

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

JOINT MEETING: BILLFISH
AND HMS ADVISORY PANELS
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TAPE TRANSCRIPTION

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Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel: (con'd)

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. LENT: -- and to take a sample of those. Captain McBride.

MR. MCBRIDE: Joe McBride, Montauk Boatmen and Captains Association, getting ready to go home soon. In any case, Rebecca, the voluntary party in charter boat observers program, have you designated a geographic area to start that with? Because I remember that we volunteered up in our way to do it. I mean if you want to get it going, we will give you a hand with it to get it off the ground with at least as little problem as possible, unless you have an area that you really want to look at other than the Block Island Sound area.

MS. LENT: We want to get started, but we need a person to run the program. I do not know if you all remember a person, Jenny Lee, a very talented young person who worked with Buck on the billfish amendment. Fortunately, for Jenny, she got a full-time job and regular job with the National Marine Fisheries Service and Protected Resources down in the southeast. And we were not able to back fill her. She was working with us under a contract. She was the person who was designated to do that, and we cannot back fill her. She is the fifth person that I have lost and that I cannot replace.

So until we get someone to run that program, Joe, we cannot. But in the meantime, if you have an interest, I would not hold you back. Go ahead and jot down the particulars, and please send it to Buck for now. And then once we get a person, if we can get funding, we will set up the program. But the idea would be to take a sample of all of those who volunteer. We are still trying to get

a good sample geographical and otherwise.

MR. MCBRIDE: But I do not understand. You said send something to Buck. What am I sending to Buck?

MS. LENT: Just send a letter saying I am interested in taking an observer on my boat under the voluntary program once it is implemented. Does that sound okay?

MR. MCBRIDE: Well, I am willing to help. I do not mind doing it, do not get me wrong. Buck, you are more than welcome to call me. But when I get going, I am not going to remember to write anybody a letter unless they remind me to send them a letter. So you are welcome to utilize it, okay? That is the point I am making.

MS. LENT: Thank you very much, Joe. And what we will do is once we can get this program under way, when we have the FTEs and the funding, we will send out an announcement asking folks for volunteers. Jim.

MR. FRANCESCONI: Rebecca, does it have to be an NMFS person, can it be someone like Dick Stone, can you get Dick to help? Because I know he has got some interest in that.

MS. LENT: Well, let me make it clear. The way that the program is designed right now is we would have an NMFS-approved observer. We are looking for vessel operators who would volunteer to accept an NMFS-approved observer on their boat. Now that could be that would be a contractor; someone like Dick might get a contract to be the NMFS-approved observer. But we would want to have these observers the same as the one as we have on our shark drift unit, pelagic long liners. They would have to be trained in species identification, catch release techniques, and all of that.

MR. FRANCESCONI: No, I understand what you want to do. That is great, and we are in favor of that. What I am saying to you is you need some help with Dick; we will help that along, too, with our budget, and we would be glad to do that.

MS. LENT: Actually, there was a lot of confusion during the comment period when people found out that our observer program cost \$650 a day, and it was a voluntary program. People wrote in and said I volunteer, I will take that \$650 a day. But that was not the case. Okay?

As I was talking about budget here, and this should start shooting up here. In season funding, we are requesting some money for some of our more critical needs within the year. And, of course, we are competing with a lot of other critical needs here at the Fisheries Service. The fiscal year 2000 budget is under consideration. We appreciate any guidance that the Advisory Panel can provide relative to priorities with this funding. Okay.

Are there any other concerns regarding budget?

(No response.)

MS. LENT: All right. Then let's move on to permitting and reporting. We have a new contractor handling our tuna permits. The company is called Appnet. Appnet is located here in the D.C. area, and they also have some subcontractors who are helping our in various geographical regions of the United States. We think that so far they have been tremendous, much improved over the previous contractor.

I do not know if folks, has anybody here got a tuna permit through the system? Mark, how did it go?

MR. SAMPSON: As a matter of fact, yes. Just a few weeks ago, I went ahead and reapplied, and I did it over the Net. And I was just amazed that start to finish, ten minutes. The nice thing about it I have to say, too, was I did not wait for it to come in the mail. I just opted to print it off the printer. And I was done in ten minutes. I do not know if the telephone or through the mail thing works as smoothly. But boy, that really was nice. I am not really keen on that 25 dollar fee. I am still not quite understanding of all of that. But as far as the service was performed, it was very good.

MS. LENT: Thanks, Mark. Again, we are trying as much as we can to use the high tech options that a lot of our fishermen seem to be totally in line with. I can explain the 25 dollar fee. But Captain McBride, do you want to go ahead?

MR. MCBRIDE: Yes, Rebecca. I also got the permit the same way that Mark did. And it was expedited very quickly, as compared to years past. And could be two-fold. One, because with a little more experience, the glitches were cut down to a minimum perhaps or whatever, or new people are doing a better job. I could not really tell you.

But I want you to keep in mind, and if you need some assistance, we certainly will be able to help you, Jim's proposal to take the \$25. If you are going to go to a universal HMS fee, HMS license for all species, and then include just more than charter and party boats, when you do this, you might want to have a dedicated fund, and we will help push for that. Because you are going to need a lot of political support for that, and that is the way to go.

Then perhaps you can get a chance to do a little more and have a little more enforcement and a little more observers, et cetera, et cetera. And you are not going to be able to do it yourself as a bureaucrat, because they will cut your throat and send you up to Alaska to check eskimos or something like that.

MS. LENT: Thank you very much, Joe. And let me just take the opportunity to explain where the 25 dollar fee came from. Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, we cannot charge more for a permit than what it costs for a bureaucrat like me to open the envelope, check the check, and stamp this and that, and put it back in the envelope and mail it to you. We cannot charge you for research, and we cannot charge you for management, and we cannot charge you for nothing else except just that paper handling fee.

So what we did for our contracts in all of these cases, we took the total price of the contract that we negotiated, and we divided it by the estimated number of permits. That is the NOAA formula, and that is what you are charged.

I know that Bob Zales was concerned, too, about why the price of the permit went up to \$25. That had to do with the new contract. But do note that your new tuna permit is good for an additional five months. It is a 17-month permit and not a 12-month permit. So you get 40 percent more for your money.

And Bob, we were just talking about how the new system works. I understood from your comment at the Gulf Council meeting that you got your permit with no glitches.

MR. ZALES: The increase in the fee, the new contractor, they are much better. It was a much quicker deal on the Internet. And the nice thing was that they did not send me anybody else's credit card information with their full information, pass codes, and everything else.

MS. LENT: You could go on quite a shopping spree. We did have some major glitches. So things are going smoothly with Appnet. We would like to expand Appnet to other areas of use. In fact, it has already been expanded for I believe one of the hailing requirements in one of the fisheries in the southeast. And I believe that it is going to be used in the northeast for some of the days at sea or limited entry into the ground fish fisheries. So there are other parts of the Fisheries Service that have expressed an interest in

joining in.

We would like to try to get tournament registration on line, so people could register their tournaments on line. Of all of our users, we have lots and lots of people from all sectors that are using the Net. But it seems to be the heaviest usage among the recreational sectors. So I would like to get a feel from you on how you would feel about being able to register your tournaments on the Web.

MR. ZALES: I would suggest that you do that. And the reason is because most of the tournaments that I am familiar with in the Gulf right now are generally all on line. So it would be real easy, and especially with this new system that you have got. It would be in my opinion an efficient and easy way to do it.

MS. LENT: John, please.

MR. HOEY: Are you collecting your catch data thought way yet from the tournaments? No, I guess you are not. We are filling out forms.

MS. LENT: Bluefin tuna is through that system.

MR. HOEY: Okay.

MR. ZALES: We could certainly do that in southeast Florida. You know, there is a tournament starting on November 15th. There are tournaments in Fort Pearson, marathons damn near every week. And most of them have computers. Instead of filing these forms, probably you ought to file a form as well, but they could give you real time data immediately right through the computer. I know that the West Palm Beach Fishing Club could do that.

MR. HOEY: Okay, sounds good.

MS. LENT: It is just a consideration. We are working this out with the folks who have been doing billfish tournament monitoring for decades. Change is always a little difficult, and you have got to work it through the existing system. We thought that we would start with registration, and then eventually get reporting on the Web as well. It reduces the paperwork.

And when you send your data electronically, it is automatically entered into a database. You do not have someone sitting there key punching some numbers that they got by mail or by fax. Gail.

MS. JOHNSON: Thanks. I appreciate the on line license things. The tuna this year went really well. As you look forward though, if you are talking about where do you go from here. If the VMS ever does get up and running, and we know which ones to use and all of that. I am a little concerned about too much dependence on real time reporting at sea. We can go for days and there are no problems. But please do not hold vessels that may be facing dangerous conditions to a set time of reporting, because that is not practical all of the time. Thanks.

MS. LENT: Thank you, Gail. And that reminds me too that another possibility down the line is getting all of our limited entry permits automated. So it is no longer through the southeast regional office.

Okay. I just wanted to chat about that a bit. And I guess I am on my next slide. Yes, tournament and charter head boats, and others. If you see high tech options that would make our jobs less labor intensive, and you are comfortable with moving to that type of system, do let us know. Yes, John, go ahead.

MR. HOEY: Are you familiar with the system that UPS uses when they deliver packages? Well, every driver of a truck has an electronic box, I will call it, because I am really not savvy on all of these things. But he carries that

thing around. And every time he makes a delivery, he makes an entry. And you sign it when you receive a package. And they can literally track where your package is anyplace in the country. And I do not know why a system like that could not be developed in fisheries for sending the data and collecting the data for guys in the field, and sending the data directly into the computer.

MS. LENT: I think that is one of the ideas for the VMS electronic log books. Nelson.

MR. BEIDEMAN: I do not know if this is the proper time or not, but is this the time to discuss and be updated as far as the FMP measures on party charter log books and voluntary observers?

MS. LENT: Yes, we had started talking about the voluntary observer program. I do not know if you were here or not, but we mentioned that. One of the budget requests that I have put in is for a person to run the program that Jenny Lee used to be running. Jenny Lee started the work of ferreting out all of the charter head boats in the HMS fisheries, which ones already have a permit, and which ones already hand in a log book, because we do not want to duplicate.

And out of those who do not already do it, do we permit them all, do we give a log book to all of them or a sample of them. Denny had started ferreting out the initial data to approach that problem, but we still need a person to take over the project. She has been hired away from us unfortunately, and we will need to get a person to get on it.

So in the meantime, it is a little bit on hold. The tuna team is trying to take up some of that effort, particularly in the area of permitting, because that would be the first step.

MR. BEIDEMAN: Are there any time lines that have been set to it?

MS. LENT: We cannot commit to a time line until we have the person to work on it. Right now, we are struggling with our basic needs, the lawsuits, the new rulemaking that is absolutely fundamental, and getting the ICCAT recommendations in place. I am down five people, and this is just not on the top priority. I will do all I can to get funding for it. I am literally begging for someone to work on this.

MR. BEIDEMAN: Heads up on the triage. The agency may well have to defend itself yet again on whether or not it is implementing comparable reporting with the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

MS. LENT: Thank you, Nelson. Margo, why don't you come on up. Margo wants to give us a quick update on limited access permitting considerations, and also the next step in limited access permitting.

MS. SCHULZE: We are at the point where we are finishing up the implementation of Step 1. And as we talked a little bit yesterday about the number of permits, and that the intent of Step 1 was to reduce latent capacity. And when we were preparing the SAFE Report, we were trying to see if we could evaluate at this point the effectiveness of Step 1. And we felt that it was still a little bit early. So we did not present much information other than just the update that we showed you yesterday.

But in Chapter 8, there is some discussion of some of the options where we could go, things that have been done in other fisheries. And so some of the things that we were thinking about, not immediately but in the relatively near future, options that we could pursue for kind of a Step 2. We are looking for an ideas that you have on what the goals should be.

Like Dave suggested yesterday, kind of matching or coming up with an analysis of the percentage of landings versus the number of boats. And that would be one approach. If we still feel that there are too many permits out there for the

quota that is available, what are some of the ways that we can go about addressing that. Maybe it is not a problem. But we are looking for feedback at this point. Where we would be, like I said, finishing Step 1, and starting to look ahead to Step 2.

And so if you have got comments or ideas, things that are working now, or things that are not working now. I know that we have gotten comments particularly about upgrading restrictions. The way that we have them now do not necessarily work very well for pelagic long lining or a bottom long line as well. But what would be some of the alternatives. So we are really looking for initial feedback and some direction on where to go.

MS. LENT: Thank you. Jim.

MR. DONOFRIO: Good morning. Margo, thanks. The question is what fishery are you talking about? I missed that.

MS. SCHULZE: Well, the limited access that is something that we have now is for commercial sharks, commercial swordfish, and tuna long line.

MR. DONOFRIO: Right.

MS. SCHULZE: So that would be, I think, what we are looking at as far as what we could work with as a Step 2. If there are other fisheries that people are concerned about, then we would be looking more at Step 1 for them.

MR. DONOFRIO: My question is you are not looking at recreational fisheries or charter party boat fisheries, are you?

MS. SCHULZE: Not at this time.

MR. DONOFRIO: Thank you. What is that, Dave?

A PARTICIPANT: (Inaudible.)

MR. DONOFRIO: Well, there have been people talking about that. I am just making sure that I am covering my butt. Thanks.

MS. LENT: The Gulf of Mexico Council has limited entry proposed. What stage is that at, Bob?

MR. ZALES: Currently, it is proposed. I am a chairman of an ad hoc advisory panel that has worked on this. We have asked the council to delay action on it until the March meeting, which is coming up. And our panel meets again on the 28th and 29th of February to discuss this. So from our viewpoint, what we are going to propose is either a take it or leave it situation. The council is either going to buy it or they are not, and you are either going to do it or you are not.

MS. LENT: I guess Margo's question is with this first step in limited access for swordfish sharks and tunas, have we gone far enough, do we need to do more, do we need to think about attrition, two for one swaps, and that kind of thing. Are there any ideas on that this morning? Gail.

MS. JOHNSON: Well, personally, particularly for myself, I do not like to use or lose. I have been there and done that. And that just encourages a lot more activity. We have been through all of this stuff, as you know, before. And there are pros and cons. It is like quicksand here. I mean one of the things that we have, I think it is on 134, some of the tradeoffs that you get when you start looking at this kind of action. And there are definitely tradeoffs. And whether we went to go further down this road is kind of what we are looking for, the feedback.

One of the things that I should point out too that we are thinking pretty seriously about is moving more towards a gear based permit. That depending on what activity is, you could have one permit as opposed to the requirement now where they are species based to have three different permits. I think that has gotten kind of confusing for people. And if we can come up with a different approach, that may be a little easier for people to understand and for us to deal with too.

MS. LENT: Randy.

MR. BLANKENSHIP: That would be very good. There seems to be a lot of confusion out there as far as how many pelagic long line vessels there are, how many are in the directed for this or that. And in reality, there is not a lot of latent effort out there. And we do not know exactly what we will have after the buy-out if that legislative proposal goes through.

In the fishery, you need time to settle out to see what it has. What I am more concerned with in the fishery is some of the permits that have gone to the Pacific. And there is the potential that they could come back. Just six of those larger vessels used to take 1.8 million pounds of swordfish. So you can see that is tremendous potential there.

The only other really latent effort is the gill netters that qualified for directed swordfish, and they are basically trawlers. But they could perhaps switch to pelagic long lining, but I do not know. And there is something on the order, maybe you could help me with this, of six or eight of the squid/mackerel boats qualified, because the directed swordfish criteria was so low.

MS. JOHNSON: I actually do not have the number based on that right now. Like I said, we have not yet quite figured out all of the breakout of things.

