define that as a medium exposure.

3
4 The same kind of flow chart for the lane snapper, if we update
5 those, and so these are the Gulf-wide stocks, and then the last
6 portion here is this need to consider allocation, and so, if
7 it's a yes, and these are the amendments that, when I first
8 learned of this pilot study, these are the kinds of things that
9 came into my head, and so, oh my god, what are we going to do,
10 and so there is several in here, and not as many as I thought
11 perhaps, but, as far as what we could do, you know, it's going
12 to take some more thought.

13
14 For example, the shallow-water grouper amendment, and so, if you
15 recall, that's a stock, and we have a stock assessment for
16 scamp, and that was a stock assessment that's going to require
17 changes in the annual catch limits, and that's managed through
18 the shallow-water grouper complex, and it's going to likely
19 require some changes to that. Black grouper is part of that
20 assessment, and, because it's in the IFQ, there's some
21 allocation kinds of situations in there, and so there are a
22 number of different issues in there that we'll kind of have to
23 think through.

24
25 SEDAR 74, that's the ongoing research track assessment, and
26 we're scheduled to complete that research track assessment in
27 December of this year, in a workshop, and that uses MRIP-FES
28 data, and, how we might translate that into the operational
29 assessment, at some point we're going to have to figure out
30 that, and I don't know what the answer is.

31
32 Some of the other actions that we've talked about working on
33 are, for example, the state management of greater amberjack, or
34 the sector separation. Those kinds of issues, when we've talked
35 about those for other stocks in the past, allocations and things
36 are just baked into those, and so, until we know more about what
37 we might do about the data and an allocation -- It's a situation
38 where, if you did it in FES now, and you got a pilot study in a
39 year-and-a-half, and it said, oh, it's something quite
40 different, we might be going back and forth.

41
42 I don't know what the answer is, but I can see where that would
43 be quite difficult, and then yellowtail snapper, which I think
44 we're going to talk about, and this is a stock that we have a
45 stock assessment, and the results were that the stock is
46 healthy, and there were OFL and ABC recommendations provided by
47 the SSC that are lower than what are currently on the books.
48 This is a jointly-managed stock with the South Atlantic, and

1 there is a jurisdictional allocation that would be affected, and
2 so the way that the landings have typically worked is the South
3 Atlantic is mostly recreational landings, and the Gulf is mostly
4 commercial, and so there would be some jostling of catch,
5 perhaps, there, based on FES, and less so maybe if you were to
6 use some other currency or something.

7
8 There is those kind of issues, and the South Atlantic has sector
9 allocations. There aren't any other management actions in
10 there, but some of this is fairly complex, about what it might
11 do, and so that's the flow chart.

12
13 In this next slide, I have some options to at least think about,
14 and this is where, you know, you guys come in, you know, what to
15 do next, and so I just, to facilitate a discussion, have a
16 couple of options for some of these that have a higher exposure.

17
18 One is you could push back the ones that we don't know what to
19 do with, and the pros of that, for example, is, in particularly
20 the allocation, you could delay some of those issues until you
21 had more certainty in the recreational data that could inform
22 the discussion. For some stocks, that may not work, if you have
23 a rebuilding plan or something like that, and we may be waiting
24 some time before these data are integrated into the pilot study
25 and they've been reviewed and are ready for management, and so
26 there could be some delay there.

27
28 Option 2 would be we would continue working on the stock
29 assessment and the actions, and that would allow us to continue
30 to try to do the work that we're required to do as best we can,
31 and the FES data we don't think affects stock status, again, and
32 we think that's a scaling issue. Some of the cons are these
33 allocation issues, when you rescale the landings, it's going to
34 make that very difficult, just to know if you're working with
35 the right set of data.

36
37 If we were to reallocate, based on the FES data we have in hand,
38 we may have to redo it when the revised data come out, if
39 they're significantly different, and one of these is working
40 with the data. The pilot study is out there, and the
41 stakeholders know that there's ongoing work, and there may be
42 some distrust among the stakeholders if we don't balance how we
43 discuss this, if we're using data that may have some known
44 shortcomings that hasn't fully worked through the process yet.

