

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL  
MIGRATORY SPECIES COMMITTEE

The Driskill

Austin, Texas

August 14, 2023

**VOTING MEMBERS**

- 10 Tom Frazer.....Florida
- 11 Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon).....Alabama
- 12 Susan Boggs.....Alabama
- 13 Billy Broussard.....Louisiana
- 14 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
- 15 Jonathan Dugas.....Louisiana
- 16 Michael McDermott.....Mississippi
- 17 C.J. Sweetman (designee for Jessica McCawley).....Florida

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1 The Migratory Species Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery  
2 Management Council convened at The Driskill in Austin, Texas on  
3 Monday morning, August 14, 2023, and was called to order by  
4 Chairman Tom Frazer.

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

10 **CHAIRMAN TOM FRAZER:** The members of the committee are myself,  
11 Mr. Diaz, who is on the line, Kevin Anson, Susan Boggs, Billy  
12 Broussard, J.D. Dugas, C.J. Sweetman, and Michael McDermott.  
13 The first item on the agenda is the Adoption of the Agenda, and  
14 that will be Tab M, Number 1 in your briefing materials, and so  
15 if I could get a motion to approve the agenda.

16  
17 **DR. C.J. SWEETMAN:** So moved.

18  
19 **MS. SUSAN BOGGS:** Second.

20  
21 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. We have a motion to approve and a  
22 second. Thank you, both. We will then move into Item II, which  
23 is the Approval of the August 2022 Minutes. That again is Tab  
24 M, Number 2 in your briefing materials, and our last meeting was  
25 in August of 2022, and so I would ask if there are any changes,  
26 edits, modifications, to those minutes, and, if not, can I get a  
27 motion to approve?

28  
29 **MS. BOGGS:** Motion to approve the August 2022 Minutes.

30  
31 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Thank you, Ms. Boggs. Is there a  
32 second?

33  
34 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Second.

35  
36 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. We've got a second by Dr.  
37 Sweetman, and so we will then move into Item Number III, which  
38 is the Action Guide and Next Steps, and we will have Dr.  
39 Hollensead work us through that action guide. Thank you, Lisa.

40  
41 **DR. LISA HOLLENSEAD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have staff here  
42 from the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Office. Ms. Karyl  
43 Brewster-Geisz will be giving us a presentation. She's going to  
44 give you an update on three management measures that are being  
45 considered at the moment: Amendment 15, Amendment 16, and an  
46 advanced notice of proposed rulemaking, which includes a number  
47 of options for electronic reporting.

1 I don't want to steal her thunder, because she's going to go  
2 through all of those, but I will let you know that scoping for  
3 Amendment 16 and e-reporting ends on the 18<sup>th</sup> of this month, and  
4 so that's Friday. If would like to do any formalized comments,  
5 please direct staff to do so, and we can work on that as quickly  
6 as possible, to get that to them. Otherwise, any comments that  
7 you provide she'll note for the record, that sort of thing, but,  
8 if you would like anything formalized by then, just please  
9 direct staff to do so. For the comment period for the proposed  
10 rule for Amendment 15, that closes in September, and so a little  
11 bit more time with that one, if you would like to go forward  
12 with that. Mr. Chair.

13

14 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Thank you, Dr. Hollensead, and so  
15 I think, if we can get Ms. Brewster-Geisz's presentation up, and  
16 that would be, again, part of Tab M, Number 4 in your briefing  
17 materials. Are you all ready to go?

18

19 **MS. KARYL BREWSTER-GEISZ:** I'm all ready. Thank you.

20

21 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** It's a pleasure to have you here today.

22

23 **UPDATE ON ATLANTIC HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT MEASURES**

24

25 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** Thank you. It is a pleasure to be here,  
26 and so thank you. For those of you who we haven't met yet, my  
27 name is Karyl Brewster-Geisz, and I'm here from the Highly  
28 Migratory Species Management Division, and you may remember that  
29 I've been here a number of times over the years taking about  
30 shark depredation, and I'm sure that topic will come up again  
31 later this morning, as I give my presentation, but, in the  
32 meantime, I'm here specifically to talk about the three actions  
33 that Dr. Hollensead already mentioned.

34

35 One of those actions is a proposed action, and that is for  
36 Amendment 15, and then we have two scoping actions, Amendment 16  
37 and then electronic reporting. For the scoping actions, we are  
38 in scoping, and this means that we are accepting comments on  
39 everything, and we don't have anything proposed yet, and all the  
40 comments we receive will help us move forward with where we need  
41 to go in the future.

42

43 Let's start with the proposed action, and that is in regard to  
44 Amendment 15, which is also -- Which has two parts, and those  
45 are about spatial management and electronic monitoring. We  
46 released this proposed rule back in May, and the comment period  
47 ends on September 15.

48

1 I did provide a shortened version of the homepage, if you're  
2 interested. There is a lot of information on that homepage,  
3 including the proposed rule, the draft environmental impact  
4 statement, a story map to help people understand sort of the  
5 spatial management aspect, along with a number of posters to try  
6 to simplify what it is we're proposing, and this amendment is  
7 fairly complex. It is very long, and a number of our advisory  
8 panel members have been pointing out that it's almost an inch-  
9 and-a-half in thickness, when you look at the paper version, and  
10 so we're trying our best to simplify things.

11  
12 In regard to the spatial management, this is looking at our four  
13 static areas that we have had in place for a long time. The red  
14 area, up at the top off of North Carolina, is our bottom  
15 longline area. It was closed back in 2005, and the green, gray,  
16 and blue areas are the Charleston Bump, the east Florida coast,  
17 and Desoto Canyon. Those are pelagic longline closed areas, and  
18 they have been closed since the early 2000s.

19  
20 These are static areas, and they are not -- They have not been  
21 changed since they were put in place, with the exception of the  
22 bottom longline closed area. We have had very little data  
23 collection in those areas, and so the whole goal of Amendment 15  
24 is to figure out how do we get in there, and how do we find out  
25 if those areas are still the appropriate areas for our species.  
26 Since they've been closed, a lot has changed. I think you're  
27 all aware of climate change and where species are, how they've  
28 been moving, and that has been a big issue in recent years.