MR. BLANKENSHIP: Well, it is like six or eight. There is a total of somewhere on the order of less than 25 of these potentially inactive that could reactivate. And quite frankly, at this point, we are concerned about it, but it is not a top priority concern. Our larger priority is to get the buy-out and see how the fishery settles out following that voluntary program, and if we have the ability to utilize our full ICCAT quota after that point.

MS. LENT: David is next.

MR. BLANKENSHIP: Thanks. Let me be clear. I am going to wear my audubon hat, which I do not do usually around this table. I am now speaking for the six groups in the OWC. This is a much larger issue that I think that I will probably talk about a little bit later, but it is very appropriate here. Because I think that in a practical sense that this is where NMFS, where the rubber meets the road.

Really, the point is something that Gary has brought up in a number of fora. And it has to do with the vision of what the fleet should look like at the end of the day. We are going to an awful lot of trouble, everybody including industry most importantly, going to an awful lot of trouble to rebuild populations that are over-fished and to prevent others from being over-fished.

And not very much thought seems to be given to what we want the configuration to be like at the end and why. So that we can either prevent similar things from happening in the future, or just take more full advantage of what we have in the water.

Now this gets into very touchy areas. It gets into allocation issues. It gets into big boats versus little boats. But I just do not think that from a sustainability standpoint that we can ignore this issue much longer. NMFS has buried their heads into the sand. There are no two ways about it. But when one looks at the actions that NMFS takes, the actions do point us in a particular

direction. I do not think that they have a vision. There may be an agenda, but there is certainly a direction of what the fleet is going to look like if things keep going the way they go.

So I do not think that I have a particular proposal to put on the table, but I do think that it would be appropriate for this body to have this discussion. And it is going to be a bloodbath, because it is going to be debating whether we are better off with more recreational boats in the water, or we are better off with a few giant long liners in the water.

But I think that there are some real conservation implications in this as well as economic implications for the industries. And I think that we would definitely all benefit by having this debate sooner rather than later.

And we do it around the edges. In some fleets, like bluefin tuna, it happens more than others, but I am not sure that the full debate happens. Because, to be honest, the conservation community usually stays out of this debate. Well, wearing my audubon hat, I do not want to stay out of this debate. I have very strong feelings about what is best for sustainability. And I think that I will begin to start expressing those more vocally.

MS. LENT: Thank you, David. This is precisely the kind of input and discussion that we would like to have this morning in this where are we going from (inaudible) outlook. It would be great if we could have an AP meeting on nothing but where we are going with capacity, what we want our fleet to look like when we reach that nirvana of MSY for all of our species. Bob, I think you are next.

MR. ZALES: I would suggest that when you are looking at future limited entry and reducing this, that you do several things. Number one, the use it or lose it thing, I think you should throw that in the garbage. I do not think that is a necessary item to consider. I think that the non-transferrable IFQ, if it goes that way, is something that you need to throw out, too. Because I think that either the permit or an IFQ, or whatever you use to manage this fishery, needs to be fully transferrable between people and between boats.

And the reason is because people have spent a long time building up businesses that they are now required to have permits for. And that permit gives you the ability to fish, and it gives that vessel the ability to operate, and it creates value for that vessel. And most of the vessels, whether you are charter fishing or whether you are commercial fishing, have a particular purpose. And they are not easily transferred to another application. So if you are not able to transfer, then you take value away from the permit, which is essentially the business.

So you need to throw that one out. Permit buy-backs, I am not into that either. I have got problems with that, because of the competition thing. That if you are good at what you do, you can make money on a permit. And if you cannot, that is just too bad. You just do something else.

The two for one entry thing. On the South Atlantic side, and their snapper/grouper commercial fishery, they have a two for one provision. And from talking to those people, it seems to be working pretty well. Because in order to get a new permit, you effectively have to buy two other permits and turn them in. And that would get you to a reduction in the fleet and a reduction in effort.

What you have to consider here though is you have to look at the future. Because if the Magnuson-Stevens Act and everything that we are going through does what it is supposed to and what it is designed to do, fisheries at some point are going to be abundant. Now it is probably not going to be in anybody's lifetime, but that is where it is supposed to go.

The buy catch issue in the long line fishery. Nelson may invent some way to

totally eliminate the buy catch. And if that is the case, then he can fish his long lines every day, I do not care.

So you have to make provisions, I think, to look at things and reevaluate fisheries to see where they are in the future. So at some point where you are restricting fisheries now, if those fisheries get to where they become where you can use them to their maximum sustainable yield, then you need to be able to allow these fisheries to expand at that point. So when you design a system, you just do not fix it to reduce it. You add provisions, so it can expand in the future.

MR. DONOFRIO: Thank you. Swordfish, I think, is going to present the agency an opportunity to have another success story similar to striped bass. I see that happening by the data, and also by what is happening even in the recreational sector. There is another interaction now in the canyons. They are seeing swordfish. They are seeing some swordfish out there.

Looking at the history of the swordfish fisheries on the East Coast though, remember that it was not too long ago, and I think that Nelson could reinforce this for me, that there was a whole fleet of boats that left and went to the Honolulu grounds north of Hawaii there, and found kind of virgin body of swordfish, and basically took them out of existence. And now I understand that these boats are moving down to the Mexico area.

I suspect that Nelson's concerns now are that we have a rebuilding fishery on the Atlantic. And if NMFS does not do something and lock this fleet up, this fleet is going to be on the East Coast again. And this is exactly what you are encouraging by not taking action. You are allowing these fleets to just move around and search out and destroy stock, search out and destroy stock, and just keep moving around. And it does not do their boats and these people who are making sacrifices here any good. So you have to take some action here.

MR. BLANKENSHIP: My perspective here comes from some experience with some things that we have done in Texas in the recent past dealing with over-capitalization of three fisheries, three commercial fisheries. And here, I notice that in the SAFE Report that you talk about a major concern being over-capitalization in these fisheries. Yesterday, Nelson said that what he was talking about was not over-capitalized.

Well, whether we are talking about over-capitalization or reduction of buy catch, a useful tool can be a buy-out in addition to the limited entry program. In our cases in Texas, especially with our bay shrimp fishery, and now it is also being implemented in our commercial fin fish fishery in shore and with our crab industry, we have implemented limited entry along with the buy-out.

The buy-out is available to every participant in that fishery, once a set number of licenses is established. The advantages there. And there is some debate here as to whether that is legitimate as to paying someone for getting out of business. Many discussions that I have had over the last two and a half days, you know, you have people who are in business, in other businesses that are not related to fisheries. They go out of business, and they do not get compensated for going out of business.

Well, when you look at buy-outs as a fishery management tool, it gives you a little bit different perspective. And it certainly is a viable option, if you have got the authority to do it and the funding to do it, which is not the case with you all. However, it is something that maybe should be looked at in the future.

In Texas, we were able to go to the legislature, and get the authority to do a license limitation program and also do a buy-out, that was funded through private donations, and also through additional fees on commercial licenses.

Anyway, it is not a done deal yet in Texas, but the potential there is for it

to be pretty positive. And even within our current license or management proposals, we have made some efforts to look at increasing the amount of money available for buy-outs, and increasing those buy-outs through surcharges on sport fishing licenses now. And the advantages there to salt water anglers are pretty good.

My point overall is not to completely rule out a buy-out, and certainly look at that as a viable possibility, and one that should be developed hand in hand along with the industry as you go along as far as the details go.

MS. LENT: Glen.

MR. ALDRICH: I have heard two of the AP members say that they did not like the use it or lose it provision, but I think that there should be some limitation to how long you can hold a permit without showing a landings history. And I say this because there are people who did not qualify for permits who were historical participants in the fishery, and they did not qualify because they did not have a recent landings history. So I think that there should be some limitation there.

MS. LENT: Nelson.

MR. BEIDEMAN: Right now, we do not think that the fishery, the pelagic long line fishery, is overcapitalized. That is not what is driving our legislative proposals. What is driving it is buy catch. From what I understood, when there were before 223 total directed chart permits, there were 202 of those permits that were pelagic long liners. Now that it is 243, if all of those additional permits were pelagic long liners, then that would mean 222 total pelagic long line permits.

Now correct me, anyone correct me if I am wrong, but I believe that there was a study done by the University of Florida, Sherry Larkin, wasn't it, that many people have told me sit down and read this study. Basically, the bottom line is she studies the fishery and says that the optimal fleet size would be 160 boats. If all 68 boats took the voluntary buy-out, we would be down to 154 boats.

Of those 154, there are X number, and I am sorry that I have not done this research and know these figures, there are X number of boats that are over in the Pacific. And whether they will come back or not come back, you know, quite frankly, we do not know.

We know that just the discussions of the legislation have already brought one boat back. You know, the apprehension about the turtle closure in the Pacific, that is not valid, because we have limited access here. And any of those boats that do not have limited access permits in the Atlantic, they cannot come over here. They might be able to go foreign, but not U.S. Atlantic anyway.

I do not think that overcapitalization is the problem. And we would agree with you on the use it or lose it, if we were having to put the fleet through the turmoil of closures each semiannual season. But as a matter of fact, we have only had one legitimate closure back in 1995. We had a closure in 1998 that was premature. But we are not showing drastic signs of overcapitalization in any respect.

So what we are always afraid of is what can we do about the pelagic long line fishery, and we are going to have measures on top of measures on top of measures. And the pendulum is going to go from one extreme to another extreme, and we need to slow down a little bit, let the fishery address its buy catch concerns, and see where it goes. It may solve a lot of problems. The research program may find ways of solving more. But we are going to need time, and we are going to need to get that program into place, the legislative program.

MS. LENT: Okay, thanks. Irby.

MR. BASCO: Reflecting back on what Randy was talking about, what is happening in Texas about the buy-out of the bait shrimping fleet. Approximately 400 boats, I think, have been bought out. The first segment of those boats were the people who had the permits who were not using them anyway. And that buy-out was pretty reasonable.

And then the next segment, I just got this verbally from Hal Osborne, was like a 100 percent increase over that. It was like 2500 to 5500 or some numbers like that. So apparently, we are going to get some people who maybe are using it. One of the things that worries me about the buy-out is the fact that any segment of fishing that you are buying out, are you buying out the people who want to go out of business anyway, who probably will go out. So that is one problem that I have with the buy-out issue.

And I am just watching what is happening in Texas. I have seen what has happened. Of course, there are 3500 permits about or 3700 permits to bay shrimp, and it is really overcapitalized quite a bit. But that is my concern. Thank you.

MS. LENT: Jim, to that point.

MR. FRANCESCONI: There has been a lot of concern out there that the only thing that we would be buying out in the legislative proposal would be small boats that are basically not very productive. You know, that is quite untrue. I have the gross information from three-quarters of those boats, and I have the production information from all of those boats. And quite frankly, some of those little boats that go in and out and in and out with the freshest product on the market, they make a Grand Banks distant water boat look sick. And their nets are unbelievable.

This is confidential information, and I cannot put it out. But I can tell you that it is not insignificant in any way, shape, or form. And I am sure that production information from those boats will eventually become available from the National Marine Fisheries Service.

MS. LENT: Okay. Thanks. Jim.

MR. DONOFRIO: I agree with the gentleman from South Carolina, with Glen's comments, the use it or lose it. However, I just want to make an additional comment. Only if there is monetary value. Because as Glen said, there are some people who qualified for permits years ago with no qualification, no landing data, and just got a permit. However, this permit is worth money. For example, there is a TFL license in Maryland. A couple of my friends have them down there. When they moved to Maryland on the Eastern Shore, they just got a TFL license.

This license now is worth like \$30,000. It is a general permit, they can do anything. They can long line, they can crab, they can catch striped bass. They can basically do any kind of commercial fishing that they want. These guys do not even fish. And this license right now is worth about \$30,000, if some waterman wants to buy it. That is unfair to the waterman who wants to get into the fishery now.

And that is what may happen here is NMFS does not take this appropriate action. And that is why you have to have these considerations in here.

MS. LENT: Thanks. Rich was next.

MR. RUAIS: Just a couple of comments on the remaining commercial tuna categories and limited entry. Everyone knows that we have got limited entry in the purse seine category. The next logical step there would be to make some of that quota transferrable outside of the purse seine category, and make it available for other user groups through the marketplace. Of course, we would

need some changes, possibly need some changes to the Magnuson-Stevens Act to achieve that. And we would probably need sort of bit of a change in the attitude of other groups in New England as well.

But that is something that in the future, and I am speaking for myself right now and not the organization, but that is something that should be looked at.

The harpoon category, again in the past, there has been some consideration. It appears to be a pretty good candidate for limited access. It has got a very small group of fisherman that have been in it each and every year, and whose performance is pretty regular. And it is a pretty highly specialized fishery. So the harpoon category is a candidate for that at some point in the future.

The general category, I do not really see limited access ever in the general category, even though it has got all of the chronic problems that you associate with open access including the derby fishery and safety concerns. I think that the overall economic value of anyone being able to get a permit and go trying will always make a strong case for keeping it open.

I think ultimately that the solution there to some of those chronic problems would be to go and look at the serious commercial fishery that is within in the general category and possibly consider doing something for that commercial fishery like removing it from the general category, and establishing it in its own category, and then maintaining the historical open access nature of the general category.

I wanted to make a comment to Dave Wilmot, but he is not here right now, but maybe Russell will pass it on. Obviously, we welcome it when we get into this discussion on the various categories, and I think that is good. But most of the HMS species right now are really being managed by quota. And from our perspective, that addresses the biological and conservation aspect of it.

So when it gets down to looking at these programs, although I will certainly welcome your input, it really is the direct stakeholders in the fisheries themselves who have to negotiate and work out how we want to see the fishery managed. And I see a smaller role for the environmental community to play, maybe a watchdog to make sure that the quotas and the biological goals continue to be achieved. But the balance that is on the AP is a very important one, and we need to be sensitive to that issue in the future.

MS. LENT: That is a great follow-up. I appreciate you bringing that up, Rich. We had a discussion on limited access and ITQs in the SAFE Report. Again, that is to launch the discussion and get your juices flowing. But the Atlantic tuna, I guess the bluefin tuna now, that is one of our few categories that are still open access, and how do we address some of those issues. But that is just forward thinking, and see where we can go with that.

A few years back, we had some meetings about limited access in the bluefin tuna fishery. And you would think that we were introducing communism. It was really a tough go. So again, we will look forward to talking to you about that. We have got several more comments on this topic. We have got about ten or fifteen minutes left, and then we are going to have to move on. Bob Spaeth is next.

MR. SPAETH: I just wanted to say something to Irby's comment about buying out people who were going out of business. For instance, maybe that happened in Texas because you bought all of the permits, but we have had an extensive weeding and taking out of latent effort in the swordfish HMS thing. I do not think that we have the problem there that we would have in some of the other industries depending on how you structured a fleet reduction program or buy-out. I personally like fleet reduction program better.

But I just wanted to make that point that these boats that are in here now are the fishing fleet. Some of them catch more than others, but those guys had to qualify on three different fronts. Just to answer the question if you had some

concerns on this particular fishery. Thank you.

MS. LENT: Jim Francesconi.

MR. FRANCESCONI: One thing to support what Glen was saying. It would be good to have some sort of a use it or lose it that mirrors in a sense the golden hour that was created with people getting their initial permits.

(End side A, tape 1.)

MR. FRANCESCONI: There is a three-year shadow behind whatever year it is to be able to prove through the landings, and it is specifically for sharks, to make it fair in that regard. But also, one thing is that when you are developing the criteria for whatever additional limited access plans, it is for like a three year period or something like that. And specifically, I am saying this because North Carolina with the short summer season for instance, a lot of fishermen do not change gears on over. Some might continue, but they do not target shark at any rate. They might target tuna. They might stay gill netting. It all depends on what the market is doing, and what they feel is the availability of the resource at the time.

