

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC
ADMINISTRATION

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ATLANTIC HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES

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SPRING 2014 ADVISORY PANEL

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FRIDAY
APRIL 4, 2014

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The Advisory Panel met in the Sheraton Hotel, 8777 Georgia Avenue Silver Spring, Maryland, 8:00 a.m., Jon Raab, Facilitator, presiding.

PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT

JASON ADRIANCE
PATRICK AUGUSTINE
MARTHA BADEMAN
TERRI BEIDEMAN
CAROLYN BELCHER (VIA WEBINAR)
RICK BELLAVANCE
ANDRE BOUSTANY
ANDREW COX
MYRON FISCHER
SONJA FORDHAM
WILLIAM GERENCER
WALTER GOLET
JOHN GRAVES
RANDY GREGORY
RUSSELL HUDSON
ROBERT HUETER
STEPHEN IWICKI
WALLACE JENKINS
SHAWN JOYCE
AMANDA KELEDJIAN

CARRIE KENNEDY
DAVID KERSTETTER
JAMES LAWSON
MARK LINGO
STEPHEN LINHARD
SHANA MILLER
JEFF ODEN
TIM PALMER
EUGENIO PINERO-SOLER
DAVE SCHALIT (proxy for Ralph Pratt)
RICHARD RUAIS
MARTIN SCANLON
JASON SCHRATWIESER
MICHAEL SISSENWINE
GREGORY SKOMAL
DAVID STILLER
SCOTT TAYLOR
ROMULUS WHITAKER
ALLAN WILLIS

ALSO PRESENT:

JON RAAB, Facilitator
MARGO SCHULZE-HAUGEN, Division Chief, Highly
Migratory Species Management Division (HMSD)
RANDY BLANKINSHIP, HMSD
KARYL BREWSTER-GEISZ, HMSD
CRAIG COCKRELL, HMSD
PETER COOPER, HMSD
JENNIFER CUDNEY, HMSD
KATIE DAVIS, HMSD
JOE DESFOSSE, HMSD
GUY DUBECK, HMSD
STEVE DURKEE, ERT
LEANN HOGAN, HMSD
NEVA HOWARD, HMSD
CLIFF HUTT, OFFICE OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
ALEXIS JACKSON, HMSD
BRAD MCHALE, HMSD
SARAH MCLAUGHLIN, HMSD
DELISSE ORTIZ, ERT
RICK PEARSON, HMSD
GEORGE SILVA, HMSD
JERON STANNARD, HMSD
DIANNE STEPHAN, HMSD
JENNI WALLACE, HMSD
THOMAS WARREN, HMSD
JACKIE WILSON, HMSD

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

8:00 a.m.

MR. RAAB: So, if we could have people take their seats? It's 8:00. Thank you for showing up early, and we are ready to rock and roll here.

So, just a couple of announcements while you're getting seated, and then, to go over the schedule again for today.

The announcements are: don't forget to fill out your evaluation forms before you leave and, also, leave your name tags, both your tent cards and your neck cards, on the way out.

In terms of the agenda today, if you remember, we had to move things around for the System Administrator for Fisheries, who should be here right at 8:30.

So, we are going to start with Research at 8:00, and then, when she comes in, we will let her speak. And then, we will go back to the order of our agenda. Okay? And we'll see how we're doing on time.

Okay. Margo is first on Research.

MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: All right. So, thanks for getting here early. I hope everybody has their coffee. I have mine, and it's big because yesterday was a really good day. I thought we had a lot of good discussion, and I am looking forward to another one.

So, the HMS Research Plan Progress Updates, Challenges, and Open Discussion. My intention with that title was to signal that we don't yet have a plan, and that we are continuing to work through it, but are open to talking about things. We do have a slight change in direction that I will talk about at the end that I think will help us advance.

So, we developed in large part, and after conversations with you all, a Draft Research Plan to identify key research needs, to improve management, reduce duplication, prioritize limited funding, research funding, and form a potential basis for future funding. It was a fairly ambitious plan. It was intended as an agency document that would help us, as well as you all, in terms of knowing

1 where to put a dollar, if we could find it,
2 knowing where to cut a dollar, if we had to,
3 and then, providing the indications of our
4 priorities and needs for folks that had
5 funding or could help generate funding.

6 Some of the challenges that we have
7 and sort of the context of the timing and the
8 challenges overall that we have. This
9 process kicked off, you know, at a time that
10 we were in a declining budget. And so,
11 everybody was trying to squeeze every dollar
12 that was already stretched. And so, coming in
13 at that point saying we need more was, you
14 know, not welcome news. I will put it that
15 way.

16 And so, that budget climate overall
17 for the agency continued for some time. This
18 year I am happy to say that there were a few
19 limited increases in a few places. And so,
20 overall, we are in a slightly better position,
21 but the outlook is still one of very tight
22 budgets. There is not an expectation that
23 things are going to ease up considerably in the
24 near-term. So, that is our reality, and I
25 think it is one that we will have for some time.
26 So, the prioritization, reducing duplication,
27 I think is a continuing need that we have.

28 The other challenge that we have, as
29 an agency, and, in particular, the HMS
30 Management Division, is the agency structure
31 is one where there is a very clear separation
32 between what we call the management side and
33 the science side.

34 And there's some very good reasons
35 for that. Wanting some separation, so that
36 there's integrity in the science and not undue
37 influence or even the perception of undue
38 influence of management on the science,
39 wanting there to be very clear distinction.
40 The science has that integrity.

41 And so, what that means practically
42 is that the science side, so the Science
43 Centers, the Office of Science and Technology,
44 has a different chain of command within the
45 agency, has entirely separate in some ways
46 budget prioritization and processes than the
47 management side, which is what the HMS
48 Division within the Office of Sustainable

1 Fisheries is in.

2 And so, when we all meet, you know,
3 we're the management side, and we're hearing
4 your inputs and interests and concerns. And
5 then, we take that back to the rest of the
6 agency. And so, we're kind of the focal
7 point.

8 And I think we try really hard. I
9 think we have success in that regard, but
10 sometimes we have more challenges than others.
11 And so, when we took on developing a research
12 plan, it was, in part, then, communicated to
13 the science side, who are not as active in this
14 arena; don't necessarily hear it all directly.
15 And we had to learn, then, some of their
16 processes and prioritization, things that we
17 were not part of. We had to learn it, and we
18 missed things. When they were doing their
19 prioritization, we didn't necessarily know.
20 And so, we had some gaps there.

21 And so, this is also our reality.
22 This is how the agency is structured. It is
23 not about to change.

24 There have been some movements on the
25 science side for strategic planning,
26 prioritization. The management side is
27 actually going to start going through that
28 process soon. I think they desire that they
29 be, obviously, well-communicated,
30 well-coordinated, and, also, maybe they will
31 synch up.

32 But so, just some of the context of
33 the environment that we are working in. It
34 has been some time since we shared with you the
35 initial draft. It is one that we shared
36 before full agency vetting because we wanted
37 to get your input and, also, show you where we
38 were going, what we were seeing.

39 And the comments that we received
40 from you all were honestly pretty critical.
41 And you can see that there were comments that
42 it was too broad; it wasn't specific enough.
43 No one had had a chance to have input into it.
44 Well, that was part of what we were trying to
45 do with the panel, but, you know, people wanted
46 more input; that there wasn't a lot of
47 fisheries' independent goals in it.

48 The very strong focus on stock

1 assessments and improving stock assessments,
2 I think that was designed, in part, because
3 management is improved when the stock
4 assessments are stronger, more precise, less
5 uncertain.

6 But there was no prioritization,
7 clearly, you know, that if we got a dollar, it
8 would go to this; if we lost a dollar, we would
9 take it from here. That wasn't there.

10 And that there were no budget
11 estimates that particular projects had dollar
12 amounts associated with them that were
13 necessary.

14 So, these are some of the things that
15 we took back, we looked at, we talked amongst
16 ourselves. And so, what has happened since
17 then is we have formed, after meeting with
18 Richard Merrick, who is the Director of
19 Scientific Programs, the Chief Science
20 Advisory for the agency, so he's at the top of
21 that science side chain of command.