29  
30 We have had changes in how the fishery operates, and so, as an  
31 example, when these closures were put in place for pelagic  
32 longlines, it was mainly a j-hook fishery, and it is now a  
33 circle hook fishery. They are required to use circle hooks.  
34 How has that changed the bycatch that they were experiencing  
35 back then?

36  
37 Additionally, the stock status of a lot of the species that we  
38 were looking at, and that they were originally closed for, as an  
39 example swordfish, are now changed. Swordfish was very  
40 overfished, back in the early 2000s, and it is now completely  
41 rebuilt, and we are no longer catching the quota, and so how do  
42 we get in, collect the data, and make sure that these are the  
43 appropriate areas, with all of these changes that have been  
44 happening? That is the spatial management portion of Amendment  
45 15.

46  
47 Directly related to that is the electronic monitoring portion.  
48 We have required electronic monitoring on all our pelagic

1 longline vessels since Amendment 7 back in 2015, and that  
2 electronic monitoring was put in place on the pelagic longline  
3 vessels for the purpose of monitoring bluefin dead discards and  
4 incentivizing the fleet to land those bluefin, rather than  
5 discard them, and it has been very successful. We have reduced  
6 bluefin discards tremendously with the combination of our  
7 individual bluefin quotas and our electronic monitoring.

8  
9 All of that is great, and the agency has been paying for  
10 electronic monitoring. Under the agency cost allocation policy,  
11 we now need to shift those costs from the agency to the  
12 industry, and so Amendment 15 is looking at how to do that.

13  
14 Spatial management, regarding the Gulf of Mexico, we have one  
15 area that is really in the Gulf of Mexico, and that's Desoto  
16 Canyon, but, for all of these areas, we are proposing changes to  
17 the area both in time and scope, and then how do we get in and  
18 collect that data that I talked about, and, additionally, how do  
19 we continue evaluating these areas so that we're not in the same  
20 place we are now twenty years from now?

21  
22 I am going to start with the timing first, and that's the same  
23 across all of the areas. We are proposing that, at a minimum,  
24 every three years, we reevaluate where we are with these areas.  
25 There is also a trigger evaluation, and so, if something looks  
26 wrong before three years, we would stop and evaluate it then.

27  
28 Moving on specifically for Desoto Canyon, the hatched areas are  
29 the current location of Desoto Canyon, and it was primarily  
30 focused around the edge that you can see on the map. The red  
31 area is what we are proposing to change that area to, and so  
32 going from the two boxes to that red polygon. The red polygon  
33 has a number of benefits. It does protect Rice's whale habitat,  
34 and so that is a good thing, and it also protects that shelf  
35 edge a little bit more than those two boxes.

36  
37 If you look at the hatched area, there are areas that are no  
38 longer in the red area, and those would be open to normal  
39 fishing, and so we are proposing opening some of those areas.  
40 The area would be remain closed year-round, but we would, as  
41 part of our data collection, allow for exempted fishing permits  
42 to go into those areas and collect data, and we have not, in the  
43 past, allowed that.

44  
45 These are all areas in the Atlantic, and so I'm not going to  
46 spend much time on them, but I am just going to point out that  
47 the bottom longline Mid-Atlantic shark closed area is similar to  
48 the Desoto Canyon, in that we are changing the footprint for the

1 bottom longline, and we're also changing the timeframe.

2  
3 For the Charleston Bump and the east Florida coast, for your  
4 awareness, we are actually splitting those areas into a high  
5 bycatch area that would only allow exempted fishing permits in  
6 to collect data, and then those yellow areas are monitoring  
7 areas where fishermen could go in and fish, but they would have  
8 to meet a number of requirements, including improved VMS, 100  
9 percent EM, and then a limit on how many sets.

10  
11 The other aspect of Amendment 15 is the electronic monitoring  
12 package, and so we looked at a couple of alternatives, and we  
13 are proposing transferring all the sampling costs to the  
14 industry. This means the industry will pay for 100 percent of  
15 the equipment purchase, installation, maintenance, video review,  
16 and storage and then the server provider fees. The agency would  
17 maintain all the administrative costs of the program. We are  
18 proposing to phase this in over three years, and then there are  
19 a number of components to this alternative of vessel  
20 requirements, the vendor requirements, the vessel monitoring  
21 plan, and then all of those modifications of the spatial  
22 requirements that I talked about.

23  
24 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Karyl, if we can ask you to just hold. Mr.  
25 Gill has a question.

26  
27 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** Sure.

28  
29 **MR. BOB GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for coming  
30 here, Karyl, and making the presentation, and I appreciate the  
31 effort that you're making here. I would note that one of my  
32 questions, which I will defer and ask later, I thought I would  
33 find in the DEIS, and so I went into the DEIS, and I finally  
34 gave up. I couldn't find it, and so I'm going to ask, and I  
35 know that information is in there, but my suggestion is that you  
36 consider making the DEIS more user-friendly. Granted, it's  
37 complex and comprehensive, and I understand that side of it.

38  
39 Relative to the electronic monitoring, the original presentation  
40 that you provided had a footnote, and I think it was on this  
41 slide, detailing to Proposal 0411502, which is the one that  
42 talks about cost allocation, and the one that you referenced  
43 earlier.

44  
45 The subsequent version of this presentation removed that, which  
46 I find rather strange, but, if you go back to that procedure,  
47 and you go to the cost basis, which is on page 3, it lays out  
48 the policy of the agency to distribute costs on programs such as

1 this, such that, if it's a council-requested program, then it's  
2 a shared basis, and the sharing is on the basis of sampling  
3 costs to the industry and administrative costs to the agency,  
4 and we can argue about whether that's a fair distribution or  
5 not, but, nevertheless, philosophically, it's the right  
6 approach, right, and it benefits both, and so some kind of cost  
7 basis to do that.

8  
9 If the program comes from the agency, and not from the council,  
10 then the costs are taken by the agency, and I believe that  
11 applies in this case, and, for one thing, you don't have a  
12 council, but, for another, as you mentioned, Amendment 7 is the  
13 one that implemented this program, and so it seems, to me, that  
14 what you're doing here in Amendment 15 is violating your own  
15 policy, and so I am trying to understand what your rationale is  
16 that justifies making this request based on the policy that you  
17 have in Procedure 0411502.