The wintertime, although it is longer, additionally poses problems with weather. And also, a lot of these boats do switch between gill netting, shark long line, and tuna long line. And if the price is better for wheat fish, you know, they are going to do that. They are going to go ahead and do day trips instead of doing overnight trips and stuff like that. They try to go for the safest route with everything else being equal. So you need more than a couple of one year in a sense, if someone does not use it for one year.

And another thing. When people get tossed out and there is an appeal process developed, in the past NMFS did not look at hardship. But there should be some hardship issues that should be considered, health being a main one. There is more than one case where someone has a bypass or something like that, and they are out of it for a year. They do not have anyone else who can fish their boat. They survive, because their wife works or something like that financially, but they still need to get back into fishing.

Jail time was also one thing in the past that kept someone out of getting a snapper/grouper permit. You just miss that golden hour, because he was making furniture for the state.

MS. LENT: Okay, thanks, Jim. Jim Donofrio was next, and then Joe McBride.

MR. DONOFRIO: Thank you. I want to expand on Rich's comments, Rebecca, which I think are very important. We have been discussing this with many of our members in the New England area, and even some from New York, who have a general category permit. These people traditionally and historically have fished for giant tuna before the management regime changed and opted to sell their fish. So they decided to stay in this category.

I realize now because of the days at sea that they are allowed to fish, and this has become such a commercial fishery now, that there is a lot of competition now, as Fitzpatrick said yesterday, getting the fish to the market. Probably the best way to do this would be have a qualification for a full-time general category, which gives them a different proportion of the quota. They get the majority of the quota. And they can decide what days they want to fish or when the fish is fatter or whatever. Then break it down to the boats that are not full-time, and do it in that manner.

Now they are discussing this already in Rhode Island. This is how they would see it done. If they can get together with Rich's people, perhaps that may be the best regime to do it and divide it up. And they can fish market smart, and not have this limited entry, but just make it different quotas for different full-time, part-time, et cetera.

A PARTICIPANT: Just to that point, I would be happy to have Jim come up to Portland, Maine and Boston to make that suggestion any time, and I will be far away.

MR. MCBRIDE: Three brief comments. Limited access. In New York State, are already applying, as I learned from the council meetings about the Gulf States and Bob's groups attempting to do the same thing through the council. We are trying to do it through New York State legislatively. We almost did it last year, and we missed out for whatever reason. But we are going to press it again this year.

And the reason for it is twofold. We are overcapitalized in New York State. I know that it does not apply here, but the philosophy is the same. And it is a unique scenario, believe it or not, in New York. Because back to the west, you are overcapitalized, and there are too many boats, because there are too few fish. On the east end, the scenario is the opposite. We are overcapitalized, because even though the fishing is much better, the east end of Long Island is becoming a tourist industry, where it used to be a fishing village and now a tourist village. And the cost of living, you cannot maintain it running a boat with the stiff competition that we have out there on the east end in numbers of boats, because it is in our geographic area one of the better fishing grounds. That is number one.

Secondly, I was delighted. I think Rich, when he mentioned before about the fact that in addition to those who actually catch and sell fish, he wants to keep the fishing open. I have heard this many times, and it is an argument that I utilize for the sport fishing industry. The ability to be able to get out and fish, whether you catch or not, the ability brings billions of dollars into a given region's economy.

And again, I asked the agency, and I am glad that Rich is saying this. Because usually, what happens when we say that is we have to go to outside studies like ASA or the CON report from Cornell University supporting the sport fishing industry's economics in a given geographic area. Your information is worthless. You know, sometimes it is as ludicrous as saying well, if they do not go fishing, they will go watch the Giant game on Sunday afternoon.

I mean that is not management. It is my old analogy. If you do not want the best information, you send two monkeys out in a canoe, and they will come back with whatever they want to tell you, and that is what you utilize. And that is wrong, that is wrong. I am saying that obviously tongue and cheek.

And the third scenario is buy-outs, and I am going to speak as a moralist here. There is something unique, and I am not in the industry and I only know it from the councils per se, but I do know a little bit of history. Many of the long line boats, particularly the shark boats, were encouraged by the agency to get into the business. And this gives them a little unique differentiation between other industries. There are not that many. And again, when they are bought out, I mean buy O-U-T gonzo forever in that particular industry with the boat. I very much believe that.

But they are entitled to a buy-out, because their industry is not going down because of economics. It is going down because of government regulations, which are necessary. I am not arguing that. But they should be considered in the buy-out for that particular reason, as far as I am concerned.

MS. LENT: I have to make a quick intervention there. I guess that the two monkeys that you are referring to would be myself and my husband, who is also an economist. And in 1995, we wrote a paper, and it was presented, peer reviewed and accepted for presentation at the National Agricultural and Resource Economics Association meeting. And it was an evaluation study for bluefin tuna fishing with a really high figure, I think the highest figure that I have ever seen for angler consumer surplus. It was \$1200 per trip. And we

have used that figure, we have used in every single document that we have written.

We rejected the Ditten estimate. We thought that it was too low. If you look in the fishery management plan, you will find millions of dollars that we attribute to the value of the recreational fishery based on that paper, us two monkeys. Thanks, Joe.

MR. MCBRIDE: Well, I will take back the two monkeys. Two very lovely people who have upgraded the estimates of the fishery. I am saying it tongue and cheek, because it has always been a contention with us. We do not get the proper statistics for our industry from the agency. We get it from other sources.

MS. LENT: We will talk about that next.

MR. MCBRIDE: Okay.

MS. LENT: Mau is next.

MR. CLAVERIE: Thank you. Rebecca, I thought that I read in one of these documents that are sitting here in front of me that you all estimated that the consumer surplus was between one dollar and \$26. That is a whole lot different from \$1200 for a canoe.

MS. LENT: That was another boat of monkeys.

MR. CLAVERIE: Oh, okay. It was some other monkeys, okay.

MS. LENT: I will have someone bring over at break time a stack of the studies. They just came out in paper form. There was an extensive economic add-on to the MRFSS, Marine Recreational Fishery Statistic Survey. And they did something as a travel cost model that is called a RUM model. It has nothing to do with the drink. It is a random utility model.

A PARTICIPANT: We call know RUM don't count.

MS. LENT: It was sort of an outside way to estimate those values. And it is averaged across trips and anglers. And some of those do in some cases appear very low. There is a lot of uncertainty associated with that. I will be happy to share those results with you.

MR. MCBRIDE: Thank you. Well, I wish you would put them in the NMFS documents as your basis for making computations.

MS. LENT: We did not do any computations. We just wanted to provide you with the latest information in the socioeconomic and community arena. And it would be really difficult for us to ignore that that study has been conducted, and note some of the results. Again, in your big game fisheries, bluefin tuna and the billfish, we are talking big bucks. We are talking offshore, and we are talking big boats, a lot of expenditures, a lot of people from out of state. And a lot of these estimations are based on travel costs as a reflection of what it is worth to the angler over and above what they pay to get there.

MR. MCBRIDE: But that is not what I got on the list. Monkeys came up after I was on the list to talk. But Jim said what I wanted to say. Whenever you have a use or lose it, you really need to have some sort of hardship accommodation, because those things do happen.

MS. LENT: Gail, and that is the last.

MS. JOHNSON: Actually, Rich said it all about Portland, Maine and the bluefin licenses.

MS. LENT: This has been very insightful. And now I am just going to let Pat Wilbert address you for a few minutes on how to get your money back.

MS. WILBERT: I want to help you get your money back, and I want to explain a little bit about the process, because we have some new people. The first thing you have to do when you want to go on travel is to call SATO and make some reservations for your tickets. And then you have to call me, and I will do a travel order for you. And then when you come to town, you pay for the hotel bill, and we will reimburse you.

And please do not buy your own tickets for the plane or the train. You are supposed to do that through SATO. And save your receipts when you have them. There are some receipts you need. If they do not have a hotel bill, they will not pay the hotel. So you have to have that receipt. And other receipts for small things like a taxi, if you cannot get them, just write down how much you spent.

There are several forms. We have a new travel system that we have to do things by computer. But to speed up you getting your money, I have included an old fashioned voucher. And all you have to do is sign where it says claimant's signature and mail it to me, and I will fill out the forms. Do not fill out a form that has a whole lot of boxes on it, because we do not need it. There is an information sheet that I want you to fill out, because that will tell me what money you spent, and what day you came and what day you left.

And there is a thing called a CAMS payment profile form, which almost all of you have already done. If you have already done it and you still use the same bank, you do not have to do it again. The only time that you would really have to do it again is if you do not bank with that bank anymore, and you want your money put in somewhere else.

And please do not travel without a travel order, because we cannot back date them anymore, because of the new computer system. It puts the date in. And if you do not have a travel order before you come to the trip, then you are not on government travel, and we cannot pay for you.

And also, there was a contact information sheet that just asked for your name and preferred mailing address that was over on that table. And I think that almost everyone filled it out with your phone number and your fax number. If you did not fill it out, please fill it out. Because otherwise, when we mail out the information for the meetings, we will not get it to you if we have your incorrect address or someplace where you do not work anymore, or something like that.

And also, you can always call me and ask me any questions, and I will help you. And on this little form to fill out about how much money you spent, I put my address on the bottom, because I forgot to do that last time, and people did not know where to mail the stuff back. And if you have any questions, I will help you.

A PARTICIPANT: (Inaudible.)

MS. WILBERT: I am going to give them to you now.

A PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

MS. WILBERT: You are welcome. And try to fill out the forms and fill out the sheet, and send me the receipts within a week or two, so I can get you the money more quickly, because I know you want your money back.

A PARTICIPANT: (Inaudible.)

MS. WILBERT: If you already had that CAMS form in before, you can get it within

a couple of days actually under the new system, if your CAMS form is already in the computer, which yours is. Anybody who has already traveled before and filled this out before. The people who do not have it in there yet, it might take a little longer. But under the new system, I can do a travel voucher, and it is done electronically. And you will get your money back within like two or three days after it gets signed.

A PARTICIPANT: (Inaudible.)

MS. WILBERT: Sure.

MS. MCCALL: I am going to jump in here for a minute, because Pat is being way, way, way too nice. And this is not really a legal issue, except that I am clever that I am going to make it one. And Rebecca is too nice, too. So I am going to say this, because I am not nice. Yesterday when we were doing the litigation discussion, we were talking about the fact that all of the litigation takes time away from the agency's ability to attend to routine functions.

This payment stuff for the AP meetings takes a lot of time away from the agency's ability to attend to routine functions, or to help me with the litigation, or to do other things. So please listen to Pat, follow the rules. Every time someone does not follow the rules, every time someone does not make a reservation, every time you do not read the stuff you get in the mail, someone has to deal with it. And it is taking a lot of time. And I am, frankly, tired of listening to people talk about it. So please follow the simple rules.

Those of us in the government, if we do not follow the rules, you know, we get in big trouble. And we do not have nice Pat really to help us out with our problems. Follow those rules, and just make it a lot easier on everybody, please. Now was I mean enough?

A PARTICIPANT: (Inaudible.)

MS. MCCALL: Okay. And if you do not follow the rules, guess who you will be sent to.

A PARTICIPANT: I have been trying to keep myself out of hot water with all of these advisory panels and whatnot for the last couple of years here. I usually end up having to come in a day early. I try to make the hotels write out a separate bill for that first day that is my own problem, so I can just submit that to the government. But some of the hotels will not. The Quality Inn, they will not do it. The Holiday Inn has no problem with it. Of course, they do not have shuttles that get us back and forth on time. But that is the proper way of doing it. Because almost every trip we take here, most of the people involved have auxiliary meetings.

MS. WILBERT: You do not need a separate receipt for different days, if you just jot down a note and tell me which days. Actually, what I usually do is give you the day before the meeting starts and the day after it ends anyway. So if you have any time that was before that or after that, I will not give it to you anyway, so do not worry about it.

A PARTICIPANT: Good. I do not want your money.

MS. WILBERT: So you do not really need to worry about that. But you can always call me and ask me anything, and I will try to figure it out. I am going to hand out these forms now.

MS. LENT: Now that you have heard about how to get your money back. Mau, you had asked that we address the issue of EFPs and SRPs. And I am going to ask Sari to come up here and just give a word or two about how that system works. Sari is in charge of that for all of the permits this year. And any particular

questions you might have.

A PARTICIPANT: What is an SRP?

MS. LENT: Tell him what an SRP is.

MS. KIRALI: I am Sari Kirali with the HMS division. I will just very briefly summarize our EFP and SRP program. EFP stands for exempted fishing permit, and SRP stands for scientific research permit. And there is one other category that is not listed here, which is a LOA which is a letter of authorization. And EFP is granted to those folks who wish to collect -- in my case, right now I am working primarily with sharks. Our people in Gloucester are dealing with tuna EFPs.

And the SRPs are research permits that are granted to NMFS scientists who wish to collect animals for research purposes. A letter of authorization is granted to scientists outside of NMFS who wish to collect animals for research purposes.

And there is a process in place for issuing these permits. We have just published a notice in the Federal Register that we are now going to be issuing permits based on applications that we receive. We have a set of criteria that must be met in the applications that we receive. And if all of those criteria are met and if all of the information that we require is submitted to us, then we can grant permits to these folks. I guess that is the summary of the process.

Are there any questions? Yes.

A PARTICIPANT: I do not remember if the Federal Register notice that we just received talked only VFPS or if the other two are also mentioned. But I notice that this year that the EFP notice said that the number of fish you were asking for this year, 200 and something billfish, was the same --

MS. KIRALI: That was specifically addressing the observer program.

A PARTICIPANT: Yeah. Well, it said that the number that you asked for this year is about the same number that were taken last year which was -- I do not remember the number.

MS. KIRALI: 225.

A PARTICIPANT: 225.

MS. KIRALI: They were not taken. These are dead animals that are included in this. These are not live animals that are brought on board and killed. These are dead animals that are caught as buy catch.

A PARTICIPANT: All right. But my question is this. The rules or whatever you call them that are set forth in this EFH say that the fish has to be dead on arrival at the boat before it can be taken except, and they have two exceptions. One exception is that if the fish has a tag on it, if it is alive, that it can be taken. The other exception is if it is some kind of permission given by the secretary on request of either the Northeast or Southeast Science Center. And there is no indication of the magnitude of those 225 fish that were alive at the boat and taken under those two exceptions, and that is what I was trying to get to. That is number one.

And no one seems to have that answer of what the count is, or have any EFPs that have been given on request of either the Northeast or Southeast that would allow fish. Okay. Well, that is important.

And then the other thing is, and I do not know if it should be brought up here

or next month, or whatever it is, but how are these fish that we count as 225 reported to ICCAT in accordance with the 25 percent landings reduction. That could be a major problem, and you might want to adjust how you state things in this notice to keep that in mind. Because this notice does not say that all 225 fish were dead on arrival, and there is no additional mortality. Nor does it say that only parts of them were really taken for science purposes. Presumably, the whole fish could have been landed, if you only read this notice.

MS. LENT: Well, let me try to address some of your questions. I do appreciate you bringing this up. And you, of course, inquired about this a couple of weeks ago. The way that the observer program works is that all billfish must be cut off whether they are alive or dead and released to sea. In certain cases, the observer may request to bring on board a billfish that is already dead. So that the observer can collect information on age, weight, length, sex, et cetera, and different parts, and then throw it back.

That billfish, whether or not the observer brought it on board, number one is already dead. And number two, was already reported to ICCAT as part of our billfish dead discards. It does not count against our landings, because it is not landed. My understanding is that these billfish are just parts and measurements.