22 And there was a leadership meeting of
23 the heads of the different science groups.
24 So, that would be Northeast Center or
25 Southeast Center, Science and Technology, as
26 well as Sustainable Fisheries. And they
27 decided that they needed a staff-level working
28 group. That has been stood up. We have met
29 a number of times.

30 And so, there has been a lot of
31 discussion in that group of scope. What do we
32 really mean? Does this include monitoring?
33 There's a lot of the monitoring things like
34 observer programs that can collect a lot of
35 information that, then, would feed into a
36 stock assessment. But is that really
37 research? Is that what we really want to
38 include in this plan? And how do you balance
39 those kinds of things?

40 One of the priority things that came
41 out of that process, we had a survey, a
42 longstanding, like the longest-time series
43 for some sharks out of the Virginia Institute
44 of Marine Science that was completely
45 unfunded.

46 And one thing that this working group
47 vetted and discussed was, should we try to
48 scrape together the funds to fund that, so that

1 that continued? It was so key in the stock
2 assessment.

3 And the decision was that, yes, we
4 needed to do that, and we were successful to
5 do that, not in a long-term way. It was kind
6 of a one-off for that year, but with the idea
7 that we need to try to find a solution to fund
8 this one, in addition to the larger issues.

9 And so, then, fall came and it was
10 ICCAT and it was Amendment 7, and it was
11 government shutdown and all that. And
12 suddenly, we were in the budget for FY14 and
13 scrambled again, but with that same sort of
14 thinking. Again, this survey was completely
15 outside funding, worked again to find some
16 funding. And it is a combination of science,
17 technology, and SF funding to keep this going
18 with, I think, a better commitment that we will
19 get it into the fold as we move ahead.

20 And so, what we're thinking -- and by
21 "we" at this point, I mean the HMS Management
22 Division -- to move ahead to have some forward
23 progress, is we have looked at what some of the
24 Councils do. Councils have a closer or more
25 linear communication, coordination, where
26 there is a Council, there is a Region, and
27 there is a Center. And all of those folks are
28 at the Council meetings. And so, they hear
29 directly from the constituents. They hear
30 directly about the issues, looking at what
31 they're doing as a model.

32 And so, what the Councils do -- and
33 again, it is a management-side kind of
34 document -- is what their prioritization, what
35 their needs are, that, then, gets fed into the
36 science process. And so, we are looking at
37 that, thinking that that may be a good first
38 step to actually get something out there into
39 the process. And then, as the
40 management-side strategic review comes online
41 and the two, science and management sides, get
42 linked up, we will have our peace there.

43 It would be a high-level view. If
44 you look at the Council plans, one of them, it
45 is a bulleted list with little context. The
46 other plan has more of that context of why this
47 is important and that.

48 So, I think there is some

1 flexibility. I think we would try and have a
2 little context to it. But it is something
3 that, because it's not an agency document,
4 it's not trying to get everybody onboard with
5 an agreement of where the next dollar would go,
6 it is something that I think we can more
7 reasonably produce in the near-term.

8 Our focus would be on improving the
9 management and the management-based science
10 needs, because this would be kind of our view,
11 feeding into the process. We are thinking it
12 wouldn't be as detailed. Some of what goes
13 into updating and having all those details, I
14 mean, it takes a lot of effort. And we may not
15 be in the best position to know all of those
16 details, particularly of the science
17 specifics. But we know our own needs, what we
18 see, what we need. So, that would be its
19 focus.

20 And so, this would be potentially a
21 fairly-significant departure from what you
22 all saw a couple of years ago. But that's at
23 this point what we're thinking.

24 Some of the things that we wanted to
25 talk about with you all were:

26 How to balance those near-term
27 management needs, monitoring and surveys,
28 with some of the longer-term research needs.
29 If we don't do the longer-term research, well,
30 some of the questions that we have we will
31 never know, but, yet, we need the current
32 information coming in. And then, in a
33 tight-budget context, how do you balance
34 those?

35 What would the look and content of
36 the plan be to best describe the needs? What
37 is the best way to get your input? What is the
38 best way to get external input? We have a
39 number of external academic folks that really
40 want to have some voice.

41 And then, what are your questions and
42 concerns, and how do we move forward?

43 So, possible next steps: what we're
44 thinking is that we would take a crack at
45 preparing kind of our view of the research
46 priorities, share it with you all, incorporate
47 comments, and then, put it out for the public,
48 maybe not a formal public comment period in

1 that same way, but certainly make it available
2 to the public and see what folks have to say.
3 And then, we would finalize the document. I
4 think this is something that we can accomplish
5 in the next six months or so, probably with all
6 of these steps that, then, would be available
7 moving ahead, as some of these other processes
8 go forward.

9 Not to say that the higher-level
10 coordination and communication within the
11 agency isn't important and something that we
12 ultimately want to do, but also knowing it has
13 been a long road so far, and wanting to get
14 something accomplished.

15 So, that is what I have.

16 MR. RAAB: So, maybe you can just
17 move back to the discussion.

18 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: Yes.

19 MR. RAAB: So, we are open for either
20 questions for Margo or any input on any of
21 these discussion questions up here.

22 We have got Rich and David first.

23 MEMBER RUAIS: Thank you, Margo, for
24 that update.

25 I recognize how difficult this is
26 and the balancing need that you face between
27 your priorities for management purposes, and
28 it is hard to even really draw the line between
29 science purposes because they do blend a lot.

30 But there's just at least one issue
31 that doesn't really involve either of those,
32 I think, and it is more of most of what is being
33 said here is that you are dealing with this as
34 an internal process. You've got -- I don't
35 know if it was a working group -- yes, you've
36 got the HMS Research Working Group staff from
37 the Office of Science and Technology,
38 Northeast Fisheries Center, Southeast
39 Fisheries Center, et cetera, et cetera, and
40 the Councils. And I don't know if the
41 Councils is new. Oh, you don't have the
42 Councils. I'm sorry. I thought you wanted
43 to model it somewhat after the Councils?

44 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: So, let me
45 clarify. You're correct that the Working
46 Group is internal. What we are modeling on
47 the Council would be the document that they
48 produce, which is their priorities for

1 research, but not that they would be included
2 in the Working Group.

3 MEMBER RUAIS: Okay. Okay, fine.
4 Thank you for that clarification.

5 Of course, I think a lot of the
6 Councils -- Pat, obviously, you can correct me
7 if I'm wrong -- but most of the Councils, if
8 not all of the Councils, have an SSC,
9 Scientific and Statistical Committee. It has
10 benefitted all of the Councils, I would say,
11 well. If you attend some of those
12 meetings -- and I have attended quite a few on
13 the herring management front and others -- the
14 topics are very lively, and what comes out of
15 them is pretty good sort of consensus advice
16 most of the time to the Council on which way
17 to go or the actual implications and impacts
18 of management proposals, if that is what is
19 before them.

20 So, I wonder, why couldn't this
21 process benefit from that type of an external
22 SSC-type, call it what you want, to maintain
23 a difference for the HMS? Because there
24 is -- I don't think I'm talking out of
25 school -- there is some outside criticism of
26 how all of the highly-migratory species
27 identified research funds are allocated among
28 the needs today, that there really isn't,
29 unlike the Pacific Coast where they have
30 WestPac and some other groups, where there is
31 a lot of scientific input, basically, is the
32 best word I can come up with to the process.
33 The input varies in how it's given, but,
34 nonetheless, the scientists have a say, have
35 somewhat of a say in which direction you should
36 go.

37 And I guess that's what I would like
38 to see in going forward, is that at least the
39 HMS, your internal process, if not Dr.
40 Merrick's side of the process, or maybe it
41 combines both, have an external group of
42 scientists involved in this, so that it is not
43 just agency scientists that are continuing to
44 support the traditional programs that they
45 have and the programs that they are currently
46 depending upon for whatever example, Catch Per
47 Unit Effort Indices or some other things.