45
46 That was just sort of a list of things that I came up with, but
47 I was hoping -- You know, if we want to stop here and have
48 questions, or discussions, about these, and I do have the

1 spreadsheet, if you wanted to look through that on particular
2 actions, and, I mean, it's not -- We could do that, and so I
3 will defer to the committee on how you guys want to do that.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Sweetman.

6
7 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Thank you for the presentation, Dr. Froeschke,
8 and you and staff putting this together I think was really
9 informative, quite frankly, and so thank you for taking the time
10 to do that. I have a couple of questions here, and so let's
11 focus on this slide here.

12
13 We have two options, potentially, on the table, and I'm
14 wondering if -- You've kind of alluded to it, but is there a
15 potential third option in here for using alternative state
16 survey data, or something along those lines, to continue moving
17 forward with some of this stuff, as opposed to kind of what's
18 strictly within these two options there?

19
20 **DR. FROESCHKE:** The options weren't exhaustive, and so I just
21 wanted to facilitate a discussion, and so that's certainly
22 viable, in my view.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Sweetman.

25
26 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Thank you, and then a quick follow-up. Bernie,
27 can you go back to that decision tree slide, and so, at the
28 bottom, in the most exposure, and so a question for you, Dr.
29 Froeschke, and so we've got yellowtail on there, and that
30 certainly seems like a potential candidate where we could have
31 some of these alternative surveys that could be looking at this,
32 as opposed to FES, and so I'm just wondering, from your
33 perspective, if something like that was done, using an
34 alternative state survey, would that lower, potentially, the
35 exposure level, maybe lower it into a separate tier, and I'm
36 curious of your thoughts.

37
38 **DR. FROESCHKE:** My interpretation is, if we were to use SRFS for
39 that, it would put it in a Tier 2, based on the flow chart. I
40 had that discussion, and we kind of talked about it as staff,
41 but I was trying to avoid overcomplicating it based on
42 assumptions of what might be done.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** So I -- When we did gag grouper in SRFS, it was
45 my understanding that the data was fairly similar to FES, and so
46 that raises the concern, to me, if FES was 40 percent greater
47 than what's expected, and SRFS is following along FES -- I mean

48 --

1
2 **DR. FROESCHKE:** The CHTS is what was similar to the SRFS. The
3 FES is quite different.
4

5 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** I couldn't remember, and I knew there were some
6 similarities, and so I hope that you understand my question,
7 because I certainly don't want to just continue on, but I will
8 express my concern again, as I did when we did gag grouper, and
9 I don't want the -- If this is going to become a state-reliant,
10 state-dependent body, then what is the Gulf Council doing? I
11 have reservations, and concerns, about -- Again, I raise
12 Alabama, and, you know, we're the red snapper capital of the
13 world, and so that does that mean we now guide the ship on red
14 snapper? I'm just very concerned of what we're doing here.
15

16 I understand that we can't stop the process, but I am just very
17 concerned, and I believe the Reef Fish AP even passed a motion,
18 and, you know, especially with allocations, and not to do
19 anything until we resolve FES, but this is 2026 that we're
20 talking about, and I then also have a question to the agency
21 about that, because I remember, going back to SEFHIER, we have
22 to run it side-by-side for five years before we start using the
23 data, but now you're saying we're only going to do this for two
24 years, and so, again, what's the right answer here, but I just
25 wanted to express my concerns. Any other questions, or
26 comments, from the committee? Dr. Sweetman.
27

28 **DR. SWEETMAN:** To your point, Madam Chair, from my perspective,
29 it's not really about the council relying on various states, or
30 anything along those lines, and it's using the best data that we
31 have that's available to us, and, if there's a data source that
32 potential mitigates some of the massive issues that we've been
33 dealing with around the council, relative to allocation, and now
34 a further level of uncertainty on top of that, I think it's
35 worthwhile for the council to explore, and I don't think that's
36 the council relying on individual states to do that, but it's
37 just utilizing the best data that we have available to us.
38