I agree with you that we need to be a little clearer in the notice that we put out. It is a little alarming, because it looks like we are going to run out there and kill 225 marlin. In fact, it is kind of an up to. It would only be the dead fish, except on the rare occasion where they might encounter a billfish that is live and that has a tag. Apparently, it has not happened. It has not happened in the last couple of years.

And they actually feel that they could have a limit of half that much, and still meet their research goal. And they would not meet that ceiling in the first place. I do appreciate your comments, and we will try and make that clear in next year's notice.

Sari, why don't you just call on these folks. I guess Gail and Steve.

MS. JOHNSON: We had an oddball occurrence quite a few years ago. Our boat happened to be fishing closer to shore than usual. And he had a small swordfish that was real lively, which he put in a tank. Because I talked to Pat Fiorelli from the New England Council, whose husband worked at the aquarium. And he was trying to bring it in to put it in the aquarium. As time went on, it became apparent, two things. First of all, the swordfish probably was not going to survive, because it got really rough. And second of all, Pat's husband did not think it was going to survive in the aquarium.

In the case of something like that, because they really wanted it there, how would you go about clearing channels for something like to happen? And if this is not appropriate right now, just call me back at a time after you have thought about it.

MS. KIRALI: They should have had a permit if they were out there collecting in the first place.

MS. JOHNSON: This was independently. I contacted the council, and it was before the minimum size thing. So we were not doing anything illegal. It is a long shot. It might happen again. That is why I say if you do not want to discuss it right now, I just wanted to put the bee in your bonnet.

MS. LENT: We will think about that case. Steve.

A PARTICIPANT: I have some questions that apply to research. With the proposed closed areas, the Gulf of Mexico and the Straits of Florida area, are there provisions, do you have provisions for research in those closed areas?

MS. LENT: I do not believe that we have anything in the rule right now that explicitly states that. But Steve, I would encourage you to provide a written comment to that extent, that you would like to enable continued research. Because, obviously, we are interested in continued research on gear modification and buy catch rates. So do give us a written comment. That would be helpful. Yes, Nelson.

MR. BEIDEMAN: A couple of things. On bringing in samples, billfish samples, et cetera. It would be really important that you discuss this, and notify the captain prior to departure. Because that captain has grown up and come into this business under the impression that he is in charge of everything that takes place on that boat regardless of whether it is an observer, an enforcement person, or what have you. He is responsible, and he is in charge.

If he does not understand clearly that that would be okay, bringing a billfish on board, there can be problems. There have been problems in the past with this when an observer brought a billfish on, taking pictures and whatnot. And I think that camera and billfish went back overboard, I believe. But you would need to have that understanding very clear and very up front.

On the EFPs, Rebecca, would this be the proper time to talk about the other tunas, the intercostal gill net fishery?

MS. LENT: Yes.

MR. BEIDEMAN: Well, I am not positive of the number, something like 20 or 22 in shore coastal boats that primarily fish for bluefish, wheat fish, et cetera. Each boat during a year's time will interact with between 2000 to 4000 pounds of oceanic bonita, skip jacks, false albacore, you know, et cetera. These guys are now being put under EFPs. And in reality, these are all highly migratory under ICCAT species. Eventually, I would hope that it would work its way to regular permits. And I would hope that they would not end up being an innocent victim of the offshore gill net ban.

And you just need to understand that they are catching these fish. They are dead in the gill net. There are very small numbers, but they are very important numbers for us to have in our reports. And if they are dropped out of the system, just because they are a very small fishery, we would end up forcing them to discard those fish needlessly. And we would probably end up with under reporting, or lack of reporting, or questionable reporting, because it is a discard situation.

So I would think that that particular fishery, in the future, I would hope that HMS would be heading toward having all HMS under one forum, which makes it much easier for the constituents of law. Thank you.

MS. LENT: Okay. Let's wrap up this session then, have a break, and then come back and do our real brainstorming here. Let's talk about economics, the subject that is near and dear to my heart. There should be some funding available depending on the budget situation through the Office of Science and Technology.

I am going to put in two proposals. One for further funding of analyses of the pelagic long line economic add-on, and we will talk about that in a second. They did give me 40 grand last year, which we used to extend Sherry Larken's work, her research on that, on those data. I am also going to put in a request for funding for further socioeconomic data collection in the recreational fishery.

My preference would be for an economic add-on similar to the one that I did five years ago to the large pelagic survey, some kind of a travel cost data collection, which would allow us to estimate the value as well as the economic impact based on travel cost. And they are calling me right now to say I got the money. Thanks, David.

I might mention that there is a workshop next week. All of the NMFS economists are meeting to finalize the revised guidelines for regulatory impact reviews and regulatory flexibility analyses. As you know, and as my lawyer knows, it is extremely important that we do a good job when we do a rule making package in analyzing the socioeconomic impact of all of our alternatives including the preferred alternative.

So we are going to get some new guidelines. One of the issues that came up in the shark case was some concern over whether the guidelines were appropriate. So we are looking forward to that, and how that will affect our rule making.

The pelagic log books. We had applied and suggested to the industry that we make the voluntary economic add-on to the pelagic log book mandatory for selected vessels. We have had a mixed rate of response under the voluntary program. We do not necessarily consider it a random sample. We are not sure why some fishermen would volunteer to do it and some would not. We have had some interesting data points. It could be typos. It could be people who purposefully wanted to misreport.

On the whole, of those who reported, we have had some very useful data. We use it in the fishery management plan, and we are grateful that people volunteered. We would like to suggest that we make this mandatory for a sample of vessels, which could be anywhere from zero to 100 percent, such that we could make sure that we get a good geographical representation, as well as a good representation of small boats and big boats.

We have had mostly negative feedback on that proposal. We did not get a lot of letters, but it was mostly negative. We really need quality information, so we have a good idea of how we are affecting or pelagic commercial fishermen with our regulations. So that is our goal here. So we would like to take a few comments on that this morning. And I think that Gail's hand was up first, and then Bob Zale's. Go ahead.

MS. JOHNSON: Thank you. In concept, I agree. In reality, it is difficult. Right now for us, it is nearly impossible, because we have exchange rates and all of this other stuff to deal with. The other part of reality is that depending on where you sell the fish, you are saddled up quicker or slower.

Somehow in the northeast, buyers are able to get away with three weeks. So do not put a time limit on it, and please do not make it 100 percent selected. I do not think that you can handle the volume. I do not think it would be reasonable. And also, do not forget our long held plea for comparable reporting. Thanks.

MS. LENT: Thank you, Gail. Let's see. Bob Zales, and then Joe McBride.

MR. ZALES: A couple of questions. Number one, the log book thing. Are you just looking at doing that on the commercial side, or are you looking at doing that across the board?

MS. LENT: This proposal is for the pelagic log book. Once we have the HMS charter head boat log book program design, which is going to take us some time, implemented, we might consider an economic add-on there as well. And we would like to hear from you as to how you feel about that.

MR. ZALES: Okay. The economic add-on that you are talking about on the recreational side, what survey is that going to be an add-on to?

MS. LENT: That would an add-on to the large pelagic survey. And it would involve some estimation of travel costs by anglers on private boats, not charter head boats.

MR. ZALES: Okay. A brief comment about that. Unless LPS has changed, it does

not come into the Gulf of Mexico. So therefore, you miss that entire sector, which is an extremely large sector. And this is one of my big concerns about the yellowfin bag limit from the get-go. Because once you start capturing recreational yellowfin landings out of the Gulf of Mexico, you are going to see a tremendous spike in the overall landings of the yellowfin tuna fish, which is going to drive some people to say God, we have just decimated this fishery. And then you just totally eliminate the bag limit, or you do to a dramatically reduced bag limit. It is a big concern of fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico.

You have the pilot charter survey that is going on there. It will not capture totally the recreational effort. The MRFs, I would not even worry with that one, because it is going to be just like the LPS. It is going to be garbage in my opinion. But you might talk to the people at Gulf States with the charter pilot thing if you are going to do an add-on to see if they would be interested in doing it there.

MS. LENT: Thank you, Bob. And do keep me posted on the additional economic study that you mentioned. That is much better than the one that we quoted in the SAFE Report. Thanks. Captain McBride.

MR. MCBRIDE: Log books. We have in the Northeast anyhow, because most people belong to the multi-species mandated log books for any type of fishing, extensive log books. That is number one. I assume from listening around that this is not necessarily so in other areas. And by the way, that is not only charter and party boats. That is any private boat who fishes for cod or multi-species that requires a log book. Am I right, Frank? No, I am wrong. Oh, okay. Frank knows more about the New England regulations.

But we have them. We will them out extensively on a daily basis. And we also have a state log book. What I am really concerned about is I hope you are not going to give us another log book.

MS. LENT: No.

MR. MCBRIDE: Okay. That you design a log book that we can utilize what we currently have to fill out. We are trying to minimize the number of log books for practical reasons. And I will say, and I want to thank the agency, whether they use our information or not, I know that they are at least checking to see that we will it out. I guess we submit it up to Gloucester. In other words, if we do not fill a log book out even in a month's time, they will give us a new permit on a given area basis. So that is good. That type of thing should be encouraged and commended. So thank you.

MS. LENT: Okay. Thank you, Joe. Indeed, that is why we need to do considerable additional work before we start implementing the new HMS charter head boat permit, as well as log book program, as we do not want to, indeed we are not allowed to make you fill out a log book twice. Nelson.

MR. BEIDEMAN: I think that a lot of the reason for the negative feedback that you have gotten is several things, but a lot of it is the timing. We are just coming off of a very controversial FMP, a very controversial proposed rule has just been put out, et cetera.

A lot of the pelagic long line fishery fishermen that have worked very, very hard in the last ten years to build up the science on their fisheries with the coming of all of these new restrictions, et cetera, they feel that a disproportionate burden is being placed on their shoulders compared to other HMS commercial fisheries and recreational fisheries, as far as the scientific aspects, reporting, and monitoring, et cetera.

Some are philosophically opposed to the government collecting this type of information. And I am sure that Mariam will be hearing from those folks. The organization itself has not considered whether it would or would not be involved in that. But just to give you a heads up on your triage.

What Blue Water has always suggested is that what you are asking on the voluntary report is somewhat impractical. We understand that what you want to get is trip-based information. But getting trip-based information from a vessel operator, even if he is the owner, a vessel operator, in a timely manner is difficult.

Now when I ran my own boat, I would go in and out of this port and that port. All of the information would go back to my wife. My kitchen table was the base of operations, and that was where the information was. You know, if I needed something, I was not looking at the prices or anything else. I am a terrible business person. But that is the way that a lot of these operations go. And even the vessel owner/operator for months at a time away from home in other ports does not always have the information you are asking for.

What we have suggested that if you want to get it, you get it in an annual report, and you tie it to the permit. And it has got to be in by like February 15th. That gives them plenty of time to get their last December -- February 15th does not give you time to give December's trip in?

A PARTICIPANT: Taxes are due March 1st.

MR. BEIDEMAN: Well, taxes are not part of it.

MS. LENT: A kitchen table discussion here.

MR. BEIDEMAN: Okay. But that is what we have always suggested, to look at that type of a procedure.

MS. LENT: All right. Thank you, Nelson. Indeed, that is one alternative that maybe we could do in addition to and allow a smaller sample at the trip level, an annual survey that can be done. That can be done anywhere where we have permits and an annual survey.

One of the things that we have done, Gail, on that log book form is that carbon copy. So you fill out your easy trip summary, how many critters you have got. And then when you rip that off, there is a carbon of your trip summary, and then there is an original of the economic add-on that you can send it later, so we can track it to the trip. Then you rip that off, and send it in, and underneath is the whole copy.

So we have got that all set up. So for the delays, it should not be as much of an issue. And, you know, just to repeat. One of the reasons why that fishery management plan was so controversial is the long liners really felt like they had been hit. They felt like they were on the margin, that they were going out of business. They were hurting.

The best way to let us know about that is to provide us this information. Lots of times, we have been challenged in court because we did not do enough analyses of how bad this hurt, how it cut into fishermen's income. We need to have that information, and I am sure that my attorney wants to add a point on that.

MS. MCCALL: Yes. I just want to stress that this is so important, and it is so frustrating from my perspective. Because I heard it this morning, and I hear it in court. And I read it in briefs in rather nasty, nasty terms. You know, you do not know what you are doing, your economic analyses stink.

MS. LENT: Monkeys in a row boat.

MS. MCCALL: Monkeys in a row boat, you know. And then I go to staff meetings of Rebecca's division, and they talk about the comments that were received on the issue of making the add-on mandatory. And people are philosophically opposed to giving us this kind of information, you know.

So I think my plea is -- and I know how sensitive that is. Because in the past, I have dealt with -- one of my more unpleasant experiences with this agency was dealing with the issue of income tax returns. You know, we could ask for everyone to submit their income tax returns, but please let me get another job before we do that. We have legal authority to do it by the way.

But I think that my plea is for all of you to think about this issue, and start things as being the beginning of the dialogue. So maybe at the next meeting, you can come after you have talked to all of the people in your organizations and that you represent, in how best to address this. You know, there are the concerns about confidentiality, but we can address those I think.

I think that there are solutions to this problem, but it is going to take a lot of work. And you have to help us. I hope you can help us instead of continue to criticize us and not help us. Thanks.

MS. LENT: Thank you, Mariam. I have got Frank, Jim, Rich, Bob, Mau, and Linda. So I think we have some good ideas coming right up. Frank.

MR. WALTON: Okay. Thank you. I agree on the log book. I think that it should be a universal log book. And I think that it should go along with the universal party and charter boat permit. So if anyone is fishing anywhere on the coast in a party and charter boat, it is one permit instead of fifteen permits. And they have to report everything into a central log book. I think that would go a long way to get data collection.

The economic add-on, personally I do not have a problem with it. We can add that on. That is okay. And the other thing that I just want to caution everybody is once the log book data is used and entered, it is going to change the MRFFS data drastically.

We just went through it at the New England Council with ground fish. The log book data was collected but not looked at for the last four or five years. So trying to come up with the annual adjustment for the upcoming year, we just went through it. And it was drastically different from what the MRFFS data was.

What happened with the MRFFS data was that there were a lot of spikes. The overall patterns were the same, but it took out the spikes. And the trends and everything were basically the same.

From this point forward, if we do have the log books, we are not going to be able to go back and say the MRFFS data for this year, and then compare it to log book data. It is going to be two different data sets that we are going to have to look at that way.

MS. LENT: Thank you, Frank. Jim.

MR. DONOFRIO: Yes, thanks, Rebecca. I agree with Frank about the universal log book. I just want to mention something about recreational data, Rebecca, if I could. You recall, and I hate to keep bringing this subject up, about the July 1997 meeting that we had in New Orleans funded by the ASA and the RFA. And I thought that was a very productive meeting. Again, I do not see any gains as far as recreational data-keeping.

We have been stressing that we want to do our part. We have asked for a tag program, you know, real dead bodies or real dead fish. Just like when you shoot a deer. It has worked in the fish and game programs, and it should work with fishing. And we want to know what we are catching. We do not want to avoid it. The problem is that we do not like being restricted on what we call inaccurate data. And as far as we are concerned, the MRFFS data is totally inaccurate, and the LPS is inaccurate.

What I would like to see for this committee here is for us to get the

questionnaires in front of us at the next meeting so people like myself, and Mark, and others who have made their living fishing, can improve the questions. Because the questions sometimes are so general that they can be interpreted wrong. And maybe we can at least improve what MRFFS and LPS questions are on that to get more accurate data out of that system. So if we can do that, and move forward with that.

(End side B, tape 1.)

MS. LENT: Thank you, Jim. Rich.

MR. RUAIS: I am somewhat sympathetic to Mariam and your dilemma, where on the one hand you get sued because industry claims you are not doing good economic impact analysis, but then you ask for the information and industry says no. But if you have hopes that there is going to be that kind of consistency any time in the near future, you may want to look for that job sooner rather than later.