48 So, I think there would be value from

1 having an outside independent panel that could
2 make some contributions there.
3 Specifically, one of the things that has been
4 bothering us, and is going to become more of
5 a scientific-intense issue, is the size, the
6 sexual maturity question of bluefin tuna.
7 And we don't see that as a high priority on the
8 part of the agency anywhere, unless I'm
9 missing that.

10 And that, to me, is a very key,
11 fundamental management need. You need to
12 know, you know, what is your spawning stock
13 biomass, if you intend to protect your
14 spawning stock biomass. And, also, the
15 location of spawning groups is another key
16 issue. We seem to be stuck with, well, let's
17 just keep going back. Maybe there have been
18 some modifications to the actual larval
19 surveys than how they are run in the Gulf of
20 Mexico, but not to the tune of what seems to
21 be being uncovered today as potential
22 additional sites. So, I would just say I
23 would add that in as one thing that you might
24 get fed into the loop, if you had some
25 independent -- if you had an SSC-type group
26 for this process.

27 Thanks.

28 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: Yes. Thanks
29 for that, Rich.

30 The idea of an SSC for HMS is one that
31 has come up at different points for different
32 reasons. If you look at the statute, the SSCs
33 are formed under the Council. And so, this is
34 one of the things that I think the match with
35 the statutory language to what we have between
36 the Councils and HMS is a little bit different,
37 where what I have learned of statutory
38 construction is that it says what it means.
39 And so, if it says "Council," it means Council.
40 It doesn't say "Council and Secretary" for
41 SSCs.

42 Now I'm not a lawyer, and I'm
43 certainly not an expert in the statutory
44 construction, but that has been kind of our
45 view, that those are Council advisory bodies.
46 And then, the Act actually confers some
47 decision making on those bodies as well.

48 And so, for HMS, we are formed in a

1 different part. We have different
2 instructions. And the delegation of
3 authority is to the Secretary of Commerce. It
4 is not, then, further delegated to a separate
5 external body.

6 And so, these are some of the reasons
7 I think we don't have an SSC right now. This
8 is the kind of thing that we can go back and
9 look at.

10 To your point about external advice,
11 we have two groups for HMS now, you all and the
12 ICCAT Advisory Committee. So, what would be
13 different about another group that would give
14 advice? It would be advice. Without a
15 statutory change, that is how it would have to
16 be.

17 So, these are some of the things that
18 I would encourage you all to think about.
19 Think about how it would actually work, what
20 your expectations of that group would be. If
21 it is a budget list that the agency would take
22 onboard, I mean, that may be fine. I don't
23 know. But these are some of the things that
24 I think we would have to sort through.

25 MR. RAAB: We've got a long queue,
26 Rich. So, very quick.

27 MEMBER RUAIS: Very quick.

28 One is I think that in the past, 1994,
29 when you had the National Academy of Sciences
30 reviewing the bluefin assessment, that that
31 was almost effectively an SSC that was being
32 called in to review what was going on, maybe
33 not, maybe not perfectly.

34 And the second thing, I mean, I don't
35 know if what you are saying is you don't think
36 you could get away with holding an independent
37 separate meeting of SSC, because I wouldn't
38 call what we do at the ICCAT Species Working
39 Groups or in any forum here a scientific
40 advisory body to either IAC or here.

41 Thank you.

42 MR. RAAB: Thank you, Rich.

43 David? Then, Bob. Then, Allan.
44 Then, Jason.

45 MEMBER SCHALIT: Thanks, Margo.

46 I understand, I appreciate the
47 distinction that you made between scientific
48 research and scientific research that intends

1 to address, that has a certain utility for
2 management. Because those meetings in which
3 I have been involved in discussions regarding
4 scientific research suggest to me that there
5 is no shortage of ideas on what scientific
6 research there actually be.

7 But this really narrows it down quite
8 a bit. And so, the question then, in my mind,
9 is how do we prioritize that list that we are
10 going to create? Because it is definitely
11 going to be easy to put this list together.
12 And the first thing that pops into my mind is
13 that it is initiative-driven. In other
14 words, we have to decide where these limited
15 funds will go and in what order, in what
16 sequence.

17 So, for example, I could say, just as
18 an illustration, I could say, well, we should
19 be tagging yellowfin. But what might be more
20 important is that, if we look at the research
21 needs, what we could do inexpensively that
22 would advance the discourse in connection with
23 mixing and the masked model, Taylor and
24 McCallish's masked model.

25 For example, collecting alutus data
26 is a very inexpensive way of advancing that
27 discourse. And we can do a lot more on that
28 level, and that would sort of advance
29 management somewhat.

30 I mean, if you look at it from the
31 perspective of the fact that ICCAT is now
32 actively or the SCRS are now actively
33 addressing mixing, and, ultimately, it will
34 come back to the Highly Migratory Species
35 Division to manage in accordance with these
36 new models that they are contemplating.

37 So, then, of course, Amendment 7,
38 another example that is going to create a need
39 for research, things that we haven't even
40 contemplated yet that will come out of the
41 implementation of Amendment 7.

42 I mean, I guess what I am leading up
43 to is that there are ways of prioritizing that
44 need to be taking into account because they are
45 time-sensitive. I mean, I think that within
46 three years this issue of mixing will have been
47 resolved. Do you know what I mean? Or maybe
48 I'm wrong.

1 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: You're
2 optimistic. Wow.

3 MEMBER SCHALIT: Maybe I am
4 optimistic. That's true.

5 Okay. So, that's my comment.
6 Thanks very much.

7 MR. RAAB: Bob.

8 MEMBER HUETER: Thanks. Bob
9 Hueter, Mote Marine Lab.

10 First, Margo, I want to thank you,
11 actually, for your presentation. I
12 appreciate the way you were forthcoming and
13 talking to us about the process and actually
14 helped us understand a little bit about where
15 we are with this.

16 I think Rich absolutely nailed it in
17 his comments. My comments don't need to be
18 very long because I second everything he said.
19 He really understood the problem.

20 And I just want to second that and say
21 that my observation is that this is still an
22 internal process that's going on, as Rich
23 said. Science doesn't work well when it is
24 completely internal to one group. Science
25 inherently is an open process, and it doesn't
26 work well when it is weighed down by
27 bureaucracy.

28 So, how do you get out of that? You
29 need to get external scientists on the Working
30 Group that is developing the plan. I mean,
31 presenting a draft plan in this kind of a
32 session, this kind of a forum, that is not
33 getting input. That is getting a little bit
34 of feedback, but that is not helping develop
35 the plan, the details of the plan.

36 So, as we have done all along, we are
37 urging NMFS to please open this up, open this
38 process up, to the scientists that are not only
39 within the agency and also outside the agency.

40 You know, we are invited to things
41 like stock assessment workshops. We go to
42 those workshops. We look at the fact that we
43 have very bad data to assess the stock. And
44 we can't do anything about it because we have
45 had no input on where the research funds should
46 have been invested. We give some feedback,
47 but it doesn't seem to really go very far.

48 So, in this process it's great that

1 you have taken this very seriously and you have
2 got review at all these various levels, but,
3 please, for openness and for the best result,
4 please include external scientists in
5 developing this plan.

6 MR. RAAB: Jason?

7 MEMBER ADRIANCE: Thanks. Jason
8 Adriance.

9 Bob and Rich pretty much covered it,
10 but the difference between what is discussed
11 in this body and, for example, in SSC, is very
12 different. We don't get into long, intense
13 scientific discussions on the merit of the
14 sciences and where those research needs need
15 to go. I think that is your difference. This
16 is not a vetting of that science or research.
17 And that's why I think an SSC is important.

18 MR. RAAB: David?

19 MEMBER KERSTETTER: David
20 Kerstetter, Nova Southeastern University.

21 Yes, thank you, Margo, for the
22 presentation.

23 I will certainly echo the thoughts on
24 the development of an SSC. This group is,
25 again, not a scientific review body. We are
26 here for management purposes.

27 A couple of quick questions. As
28 part of this process, have you reviewed
29 existing funding programs, for example,
30 MARFIN, in terms of including HMS species
31 within those? I know that this is a point that
32 has been brought up before. So, if you have
33 not addressed it, I urge you to do so. I think
34 you have, but I just wanted to reiterate that
35 point.