18  
19 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** Thanks for that. I would have to actually  
20 pull up the policy to show you that language, which I don't have  
21 right in front of me at the moment, but we have been told, in no  
22 uncertain terms, that we are violating the policy when we keep  
23 the agency paying for EM, and so that is why we are proposing to  
24 come into compliance with that policy, and so I would love to  
25 have a greater discussion, but, as I said, I do not have the  
26 policy right in front of me right now, but it is clear, and I  
27 have read it more than several times, to understand it myself.

28  
29 I can't answer your question about the footnote, and I've only  
30 sent one version of the presentation, and so I don't know how  
31 that was removed, and I don't remember the footnote being in  
32 there anyway.

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Thank you, Karyl, and, Bob,  
35 actually, if it's okay -- I mean, this line of questioning is  
36 related largely to policy, and I would prefer that Karyl keep  
37 moving on with her presentation, and we'll have some time to  
38 talk about that either after the talk or in a side conversation.  
39 All right. Go ahead, Karyl. Thank you.

40  
41 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** Thank you. This diagram helps show more of  
42 how EM would work under what we're proposing. In short, the  
43 vendors would apply to us to be approved. Once they are  
44 approved, they would work directly with the vessels, in order to  
45 come up with a vessel monitoring plan, and that vessel  
46 monitoring plan is a very individualized plan. It talks about  
47 where the cameras would be on the vessel and how that whole plan  
48 would work.

1  
2 The vendors would then provide quarterly reports to us, with all  
3 the metadata, and occasionally we might reach out to the vendors  
4 to have them look at something in more detail.

5  
6 Right before I talked, I believe, you had asked a question about  
7 the pelagic longline fleet and the vessel -- The number of  
8 active vessels, and so we have included this slide, to answer  
9 some of those questions, which I am just going to pause a  
10 second. We have included this slide to help answer some of the  
11 questions you had relayed earlier, in terms of the active number  
12 of vessels.

13  
14 We gave swordfish landings as an example, but please be clear  
15 that pelagic longline vessels do land a lot more than just  
16 swordfish. They also land yellowfin and bigeye, and so, if you  
17 look at this chart, the blue bars are the pounds landed, and  
18 then the red shows the percentage of the quota, and I apologize  
19 that the blue hides it, but, in short, the top six vessels are  
20 responsible for 50 percent of the swordfish landings, and the  
21 top twelve vessels are responsible for the top 70 percent of  
22 swordfish landings, and these are active vessels, active from  
23 Maine through Texas, and so it includes the Atlantic along with  
24 the Gulf of Mexico.

25  
26 That is the end of the proposed rule, and now I'm going to talk,  
27 hopefully somewhat briefly, about the scoping actions, and so,  
28 starting with Amendment 16, Amendment 16 has to do with pretty  
29 much everything sharks, but there's some background that I want  
30 to make sure all of you are aware of as you're looking at and  
31 considering Amendment 16.

32  
33 First off, Amendment 15, and I talked to this council last  
34 summer about Amendment 14, and Amendment 14 has been finalized,  
35 and it sets up a new framework for acceptable biological catches  
36 and annual catch limits, or quotas, for sharks. There is  
37 nothing in Amendment 14 that actually establishes new  
38 regulations, and, instead, it sets up the framework, and  
39 Amendment 16, and other rulemakings, will be implementing what  
40 was finalized in Amendment 14.

41  
42 The other thing we have is what we call our SHARE document, the  
43 Shark Fishery Review. Last summer, it was in draft format, and  
44 it is now finalized, and this review goes through the entire  
45 fishery as a whole, and so not the stock status, but more of a  
46 fishery status, looking at all the trends. You will see, in the  
47 issues and options paper for Amendment 16, the results of SHARE  
48 being echoed throughout all those issues and options and things

1 that were are looking at.

2  
3 There are also two things that were done outside of NOAA  
4 Fisheries that have a direct impact on the shark fishery, and a  
5 direct impact on anything we might want to do, and so one of  
6 those is CITES, and so, for those of you who are unaware of  
7 CITES, it is an international organization that monitors trade,  
8 and there are three appendices. The first appendix prohibits  
9 all trade, and the second appendix monitors trade. For a number  
10 of years, sharks have been increasingly listed on Appendix II of  
11 CITES, and this includes silky sharks, hammerhead sharks,  
12 shortfin mako.

13  
14 In November, CITES listed bonnethead sharks, and that was the  
15 last hammerhead species that was listed, and then they decided,  
16 effective this coming November, to list all Carcharhinid sharks  
17 under Appendix II, and, for those of you unaware, Carcharhinid  
18 means pretty much all the rest of the sharks that we manage,  
19 with the exception of smooth dogfish and spiny dogfish, and so  
20 we are now looking at a time when every shark, pretty much, that  
21 all the dealers and fishermen want are now monitored through  
22 CITES, and so that means all dealers who want to export sharks  
23 to other countries, any shark product, they must receive a  
24 permit, an export permit, from Fish and Wildlife Service.

25  
26 Any scientists who want to exchange genetic materials with  
27 scientists in other countries also need to receive a permit, an  
28 expert permit, from the Fish and Wildlife Service, and then, of  
29 course, any shark products coming in will require an import  
30 permit, and then, if you happen to be a fishing vessel out on  
31 the high seas coming back into the EEZ and U.S. waters, you  
32 would need an introduction from the sea permit, and so obviously  
33 this will have a large impact on anything we do for sharks, and  
34 it's already impacting a lot of scientists and fishermen as  
35 well.

36  
37 The last thing that came up, at the end of last year, was  
38 President Biden signing in, as part of a much larger bill, the  
39 Shark Fin Sales Elimination Act, and this is prohibits the sale  
40 of any shark fins throughout the United States, and so that is  
41 also having a huge impact on the commercial shark fishery,  
42 which, as you know, many of those fishermen and dealers would  
43 get about half the profit from sharks from the fins.

44  
45 Amendment 16, we are struggling to come to terms with what CITES  
46 means and what that Shark Fin Sales Elimination Act means, and  
47 we released this scoping notice back in May. The comment period  
48 ends this Friday, on the 18<sup>th</sup>, and our whole purpose of Amendment

1 16 is to implement new ABCs and ACLs for all non-prohibited  
2 shark species, optimize the ability of our commercial and  
3 recreational fisheries to harvest the entire quota, which, as  
4 many of you know, it has not being harvested right now, and then  
5 increase management flexibility to be able to handle changes  
6 that are coming, some that are expected and others that aren't.