But I think that the real solution is to look for that subset of commercial and recreational fishermen who do not have the philosophical objection to providing you with cost information, income type information, and sales information, because that is where you are going to get quality data anyway. You can go the force route and just say we do have the authority, and thou shalt comply. But then you have got the quality issues as well.

The question I wanted to ask though not really related to that on the economic side, but just simply in the regulations, the HMS regulations, you have the authority to require log books on catching effort and cost information.

Are you doing that in the general category; not the cost information, but are you sub-sampling general category permit holders requiring them to submit logs on their catching effort, their effort in catch?

MS. LENT: Not at this time.

MR. RUAIS: Do you have plans to do that?

MS. LENT: We are working on those plans.

MR. RUAIS: I suggest that be a higher than otherwise would be priority. I can suggest it.

MS. LENT: Thanks. I appreciate the suggestion. In the past, we have had some industry provided surveys. As you know, you helped me get some class information from the purse seine fishery. And there is an economist who is working with you on that in updating that. And the General Category Tuna Association also sampled some of its members with a questionnaire, and I used that information, but no log books yet in that fishery. So thank you.

MR. ZALES: Getting to something that Mariam discussed, and the information from the reports that I pointed out in this paper. Your economic information that comes especially from the recreational side, according to the people who do these surveys, they get the information. They go up and ask for the information. And the information that they put in the reports is actually what they get.

We in no way accuse these people of putting false information in it. But when the reports came out, it was obvious that some of the people that they have been talking to were not giving them good accurate information. And that just totally screws up the whole system. So you have to try to stress to the people that you are getting the information from what is going to happen when they lie to you. Whether it is a high number or a low number, it is going to screw up the actual part of it.

And fortunately because these two reports were done in the Gulf, you had one for Florida and you had one for the rest of the Gulf, when you compared the charter head boat operation of Florida to the charter head boat operation of Texas, realistically they are almost identical. But according to the two reports, they are 180 degrees apart as far as what it costs to operate them, as far as the income you make, and the whole bit. So that is a big problem. And how you are going to solve that, I do not know.

One last thing that I heard from Frank, and this is kind of my pet peeve, is the MRFFS, which you need to stress to all of your assessment people, especially for a book like this SAFE book, that recreational fishing statistics that come out of the MRFFS so far, to my knowledge, every comparison that has been done of a system to MRFFS has consistently showed that MRFFS has been to the high point on effort and to the high point on catch, that every realistic situation is always lower than that.

And that is what we have argued. The pilot survey in the Gulf of Mexico shows 25 percent less effort than the direct survey in a true comparison. So that is a problem that needs to be considered, because that is one big problem in trying to make the decisions that the people are dealing here with, with tax, tag limits, size limits, and the whole bit.

MS. LENT: Thank you very much. Mau.

MR. CLAVERIE: Bob, please do not run off. I am going to ask you to help me on this. I agree with Rich that if you ask nicely that you get more accurate information than if you force it. And I know that in the Gulf that the fishermen in dealing with scientists, that the recreational fishery general, I cannot speak for the commercial fishery just because I do not know it, they may be the same too, but generally speaking a recreational fisherman who is requested by a scientist is going to give him more information than he wants. If requested by a policeman, which is a mandatory scientist, because then the scientist becomes a copy, his name, rank, and serial number, and that is it under the convention or something.

But we have been participating in this same recreational offshore fishing survey with NMFS for years. And we have offered to give them more information, economic information, tunas instead of just billfish. And in every instance, they have said no, we cannot handle it. We do not have the money, and we do not have the people, so do not do it. We will not take it.

So whenever I hear all of this that we want this information, I am wondering why didn't you take it when it was offered. And now the report that comes out annually, when you get information from fishermen, if you give them back an overall view of what is what, and where the good fishing is, and what is happening, that encourages them to keep doing it.

And the agency has not even had the funding to keep the report up to date. So interest is falling off. So I just want to caution you that you have at least in the Gulf operational and willing, I guess they are still willing, there has not been a report for awhile, and we have been told no so many times about giving additional information, but it would be easy if you could get the money to do whatever they say they cannot do because they do not have money to get that rolling.

Another problem is what you do with the data that you get from us. A lot of people give data and then think that what comes back is nowhere near what is really going on. And Bob mentioned it. The MRFFS survey is so far off of reality, that everybody wonders what goes on in NMFS. So why give them data, because they are going to mess it up.

Now if you want an example of how that works, we heard it here today just a few moments ago. We were told two monkeys in a canoe. That is the input data. The repeat that we got back was two monkeys in a row boat. Do you not all know

that a row boat is different than a canoe? You see what I mean. That is the kind of thing that everybody says, my God, what are they doing with what we get.

MS. LENT: Thank you, Mau.

MR. CLAVERIE: The other thing is that we had some systems tested in the Gulf, and we got a report on which one is better at our last meeting. And I would ask Bob to give you a rundown on that, because that is some information that might be helpful to you. Do you remember all of that, Bob?

MR. ZALES: You are talking about the pilot study?

MR. CLAVERIE: Yes.

MR. ZALES: And you were briefed a little bit on that I guess by Van Hoores when you came to our NATO meeting in Lauderdale and did that, so you should know some. But for the benefit of everybody here, the pilot charter survey was a test. It was a day to day test over a two year period in direct competition with the MRFFS. Everything was the same. All of the methodology and everything was done exactly the same. The primary difference was that in the pilot charter survey that the universe of people sampled were charter boat owners and operators, not the universe of the population of the United States.

And what it ended up being was for the one year of solid comparison during the good year that they had, it showed up to 25 percent less effort than what the recreational survey had shown in that same period of time. So an assumption can be made that over history that we have been up to that level. And when you talk about effort, effort is directly relative to catch in the way that the MRFFS operates.

So when you go back and you look at the status of the stock in the stock assessment as to where the Fisheries Service says that the stock is at this point, if you subtract the catch and the effort that has been said has been taken out to the stock, then you see what fishermen see. Because fishermen see more fish than what a computer says is there.

And that has been our contention, and that is what this has shown. And I know that the OPS operates in the same way that the MRFFS has done. I am now hearing that in New England that they have got a similar comparison. I know in South Carolina that they have their own log book system. Their system showed the same thing. And in Oregon, I believe, they are doing a thing now, and I am hearing that they are showing the same kind of information. So in every comparison, MRFFS is losing. So it is a problem.

MS. LENT: Okay. Thank you, Bob Zales. And in fact, the part that you did not add was that the in shore fisheries catch had been underestimated. For the offshore fisheries, it was overestimated. Watch for there elephant tuna estimates to go down when everyone on this panel seems to think that we are underestimating. Because of these MRFFS results, they will do down. Linda.

MS. LUCAS: I just have to say something. Because since 1978, I have been collecting data in the U.S., in Hawaii, and in California, and in Texas, and in Florida from commercial fishers, and from recreationalists, and from charter boat owners. And I have been doing economic analysis on that data.

So I have a couple of general remarks to make. I want to say something about this recreational survey. I have worked with it, not in the last couple or three years, but when I first worked with it, I think that was in the early 1980s, there was poor coverage. So you are saying the same thing, that there is poor coverage. And I have the sense that it is not the National Marine Fisheries that is causing this problem, but it is the nature of the problem.

There are recreationalists everywhere. And unless they have 100 percent

coverage, it would take thousands of people to be every place all of the time. That survey is never going to be what we want it to be. And I just think that it is the nature of trying to capture all of the recreationalists, and how we define it. If we were only going to go for tournament, I think the move for tournaments will do a lot to kind of fix that problem. But anyway, that is my two cents on that.

I have a question first of all about the RIRRFA guidelines. Where are the meetings, and will you be dealing with this issue of small entities? Because my understanding is that one of the problems is how do we evaluate the impact on small entities, but we do not really know what small entities are. Do you have anything to say about that?

MS. LENT: The meetings are again with the NMFS economists in La Hoya I think in a couple of weeks. They are going to come out with these guidelines. It is my understanding that they will be public eventually when they are completed, and maybe even undergoing some external review. And indeed, the definition of a small entity will be critical. So far, everything that we have analyzed, everybody is a small entity. And in that significant number and what percentage loss and gross in that revenue, what is the threshold on what percentage of the business.

MS. LUCAS: I wanted to just give a heads up to this panel, because that does affect us. Because vessels are small entities. And the law that pertains to lots of other industries is not at all clear when we try to apply it to fisheries. And the National Marine Fisheries Service is bound by these regulations, and then takes them into court. So you probably need to pay attention to what comes out of these discussions. And I do not know if you have any public hearings. But all of you who have small businesses should probably should be attentive to this stuff.

I want to take a shot at the travel cost method, and remind everyone that is quite controversial. And so there are a lot of new methodologies coming up.

And that leads to my last point. I think that as we rationalize. I avoid this word sustainability, and I know that I am being controversial. But I find sustainability an allusive and perhaps constructed point, which we hope to reach somewhere in the future. And I think that it is really flawed as a goal, to have a goal of sustainability. I think that we ought to talk about rationalizing the fishery. This is the language that we have used for years. It includes not only the biological constraints, but the market constraints as well.

So I would like to see a move in the economic analysis beyond simple cost earning studies and beyond simple add-ons in the pelagic, to a more holistic view. I think that we need to be attentive to the idea that the markets are critical to what is driving both the commercial and the charter boat, all of these sectors. And we just do not think about getting the market analysis. So I would like to encourage you that if you get some of this funding, to use some of it to look at the market in a context, in a changing context, in a globalized context, and include imports and exports, and include competitive markets abroad, and think in a larger picture.

Because I think that as we rationalize fisheries, I think that we are really operating in a much bigger world than we were twenty years ago. So I would like to see some of our strategies for researching what is going on changed too.

MS. LENT: Thank you very much, Linda. That is a very useful comment. We have limited studies on the markets for some of these products. There was an extensive study of the swordfish market that is now four or five years old. The bluefin market studies, there are a few of them out there. But indeed, that is what is driving it, the price, this supply and demand. Okay, John Hoey, you waited a long time. Thank you.

MR. HOEY: Thank you. Just a point of information. Is the panel aware of and are you aware of the efforts by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to design a standardized data collection program for the entire east coast of the United States, both catch and effort data, economic, social data, and biological data? And I would encourage that as you move forward with whatever your endeavors are here at NOAA, that you look at those plans that have been pretty well thought out and researched, and you try to design at least your soon to be programs to be compatible with those. I think that is an efficient way at least to pursue it. Thank you.

MS. LENT: Thank you very much, John. Indeed, we have had attendance at some of the ACCSP meetings, and we work closely with the Office of Science and Technology First Division, because they are the key players at the Fisheries Service in this data collecting, making sure that we are meeting their standards, basic minimum standards and criteria, and avoiding the duplication that ACCSP is designed to do.

Okay, just a couple more comments on this. I think I saw Mau and Bob Zales. Go ahead, Mau.

MR. CLAVERIE: Rebecca, it sounds almost like I am at a council meeting. The councils are going down the same road. So you need to coordinate with them, so there is not a council log book and HMS log book. Also, the MRFFS. Bob was telling you about the testing that we did in the Gulf about what is the best thing to do. And there were really three things compared. The MRFFS was compared to this charter boat only phone call situation, and there had also been log books that had been tried. And it was compared to the log book system.

The results in the log book and charter book phone call thing were about the same, but both of them differed vastly from MRFFS. And I remember that there was something when they explained it to us that there were spikes that existed in one that did not exist in the other. But as between the charter boat telephone survey and the log books, now you talk about log books here. The conclusion forwarded to us, as I recall, was that the telephone survey was less expensive, got the same quality of information, and was less burdensome on the captains. So you have been talking log books, but you might want to be aware that there could be possibly a better way to go.

And as I recall, Bob, wasn't it all done by private contractors, or it was done by the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission on the private fleet. Anyhow, that information might be useful to you. Now the captain who was going to be phone called, didn't he get a postcard in advance and said you are going to be on our phone call list such and such a week. There was a lot of prior warning and good contact made and all of that.

MS. LENT: Bob Zales.

MR. ZALES: That was basically what I was going to address, because Mau reminded me of that. But the key difference between the log book and the pilot charter part of this was that the burden was less. Because what happens is you had ten percent of the charter fleet randomly selected once a week to report. And the log book, every captain was chosen to report for a specified period of time. I think it was like three or four month waves. And you only had to report for the three or four month period, but everybody had reported in the course of a year.

The burden was less than the telephone part of it, and the expense was less on the telephone part of it to capture essentially the same data. So that is why we kind of stayed away from log books down there, because we are getting that information now.

And the other part was that it was the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission that initiated this, but it was the MRFFS people to contract with the states.

The dockside sampling was done identical. It was the same dockside sample that was in both of them. The difference was where traditionally you had MRFFS contractors doing the dockside sampling, they now have state DDP people in Florida, and whatever they are called in Alabama and Louisiana, and Mississippi. The state people conducted the dockside interviews. And they also conducted the telephone intercept part of this thing.

So there was more state involvement through that, but it is all through the MRFFS people. And I give them credit for doing this, because we are able to convince them to go here and do this thing. So those are essentially the two things that were done.

MS. LENT: Let me just add that I was told by Dave Amberhies that without the cooperation of the captains, the charter head boat captains, that they would not have been able to do this study. And Bob Zales was one of the key players. And he is very, very grateful to you, Bob. The last comment on this issue, and we will move on. Captain.

MR. MCBRIDE: These log books and these phone calls, are these similar to what we get up in the northeast from your agency and from the survey agencies?

MS. LENT: The phone calls would be the pelagic survey. And then outside of those periods would be the MRFFS.

MR. MCBRIDE: We have a big problem with that, and it is not because of the people calling or anything. Let me be very candid with you. You do not get a good response. Most of them hang up and tell you they are not home. The reason being -- I will give you my own case -- I get home about 6:30 at night, and I go to bed by 8:00. I have to eat dinner, say hello to my wife, take care of paperwork, and be in bed by 8:00 to get up at 3:00 or 3:15, whatever time I get up in season.

And believe me, I do not want in the middle of my dinner, nor does my wife want in the middle of my dinner, or any other guy's wife, a phone call for 20 minutes answering how many days I went fishing for sharks, and so forth and so on. And the guys do not do it. They give them all sorts of stories, not because they do not want to give them the information.

One of the suggestions, and we do it in New York State when it comes to striped bass, if you are going to use a log book, the log book should be filled out daily. Otherwise it is valueless. You know, at the end of the month, I can put anything I want in the log book from memory, even if I want to do it right. But if you check a log book here or there, and the guys find that you are checking it, you will get accurate information.

MS. LENT: We have got to move on. Communities. Glen, do you have a comment on communities?

A PARTICIPANT: (Inaudible.)

MS. LENT: Well, if I am going to have to let more people in, it is going to have to be Glen first. Okay. I think folks are ready to move on. I am hearing from my save taxpayer money section over here that it is time to move on. I just want to note that as we are collecting socioeconomic data, we are trying to get as much information as we can on communities. As soon as you find out where somebody lives, you have got some information about their home base and some of the places where they go.

Please take a close look at what we prepared for the time area closure. We are trying to do a better job. It is a bit of a struggle, because again we do not have all of the information we need. We have some ZIP codes in the permanent database, but ZIP do not always mean a lot to fishermen. Gail's operation is pretty far from here ZIP code. But let us know what you think about that. We tried to do it for the dealers as well.

Help us with other sources of information that we might be able to use. There was a national fishermen's survey of fishermen that we quoted in our SAFE Report. I wanted to ask Nelson. You mentioned that you did a survey on the buy-back. And there might be some information, some results from your survey, if you summarized them, that you might want to share eventually with the service that we could use to help better document your community. The same with other user groups, constituent groups.