36 Part of the other question is almost
37 more of a comment. Some of the concerns that
38 those of us on the outside have had is a review
39 of the existing HMS research, even within the
40 agency, and whether there is a misallocation
41 of resources on the research that is going on
42 within that scientific side.

43 So, I just wanted to note those
44 comments. It is nice to have other people
45 take the lead on this particular issue.

46 And finally, I will echo Bob, saying
47 we have tried for years, literally, to get
48 involved in this process. We have told you

1 repeatedly how much we would like to
2 participate. So, I encourage you to do so.

3 Thank you.

4 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: Just a couple
5 of points there in response.

6 In terms of considering MARFIN, we
7 have talked about that internally. I think
8 one of the challenges there is that there is
9 kind of a very dedicated group. And
10 particularly, the budget climates for them,
11 you know, having another user group coming in
12 was difficult, and we haven't done that.

13 In terms of the review of existing
14 science, this is actually, I think, part of
15 what is underway right now in terms of the
16 Center reviews. Each Center is going through
17 this. I think they are looking at that
18 alignment and the value of what is underway
19 now.

20 So, I can forward to you information
21 that I have on that, but I'm not exactly sure
22 how public that process is. But I can find out
23 more. But it certainly is a part of what's
24 underway right now.

25 MR. RAAB: Michael?

26 MEMBER SISSENWINE: Yes, thank you.

27 I find all the emphasis on an SSC to
28 be interesting because I actually hear some
29 things being said that don't reflect my
30 experience, having served on two of them and,
31 by the way, having also been at any number of
32 ICCAT meetings, SEDARs, and pretty much
33 everything else you can think of that deals
34 with scientific advice.

35 I think we need to be clear that we're
36 in this discussion talking about two separate
37 functions. One is the function of
38 peer-reviewing scientific advice. We are
39 formulating the best scientific advice
40 possible that's got peer consensus around it
41 to the extent possible.

42 And that's what SSCs are about, but
43 that's also what SCRS of ICCAT is about. It
44 is what SEDAR is about, and so on.

45 So, in terms of the formulating of
46 scientific advice that brings together a
47 reasonable consensus view, I think that is
48 available for the traditional stuff that HMS

1 deals with, basically, stock assessments.
2 I was going to comment yesterday that
3 I'm not convinced that it is well taken care
4 of for the things that indirectly impact HMS,
5 such as status reviews on protected species.
6 I don't think sending out a status review,
7 which isn't clear to people whether it is a
8 scientific document or a policy document, to
9 two or three people by mail, is anything near
10 equivalent of the scientific formulation of
11 advice that comes out of an SSC or SEDAR or
12 SCRS. So, that is an area where I think there
13 is some need, but it is not for a new SSC for
14 everything. I think that, to me, would just
15 be another layer that I don't think would be
16 terribly efficient.

17 The other function, though, is
18 research planning in program review. As I
19 said, having sat on two SSCs, that isn't what
20 they do. I mean, they are occasionally asked
21 to comment on a program or some sort of plan,
22 but they're not basically program review
23 policies.

24 The program reviews that Margo
25 mentioned are the forum for that in general.
26 That is the program review structure that is
27 being run by the Centers right now. That is,
28 to some degree, a response to quite a large
29 review I was contracted to do back about three
30 years ago, where we laid out a framework for
31 doing these sort of program reviews, and it is
32 being partially implemented.

33 The problem in the HMS world is,
34 though, that unlike the traditional fishery
35 stuff, and pretty much unlike a lot of the
36 marine mammal work, is the funding lines are
37 very confused, as Margo knows. That is sort
38 of internal jargon to the agency. But it is
39 a little less clear as to what you are
40 reviewing and what is available to actually be
41 used for HMS research. And that makes it a
42 little less clear as to what is being reviewed,
43 how the program review will go, and so on.

44 And that is because, if you look at
45 a traditional fish problem of codfish stock,
46 there is only place where research is managed.
47 It is in the Northeast Fisheries Science
48 Center. If you look at other species, that is

1 the situation.

2 If you look at bluefin tuna, you've
3 got activity going on and being funded out of
4 many lines from different entities within the
5 National Marine Fisheries Service. And you
6 also get it mixed up with various pressures
7 associated with observer programs, which are
8 very large-ticket items that are both science
9 and management. And then, you get things
10 confused historically with lots of
11 congressional intent language that says
12 so-and-so will get money for such-and-such.

13 So, the problem becomes even more
14 difficult in terms of actually saying what are
15 the funds available for HMS and, therefore,
16 what is the research plan. I think the agency
17 has to come to grips with that part of the
18 problem before these peer-review processes or
19 program review processes, which are ongoing in
20 the Centers, can really be effective for the
21 HMS world. That is, those reviews have to be
22 inclusive of all of the sources of money that
23 potentially are relevant to the HMS problems.
24 And I'm not convinced right now that they are.

25 Thank you.

26 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: So, we have a
27 couple more comments in the queue here, but I
28 see that Eileen Sobeck has joined us. So,
29 let's take the time and let her address you
30 all.

31 So, Eileen, if you could come on up?

32 Yes, we will come back.

33 So, Eileen has joined us. She was
34 with NOAA some time ago. I will let her give
35 you the details on it, but I think she is well
36 familiar with natural resource conservation
37 and management.

38 And we are welcome to have her here.
39 Thank you so much.

40 MS. SOBECK: Great. Thank you,
41 Margo.

42 Good morning, everybody. Thank you
43 for inviting me and letting me come say a few
44 words. And I'm sorry to interrupt the
45 discussion, but it is always nice to come hear
46 what people have to say about the agency and
47 their thoughts about our programs. So, thank
48 you for having me.

1 I have been on the job for a couple
2 of months now. I'm still calling it my
3 official honeymoon. I still am taking credit
4 for decisions made by others before I arrived.
5 So, I take credit for the good stuff that
6 people did, and if people aren't happy, I just
7 go, "Hey, that happened before I got here." I
8 figure that the tide is about to turn on that,
9 but I'm enjoying it while I can.

10 I have heard from a lot of the groups
11 that I have spoken to that they have never
12 heard of me and they don't know who I am. And
13 I have told them that that should be a good
14 thing because I actually have been in the
15 natural resources federal world for quite a
16 long time.

17 I started at NOAA in 1979. I am a
18 lawyer. I started in the Office of General
19 Counsel. I was there for five years.

20 Then, I was at the Justice Department
21 for 25 years, where I worked mostly in the
22 wildlife section, which does the litigation
23 for NOAA Fisheries and, also, for the
24 Department of the Interior and other agencies
25 involved in the Endangered Species and other
26 federal wildlife statutes.

27 And then, more recently, I was at the
28 Department of the Interior for five years as
29 the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and
30 Wildlife and Parks. And I also worked with
31 the Interior program that works with U.S.
32 territories.

33 So, while I haven't worked
34 specifically on fisheries issues for quite
35 some time, I have actually pretty quite active
36 in the federal regulatory world, and I am
37 really happy to come back to my first agency
38 home, NOAA. And it has been really fun to come
39 back and reconnect with some of these issues
40 that I've been out of touch with for a while.

41 But I still have a lot to learn, and
42 I don't pretend to know it all. And I think
43 what I do have to offer is I do have a pretty
44 firm footing in understanding the regulatory
45 world, the way that science and federal
46 regulation work together, the relationships
47 that we have to have with our partners and
48 stakeholders to make sure that any regulatory

1 policy -- regulations without relationships
2 don't work, especially in these days where
3 statutes and regulations are hard to get and
4 hard to change. And I think that we are way
5 more successful when we are cooperative,
6 either in the scientific world that you were
7 just discussing or in how to manage our
8 resources.

9 So, I didn't come to the agency with
10 a personal agenda. I'm not associated with a
11 particular part of the industry or interest
12 area. I am someone who is interested in
13 renewable natural resources. I want to make
14 sure that we still have fisheries and other
15 marine resources in the future that our kids
16 can enjoy, whether they are recreational
17 fishermen, whether they want to be commercial
18 fishermen, whether they just want to go out on
19 a boat and see a whale or dolphin out in the
20 wild. And so, I'm happy to be in a position
21 where I can help do that.