7  
8 As I said, Amendment 16 is everything sharks, and I do mean  
9 everything sharks. We are looking at establishing quotas for  
10 the commercial fishery and for the recreational fishery, and we  
11 are using our tiered approach that we finalized in Amendment 14,  
12 and we provide examples throughout the document on the various  
13 species and what that might look like.

14  
15 We're looking at the management group structure. Right now,  
16 we're all familiar with large coastals, small coastals,  
17 pelagics, and those were put in place in the 1993 FMP, and we're  
18 looking to see whether or not those management structures are  
19 still appropriate for the fishery that we have now, and so, in a  
20 few years, we may no longer be using those terms.

21  
22 We are looking at the regional and sub-regional splits. Right  
23 now for a number of the species, we split between the Atlantic  
24 and the Gulf of Mexico, but then we also have a split between  
25 the east and west Gulf of Mexico, and, again, we're looking to  
26 see if those are appropriate.

27  
28 We are looking at the exempted fishing permit quotas in addition  
29 to our shark research fishery, and that is the fishery that --  
30 It's the only fishery that's allowed to retain any sandbar  
31 sharks, and so we're looking to see whether or not all those  
32 quotas should be changed, modified, increased, decreased, access  
33 granted to sandbar beyond just the shark research fishery.  
34 We're looking at commercial retention limits.

35  
36 As we change the quota levels, maybe those retention limits,  
37 which currently, for large coastal, range from zero to fifty-  
38 five, need to be changed. Just so you know, the fishery is  
39 open, and right now it's a maximum value of fifty-five, and we  
40 do have a proposed rule out to open it at fifty-five, come  
41 January, as well.

42  
43 Then recreational retention and size limits, and those  
44 recreational limits of one shark and fifty-four inches -- Those  
45 were established in the 1999 FMP. We've had a lot of changes  
46 since then, and we no longer allow shortfin mako, and  
47 hammerheads has a much larger size limit, at seventy-eight, and  
48 so we're looking at everything sharks, and so, if you are

1 concerned about the depredation issue, we would be hopefully  
2 coming up with something in Amendment 16 regarding that.

3  
4 This is just an example of some of the things we're looking at  
5 as we dive into the ABCs and the ACLs. I am not going to spent  
6 a lot of time on it, other than to point out that, if you follow  
7 through the math, and it holds true, these quotas for the Gulf  
8 of Mexico blacktip would be by far the largest quota we have  
9 ever managed for sharks. I also want to point out that what we  
10 are looking at is commercially keeping the quota monitoring in  
11 weight and recreationally monitoring in numbers of sharks.

12  
13 This is the last action, and, if you have been following along,  
14 all of these actions are very large and complex, and this is no  
15 different. Electronic reporting looks at -- Just like Amendment  
16 16 looks at everything sharks, electronic reporting looks at  
17 everything reporting. This comment period also ends this coming  
18 Friday.

19  
20 The purpose was to streamline and modernize logbook reporting,  
21 and, in other words, move from paper to electronic and expand  
22 logbook reporting for for-hire and commercial vessels that are  
23 not already required to report through logbooks, such as our  
24 bluefin tuna general category. It would collect additional  
25 vessel and dealer information, incentivize reporting compliance,  
26 and this is specific to recreational fishing reporting, and then  
27 offer an electronic reporting platform for our exempted fishing  
28 permit holders.

29  
30 This could have potential changes to vessel reporting across all  
31 of our commercial fisheries, charter/headboat, and recreational  
32 fisheries, changes to the dealer reporting, and changes to our  
33 exempted fishing permit reporting.

34  
35 We are very much aware of the one-stop reporting, and we are  
36 working very closely with everybody from the Southeast,  
37 Northeast, ACCSP, and GulfFIN to try to fit all of our reporting  
38 in with this one-stop reporting, and that means the goal is one  
39 submission by a fisherman would meet all of the requirements  
40 across at least the east coast part of the agency.

41  
42 We are considering various reporting options across the  
43 commercial and recreational fisheries, and we're looking at that  
44 across all of our species, and so what species should everybody  
45 be required to report, whether this should be on a trip level, a  
46 set level, some other version of that, and then timing, every  
47 twenty-four hours, every week, every month, and so all of  
48 options are outlined in the advanced notice of proposed

1 rulemaking.

2  
3 That's the end of the quick summary, and all of these actions  
4 are still open for comment. Amendment 16 and electronic  
5 reporting, the comment period ends on Friday, and these, again,  
6 are scoping documents, which means that comments on anything is  
7 appreciated, and both of these are dealing with everything  
8 sharks and everything reporting at the moment, and so everything  
9 is allowed. Under Amendment 15, this is a proposed rule, and so  
10 we are looking for comments specifically on the alternatives  
11 that we looked at, along with the specific alternatives that  
12 we're proposing. The comment period for Amendment 15 ends on  
13 September 15.

14  
15 We do have a few webinars and hearing remaining for these.  
16 Amendment 15, we have a webinar coming up this Thursday, along  
17 with an in-person public hearing in Panama City on August 29,  
18 and we'll also be talking about it again during our advisory  
19 panel meeting, and that will be after Labor Day. Amendment 16,  
20 we have one face-to-face public hearing left in Puerto Rico on  
21 August 16, and so this Wednesday, and I believe that's the last  
22 slide.

23  
24 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Thank you, Karyl, for that  
25 presentation. We've got a number of potential discussion items  
26 in various parts of this presentation, and so it might be best  
27 to revisit the Amendment 16 part of the talk first. Well, let  
28 me see. Amendment 15. That had to do with the spatial  
29 management and electronic monitoring. Bob, go ahead.

30  
31 **MR. GILL:** You're looking at me, Mr. Chairman?

32  
33 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Yes, I am.

34  
35 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I expressed the question  
36 relative to the cost portion of the electronic monitoring, and  
37 that was that you're imposing a cost on industry that they  
38 previously did not have, and, despite your comment and your  
39 input, I disagree with the read of that policy directive. To  
40 me, it's pretty darned clear, and I was surprised to see that,  
41 because cost sharing makes some kind of sense, but that's not  
42 what the policy directive says, as I read it, and so I'm a bit  
43 dismayed that your input is to the contrary.