Some people like there, like the General Category II Association did a survey, and shared the information with us. That is very helpful. And, of course, we will be looking at the possibility of contracts. Nelson, did you want to quickly respond?

MR. BEIDEMAN: Yes, just very quickly. Because it was a pretty extensive survey, and it goes into a lot of details. But basically, the first part of it, what it did was what do you want to address, and it went levels. And the first level was 13 boats affected by the Straits of Florida in the FMP. And then we went to identifying a hot spot for sword and gill fish. And then we went as high as do you want a general buy-out. You know again, what came back is normally focused on hot spot buy catch reductions. I would love to provide that to you.

MS. LENT: Thank you, Nelson. Okay. The last topic has to do with research, and I think we can discuss this in our next session after the break, which is the brainstorming session. The research and monitoring plan that we prepare every year was appended to the SAFE Report. I hope you had a chance to take a look at it. The species working groups of the ICCAT Advisory Committee of course played a role in letting us know what some of their priorities are.

So raise your hand if you are on a species working group. So those are some of the people you can touch base with. When they meet in March, they can bring some of your ideas forward. And, of course, we will be looking at suggestions from our Advisory Panel. Okay. Let's take a break, and do our last session starting at 11:00. And a quick question, Jim.

A PARTICIPANT: (Inaudible.)

MS. LENT: We will talk about that after the break.

(A brief recess was taken.)

MS. LENT: Please take your seats. We have got one more hour left to go. Please take your seats. We are going to do our free flow of thought. Most folks have flights that require them to end around noon. So I would like to get the discussion going, and try to wrap it up at about a quarter to.

I have had several people come up and express an interest in reviewing how the HMSAP and joint meetings should be run now there we have no contract due to funds with the ASMFC. It used to be Jack Dunnigan who ran the meeting. So I would like you to think about that a little bit. Would you like to have a chair of the HMSAP, would you like to have a chair when we have joint meetings that is elected each time? And maybe straight thinking about potential candidates that would be selected by consensus at the next joint meeting of these panels.

So just think about that. It is not the topic now, Rusty. I know you have got some good ideas. Do you want to chair it?

MR. HUDSON: The combined meeting, could that be a co-chair meeting, if you have billfish and HMS?

MS. LENT: That is an option, if you think that would work. We have Russ Nelson, who is the chair of the Billfish Advisory Panel. At least he was the

chair of the previous billfish AP. I do not know if he would need to be reelected. We would have to take a look at the SOPS. And they might split up the meeting or something like that. Okay, be thinking about that.

Now this part of the meeting is totally for your free flow of thought, just some ideas or considerations, anything that we are not even thinking about that you think ought to be on the radar screen, any particular concerns or whatever. I am going to call on folks, and then Buck is going to try to just jot some of the big items down as we go along. I think that I saw Rich's hand up, and then Joe McBride, and Joe Francesconi.

MR. RUAIS: One of the things that I thought of, thought would be useful, and this is of course tied into budget issues and how often we can meet, is being able to have the AP meet in various locations, almost like the ICCAT Advisory Committee does -- it basically has been on the road in the past -- and do things like that. But also, have the capability to meet in smaller subgroupings of the advisory panel to work on specific issues.

Because I think that in terms of process, that would be very helpful for issues like Jimmy and I have one right now with Joe and everybody else between the recreational and the commercial people in the tuna fishery. We could be looking at this issue of doing something about the small/medium quota that does not seem to be really suitable or convenient in the volume that it is at right now for the recreational fishery. And we could be working on issues like that that are going to take some time, and are going to take some analysis as well to get it done. And yet, it seems as though it is going to be hard to focus in on issues like that with the entire panel.

And again, obviously, it has to do with budgets as well, whether or not you would be able to support subgroup meetings more frequently than just AP meetings twice a year. So that is one issue that I would like to see.

MS. LENT: Okay. Joe McBride.

MR. MCBRIDE: Again, this is not in sequence. I agree with what Rich is saying, by the way. I do not know if it is practical in dollars and cents. It is very easy to spend your money. Of course, Rich's suggestion would be if you want an input from our industry, it would have to be in the winter months when we are not fishing in the northeast.

Rebecca, just out of curiosity. The survey that you and your husband did, was that for the agency or your own type of economic study?

MS. LENT: It was an economic add-on that I designed and added to the large product survey the first year that I came to work at the Service.

MR. MCBRIDE: And it only had to do with bluefin tuna, right?

MS. LENT: Just bluefin.

MR. MCBRIDE: Okay.

MS. LENT: I will send you a copy, Joe.

MR. MCBRIDE: I am sorry.

MS. LENT: I will send you a copy.

MR. MCBRIDE: Okay. That is the type of thing that should be done. Because we have these surveys done by CON. It seems to be an accepted survey for the economic impact of sport fishing on Long Island done by one man with some assistance from school from his college courses and stuff. So you are probably more efficient in having an en masse type of survey going on. But thank you.

MS. LENT: Thank you. Jim.

MR. FRANCESCONI: I will pass. I jumped the gun. I am anxious to talk about research.

MS. LENT: You can talk about research too, if you would like. That is part of the outlook. Do you want to touch on that now?

MR. FRANCESCONI: Yes, I could, if it is all right.

MS. LENT: Go ahead.

MR. FRANCESCONI: I am going to make this pitch, which I made last year at this time. It is very important to continue with databases on a yearly basis. And specifically, I can talking about COSPAN. Last year at this time, I sort of predicted that. It did not seem like there was going to be any research going on or money coming through for the continuation of the work for this past summer, and that indeed was the case. We are looking now at this coming summer. For instance, North Carolina, and what is coming out of Rhode Island. It looks like we might only get one month. And it is just sad really.

Specially, with COSPAN. I do not think that I am being delusional if I feel that EFH is really going to be a driving force in the future for many management decisions. It is earth shattering. Just the whole aspect of management is going to be dependent on EFH. Correct data, if it shows that there are issues, then people are going to be able to go along with it.

Also the other problem is that even if data are bad data, best available data, someone is going to want to use it, and say that is the best we have. And I tried to bring up a point yesterday, perhaps the blue fish was not a good issue with one being found in North Carolina, because a lot is known about it. But the example that I was trying to make is let's say that we just went on one observation of something and tried to extrapolate out, that we are going to end up wrong. And the blue fish is a good example, and they occur other places.

And that was more to the point of deep water species, since there is not a whole lot of sampling. But we need to try to get a continuity through time on this type of data. North Carolina has some very specific nursery ground, secondary nursery ground issues. I was noticing in the SAFE Report that it did not seem like there was a good definition of primary nursery area and secondary nursery area. And perhaps with some further research on the coast ban work, there could be some better background to come up with a correct definition of those two aspects of live history.

I just want to encourage NMFS to try to pull funding, and help the people in the (inaudible) to try to do their job. It is money well spent. It is not going to be wasted up in that neck of the woods. Going through their office, they are hard working people. Let them be in charge of it. Like in North Carolina, \$25,000 to do the work for our state. Other states might be a little less, but it needs to be done. I appreciate it.

MS. LENT: Thank you very much, Jim. I do appreciate that, and could not agree with you more. In fact, we got some EFH funding, very limited funding, that allowed us to funnel some money into coast ban which otherwise would have been totally unfunded. It is still not enough. And indeed, sharks are where the habitat issues are the hottest. It is where we need to work with the states and identify nursery grounds, and continue to push hard for that shark information. Sharks are the critters for which we do all of the science and all of the stock assessment. There is no international management body. So we really need that information. Thank you for that support. I appreciate it. Jim Donofrio.

MR. DONOFRIO: Rebecca, thanks. I have a suggestion regarding what Rich was talking about. We had huge success recently with Dr. Hogarth when we put

together a stakeholders snapper meeting in the Gulf of Mexico. Prior to that meeting, we had extensive conference calls that Bill provided us with through the Service.

My suggestion is that you allow us a member of your tuna team or any other appropriate team you may have, like maybe Jill and the swordfish team to talk to Nelson and the long liners. And we can do conference calls, I know that we cannot have all of the meetings that we need to do, and work through these committees. And I think that they would be very productive. We can schedule some time. I know that Rich and I can definitely make an effort to do that, and maybe get some other people who are not even here. Ray Bogan, get some input from Ray and others. And the conference calls would be a lot less money than having the travel.

MS. LENT: Thank you, Jim. And I am glad that Mariam is back in the room. Because this point came up earlier, Mariam, before you got back. The suggestion of subgroups of the AP meeting and that sort of thing. There are all sorts of FACA issues involved. If you folks outside of the AP structure, like the time, Jim, that you invited Gary and me to come to your one day workshop. It is your meeting, and we come and we participate, that is one thing. But if it is subgroups of the AP formally meeting, or a conference call where not everybody can call him, there could be some FACA issues. Let me just get Mariam to comment on that, if she could.

MS. MCCALL: Under the law, this AP comes under the provisions of APs for councils, and the provisions of the Act that require the meetings to be open to the public. So anytime that there is an AP meeting, it has to be open to the public as well as subgroups. There could be certain ad hoc meetings that maybe would not come under those provisions. But it would be difficult, and I would not advise it. And also, the FACA problem.

You know, anytime that a group that is formed and gives advice to the government, advice in the form of a recommendation, consensus recommendation, that triggers the Federal Advisory Committee Act, which has two parts. One part is a very good part. It requires that all of those deliberations be in public and open to the public. It has another part, which I do not view as a good part, although I know from a bureaucratic perspective that it is, but it requires a charter. You know, there is all of this internal paperwork and everything.

And it is just meant to make sure that each individual agency is not spending a lot of money and a lot of time on all of these groups. So those are the two things that we have to be careful of.

So like a stakeholders conference call, it would just be talking to the public. It would not be a meeting of the AP, right, by conference call or anything. So that would be okay.

MS. JOHNSON: Okay. To that point, Bob Zales.

MR. ZALES: Yes, to that point. In the Gulf of Mexico, as the chairman of the Marine Fish and also the Mackerel Advisory panels, I participated in the past year in two conference calls of those AP meetings. They were not done at a location. And those meetings are just like this. They had to be open to the public.

So what the Fisheries Service did is they made listening stations available. So you could consider something like that. You could do a conference call. You can notice, and you can have a listening station available, where a member of the public can go. And they can participate, because participation by the public is up to whoever is in charge of the meeting essentially the way we understand it.

So as chairman, I can pick and choose. If I want to let somebody talk, I can let everybody talk. If I do not want anybody to talk, that is my decision as

chairman. Generally, you can do that. But the public can sit there and listen. They can hear everything, and they can participate through a listening station, because it is a reciprocal station.

MS. MCCALL: And I know that other councils have used that same system. If for instance, there is a true emergency that arises like a true, true emergency, and they cannot call a meeting, they actually will do it through the conference call, and have the hearing station set up or listening station. I have worked on that with those lawyers.

Here it is possible, but I think that logistics would be pretty hard, because we are covering such a wide geographic area, but it is not completely out of the question.

MS. LENT: David Wilmot.

MR. WILMOT: I was just going to ask if there could not be some type of solution. And, Bob, that is the one that I would have thought of. And since we have a meeting here today, we do not have listening stations around the East Coast. So it seems like you could have such one site in Silver Spring as the listening station, and everybody home on the phone. It would not cost much at all. And you could have it open to the entire AP. And if only people interested in bluefin tuna on a bluefin tuna issue wanted to participate, you would not encourage others not to. But so what if only seven people are on the call.

MS. MCCALL: And probably as a minimum, you could have a listening station at the facility of Gloucester and one in St. Pete. So that there would be at least a few regional stations. And maybe a couple of you have offices or something that you would volunteer to open up. Is that a possibility maybe?

MS. LENT: So next time, we all stay home and we just phone in.

MR. ZALES: If I could. The Fisheries Service has enough offices or labs or something throughout this country, especially in the southeast I know and up and down the East Coast. That is what you do. In the Gulf when we did that, they set up a listening station in Galveston. They set up one in the Pascagoula lab. They had one set up at the Panama City lab, and one set up in St. Pete at the main office.

So actually for a public hearing that you would normally have at one site like here, by doing a listening station, you expand that range. And theoretically, it is a better way to do it.

MS. LENT: A good point. Nelson.

MR. BEIDEMAN: I think that something of that nature could be very helpful, as long as any deliberations or recommendations, any results from a committee or a subcommittee-type meetings, came back to the full group at the next meeting. I think that it would very helpful in the IAC as well. Where the species working group, the swordfish species working group, wanted to get together prior to ICCAT and get more details on what we were doing. And we really could not do it, because of the FACA considerations.

I do not know if it would be the right time now. But there was a somewhat different topic along these same process lines that I wanted to throw out there.

MS. LENT: Let's hold on just a second, because Steve is back at the table, and he was on the list.

A PARTICIPANT: Actually, it was on the research component. Last year, Barbara had done studies in the Gulf and put four pop-up tags. I am not sure where they all ended up on bluefin, but I think that this year that she has allocated

40 pop-up tags. And I would just like to make sure that the HMS would definitely get that information next year. And possibly maybe, we can tag everything, not just the bluefins. But if we catch marlin, anything this year, tag those and see where they go also. I think that it can only help us and not hurt us.

MS. LENT: When we have tagging results, we certainly love to share them with the public. I do not know if that will be discussed at the species working group meeting or not in March. Are you on the ICCAT Advisory Committee, Steve?

STEVE: No, I got off of it.

MS. LENT: All right. And Russ, you wanted to make a point relative to --

A PARTICIPANT: (Inaudible.)

MS. LENT: Okay. Let me go back to Nelson first quickly, and then back to Russ. Again, a free flow of thought.

MR. BEIDEMAN: This is a little bit cosmic, and it would require changes in law. And I am not about to take any position one way or another. But in the past, there have been various concerns that the domestic and the international are not being closely integrated enough. And there was even an attempt to create some type of highly migratory species council that would more closely integrate international and domestic in the last three authorizations of the Magnuson Act.

I have heard some discussion of that type of thing being raised for this reauthorization of the Magnuson and Atlantic Tuna Convention Act. And basically, what the discussions go along is that there would be primarily one body to deal with the HMS, and

and it would deal with both the domestic and international components.

And that the head of the table would be the three commissioners, and the State Department, and the AA of Fisheries. And the body of the table would be the members from all of the councils and groups, et cetera. And then you would have your species working groups, et cetera. Those discussions have taken place on and off at some pretty high levels, and I have heard them again recently.

MS. LENT: Thank you, Nelson. Obviously, the level is so high that I do not hear about them. But I appreciate those insights and that comment. The reauthorization is being developed. I guess that the agency will eventually have some kind of position, and is still looking at that. Back to Russ.

MR. NELSON: As long as Nelson is changing the law to create one panel, we might not object if there were four commissioners, and one of those was a conservation commissioner as well.

But my original point was that I guess I am increasingly concerned about the apparent inaccuracy of the log book data and the lack of observer coverage to sort of correct for apparent inaccuracies. Now I have not seen the report. The long liner who stood up the other night, I think his last name is Scanlon, he came out and said directly we cannot be using log book data. They are inaccurate. NMFS has stated this in the reporter, and we need to put observers on the boat. And those were quotes from him.

Obviously, log book data is used pretty heavily in assessments, which feed into the management decisions that are made. As the U.S. always likes to point out, we are in compliance with ICCAT mandates. The obvious one that we all know we are not is long liner observer coverage. We are below recommended levels. We are below the recommended levels of the biological opinion.

So I guess that what I am saying that I would urge NMFS, your department, to go to the congressional liaison. Oh, you cannot lobby for your own? I can. Okay. Forget that point then. I guess that I would ask that you redistribute monies within your program to focus more on observer coverage, because it is clearly a pretty substantial problem when we have people from industry coming up and admitting that the log books are inaccurate.