22 So, I thought I would just mention
23 that earlier this week -- I mean, I have been
24 trying to get out and about to different
25 Regions to, if I can, sit in on Council
26 meetings or Commission meetings or advisory
27 panel meetings like this, just to get a sense
28 of who are our partners, how do we interact
29 with them, trying to get to know my own
30 far-flung Regions and laboratories and our
31 personnel. So, I have been trying to get out
32 and about, but trying to stay here in
33 Washington and get the lay of the land.

34 But earlier this week we had a great
35 two-day conference focused on recreational
36 saltwater fishing. Was anybody here there?
37 Yes, great, great.

38 I hope your sense was the same as
39 mine, which it was a group of 101 invitees and,
40 then, a lot of NOAA scientists and managers at
41 the senior level, representatives from
42 Fisheries Management Councils, from the three
43 State Commissions. And it was two days of
44 pretty intense discussions, a lot of small
45 group discussions, to come up with some
46 concrete next steps and planning for our next
47 action agenda for recreational fishing.

48 As I think many of you know, the first

1 Summit, Recreational Fishing Summit, was held
2 in 2010. Relationships between NOAA and the
3 recreational fishing community were not
4 particularly good. In fact, many, many
5 people at the conference this week said that
6 the tenor of that first conference was tense,
7 if not outright hostile, and that the facts
8 that there were some pretty significant
9 promises made in terms of NOAA committing to
10 better communications, better engagement,
11 dedication of more resources towards
12 understanding recreational fishing,
13 interests, contributions, and needs, those
14 promises were made at that 2010 conference.
15 And many of them, and I hope most of them, were
16 fulfilled, which resulted in a much more
17 cordial atmosphere at the conference earlier
18 this week.

19 But, also, a very serious sense that,
20 now that better communications have been
21 established, it was time to actually make very
22 real, substantive process. And that was sort
23 of the business of those two days, was to sit
24 down in small groups, to come together, to put
25 together suggestions about how we could
26 actually make progress in the needs that have
27 been articulated by the recreational
28 community itself, including the need perhaps
29 to manage recreational fisheries differently,
30 to acknowledge, to try to capture again what
31 the social, cultural, and economic
32 contributions and needs of that community
33 were, a number of other issues that were
34 articulated.

35 So, at the end, there was also the
36 presentation of a very well-thought-out
37 report, the Morris-Deal Report, put together
38 by the recreational fishing community, that
39 articulated what its goals and requests of
40 NMFS were, which was, I think we all
41 acknowledged, is very helpful and it is going
42 to help us figure out where we are going to go
43 next.

44 So, the results of that Summit were
45 that we are going to take the results of all
46 these discussion groups and these various
47 categories and put together a new action plan
48 for the next few years. We want to have more

1 not just process, but substantive goals that
2 we're going to work towards.

3 And then, also, I made a pledge that
4 we were going to take the first recommendation
5 of the Morris-Deal Report, which was a request
6 for a national policy on recreational fishing,
7 and that I promised that we were going to start
8 working on that immediately, and that that was
9 our goal, was to have a national recreational
10 fishing policy.

11 And we are going to develop that in
12 a very collaborative and transparent way.
13 And so, we want input from every element of the
14 recreational fishing community and everybody
15 who has an interest in making sure that that
16 national policy is articulated well.

17 So, I invite you guys to pay
18 attention, you know, to contribute to that
19 when we get started on it, which will be soon,
20 and to look for the next action plan for
21 recreational fishing, as we work on that.

22 So, with that, I just wanted to say
23 again it's nice to see everybody here. I'm
24 going to sit in on a few more minutes. I have
25 got to run away to a 9:30 meeting, but I would
26 like to sit in for a little while and hear more
27 of your discussion.

28 I would be happy to take questions if
29 anybody has them, although my experience is I
30 don't know any of the answers still.

31 But I guess the only other thing I
32 would just mention is this is budget season
33 here in Washington. So, there have been a lot
34 of discussions everywhere, from the
35 Secretary's level to my level and every other
36 line office at NOAA, to go chat with our
37 friends on the Hill about the President's
38 budget for 2015.

39 And I have been doing my best to make
40 the case that NOAA Fisheries really does need
41 the resources that we have asked for in that
42 budget, that we are not back up to the levels
43 we were pre-sequester, pre-shutdown,
44 pre-2013, although we have made some modest
45 levels of recovery.

46 But to get the kind of science that
47 we need to maintain sustainable fisheries, to
48 recover protected resources, to rebuild

1 habitat, to manage species in an
2 ecosystem-based manner, to live up to our
3 international obligations, all of those
4 things take resources. And so, I am going to
5 fight really hard to get what I think we need
6 and what we deserve.

7 So, thank you.

8 MR. RAAB: So, we have time for a few
9 questions or comments.

10 Pat, you're first.

11 MEMBER AUGUSTINE: Thank you.
12 Welcome aboard to the world of "make believe".

13 (Laughter.)

14 A lot of promises have been made in
15 the past, and not a lot has been delivered on
16 the surface. I know there's a lot of work
17 going on behind the lines and under the lines.

18 I've been on the Council and a
19 Commission for quite a long period of time.
20 We have had to scrimp and scrape to put dollars
21 together to support the research efforts along
22 the coast.

23 In recent years we developed
24 something called NEMAP, and we all have seen
25 that. NEMAP, in particular, is a research
26 setaside program that basically has divided
27 the commercial and recreational community.
28 They've blown them apart.

29 If you get the quota that you buy, you
30 end up fishing when the seasons are closed.
31 And those folks who can't afford to get into
32 that part of it, they sit at the dock and
33 continue to lose money.

34 It would require probably a transfer
35 of monies that are set to something else, maybe
36 catch errors or something else that could be
37 transferred to the research setaside program
38 that is called NEMAP that is absolutely
39 essential for the 15 states and our research
40 needs, roughly \$2 million a year.

41 And every year that we run this
42 program, the Council and Commission agree to
43 set aside 3 percent of the quotas of usually
44 fluke, black sea bass, porgies, and now we have
45 monkfish and several other species. Bluefish
46 are in there also.

47 And when you are talking about 3
48 percent on maybe a 2.5 or 3 million-pound

1 quota, it cuts in pretty deep. When you have
2 recreational anglers, then, again, you heard
3 from the program last week what the cry is from
4 the recreational anglers, redistribution,
5 what they're looking for. Someone is going to
6 get hurt. They want more fish. That's
7 another problem.

8 But this research set aside, if there
9 is some way that your organization at your
10 level could offer up in the very near future
11 a transfer of about \$2 million to, in this case
12 it would be ASMFC -- and I think SEAMAP has some
13 concerns in the South Atlantic -- that would
14 probably benefit all fishermen, both
15 recreational and commercial, up and down the
16 coast.

17 Right now, there is a constant battle
18 and fight for the quota shares that you will
19 actually buy in order to fish when the season
20 is closed. So, that is the only thing.

21 I hope you have permanent ink on your
22 new business cards that last more than six
23 months. Sam has had musical chairs to play.
24 I think he has done yeoman work, and I think
25 you've got a tremendous staff that you have
26 inherited.

27 So, we're with you. Let's see you
28 move forward with haste to help our resource
29 season, support money to do the groups that
30 need this.

31 Thank you.

32 MS. SOBECK: Well, thank you. And
33 you know what? I was remiss in not thanking
34 Sam and really the whole NOAA Fisheries
35 Headquarters team and our regional folks. I
36 mean, I have just been blown away by what a
37 great team, and it really makes the job a lot
38 easier when you can really rely on the team
39 that you have got in place. And so, I am still
40 completely reliant on them and intend to be in
41 the future.

42 I will just note for the record that
43 I gave Sam Rauch his first job at the Justice
44 Department. So, Sam and I have actually known
45 each other for quite a while.

46 And you have proved my point -- thank
47 you -- that I don't know the answer to your
48 question. And I am happy to look into it.