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Again, based on the previous  
46 discussion, I think that, you know, that's probably -- We can  
47 seek some clarification, right, on this particular issue, and we  
48 can circle back on that. Okay. Ms. Boggs.

1  
2 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Karyl, for  
3 coming. I have got two questions. My first one is, in the Gulf  
4 of Mexico, the parallelogram that you all are considering -- I  
5 don't know who to ask this question, but does that affect the  
6 Madison-Swanson or the Steamboat Lumps, as it currently sits? I  
7 looked at the maps, but they don't overlap, and so my question  
8 is does this council -- If they do, do we have to do something  
9 different, because it's closed to fishing? That's part one.

10  
11 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I don't think that this area actually overlaps  
12 with either of those two areas, but I would defer to Captain  
13 Walker, who probably knows that area better than I.

14  
15 **MR. ED WALKER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't think so, looking  
16 at this map, but it's kind of close on the upper-right corner of  
17 the lower box there, and so, without looking closer, I can't say  
18 for sure.

19  
20 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Susan.

21  
22 **MS. BOGGS:** So, I mean, we might need to see an overlay of that,  
23 to see if we're going to have to take any kind of action, and  
24 then my other question is not as in-depth as Bob's, but my  
25 curiosity would be do we know what the costs could possibly be  
26 for this, based on past experience?

27  
28 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Karyl.

29  
30 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** In regard to the Madison-Swanson and  
31 Steamboat Lumps, no, I don't think they overlap, and we also had  
32 a question, I want to say two weeks ago, about where we were,  
33 HMS, in making the same changes that you all made to Madison-  
34 Swanson and Steamboat Lumps, and we have not yet made that  
35 change, and so we still allow trolling through the closed areas.

36  
37 One thing I forgot to mention is that, in Amendment 15, we do  
38 have a list of criteria that we have proposed for any future  
39 changes to spatial management that we would look at, and so, in  
40 making the same change to Madison-Swanson and Steamboat Lumps,  
41 we would be considering those criteria, and so we're waiting for  
42 Amendment 15 to finalize before moving forward.

43  
44 In regard to the cost for EM, what we did is we looked at how  
45 much it currently costs the agency and tried to figure it out,  
46 and what we are hearing, across-the-board the commercial  
47 fishermen, is that it would put them out of business. We're  
48 looked at it on a per-set basis, and I don't remember the exact

1 amount right now, but it was pretty high, and I want to say --  
2 No, I'm not going to say. I would be taking a guess, but it is  
3 in some of the posters. If you look on our webpage, we have a  
4 poster specifically on EM, and the top part has the same graphic  
5 that I showed here, but the bottom part does talk about the  
6 cost, and it is quite large.

7  
8 We have also been having discussions with potential vendors, to  
9 see what they thought generally -- They're not sure exactly, and  
10 each vendor is different, whether they would charge it more of -  
11 - Like if you think of your cellphone, and whether it would be  
12 like a monthly cost or whether it would be based on which sets  
13 are being reviewed.

14  
15 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Go ahead, Susan.

16  
17 **MS. BOGGS:** So a follow-up to that then. Would there be any  
18 possibility of any type of reimbursement, like there was with  
19 the SEFHIER program in the Gulf, for these fishermen?

20  
21 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** My understanding is no, and that is part of  
22 how we are phasing it in, and the equipment that's currently on  
23 their vessel -- We would allow them to continue using it, and so  
24 they wouldn't necessarily have to buy things right away, unless  
25 the equipment on their vessel isn't working or is not compatible  
26 with the equipment that the vendors would be using.

27  
28 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Dr. Sweetman.

29  
30 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Thank you for the presentation, Karyl. I have a  
31 question for you regarding Desoto Canyon in particular, and has  
32 HMS kind of looked at potential socioeconomic analyses that -- I  
33 am mainly thinking about the fisheries that we manage over here  
34 and about interactions with those fisheries, about reopening  
35 some of these areas could have -- My main concern here is that  
36 we've got some fisheries that, you know, this is a prime area  
37 for that a pelagic longline could interact with that could have  
38 some negative effects on the fisheries that we interact with,  
39 and so I guess I would just ask that question to HMS.

40  
41 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** We did look at all the economic impacts,  
42 and we actually found, for the most part, the economic impacts  
43 were fairly neutral when we made the changes to the closed  
44 areas.

45  
46 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Can you expand upon that? What do you mean by  
47 "fairly neutral", and what kind of analysis are you talking  
48 about here? I am just curious how HMS looks at the data that

1 our council -- The fisheries that our council manages there.

2  
3 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** We were primarily focused on our fishermen  
4 and then what their costs and profits have been over the years  
5 with all of their fishing, and so we weren't looking  
6 specifically at your fisheries, but, by fairly neutral, some of  
7 the areas would have more of a cost than others. In other  
8 areas, we actually were looking at benefits of what we were  
9 proposing, and so, across the board, it came out to be fairly  
10 neutral.

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Go ahead, C.J.

13  
14 **DR. SWEETMAN:** I appreciate that, Karyl. I mean, obviously, as  
15 you know, the State of Florida is really opposed to reopening  
16 closed areas to pelagic longlines in general, both on the  
17 Atlantic and the Gulf coast here, because of some of these  
18 negative interactions with both the targeted species as well as  
19 the bycatch, and so I appreciate the answer though. Thank you.

20  
21 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** Yes, and, if I could just expand, and so,  
22 if you look at the polygon, we're opening like say that southern  
23 area of the southern box, and we are expecting some benefits to  
24 that for our fishermen, but, if you look, we're also closing  
25 that area right around the shelf break where those two boxes  
26 meet, and there is a lot of fishermen who tend to fish in those  
27 areas, and so those particular fishermen would have negative  
28 repercussions, but, as I said, the area matches the shelf break  
29 better, and so it should have some positive impacts for some of  
30 the species involved there, including Rice's whale.

31  
32 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Dr. Froeschke.