MS. LENT: Okay. Thank you very much. Nelson, and then Sonja, and then John.

MR. BEIDEMAN: There have been various studies over time, and primarily those studies come out with that in some species that they are very accurate. In other species, where it is a more random event and non-marketable, they are not as accurate. But they have been able to take into account those inaccuracies and come out with as best as what they can.

All of the different stresses, all of the political stresses, and the boycott forces, and everything else, create emotional responses from human beings. I am not going to tell you that the log books are the most accurate thing, but I am going to tell you that this fishery is the only HMS fishery that is laying so much information on the table. Where is the information from all of these other fisheries.

When you mention observer coverage, the recommendation from ICCAT includes all boat fishing for yellowfin tuna and big eyed tuna. You are only observing one fishery, whether that be up to the five percent or not. That includes recreational fisheries that are fishing on yellowfin and big eyed tuna as well.

MR. NELSON: I guess that I would respond --

MR. BEIDEMAN: Hang on, let me talk. We have placed regulations on the books for voluntary observers. We have placed regulations on the books for log books in some of these other fisheries to try to bring some of these other fisheries up to the level that the pelagic long line fishery has been at in years of voluntary and now mandatory coverage. We have got stacks and stacks on the table. But you from the environmental community, I am very shocked that you are not concerned that we do not have information from many of these fisheries. And all you seem to be concerned about is how do we crank up the microscope on a single fishery.

MS. LENT: Okay, Sonja.

MS. FORDHAM: Can I make random shark comments now, or do you want me to wait?

MS. LENT: Okay.

MS. FORDHAM: I was looking at the SAFE Report, and it struck me, the sections on shark imports and exports. And forgive me if you are already doing any of these ideas. I am just going to throw them out there. On shark exports, it says that they are not ID'ed by species code except for dogfish. And that they are not ID'ed by a specific code other than fresh or frozen meat and fins. But there is no tracking of other kinds of shark products like jaws, and teeth, and leather. And that the percentage of exports between the Atlantic and Pacific is unknown. In terms of imports, NMFS has no specific product information on imported shark meat, and yet the imports of frozen sharks has more than tripled since 1995.

I think that these are questions that we should look into. And I think that recent activity in sharks is really going to provide some great opportunities for that starting with the protected resources people that are working on the U.S. proposals for two species of sharks. And one of those, the white shark, I think that one of the main concerns for the white shark is the trade of their jaws and teeth, which we have no information for.

So those people are working on that. And I think that the FAO plan, the U.S.

plan of action for the United States to meet the FAO mandate represents a really great opportunity to get the NMFS people who are working on the different shark initiatives together to answer some of these questions, and come up with some recommendations that we can push at both SEIDES and also the next COF, the Committee on Fisheries at the U.N. next year.

And there is a real opportunity to answer these questions, and to encourage and to educate also the other countries that will be at COF trying to deal with managing their shark fishery. Since the United States has been such a leader in this area, I think that it is really important to continue that initiative.

I want to second Jim Francesconi's comments on continuing shark research programs, COSPAN and others, and Russ' comments on beefing up observer coverage. I think that these are all really important programs for sharks, and to discontinue them would be really dreadful. And they should actually be enhanced, if at all possible.

And finally, I wanted to say that last year the environmental committee was really pleased that NMFS went forward, and took a precautionary approach in terms of a lot of the sharks that we do not know enough about their status, or that were severely depleted, and placed a bunch of new sharks on the prohibited species list.

Yesterday, we got a list of sharks that are mostly deep water sharks. And if you go through the list, they are all deep water and poorly understood. And I think that a lot of us recognize that if you live in deep water and you are a shark, that is a real double whammy in terms of vulnerable life history, and really are not appropriate targets.

And I see fisheries moving further and further offshore in search of alternative species. And these are really inappropriate targets. And I would urge NMFS to consider putting the deep water sharks, adding those as soon as possible to the list of protected or prohibited species, so we can avoid some trouble that fisheries develop for them in the future. Thanks.

MS. LENT: Thank you, Sonja. As you know, unfortunately, that list of prohibited species does not apply to the commercial fishery due to the court injunction. I might also add that we have a couple of import monitoring systems already in place. The bluefin statistical document, and the swordfish certificate of eligibility. We also have a certificate of origin for billfish.

It has been suggested that maybe we should look down the road to the future of one permit that would cover all HMS. So think about that a little bit. John Hoey.

MR. HOEY: Before I leave, I just wanted to leave you with a couple of ideas here. I still think that we need to get a better handle on mortality in the recreational fishery for billfish. I see the recreational news media supply information to us quoting the National Marine Fisheries Service and others about what these estimates are and everything.

And just because it is the best available data does not mean that it is fact.

The sheer size of the recreational fishery means that they are catching a lot of fish. And even though we let most of them go, there is mortality associated with that. And I think that it is important to my constituents that we get a better handle on that. I do not presume to know how to do it, of course, but that is up to you.

There is another item that worries some of us. I do not think that it is a big concern at the moment. But there is a concern that these juiced baits that are being used in the fishery might not be good for the animal. Now for those of you who do not know what a juiced bait is, it is a bait that is soaked in a solution containing formaldehyde. And they use it in the high speed fishery

where they are trolling natural baits for blue marlin and other fish.

And it is a growing thing, it is a growing phenomenon in the recreational fishery. Well, bait is getting expensive. And one of the ways to make your bait last longer is to juice it. It does not fall apart as fast when you are trolling. I know I have used them before. I pleaded with some people to supply me with brine baits, and they have insisted that they are only brine, that there was no formaldehyde in them. And I can tell you that they never would be able to hide the formaldehyde from me.

I just think that it is an area that maybe a university, somebody should begin to look at this, because it is a growing phenomenon. And I am not sure that is good for the animal.

And lastly, because you are constantly fighting over money, I think that NMFS needs to do a better job of evaluating what programs it should keep running whenever you reach the law of diminishing returns, for example. I had some discussions with John and Russ Nelson about this.

But one of the things that comes to mind as just an example would be the tagging program. I know that a lot of people in this room are big supporters of the tagging program, probably not any bigger than I have been. But we have been tagging sailfish since the 1950s and 1960s. And I question how much more data we can get tagging them in the 21st century, how much more are we going to learn about sailfish migratory behavior. I mean fifty years tagging that animal.

So scientists have to say okay, we have needs, and we have got to prioritize things. But there are some things that we just have to stop doing. Because it may make the general public more aware, and it may excite them. But I am not sure that it is that productive anymore, at least for that particular species.

But those are the kinds of things, that as you move forward that you need to evaluate things like that, have we reached the point where we need to refocus, do we have critical issues that we can draw down other areas that use that money and effort. Maybe private enterprise can take over some of these things, and I see that happening in the tagging program to some extent. But I also worry that --

(End side A, tape 2.)

MR. HOEY: -- that are being developed that are ongoing now where you have to tag the fish for it to count in the tournament. If you do not get the tag in the fish, it does not count. Well, you can get some pretty sloppy tagging procedures when that occurs, and you can increase mortality. The reason is you keep the fish on longer. The longer the fish is close to the boat, the harder he pulls on the leader. The more often he does that, the more sure you are that you are going to injure the fish.

In our experience in tagging fish for 50 years, and that is how long we have been tagging them at the fishing club, we have got people who are stopping their tagging activities, because they know from experience that the mortality rate goes up. I think that is enough. Anyway, those are some things for you to think about as you go forward. Thank you.

MS. LENT: Thank you very much, John. David Wiilmot.

MR. WILMOT: Just to follow up. John touched on one of the points that I wanted to highlight, and that is really prioritizing the research and monitoring needs. I still am not clear on the mechanism that you use internally for determining which projects you fund on the research front, which ones get cut, and how when you find out when you are short of money such as this shark observer program -- I understand that one is not funded for the upcoming year.

This is obviously not the right body to be giving you guidance on that. You have internal scientists who help. I have encouraged in the past that you have an external team for peer review. I encourage you again to not only let us know about this process maybe a little better, so those of us who do have some expertise or interest can provide some input. But more importantly, just to make sure that you are putting the program in place, and you are getting the advice that you need, anticipating limited budgets and anticipating cuts.

All research projects are not created equal. We need some data sooner than we need others. And I think that it is important that you be willing to make those hard choices for the right reasons, and it is not because the people around this table like them or do not like them. As I say, this is not the appropriate body to be giving you that ultimate guidance, although many people here have good input.

On the monitoring, it is the same type of story. Just to kind of alleviate some of Nelson's fears, in our ideal world, you all would have enough money to do monitoring, so that we would know every fish that is being caught. That is the goal here. However, to be completely honest, we need to know in some fleets more than we need to know in others, partly because of the regulations that are put in place.

When the lawsuit on sharks, for example, ends, we are going to need appropriate monitoring in that fishery to know if a minimum size in a commercial fishery is going to work. We were very reluctant to support that, but ended up doing so, making very strong caveats that if we do not have appropriate monitoring that we are not going to know if the fleet behaved the way that we anticipated that they will behave.

We want to be able to support things like minimum size. Because our alternative was to shut down that fishery and cut the quota the rest of the way. And we said no, we are not going to go that route.

The same thing with these closed areas. If we do not have appropriate monitoring, we are not going to be able to know. Therefore, to be honest, certain fleets are going to be more important to monitor than others, not that they are not important.

So putting it in place is one thing, and also sharing it with us in a little more detail. I do not think that it would take more than a fifteen minute presentation. How do we make our choices and why, and here they are. Thank you.

MS. LENT: Thank you, David. Rusty Hudson.

MR. HUDSON: I need to see what Russ has up there in a moment. But just to elaborate on this rush to prohibited species. I feel that since we have a limited access fleet and the potential of it becoming even smaller, it is very important to look at two other words, exploratory or experimental quotas. Because I believe that the rush to make prohibited species out of virgin populations or near virgin populations that have never been commercially or recreationally impacted, but may have food and biomedical values that could translate into commercial enterprise for the few survivors left in our fleet, the quota has been too small. We have said it all along in the fleet. When you proportionalize, it just does not fit.

So we need alternatives. And some of those deep water sharks has been noted to be an incidental catch in some of the northeast fleets in very large amounts. And we need to be sure that we just do not shut those fleets out, because they have interaction. Instead set an experimental or exploratory quota.

Furthermore, in 1993, there was a log book developed for the sharks that not only collected the number of, the size of, and the sex of, and the species of the sharks, that virtually got eliminated. And because of that, the open population model that was used to underpin this FMP basically started having

problems, because it did not have the data collected that needed to be collected.

We need to go back to those directed fishermen, and make sure that that data now gets collected. Because these animals when they are large coastals are roughly human size animals. And that should be fairly easy to monitor and to put into a log book at some point.

MS. LENT: Thank you, Rusty. Some of these exploratory fisheries where there is some promise of food or biomedical, there might be an option of exploring that through an EFP process, but we can talk about that later.

Steve, I am sorry I skipped you. Steve Berkley.

MR. BERKLEY: Thanks, Rebecca. I am going to make this just real quick. A lot of what I was going to say has already been said. Dave Wilmot touched on a lot of the points about prioritizing research. Just a couple of quick things. One, professionally, what I do is research. It has been and still is kind of a mystery to me how HMS either decides how to allocate research or who is eligible for research. It is a strange process and not one that I am used to. And I think that maybe I would like some light shed on how that is done, how your research dollars are allocated and spent, and perhaps open up that process more competitively.

The other request that I might make is that at some point that everybody had to realize that observer programs, for example, are extremely expensive. The type of research, at least the type of research that I do and that Barbara Block does and a number of other people around here do on highly migratory species is very expensive research. Just getting out on boats and going out that far at sea is expensive and is costly.

I guess that what I would like to find out at some point maybe for the next meeting is what the cost of the observer program is. I realize that we have ICCAT commitments, and that we do have to get the level. We have a commitment to get that up to five percent. I would like to see what the cost/benefit ratio is on that, and see what it costs to get those observers out there. Thanks.

MS. LENT: Thank you, Steve. And just quickly on the budget process. For the last couple of years, there has been very little discretionary money for research. There has been so little money. The way I set it up, and I do not make these decisions, I can make suggestions, but basically we set it up by covering our salaries, and then our basic permitting and observer program requirements.

Pretty much all of the rest of it is a mandate one way or the other in the language in the budget, or what they call the conference report and all of that. The money for the ICCAT Advisory Committee, and money for Mote Marine Lab, money for bluefin tuna tags. All of those are set. We cannot change it, and even the recipients are set.

So in terms of having a block of money where we would invite proposals, and entertain the proposals, and review them, and have a panel, that was something that we were starting plan about three or four years ago. And then our budget got so cut, that was no longer an issue. What we are trying to do now is use the existing mechanisms to the extent we can to encourage them to request proposals in the area of HMS, so that we can.

I do appreciate the request for information on the observer program cost. We have been getting more and more information on that from the science centers and regional offices that run our programs. It is pretty sobering to look at it. Like I said, for shark drift net, it can be anywhere up to \$4000 per set. It is extremely expensive.

We have got to make sure, as you said, Steve, in the long run that we have got the right benefit/cost ratio in those expenditures. So thank you for that suggestion. That might indeed be something that we could ask the science center to do for the ICCAT Advisory Committee meeting, but I cannot make any promises. We will have to work with them.

Let's see, let me look at my list. Rich Rulais, Bob Spaeth, Glen Alrich.

MR. RUAIS: Just a couple of quick comments. One on Steve's comment earlier about the value and importance of getting more pop up tags out, and getting those research findings out. We really support that, and we are hoping that happens. I would say that those groups that are assisting in that process of helping deploy these tags can also have some influence about how widely the results are circulated. And you might help us on that front in terms of getting some of those results out, because it is one area where we still have trouble seeing what is going on by some of the other researchers.

The other comment that I wanted to make was to fully support what Hammer was talking about in terms of what seems like the obsession and preoccupation with just long line gear. And I do not think that Dave's justification for why we have to focus on certain fleets is really -- even from his perspective, I think that the long liners are an easy target. But he could very well be missing some very substantial practices and by catch impacts that are occurring elsewhere. And if you are not having some observers and some reporting in those other areas, you may feel comfortable that you have hammered the hammer, but you may not really be getting at where other significant sources of mortality might be taking place.

I would point out also that it is not just the long line fleet that has had excellent coverage. I think that you can look at the SAFE Report and see that I think it was 1997 that the purse seine fleet had 100 percent observer coverage. In a number of years, we have had 100 percent observer coverage. And certainly, in almost every year, we have extensive observer coverage that goes on a good part of the five boats.

MS. LENT: Thank you, Rich. As you all can see, our boss is here. Penny Dalton, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries. Penny, come on up. Come on over. There is a mike there for you.

MS. DALTON: I do not think that I really have anything to add. I think that you guys are all hungry. I just wanted to say hi to all of you. I am sorry that I have not had a chance to come down and spend more time. This seems to be the story of my life these days. But I will look forward from hearing from Rebecca what has gone on. And hopefully, at least a chance a say hi to a bunch of you after the meeting is over. So that is it.

MS. LENT: Are there any questions for Penny?

(No response.)

MS. LENT: Nelson Beideman.

MR. BEIDEMAN: This goes on the topic that we were on. And Penny might want to participate, because she experienced it and lived through it. On the topic of budget cuts and whatnot that you guys really cannot do much about. You cannot go to the Hill. The groups can go to the Hill and fight. And in the past, we have exactly done that. And I realize that what Dave was bringing out are the realities of the present.