1 You know, I will say this is not going
2 to come as a shock to anybody in the room, that
3 moving money around in the government is not
4 as easy as any federal manager would like it
5 to be. We don't get a fungible pot of money
6 that we can just put anywhere that we think
7 reflects our priorities, and that the budget
8 process is cumbersome at best and completely
9 irrational at worst.

10 So, we do try to take advantage of the
11 flexibility we have, and we are trying very
12 hard, as Margo and others were mentioning,
13 too. We have been forced in these times of
14 austerity to look a lot harder and think a lot
15 harder than I think we have in the past about
16 what our priorities are, and trying to make
17 sure that, for instance, science and
18 management goals are aligned. But we have got
19 to work within the structure we have.

20 But I will be happy to look into and
21 try to educate myself about the point you
22 raise.

23 MR. RAAB: Rusty? Then, Sonja, and
24 then, Shana.

25 MEMBER HUDSON: Welcome aboard, Ms.
26 Sobeck.

27 Rusty Hudson.

28 I have been involved with the shark
29 fisheries since the early eighties when
30 National Marine Fisheries Service helped us to
31 develop that, Department of Commerce, Sea
32 Grant, et cetera.

33 In '93, we put a shark plan in place.
34 It has been 21 years, and we have not managed
35 to get the straddling stock issue solved with
36 like Mexico. Sharks like dusky and sandbar
37 sharks, which you will learn more about as we
38 go into the future, over winter; a lot of the
39 adults over winter down there. And there is
40 a certain amount of take through the history
41 that we utilize in our assessments.

42 Dr. Hogarth did try to meet with them
43 at certain points. And at certain points at
44 the beginning and the end of all this process
45 of 21 years, we have tried to engage the
46 scientists to be more involved with our
47 process of assessment. But we have been
48 unilaterally managing a lot of this situation.

1 So, we need help there on the straddling stock
2 issue.

3 The second and final thing is that
4 the California fin ban and everything that has
5 follows since then, the California fin dealers
6 were encouraged into the existence of buying
7 our product from Maine to Texas since the early
8 eighties. And for the last two years, they
9 have been out of business.

10 It has impacted us financially very
11 seriously with our directed shark fishery and
12 our bycatch shark fishery. And we need help
13 because we in Florida, Dr. Hueter and
14 others -- he's been trying to work on the
15 straddling stock issue. We have been trying
16 to work on being able to keep our fishermen
17 fishing. And that's really kind of our motto.

18 Because we are a sustainable
19 fishery, we have been able to lead the world
20 in shark management. I think there is no
21 contest on that one.

22 And a lot of NGOs and myself in the
23 industry are trying to make a difference now.
24 We believe in conservation, not preservation.
25 And the emotional scenario that goes with some
26 of the assertions with the fin ban are not
27 necessarily true, but we would like to talk
28 about that later. We just didn't know if you
29 knew about that.

30 Thank you.

31 MS. SOBECK: Yes, I have been made
32 aware we have a number of issues working with
33 Mexico and that, as usual in this job, none of
34 them seem easy. So, straddling stocks is
35 definitely one of them, enforcement, turtles.
36 We have got a lot of issues that we need to keep
37 working on with Mexico.

38 And, yes, I understand that we are
39 trying to walk a fine line, thread quite a
40 needle with shark issues. I think you know
41 that the agency supports our shark fishery,
42 but we understand that internationally there
43 are shark issues, finning issues. And
44 figuring out to respect legitimate state laws
45 is something that we don't take lightly. So,
46 we are trying very hard to, as I said, find the
47 right path forward on this to respect, not to
48 honor every irrational interpretation that is

1 out there, but to find the respectful right
2 path. So, I hope we continue to work towards
3 that.

4 MR. RAAB: Sonja?

5 MEMBER FORDHAM: Thank you. I also
6 want to welcome you.

7 I'm Sonja Fordham. I head up a
8 project called Shark Advocates International,
9 housed at the Ocean Foundation here in
10 Washington.

11 And I quickly wanted to give you both
12 a compliment and an argument for your next
13 meeting, since you did mention that you are
14 headed to the Hill, give you a compliment about
15 things that happened before you got here.

16 MS. SOBECK: I'm happy to pass it
17 along to those who deserve it.

18 MEMBER FORDHAM: I work on sharks,
19 but about probably the most endangered shark
20 may be even marine fish in the world, and those
21 are sawfish. And here in the U.S. we have
22 small-tooth sawfish now really just in
23 Florida. We talked about them yesterday
24 under the agenda for both ESA and CITES.

25 And I have done a little bit of work
26 recently on the Hill trying to promote the NOAA
27 budget, particularly the protected resources
28 allocation, with a view of sawfish
29 conservation.

30 And so, the compliment is that, since
31 the 10 years since they were listed under the
32 ESA, the Regional Office in the Southeast and
33 the scientists at Panama City have done just
34 an exemplary job. We have a really
35 impressive -- I can say that I am on the
36 recovery team -- but a really impressive
37 recovery plan, I think.

38 And now, the U.S., because of that
39 research and those regulations and efforts,
40 along with Australia, are really the only
41 places in the world where we have concrete
42 examples of good news for sawfish.

43 But, of course, that budget, along
44 with other parts of the budget, have suffered,
45 particularly sawfish. And a lot of the
46 outreach has been caught, and so, we are really
47 urging more money for the sawfish recovery
48 plan implementation, in particular, the

1 outreach. We are having more and more
2 interactions with fishermen in Florida,
3 particularly recreational. We want to get
4 the word out that they are protected and that
5 you have to handle them very, very carefully
6 and release them immediately.

7 And that dovetails nicely with the
8 UCN Shark Specialists Group. I'm Deputy
9 Chair. We are about to come out in the next
10 couple of weeks with a global strategy for
11 sawfish. It is our first one, and this
12 signifies that sawfish are a priority for the
13 global shark community. And the U.S. is
14 really a terrific example. Extra funding for
15 that recovery plan would help us continue that
16 path.

17 Thank you.

18 MS. SOBECK: Great. Thank you.

19 And you're right, it has nothing to
20 do with anything I did, but I would be happy
21 to pass those comments and compliments along
22 to the regional folks.

23 And I guess I would just make the
24 observation that, you know, I think that our
25 protected resources program was hurt even more
26 than the fisheries side of the house in the
27 budget downturns, and that that really doesn't
28 help anybody. It doesn't help the fisheries
29 world when the protected resources world
30 doesn't get adequately funded, because it just
31 increases the likelihood of adverse
32 interactions and hampers our ability to
33 educate, outreach, mitigate, to do anything
34 other than just process requests to list or
35 consultations.

36 For protected resources, it really
37 doesn't get us towards recovery, and that's
38 what we are aiming for in protected resources.
39 The goal is to get protected resources either
40 off the list or get them to be healthy under
41 the MMPA, or whatever other management tool we
42 have, so that certain interactions or certain
43 levels of take will not screw up other
44 activities that people want to pursue.

45 And so, I think that, again,
46 internationally, why our fisheries are
47 respected and sustainable is partly because we
48 have a robust protected species program. And

1 we just need to make sure that it does
2 receive -- we can't starve the protected
3 resources side of the house. We need to float
4 all our boats. We need to have the money. We
5 need to keep our fisheries sustainable and to
6 have good research, both on the fisheries and
7 the protected resources side of the house.

8 MR. RAAB: Shana? And then, Terri.
9 And then, Rick.

10 MEMBER MILLER: Thank you.

11 I will echo the congratulations on
12 your new post, and thanks for taking the time
13 to be with us this morning.

14 My name is Shana Miller. I work for
15 the Ocean Foundation as a consultant to the Pew
16 Charitable Trust.

17 And we talked yesterday about a very
18 big decision that Margo's team is making right
19 now, a culmination of five-plus years of
20 effort of this group. And that is Amendment
21 7 on bluefin tuna.

22 And the western population of
23 bluefin is severely depleted. The last stock
24 assessment showed, you know, indications of
25 the very beginnings of recovery of that stock,
26 but we still have a long way to go. Based on
27 that, the scientists recommended staying the
28 course for both stocks, western and eastern
29 Atlantic.