39 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Mr. Strelcheck and then Captain Walker.
40 Captain Walker.
41

42 **MR. WALKER:** Thank you. I was just going to agree with C.J.
43 about that. I mean, if you tell your constituency, if you will,
44 that the system we've been using is flawed, and you have another
45 option that is somewhat agreed upon to be better, I think you
46 owe it to them to use the one that we call better, and you know
47 what people are saying about FES right now, and so I would be in
48 support of, you know, using states, where states are applicable.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Mr. Strelcheck.

3
4 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I agree with C.J.'s comments as well, and I do
5 want to say that there is some risk of exposure for yellowtail,
6 and right now mutton snapper, and they're kind of embarking on
7 the calibration, and potential inclusion of SRFS, but we haven't
8 used SRFS on the east coast of Florida, right, and they
9 implemented that several years later, right, and so there's some
10 unknowns there, and so I just wanted you to keep that in mind.

11
12 I think the other component here is there's -- You know,
13 certainly I think perception, or maybe even agreement, that the
14 state surveys are better, right, and "better" is a very relative
15 term, and based on your perception of what you consider better,
16 in terms of regulations, or management, but incorporation of the
17 state surveys does generally reduce your yield levels, right,
18 because they're estimating lower landings, or catch, right, and
19 so what it does provide though is more timely information, and
20 potentially better ways to manage the fishery, kind of more
21 real-time or in-season, and so I just wanted to note that, in
22 terms of some of the nuances, and differences, here, and I think
23 we need to be careful, and thoughtful, about the risk of
24 exposure, because some of these things -- We'll still have other
25 risk, if we change course and try to focus on moving away from
26 FES.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Simmons.

29
30 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and so,
31 when we were putting this together, I mean, I think the big
32 struggle is the action plan piece of this, and, you know, what
33 is our action plan right now, in the near-term and long-term,
34 because it is very difficult. I know the South Atlantic Council
35 had several motions that they came up with, during their
36 September meeting, on how they were going to handle these
37 things, and I think we took this approach first, and I believe
38 they came in, at the SEDAR Steering Committee, and made some
39 changes to their schedule, based on their discussions they had.

40
41 Back to the whole calibration to the state surveys, and so
42 Florida is still running MRIP, right, and so they have a
43 supplemental survey, and so they have to go through a
44 calibration process, like they did for gag with S&T, to
45 calibrate their supplemental survey to the MRIP-FES. If that
46 ratio changes in the future, as we get more information, you are
47 correct that, in 2026, we may have to come back and relook at
48 that ratio, but I think the idea is that we'll be much closer,

1 if you think about mutton snapper and yellowtail snapper, near-
2 term with that supplemental survey, if we can get that
3 calibration done now, until we have the results of the pilot in.

4
5 I see what you're saying, and you can't really decouple those,
6 because you have those three eastern states that are still using
7 MRIP, and so that is a process that Florida is working on with
8 FWC. They've done it for gag, and they're looking at it for
9 mutton snapper, and I think now we've asked for them to do it
10 for yellowtail snapper, and so you are correct with your
11 statement on that earlier.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** So, Dr. Froeschke, do we want to look at your
14 exposure analysis table of the action guide, and just look at a
15 couple of examples, or maybe not, and do we need to rely on the
16 council staff? I mean, we have the rankings here, but, based on
17 all of this with FES, do we need to relook at the rankings, or
18 has that already been done? I mean, what do we do with this
19 action guide now, moving forward?

20
21 **DR. FROESCHKE:** What I was thinking is we would pull it up, and
22 you could look at the number -- There's a lot of number ones on
23 there, and so, essentially, those actions, we could continue
24 unabated, but there are the other ones, and you could look at
25 these, and, again, you know, these were numbers that I assigned,
26 based on the spreadsheet, and so, if there's a discrepancy, and
27 you think I have something rated as a two, and you think it
28 should be a three or a four or a one or something, I think I
29 would like that feedback.