33  
34 **DR. JOHN FROESCHKE:** Thanks for recognizing me. I have a quick  
35 comment and then a question. The comment is, just looking at  
36 the blacktip ACLs, based on my math here, it's around sixteen  
37 million pounds, which is essentially red-snapper-like levels of  
38 annual productivity for that stock, and it just doesn't seem  
39 plausible to me.

40  
41 Then the question is, if the all-species option was selected for  
42 the for-hire reporting, essentially, we would be back, at least  
43 the vessel operators that have reef fish and HMS, for example,  
44 permits, where there are, I think, more than a hundred, they  
45 would be back into electronic reporting for all the species  
46 again, and is that correct?

47  
48 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** So we would just be requiring it for our

1 species and not necessarily for all of your species, but part of  
2 the purpose of one-stop reporting is that our report of our  
3 species would show that they're reporting, and so you wouldn't  
4 have necessarily -- Like if they go fishing for reef fish, and  
5 not for HMS, they would probably still be reporting those reef  
6 fish, just to cover that, yes, they've reported what they needed  
7 to for HMS. I'm not sure if I clarified that enough.  
8

9 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Well, just that slide in the scoping showed --  
10 It had all species in there, or at least as an option, as part  
11 of the scoping document, and so I wasn't sure how that would be  
12 operationalized, and just kind of to expand, and that program  
13 didn't seem to have validation or anything else in there. As we  
14 go through a SEFHIER 2.0 or something, I was just curious how  
15 you got over any concerns about that and how we might use that  
16 for consideration in our program, and that's why I was kind of  
17 asking.  
18

19 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** Okay. I might have to have a sidebar with  
20 you, to fully understand what you're asking.  
21

22 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Dr. Sweetman.  
23

24 **DR. SWEETMAN:** A real quick question, Karyl, and so I think you  
25 said there was eighty-two or some-odd fishermen that are  
26 operating there, and do you know, of those, how many are  
27 operating in the Gulf, versus the Atlantic?  
28

29 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** I do not, but I can get back to you.  
30

31 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Thank you. That would be helpful, and  
32 I just want to follow-up, real quick, on one of the issues that  
33 was raised, right, and so, I think several years ago now, this  
34 council tried to move forward with some fishing restrictions in  
35 that Madison-Swanson and Steamboat Lumps area, and I'm just  
36 curious what the holdup is on the HMS side of things on  
37 implementing that action.  
38

39 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** The holdup is that it's just in the queue,  
40 and we knew we were working, at that point, on Amendment 15,  
41 having to do with spatial management, and so we're just waiting  
42 for Amendment 15 to finalize, so we know what criteria it is  
43 that we should be looking at.  
44

45 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Thank you for that. Mr. Anson and  
46 then Dr. Simmons.  
47

48 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Thank you for the presentation. This is

1 outside, I think, of the request that you've come here, or at  
2 least the information that you provided relative to the  
3 timelines for comment, but, you know, the blacktip example that  
4 John pointed out, and you mentioned that it's significantly --  
5 That's probably not an appropriate word, but 10 percent of the  
6 harvest, or 10 percent of the quota, is harvested, essentially,  
7 and I know, like a lot of things, it has to do with demand.

8  
9 I'm just wondering, outside of that, in terms of the agency's  
10 promotion of seafood generally, is there any discussion, or any  
11 initiative, that's being considered for, you know, putting that  
12 out there to the public, that there is extra sharks out there,  
13 if you will, because there might be a stigma, out in the general  
14 public, that sharks, as an apex predator -- You know, they have  
15 an important role in the ecosystem, but, you know, if there is  
16 data that indicates that there is an opportunity for harvest,  
17 that that might be something that could be picked up on, I  
18 guess, is to help kind of promote that, in certain areas and  
19 species, and specifically to commercial, because, you know, you  
20 can train folks for identification and such, and that maybe that  
21 might be an avenue to pick up.

22  
23 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** Thanks for that. Yes, public perception is  
24 something that we have been trying to help. For the past  
25 summer, starting in April, we have been doing a social media  
26 campaign that we call celebrating thirty years of successful  
27 shark management, and the goal of that is to try to combat a lot  
28 of the misinformation that is out there about the status of  
29 sharks.

30  
31 I think all of you know that you look at whether or not sharks  
32 are endangered, and it will come up that, yes, sharks are  
33 terribly endangered, and they're critically endangered, and all  
34 of those are based on IUCN terms, and IUCN stock assessments  
35 have shown that, globally, because that's how their assessments  
36 are done, sharks meet certain of their criteria for critically  
37 endangered, endangered, threatened, near threatened.

38  
39 If you look in the United States, that is not true in the  
40 Atlantic, where we have a number of species that, like Gulf  
41 blacktip, are fully healthy and can withstand additional  
42 pressure, based on those last stock assessments, and so we have  
43 been trying very hard to get the word out that we do have a  
44 number of healthy stocks out there and that the fisheries could  
45 probably withstand even more fishing pressure than they have.

46  
47 We're doing what we can. If you have additional ideas, we would  
48 love to hear it. If you've been watching those social media

1 posts, we are getting hit from all sides. The people who  
2 believe sharks are endangered are unhappy that we are promoting  
3 the use of a sharks in a fishery, and the people who believe  
4 that -- Not believe, but have shown that depredation is a major  
5 issue are unhappy that we are saying that some shark species are  
6 not fully rebuilt yet, and so we are getting it from all sides.

7  
8 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Go ahead, Susan, and we'll come back to  
9 Dr. Simmons.

10  
11 **MS. BOGGS:** Well, it's not to this point.

12  
13 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Go ahead, Carrie.

14  
15 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. You  
16 threw a lot at us, and so could you just remind us again, and  
17 perhaps I missed this, and so I apologize, but, for the  
18 electronic reporting piece of it, the commercial electronic  
19 reporting and the dealer electronic reporting, that will take  
20 place after the councils, the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils,  
21 consider their commercial logbook program, and is that correct?

22  
23 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** So, for electronic reporting, we're just in  
24 the scoping phase. We are going to try to work the timing of  
25 our proposed rule, and then final implementation of electronic  
26 reporting, to match the South Atlantic and the Gulf Councils.  
27 We're working very closely with all the different aspects on  
28 what it would mean. Just like when we implemented electronic  
29 dealer reporting back in 2013, we worked to try to make sure  
30 that the timing aspect of when we were requiring it matched the  
31 timing of everybody, and we want to do that with electronic  
32 reporting as well.