30 And to their credit, the fisheries
31 managers maintain the quota based on the
32 scientific advice, and there is an updated
33 assessment coming up later this year. There
34 is no indication that we will see anything much
35 different. So, chances are the U.S. will be
36 operating under the same quota level for the
37 foreseeable future.

38 But, at the same time, hopefully, the
39 stocks will continue to rebuild, including the
40 eastern stocks. So, we will be seeing more
41 eastern fish migrating into our waters. And
42 we are going to run the risk of exceeding our
43 U.S. quota from ICCAT for bluefin.

44 The longline category, in
45 particular, has exceeded its subquota for many
46 years now, each of the last five years more
47 than doubled its quota, tripled its quota in
48 two of those years. And there is the

1 continuing issue of wasteful dead discards in
2 that fishery. In what, 2012, we saw over 20
3 percent of total U.S. mortality was dead
4 discards in that fishery, you know, very
5 wasteful use of this valuable resource.

6 So, the good news is that many of the
7 measures proposed in Amendment 7 are going to
8 address these problems. However, one of the
9 most controversial pieces is a proposed
10 reallocation from some of the more selective
11 traditional gear categories to the longline
12 category. And that proposal has been
13 interpreted by some as inadvertently
14 rewarding the inability of that fishery to
15 operate within its limits.

16 As with many of the people around
17 this table, we have submitted detailed
18 comments on this issue and suggested a
19 different strategy on how to balance the quota
20 requirements for each of the categories
21 without reallocation.

22 And most importantly, by expanding
23 the proposed longline gear restricted area in
24 the Gulf of Mexico in both time and space, to
25 more fully cover the peak spawning of western
26 bluefin and, also, the peak bycatch. The Gulf
27 of Mexico is the only known spawning ground of
28 the western population. It is also the only
29 location where we know all the fish caught are
30 from the western population. So, it is a
31 priority for protection in that way, and it can
32 also expand in that gear restricted area, can
33 also give us the quota savings.

34 So, you know, as you in the agency
35 support Margo and Brad, who may not be here,
36 as they finalize that rule, I just really urge
37 you to consider all the many comments that have
38 been received on how to reduce bluefin bycatch
39 in the longline fishery while also maintaining
40 the traditional quota shares.

41 Thanks.

42 MS. SOBECK: Okay. Thanks.

43 MR. RAAB: Terri?

44 MEMBER BEIDEMAN: My name is Terri
45 Beideman.

46 Welcome and thank you for coming.
47 It is very nice to meet you. I just really
48 wanted to like say hello and welcome you to the

1 wild world of the international segment here
2 of our fisheries.

3 The folks around this table are, in
4 my opinion, the cream of the crop of the United
5 States fishermen that fish international
6 stocks. We follow rules. We have lots of
7 them. Some of them require us to discard
8 fish; we don't want to. We comply, and then,
9 we get punched in the nose for it.

10 I actually represent Blue Water
11 Fishermen's Association that has been around
12 for a couple of decades, working on trying to
13 recover international highly-migratory
14 species, and swordfish, in particular, was our
15 first species that we went forward. And guess
16 what? We have recovered, fully recovered
17 North Atlantic swordfish stock.

18 And we didn't do it singlehandedly
19 because we don't catch all of it, but we did
20 have a pretty large part in pushing it and
21 forcing it to succeed. And we are fully
22 rebuilt, and it is because American fishermen
23 pushed for that.

24 So, we like to have some sense that
25 the leadership recognizes, when they go to
26 ICCAT, that we are important and that we need
27 protection. The other countries come into
28 this looking to get as much as fish as they can
29 for their fishermen.

30 And in recent years, it seems like we
31 don't have as much push to try to hang onto or
32 increase what we need to survive. We are on
33 the brink.

34 And so, I didn't intend to get into
35 the details of Amendment 7. It is an
36 extremely-complicated 30-year mess that we're
37 trying to fix. And I have put in, on behalf
38 of Blue Water, a pretty extensive comment that
39 I know is in the process, and I encourage you
40 to read it.

41 If you have any questions, Margo
42 knows how to reach me. But I do welcome you
43 and wish you good luck. This is not easy.

44 And HMS is kind of different from the
45 Councils. So, we hope we don't get lost in the
46 shuffle. Lots of stuff going on with all the
47 Councils everywhere, and we are kind of a
48 little different, all of us a little bit.

1 (Laughter.)

2 So, thanks.

3 MS. SOBECK: Yes. Thank you.

4 I mean, if there is one thing I knew
5 before, and that has been reinforced since my
6 return, it is there's nothing that is simple
7 in the fish world and everything is complex and
8 unique. So, you can't learn -- learning one
9 thing doesn't get you too far in learning
10 anything else.

11 So, I understand that Amendment 7 and
12 all the other issues before you guys are
13 complicated, and it really matters, no matter
14 where you stand on the issue.

15 And I also think that we do need to
16 fight to keep American industry alive, but we
17 do have a conservation responsibility or we
18 won't have a future resource.

19 And there has been a lot of pain and
20 suffering on the part of industry and
21 recreational anglers. But there has been a
22 big payoff. You know, that is part of what the
23 calculus is. And to the extent that we can all
24 sit and take collective credit for recovered
25 stocks and species around the country, I mean,
26 there was no recovery, I don't think, that
27 didn't involve a fair amount of pain, which
28 everybody should be congratulated for
29 suffering through for the current and,
30 hopefully, future benefit.

31 What time is it? I need to leave in
32 a couple of minutes to get back over for
33 another meeting.

34 MR. RAAB: So, we are about 10
35 minutes over what Eileen committed to give us,
36 but we are just going to take one more comment.
37 Sorry to those who came up late.

38 But, Rick, go ahead.

39 MEMBER BELLAVANCE: Thank you..

40 Welcome, Ms. Sobek.

41 Just a quick comment. First of all,
42 I would like to say thank you very much for
43 attending the Recreational Fishing Summit.
44 On behalf of all the recreational folks that
45 I talked to there, we were impressed that you
46 took that amount of time out of your busy
47 schedule to listen to our issues. And I think
48 you correctly framed quite a few of the

1 important issues that came out of that Summit.
2 But I would also like to just talk a
3 little bit more about one theme that came up
4 pretty regularly in all of the sessions that
5 I attended. That is the dissatisfaction in
6 the recreational community with our current
7 data collection program regarding catch and
8 effort.

9 I would recommend or ask that you
10 would spend a little time learning about that,
11 and possibly offer guidance to your agency in
12 developing a new system that incorporates new
13 technologies and maybe some angler
14 self-reporting into that collection process.
15 I think you would get really good buy-in from
16 the community and continue to foster those
17 relationships that we have started to build.

18 And again, I just want to say thanks
19 for taking your time to attend that Summit.
20 That was important.

21 MS. SOBECK: Yes, absolutely. And
22 thanks for bringing that up.

23 Yes, as far as I'm concerned,
24 everything is on the table, and although it
25 probably won't happen as quickly as everybody
26 wants done.

27 So, I'm sorry I am going to have to
28 leave. I will say I did spend two full days
29 at the Summit, which is why I've got a bunch
30 of stuff crammed into my calendar.
31 Otherwise, I would have loved to stick around
32 to hear a bit more of the discussion.

33 But, you know, if you have something
34 specific you want to bring up to me, let Margo
35 know, let Allan know, whoever else in the
36 agency.

37 And I look forward to sitting in on
38 other sessions and getting to know more about
39 your issues.

40 So, thanks very much, everybody.
41 Thanks, Margo.

42 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: Yes. Thank
43 you for coming.

44 (Applause.)

45 MR. RAAB: So, we had two more cards
46 up on the research, Carrie and Andre. So,
47 let's wrap that up, and then, we're on to
48 sharks. And Pat, yes.

1 Carrie?

2 MEMBER KENNEDY: Carrie Kennedy,
3 Maryland DNR Fisheries Service.

4 Going back to the research plan and
5 your concerns about how to prioritize needs,
6 identify and prioritize needs, you know, there
7 are other areas where this is being done. And
8 specifically, the ACCSP has two committees.
9 They have a Bycatch and Biological Sampling
10 Priority Matrix that they create.