30
31 The ones with a three, or, in particular, a level four, I just
32 kind of wanted to raise awareness that, from a council staff
33 perspective, that we think there are going to be some
34 challenges, and so we either need to figure out what we're going
35 to do, or we're going to be spinning our wheels a bit, and so
36 that's kind of what I was hoping. If there are ways to work
37 through those challenges on the ones that we have flagged as
38 number four, it would be great to get that feedback, so we could
39 know what to do.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Walter.

42
43 **DR. WALTER:** Madam Chair, thanks. John, thanks for taking this
44 on and working with staff to do this, and I think it is the
45 first step in the triage here, and then the challenges are going
46 to be what do we do for those most exposure stocks, and the path
47 forward for them, when sort of everything is wrapped up in FES,
48 and so I think that's where it will be good, I think, to

1 consider what that path forward is.

2
3 Like the South Atlantic Council has delayed a couple of
4 assessments, to buy some time for incorporating that, that's an
5 option, but, also, as Luiz alluded to, the center is going to be
6 working on, together with SERO and council staff, some options
7 for some other approaches that could be used in some situations,
8 like a percentage change approach, and I think we'll try to work
9 that through the SSC, so that everyone is clear on what those
10 options are for these more challenging assessment and management
11 stocks. Thanks.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** So, Mr. Chair, I know we're bumping up against
14 time, and Mara has her hand up, and she may be answering the
15 question that I'm about to ask, and then I think, if okay, and
16 I've already talked to Dave, we'll move his to Full Council, and
17 maybe we look at the spreadsheet at Full Council, and is that
18 okay?

19
20 **MR. ANSON:** Yes, if that's what you would like, and that sounds
21 good.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Ms. Levy.

24
25 **MS. LEVY:** Thank you. Just a comment that I see even two groups
26 in Tier 4, and so I see the groups where you have SSC
27 recommendations on ABCs and OFLs that need to be addressed,
28 because I think both of those shallow-water grouper and
29 yellowtail decreased, right, and maybe I'm wrong about shallow-
30 water grouper, and so we have -- Two of those actions have SSC
31 recommendations that need some type of action.

32
33 Two of them are just thoughts for future actions that you don't
34 really have -- I mean, obviously, the stock assessment is
35 ongoing, but the state management of greater amberjack -- I
36 mean, there's nothing pushing that, but, to me, the two that
37 require the real attention are the ones where we have ABC
38 recommendations from the SSC.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** So my question that I was going to ask you, Ms.
41 Levy, is so what happens if make decisions going forward, albeit
42 maybe not allocation decisions, but just the scenario that we
43 just did with Spanish mackerel, that it looks like it should be
44 decreased now by 25 percent, and I know there was a long
45 discussion, at the SSC meeting, about the vermilion snapper, and
46 so what kind of precedent do we set? I mean, we've reallocated
47 red grouper, which now we've got -- I mean, are we setting
48 ourselves up for lawsuit after lawsuit?

1
2 **MS. LEVY:** So I want to reiterate that we don't have anything
3 that says that something should be 25 percent less. We have
4 pilot studies, two of them, and one which indicates that a
5 certain change increases estimates, and one that indicates that
6 another change decreases estimates, and we have no idea what's
7 going to happen when we put those two together and run the full
8 pilot study, and so, to me, the statement that we have -- It's
9 not correct.

10
11 We have the best scientific information that we have available
12 before us, which is FES, or perhaps it's the state survey for
13 some stocks, and you can act on that, and you move forward. To
14 say that you're going to wait until sometime after 2026, when we
15 don't even know what the results in 2026 are going to tell us,
16 that, to me, is problematic.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you, Ms. Levy. Well, with that, I think
19 we will adjourn the Data Collection Committee.

20
21 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on October 23, 2023.)
22
23

- - -