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Go ahead, Carrie.

35  
36 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you for that, and so I have  
37 kind of a weedy question, following up with what John was asking  
38 about regarding validation, and the HMS, the charter and  
39 headboat requirements that are being proposed, and so I guess  
40 it's under Sub-Option C(1)(c), which would require the owner of  
41 an HMS charter/headboat permitted vessel to report all fish  
42 landed and discarded on all trips, regardless of where the fish  
43 were caught, and I think that's what we were asking about  
44 regarding those reef fish species that were included in the  
45 infographic, and so I think that's where the confusion may come  
46 in.

47  
48 As the council looks at their SEFHIER for-hire program 2.0, I

1 guess where those would meet, that was one of the questions we  
2 had, and then, in that section, it talks about that the Access  
3 Point Angler Intercept Survey could serve as a validation check  
4 for logbook-reported data. A proposal has already been put  
5 forward by the Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program for  
6 MRIP certification to use the APAIS as a validation survey of  
7 the for-hire logbook data collected in the Atlantic, and so is  
8 that also something that would be considered for the Gulf, and  
9 could help us moving forward for whatever program the council  
10 may decide would follow for the for-hire program? Have you all  
11 talked about that at all?

12  
13 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** So, in answer to the question about the all  
14 fish landed or discarded, the New England Council, and I want to  
15 say the Mid-Atlantic, and I might be wrong, already requires  
16 that, and so any fish that are caught must be reported,  
17 regardless of whether that's managed by their council, and so  
18 that's why we're looking at that one.

19  
20 In terms of the MRIP and the APAIS angling validation, I am sure  
21 that somebody has talked about that, and I am not apprised of  
22 all those details, and so I would have to get back to you on  
23 that one.

24  
25 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Karyl, for your answers to those  
26 questions, and we have Ms. Boggs in the queue and then Captain  
27 Walker.

28  
29 **MS. BOGGS:** Karyl, thank you, and I feel like we're beating you  
30 up this morning, but there's just lots of questions, and I've  
31 learned a lot, and, by the way, I really enjoyed that  
32 presentation on Amendment 16, and that was kind of entertaining.

33  
34 Back to the CITES, because I'm actually working on a CITES  
35 permit for something else totally different, but it's kind of  
36 complicated, and so can you briefly tell me again who would be  
37 required to do that, because, I mean, that can almost become a  
38 roadblock, which is maybe what you all are looking to do for  
39 some of these species, and I understand, but it seems like it  
40 might be cumbersome.

41  
42 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** I don't think the goal is to make it become  
43 a roadblock, and it's more just the goal is to monitor the  
44 trade, and so, in answer to your question on who would be  
45 required to do it, so it is only trade of any species that is  
46 going to be traded outside of the United States, and so, if  
47 you're going from state to state, there would be nothing. If  
48 you are a Louisiana dealer intending to export your sharks

1 through Texas, down through Brownsville and into Mexico, which  
2 is what often happens with a lot of the sharks that are caught  
3 in the Gulf of Mexico, you would need to go through the Fish and  
4 Wildlife Service to obtain an export permit.

5  
6 My understanding is the permit process takes a long time, and  
7 is, yes, fairly complex, and so the agency -- NOAA has already  
8 been working with Fish and Wildlife Service, at least to cover  
9 our scientists, but I would definitely recommend any non-agency  
10 scientists and the dealers, the shark dealers, to start working  
11 with the Fish and Wildlife Service now to try to figure out all  
12 those ins and outs and get the permits, and, if somebody needs  
13 the contacts, I can get them the contacts offline, or they can  
14 always send me an email, and I can get them that information.

15  
16 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Great. Thank you. Captain Walker.

17  
18 **MR. WALKER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm, obviously, not on your  
19 committee, being my first day and all, but I did have a  
20 question. You said that the sale of shark fins has been banned  
21 in the United States, and is that correct, and so does that mean  
22 that a commercial shark fisherman has to throw away now the most  
23 valuable part of the shark?

24  
25 Okay, and, in the same conversation, we're wondering why they're  
26 only catching 10 percent of the shark quota, and the last  
27 remaining thing that a commercial shark fisherman could possibly  
28 make his business work was the sale of legally-caught, legal  
29 species sharks, and he now has to throw the most valuable part  
30 away, out of this thirty-three-head-a-day trip, and does that  
31 provide the most benefit to the nation?

32  
33 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** I don't know what to say about that. The  
34 Shark Fin Sales Elimination Act was signed in December and is  
35 the law currently, and it is statute, just like the Magnuson-  
36 Stevens Act is statute, and it's not something that -- It's out  
37 of my control.

38  
39 **MR. WALKER:** Thank you.

40  
41 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Boggs.

42  
43 **MS. BOGGS:** This is probably not the appropriate time, but, just  
44 based on what Ed said, and is that something that the council  
45 could write a letter about, saying -- We hear from the  
46 fishermen, and I'll be honest that I've been texting some  
47 fishermen while we're sitting here, and, you know, what kind of  
48 sharks are we seeing, and the fishermen aren't keeping the

1 sharks, and I don't know why, because they say it's such a  
2 problem, but I think it's because they're predators. They take  
3 your fish and they're gone, and we're not targeting the sharks  
4 so much.

5  
6 Now, if the sharks are a problem, the commercial fishermen are  
7 saying, well, we're not going to catch them, because there is no  
8 value to them, and it's just like we're in this cycle of never-  
9 ending shark depredation.

10  
11 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I mean, part of the goal of this particular  
12 discussion surrounding this presentation, and, again, thank you  
13 for being here, right, and we recognize that, you know, you're a  
14 representative of the agency, and so don't take any of the  
15 comments, you know, personally, of course, but, you know, one of  
16 the questions that we would have for the committee here is, you  
17 know, do we -- Based on these conversations, do we want to  
18 provide some comments back to the folks at HMS, right, given  
19 that the comment periods are imminent, right, and certainly this  
20 conversation will be captured as part of the record, and  
21 hopefully you would rely on that, but, if we were to write a  
22 letter, with some comments, would the agency accept that or  
23 extend the time period, you know, as a courtesy to the council,  
24 given that we're just now getting an overview of Amendments 15  
25 and 16 and some of the other things?