We went to the Hill in the past. We got \$1.5 million for East Coast observers. It was a line item, and it was intended to be for all HMS fishery observers, including squid and mackerel boats that interact with HMS species, et cetera. That added money that fishermen in my fishery fought for that we thought was abused. It was only used for pelagic long line. We went back to Congress, and

were very disappointed. and Senator Lautenberg helped reduce that to \$750,000.

Now we would love to go to Congress and fight for different line items that we would like to see used. But that kind of experience was a real slap to the people who fought to get that. And Penny, you were there through all of that. And we spoke to you as well as many other offices.

And I would like to get back to a point where the fishermen in these fisheries are indeed going to the Hill, and fighting for the programs that these fisheries need.

MS. DALTON: I think that there are a couple of things here. One of the things that I am finding on this side in this position is that there is probably at least as much misunderstanding of how the Hill works within the federal agencies and the budget process, as there is on the Hill's part on how some of the agency decisions are made.

One of the things that you said is that the agencies cannot lobby. One of the things though that I think that is translated into is a hesitancy on the part of the agency to go up and explain what it is that we are doing and why we are doing it. What I am hoping is that we can correct those kinds of problems. It is not lobbying to go up and explain to a congressional staffer what your programs do, who works on them, and what their goals and objectives are.

And we have too often felt fettered by concerns that we are going to get in trouble by talking to the Hill, to go up and do that. And as a result, I think that a lot of the decisions that are made are not because of political pressure one way or another, but just because people do not understand. We are going through this right now with a couple of the other budget earmarks that we got.

Having lived on the Hill, it would be incredibly hypocritical for me to say that congressional earmarks are bad. For the most part, they are there for a purpose. What we need to do is figure out together how to structure them in a way that gives the agency enough flexibility to do their job, and also gets done the job the purpose for which the money is put in the budget.

You do need to realize that one of the things that is happening to us as an increasing proportion of our budget comes in the form of PPAs, and we do not have the adjustments to base. What you are actually seeing is that many of our traditional activities that we have done for the past 100 years as part of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, the money for them is slowly eroding. Generally, that money is associated with positions.

And so what you have are people who kind of find the money that supports them being eroded out from underneath. There is a natural inclination in any organization to protect the people who work for you and the infrastructure that you have. And I think that is where a lot of the misunderstandings are. When people see it as a diversion of a PPA, there has to be a general acknowledgement of what the basic agency needs are, and some way to build that in.

If you are going to tell the agency the way that they need to spend their money, there has to be a realistic acknowledgement of kind of the baseline that you are starting from as well.

MS. LENT: Okay, Penny. I think that we have another question from Bob Zales.

MR. ZALES: I have never met you before. You have seen letters from me, I know. And I just wanted to thank you on behalf of the fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico for the effort and everything that was done in that red snapper fishery. We appreciate what you did in sending Bill Hogarth down there. He has worked with us extremely well. We are happy with him. We are happy with what the council has been doing. I just wanted to say thank you on behalf of all of those people.

MS. DALTON: Thank you. I think that the other thing on that is that we need to figure out where we are going long term in that fishery and come up with some solutions, so that we are not constantly going year from year and doing triage.

MS. LENT: Rich Rulais.

MR. RUAIS: I know an issue, Penny, that is near and dear to your heart is the spotter plane issue in New England. I am sure that every time that you hear from Senator Kerry or Senator Snow that it brings up good thoughts. Here in the AP, we talked a little bit about this yesterday. My organization, of course, does not have a position on the airplane issue. But we are very much concerned about what you think a sustainable ban might have on the traditional way that the general category and the harpoon category have operated.

And one of the things that I did not realize until I heard from Gary, I think it was Gary who mentioned it, was that there was the possibility that since there is this standing proposed rule to ban the airplanes that we could actually see a final rule with some configuration of a ban that might have some impacts on the historical way that the general and the harpoon category have operated.

And I would urge that specifically because those impacts might be controversial, very controversial, and might even cause some people to reconsider whether or not they wanted to see that happen, even though the benefit would be to their liking or part of the benefit would be to their liking, that you really consider a new proposed rule. And also, just getting out as soon as you can with whatever method of avenue you are pursuing to effectuate what seems to be the overriding desire in the fishery.

MS. DALTON: Okay. Thank you.

MS. LENT: Okay. Penny, I guess you have wowed them. Bob Spaeth, the last question.

MR. SPAETH: This was not really a question for Penny so much. But in going through the SAFE Report, and I looked under safety and I just happened to fall into page 84 there, it shows that over 800 people drowned in 1997 off of boating. Now what that is, I do not know.

But the question that I have is on the general category, are those people required to have the life rafts, the e-perbs, and those kind of safety equipment as the commercial go into the same area, and is that being enforced, or is anybody looking at the numbers permanently affixed to the boat, et cetera?

MS. LENT: The general category permit is a commercial permit, and all of those safety features of a commercial fishing vessel should be on board. We did have problems last season with people going out in rubber dinghies and canoes harvesting bluefin tuna. It was a real problem. If you get stop and inspected, you are busted, because you have to have that equipment.

MS. DALTON: There is one thing. A lot of the safety regulations are Coast Guard regulations, and there is a minimum size. And I know that in New England a few years ago that they had some pretty serious problems, because a lot of the boats were under a size of a commercial size. So there are really de minimis safety requirements when the boat is a smaller boat, even though it is considered to be commercial.

MS. LENT: Irby Basco.

MR. BASCO: First, I want to thank Bob for passing that compliment on to us. We do not hear many good compliments from our APs there. We finally did something that you all like.

At any rate, the question that I had for Penny, I think that I posed it before to Rebecca, is can we expect any more enforcement agents? You know the complexities of the FMPs. In some of the areas down there, some of the fisheries, some of both commercial and recreational, they really do not take much credence in the fact of these fishery plants, because there is no one to enforce them. Can we expect more enforcement? I know that they are talking about observers and things like that, but I am talking about real cops, real wardens, real agents.

MS. DALTON: In our budget for 2001, there is no increase for more enforcement agents. But there are a couple of things. You probably already talked about the VMS system, which is one enforcement tool that we think should help in a number of the situations. The other thing that we have is I think it is \$2.5 million in our 2001 budget that would be for doing cooperative enforcement agreements.

And the idea would not be for us to go and hire more enforcement agents, but to do cooperative agreements with the different states. And a lot of the steps are cross-deputized now, but to start to build up. A lot of them do not have boats. This comes off of a pilot program that we did in South Carolina. And it allowed them to buy some small boats, and it allowed them to bring some guys in, retired law enforcement officials. And they have really picked up and increased the amount of near shore enforcement. And then it frees up the Coast Guard to do a lot more to increase their presence in the offshore areas.

And from everything we are hearing, it has worked really, really well. And the states generally have a lot enforcement capability than we do. It helps them get their guys out on the water.

MR. BASCO: Well, thank you. That is good news. I was hoping that a lot of that would be dockside checking.

MS. DALTON: it depends on the agreement.

MR. BASCO: Thank you.

MS. LENT: Penny, if there are no more questions, I just want to point out that these folks sitting around the table have been here since Wednesday at 1:00. They have worked very hard. We worked Wednesday night with the public hearing. And we are very grateful for the input that they provide. While we do not always come to consensus, as I tell them, we do learn a lot from the debate. And I have learned a lot from this meeting and some useful feedback.

MS. DALTON: Thanks.

A PARTICIPANT: Penny, while you are here, a question that has been put to us in the fisheries is how to mitigate. As you know, we oppose the proposed rule, close area proposed rule. But God forbid, if it is finalized, how to mitigate the socioeconomic impacts to a lot of good fishing families. And I hope that your folks and your staff will pass along the comments that we have made in the last few days over this.

That basically, there would need to be an extensive time between finalization and implementation if 102 vessels and approximately five or ten families that are connected to each vessel, and a lot of supporting companies, et cetera are going to be displaced. They would have to pick up their home bases, find housing, education, medical facilities, and all types of supply and service facilities for both the home and the fishing operations in other regions.

The only thing that we can think of to try to mitigate it short of a buy-out is to allow at least a year time for those families to readjust.

MS. LENT: I think that Russ just quickly wants to comment on that. And we will let you go, Penny.

MR. HUDSON: I just want to make sure that you realize that is not a consensus opinion. The environmental community wholeheartedly disagrees with that.

MS. LENT: Thank you very much, Penny. I appreciate you stopping by. Okay. Before people start taking off, I would like to just digress from this list of names I have here, and just spend a couple of minutes on this issue of chairing the panel.

Do folks generally agree that you would like to have a chair for the HMS AP now that we do not have Jack Donegan under contract anymore? Let me just get a few comments on that very quickly, because people are starting to leave. Rusty Hudson and Rich.

MR. HUDSON: I definitely agree that I think a chairman would be very useful. I think that Rich has some further thoughts that might help on that.

MS. LENT: Rich.

MR. RUAIS: I was not expecting that. I think that from the beginning when we got together a few years back, whenever it was that this started, that there has been a fair amount of support around the panel to have our own chairman. And Jack certainly did a fabulous job leading us through a lot of the issues. This desire to have a chairman in itself does not take anything away from the National Marine Fisheries Service from my perspective, or the important rule that you and your staff are going to obviously going to continue to play in this whole process.

It is just sort of structurally or process-wise that I think it is good for the AP to have its own chairman. I think that you will eventually find as well that having a chairman is helpful, that it assists in the whole process.

My views on it, and I would like to hear from some of the other AP members as well now or later, is that the best people suited for that are panel members either from academia or for the states. And lastly, possibly a fishery council representative. I do not know that any of the real stakeholders in the fishery would be in a position where they could give up their active role in the whole process, although I would nominate Dave Wilmot in a heartbeat to take the job.

I think that there is a lot of benefit to having our own chairman, and being able to have access to that chairman to talk about issues all of the time.

MS. LENT: Thank you. Gail.

MS. JOHNSON: I support having a chairman, if for no other reason than to give you a chance to listen, and not having to be writing and listening at the same time, which I know is wicked hard to do.

MS. LENT: Thank you. I do practice my multi-tasking every day even at home. Bob Zales, and then I am going to ask Mariam to comment a little bit on the meeting would be run even with a chair.

MR. ZALES: Due to the fact that this is my last meeting, and now that Penny is here I am going to vent some frustration on this, too, I used to be a member of the Billfish Advisory Panel. And as I mentioned here for the past couple of days, the Gulf of Mexico currently has no more representation on the Billfish Advisory Panel from a recreational fisherman, which I am.

But the Billfish Panel when we first came together established a chairman for the purposes that have been discussed here already. And dealing with advisory panels that I am chairman of for the Gulf of Mexico fishery management council and the advisory panels that I have sat in as a participant, the chairman to me is a necessary function of an advisory committee. You need to have somebody who can be impartial, so that you can try to direct traffic to get comments and to

handle the meeting.

So I would encourage this panel to go with a chairman. And probably somebody in academia would be my first option to select if I were to nominate somebody, because they are generally impartial in what they do. And that is what you need. So that is my comment.

MS. LENT: Thank you very much. I am going to ask Mariam to intervene just a little bit on the nature of these meetings. Even when you have your own chair, how things would be run.

MS. MCCALL: I am going to actually give my opinion. Which I, too, support the notion of having a chair. I think that it would be beneficial for Rebecca to be able to listen to you all of the time instead of having to keep track of who is speaking and who have not spoken. And I think that it might also take the burden off of her from having to worry about if she is calling on you in the right order. You noticed that I was nervous about that. I think that it would just make it easier on Rebecca, which I would always support doing.

And I suppose that the way that the chair would work would be, and this would be beneficial well, a kind of conduit for you to contact the chair, and the chair could work out with Rebecca and her office, you know, issues relative to the agenda and to working throughout the meeting and things like that. I think that would be beneficial.

I do caution you in one respect, though. If you have a chair, I just do not want you to take on the assumption that the Advisory Panel would become similar to the Advisory Committee or to the councils. They are by nature, by their statutory origins of a different nature. They are not completely autonomous, but more autonomous.

So John, for instance, calls meetings not exactly when John wants to, but in cooperation with the agency. These AP meetings are still going to be government meetings called when the government needs them and when the government wants them. But I do think that it is a great idea to have a chair to do it kind of in more of a cooperative mode. So if you understood the point that I was trying to make, I hope you do. Thanks.

MS. LENT: Okay. It sounds like generally we are in agreement that you would like to have a chair. And maybe at the next meeting of the HMS or the joint AP meeting that we will select a chair by consensus. Mau, a last comment on this.

MR. CLAVERIE: I agree. I am not on that AP. I am on the billfish. Well, it switches back and forth with me and Irby. I take issue with what Rich says about council members. Because council members certainly have a great deal of experience in how to run meetings, particularly if it gets hot. And on the Gulf Council quite often, we do have two committees meet jointly. So you have two chairs, and we always work that out in advance how that is going to work. So that should be no problem. (Inaudible.)

MS. LENT: Okay. Just be thinking about that for the next meeting, which I hope we will be able to get some funding so we can meet again this year, if issues arise that require us to do so. Otherwise, it will be the next fiscal year, which starts October 1.

So with that discussion ended, can I go back? I still had Bob, but I guess he is out. Glen Aldrich, Bob Zales, Nelson, and Jim who wanted to intervene on outlook issues. Just quickly touch on some of those, starting with Glen.

MR. ALDRICH: I want to just make a few comments on the shark management issues. I think that when we are looking at a region that extends from Maine to Mexico, that I think that we need to retain some regional flexibility in shark management. And I am thinking in terms of recreational bag limits. One size fits all just does not cover the situation in terms of what is going on in

different regions. (Inaudible.) So I would just like to introduce the idea of having some regional flexibility in this plan.

MS. LENT: Thank you very much, Glen. I will make sure that comment gets back to the shark team. They are busy getting ready for next week's pelagic workshop. Bob Zales.

MR. ZALES: (Inaudible.)

MS. LENT: I guess the idea is that if you have a place of business like a bait and tackle shop, to just pin it up on the wall so people can see it. Anything you can do to get the news out. We are up to 1500 to 2000 people on that list. We are trying to keep that -- fax that network list to people who will turn around and share it, if they have a club meeting or something, share it with their people, whatever they can do to share it.

Nelson, I think you are next on the list. Nelson, go ahead, and then Mau and Sonja.

MR. BEIDEMAN: I second what I think John Hoey was saying both on the priorities that need to be examined and on the survivability. (Inaudible.)

MS. LENT: All right. Quickly, Mau.

MR. CLAVERIE: A few scattered things. I talked to that fisherman who came up with a 70 percent who was wearing a red shirt, and he said that was swordfish that he was talking about and not marlins.

MS. LENT: Yes, Mau.

MR. CLAVERIE: And I have a question for John, because I do not think that we are adding to mortality on the marlins in the Gulf on the tagging. Are you talking about sailfish or marlins?

MS. LENT: Make it quick.

MR. HOEY: I am talking about billfish in general. (Inaudible.)

A PARTICIPANT: (Inaudible.)

MS. LENT: Okay. When you register for the fax network, you check off certain items that are of interest to you. We are trying to do a sorting, so not everybody gets every single fax. If you are strictly a billfish fisherman, you do not necessarily want to know about sharks. (Inaudible.) We try to make sure that we are covering all of our bases. We end up giving people triple faxes. I think that is better than missing you. Because the message that I have gotten is that you are not getting the word out. So we are trying to do the best we can on that.

MS. FORDHAM: I forget to mention earlier that we have some serious concern about the loss of the momentum that we had last year getting the ASMFC to move forward on complementary measures for sharks in state waters. (Inaudible.)

MS. LENT: Thank you very much, Sonja.

On that note, I think that we are ready to wrap up this meeting. So this is my chance to again thank you for hanging in there for the two-and-a-half days that we have been together. And I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting. Have a safe trip home.

(End side B, tape 2.)

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