26  
27 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** So, yes, all of the comments that -- And  
28 questions that you're all providing me now are definitely part  
29 of the record. If you want to clarify it and send a more formal  
30 letter, for Amendment 16, electronic reporting, it would be  
31 really good if you could meet the time period. If you can't,  
32 please send me an email and let me know that you'll be sending a  
33 more formal letter as soon as you can. These are scoping, and  
34 so it's not as critical as Amendment 15, which is a proposed  
35 rule, and so that comment period ends on September 15.

36  
37 In terms of the council writing a letter about the Shark Fin  
38 Sales Elimination Act, as I mentioned, there isn't anything the  
39 agency can do. There are congressmen currently talking about  
40 what they call the Shark Act, which would set up a taskforce,  
41 and so the council may want to consider sending a letter  
42 regarding the Shark Act and the Shark Fin Sales Elimination Act.

43  
44 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I'm going to let our counsel weigh-in here.  
45 Ms. Levy.

46  
47 **MS. MARA LEVY:** So you can't lobby Congress, the council, right,  
48 and so you can't use grant funds to lobby Congress, and so if,

1 as individuals, you want to express your opinions to Congress,  
2 that's fine, but the council as a body cannot do that.

3  
4 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mara, for that reminder. I saw  
5 that Ms. Boggs had her -- First of all, let me say thank you,  
6 and we will try to -- In Full Council, we'll come back and  
7 implement a strategy for making sure that the agency, right,  
8 gets the comments, and so that's one thing, but go ahead, Ms.  
9 Boggs.

10  
11 **MS. BOGGS:** So, based on -- The electronic reporting versus  
12 electronic monitoring, those are two separate amendments, or  
13 you've got them in 15 and then the reporting, and, personally,  
14 and I don't know if the comments want to comment on this, I  
15 don't have an issue with the electronic reporting. I think  
16 anybody that can electronically report would much rather do that  
17 than paper, as long as it's not tied to what's in Amendment 15,  
18 and I just wanted to get that clarification.

19  
20 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** Correct. They are two separate things.  
21 Electronic reporting is regarding logbooks and dealers  
22 submitting reports, and electronic monitoring is regarding the  
23 video cameras on the vessels.

24  
25 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Ms. Boggs.

26  
27 **MS. BOGGS:** Well, and just -- I understand -- Going back to  
28 Madison-Swanson and the Steamboat Lumps, but -- Karyl, I mean,  
29 you said "I think", and I want to make sure we know, because  
30 this council is often criticized for unintended consequences,  
31 and so I really want to make sure that we're not doing any  
32 overlap there and having to make any changes, or, when I say  
33 "overlap", I guess un-overlapping where it currently is.

34  
35 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right, and so a couple of things. I will  
36 go ahead and let Dr. Hollensead address that question.

37  
38 **DR. HOLLENSEAD:** Thanks, Karyl. If you have any spatial files,  
39 or anything for that polygon, we can put together a map.

40  
41 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Thank you, Lisa, for that, and we're  
42 going to go to C.J. real quick.

43  
44 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Thanks, and so my previous comments were on  
45 Amendment 15, but I just kind of want to say -- To applaud you  
46 and your staff for your efforts on Amendment 16. That is  
47 clearly a very in-depth scoping document that is going to  
48 potentially make broad changes to the overall shark fishery, and

1 so thank you, and you will see Florida's comments, if you  
2 haven't already, but, yes, that is -- I think there's a lot of  
3 very interesting things that are within there that could perhaps  
4 benefit the shark fishery, given some of the constraints that  
5 they're up against right now.

6  
7 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Dugas.

8  
9 **MR. J.D. DUGAS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is there any timeline,  
10 or a certain timeframe, for Amendment 16 to go into  
11 implementation?

12  
13 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** No, and so we are waiting for SEDAR 77 and  
14 the hammerhead shark stock assessment to be complete, and so we  
15 follow the same process as all of you do with SEDAR, and so we  
16 are doing a benchmark, or, sorry, a research track assessment  
17 for hammerhead sharks, and that's smooth, gray, scalloped, and  
18 Carolina hammerhead, which is a cryptic species with scalloped,  
19 and that peer review process is scheduled for the last week of  
20 August, and so a couple of weeks from now, but then we need to  
21 go through the update before we actually have the final stock  
22 assessment status to use for hammerheads, and we're expecting  
23 that to happen in June or July of next year, and then, from  
24 there, we will be using those results in anything we do with  
25 Amendment 16, and so I'm hopeful, or probably overly optimistic,  
26 to say a preferred rule in late next year or early 2025.

27  
28 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. I just have one more kind of in-the-  
29 weeds question with regard to Amendment 16, and, I mean, so the  
30 current retention limits for a select group of sharks, for the  
31 commercial side, is fifty-five, and I am just curious if the  
32 data demonstrate how often that that retention limit is  
33 achieved.

34  
35 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** The answer is, no, we don't really have a  
36 good sense of that. One of the things, with electronic  
37 reporting, that we're looking at is whether or not dealers  
38 should be reporting each individual fish, as opposed to just the  
39 total amount. If we did move to an individual fish level, we  
40 would be able to answer that, but, at the moment, we don't have  
41 a good sense. A lot of the shark fishermen use the coastal  
42 logbook that all of you do, and that's not a good sense of  
43 numbers. As with the dealers, they report the total amount, and  
44 so that also is not good with the numbers.

45  
46 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Great. Thank you. I am looking around, and I  
47 am not seeing any more hands, and we will certainly bring this  
48 discussion back at Full Council and think about what we want to

1 do with regard to making recommendations to the HMS group, and  
2 so, Karyl, thank you again for being here, and you endured  
3 through a large number of questions, and so I appreciate your  
4 time and effort.

5  
6 **MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ:** Thank you. I appreciate all the comments  
7 and questions.

8  
9 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay, and so the next item on the agenda is  
10 Other Business. Any other business to come before the  
11 committee? I am not seeing any, and so we are a bit ahead of  
12 schedule. It's 10:00, and I'm going to suggest that we go ahead  
13 and take our scheduled break a little bit early. We will go  
14 ahead and take a break, and we will come back at 10:30. Thanks,  
15 everybody.

16  
17 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on August 14, 2023.)

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