11 And I know that there are
12 representatives from Northeast and Southeast
13 Fisheries Science Centers on there, all the
14 partners. You know, there's recreational
15 folks. I know Rick is involved through ACCSP.
16 There's commercial advisors.

17 So, I think that might be a really
18 good place and a really good opportunity to
19 identify some research needs. For example, I
20 just took a quick look at the matrix, and, you
21 know, pelagic longline bycatch is on the
22 matrix in terms of needs. So, that might be
23 a place to at least discuss with your partners
24 what the needs are and what the priority is,
25 rather than having to do it all from scratch.

26 Thanks.

27 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: Yes, to that,
28 we do have a representative on at least one of
29 those committees. So, thank you for that
30 suggestion.

31 MR. RAAB: Andre?

32 MEMBER BOUSTANY: Andre Boustany,
33 Duke University.

34 I would like to echo some of the
35 things that other people have said before me
36 regarding outside consultation on making the
37 research management plan.

38 With that being said, I like the idea
39 of having the two separate tracks of those
40 research goals that inform, directly inform,
41 stock assessment science or management
42 questions, and those research questions that
43 are of broader interest, maybe beyond just
44 directly informing management.

45 The former, I think people within the
46 agency are going to have a better idea of what
47 those goals and needs are than outside
48 scientists will. Outside scientists may be

1 better able to inform the latter.

2 I think an area where outside
3 scientists, or even non-scientists, will help
4 inform both types of potential science to be
5 done is in providing information on both
6 feasibility and cost to carry out various
7 goals.

8 And please keep an idea of what the
9 cost for each of these science management
10 goals would be, as that is going to impact both
11 the feasibility and the ranking, I think, of
12 what those are. Everyone in this room might
13 agree that a \$20 million project, you know,
14 tagging every HMS species with electronic tags
15 might be a great thing, but that's never going
16 to be feasible, as an example.

17 One thing I would just like to add in
18 terms of getting outside scientists' input on
19 crafting these plans is that you have to take
20 a lot of things we say with a grain of salt
21 because we are all going to rank the type of
22 science we do very highly. So, I am sure
23 you're well aware of that, but that is just the
24 nature of the beast.

25 And as we see the linking between
26 what goes into that plan and, then, potential
27 funding in the future, we try to be objective.
28 We are trained to be objective, but we are also
29 humans. So, keep an eye on that.

30 And also, just one last thing.
31 There is a potential for a lot of stuff to be
32 done very cheaply. The agency has a lot of
33 data without extra manpower, extra
34 person-power lying around to analyze those
35 data. Those of us at universities and other
36 institutions potentially have students and
37 other people that are looking for projects
38 that can be done very easily and cheaply, if
39 data were available. So, making the
40 connection between those two, the people that
41 have extra human power and the people that have
42 data that needs to be analyzed, that is a
43 potential area where a lot of projects could
44 be done, discrete projects could be done very
45 cheaply.

46 Thanks.

47 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: Thanks, Andre.
48 I appreciate that.

1 MR. RAAB: Pat? And then, Allan.
2 And then, we're on to dusky sharks.

3 MEMBER AUGUSTINE: Thank you.

4 On the issue of what is the best way
5 to incorporate AP input, several years ago we
6 used to have the focus groups. We would break
7 out into separate sections. I don't know if
8 this fell apart or wasn't effective.

9 But I thought the results of those
10 were very pointed, very clear-cut, when you
11 have four, five, or six people working on a
12 particular section and come forward with a
13 recommendation. And I still believe,
14 although we're an advisory panel, if there is,
15 I want to say, a consensus of opinion on a
16 particular area, I really think that that
17 should be advanced. And I think you do that
18 over time, but when we leave, we don't really
19 know that. We just have a sense that you are
20 going to take it under consideration because
21 in the wrapup you feed back to us what the
22 elements were that we put forth.

23 That, in itself, would make this
24 group feel more viable, as though they're more
25 vibrant; they're more of an interactive part.
26 I look around the table and look at the number
27 of years of collective experience. We have
28 here 400 years of experience collectively
29 between the recreational, commercial, and
30 NGOs.

31 And it just begs to be asked, the
32 question begs to be asked, why is that talent
33 not more effectively being used? And that's
34 all I have to say on that.

35 It is the same way with SSC. SSC can
36 be to your benefit. It can also be to your
37 demise. If you have an outside source, first
38 off, the funding it takes to put one together,
39 it can be very costly.

40 In the Council experience, we used
41 the SSC for a couple of years. All we did was
42 pay for their out-of-pocket expenses. We did
43 not give them a per diem. As time went on, we
44 decided to give them a per diem, and they ended
45 up with the same daily money, per diem, as the
46 Council members. It became very costly. And
47 with money as tight as it is, it is kind of
48 tough.

1 But SSC is a great idea. You could
2 try it as an experimental basis, one or two
3 species, and see if it helps. It may be a
4 clarifying point for us.

5 MR. RAAB: Allan?

6 MEMBER WILLIS: Allan Willis.

7 I would like to say times two on
8 Andre's comments. I thought that was really
9 well-worded with particular emphasis on the
10 cheapest information you can get is typically
11 from mining existing data that hasn't been
12 thoroughly reviewed. That's it.

13 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: So, maybe as we
14 have got the shark folks coming up, I will just
15 respond on the breakout group. We like them,
16 too, but I have to say that we got some very
17 mixed feedback. Some people on the panel
18 loved them, and some people, I think, on the
19 panel hated them.

20 So, I think we are trying to use that
21 forum, that format, where we think that
22 smaller discussion is really worthwhile, but
23 not overuse it. So, that is why maybe you
24 haven't seen it quite so frequently.

25 But I think you're right, it gives us
26 a very distilled, synthesized feedback, and,
27 also, a good chance for dialog amongst the
28 panel and staff. So, we haven't forgotten it.

29 MR. RAAB: Okay. So, let's move on
30 to the 5b on dusky sharks.

31 MR. COOPER: Good morning,
32 everybody.

33 I am Peter Cooper. For those that
34 don't know me, I am a Fishery Management
35 Specialist in the Highly Migratory Species
36 Management Division here in Silver Spring.

37 And I am just going to go through a
38 presentation on Amendment 5b Predraft. And I
39 think Margo sent everybody a copy. We might
40 have some hard copies in the back, and it is
41 available online, on our website as well.

42 And it is just dusky sharks today,
43 which is kind of nice. And so, I am going to
44 go through the background of Amendment 5b,
45 what we are doing here, and then, get into some
46 different ideas on alternatives, and open it
47 up for, hopefully, a lot of discussion and
48 feedback on where we can go next.

1 And so, if you recall, we had
2 Amendment 5, which was developed to address a
3 smorgasbord, for lack of a better term, of
4 shark stock assessment results. And some of
5 the stocks that were included in Amendment 5
6 were assessed for the first time. Others had
7 been assessed in the past and we were
8 addressing new information. So, there is a
9 bunch of different timelines and a bunch of
10 different approaches involved.

11 When we went out with the Draft
12 Environmental Impact Statement and the
13 Proposed Rule, we received a lot of comments
14 on dusky shark measures, and specifically,
15 regarding data sources used in the analysis
16 that we were doing with some of the data. And
17 a lot of the comments also asked us to consider
18 significantly-different approaches than what
19 we had in our alternatives, stuff like
20 exemptions to recreational minimum size for
21 certain species of sharks and implementing
22 gear restrictions instead of additional
23 pelagic longline closures.

24 Measures that weren't in there that
25 we felt, after reviewing all the comments,
26 that we wanted to go back and take another look
27 at some of the approaches. So, we decided not
28 to proceed with the dusky shark management
29 measures as proposed.

30 Dusky sharks are already under a
31 rebuilding plan. So, they kind of weren't
32 tied to the same timeline as some of the main
33 driving species of Amendment 5, which was the
34 scalloped hammerhead, which was a first-time
35 assessment and determined to be overfished
36 with overfishing occurring.

37 So, we went forward with the rest of
38 the measures for sandbar, scalloped
39 hammerhead, the two blacknosed stocks, and the
40 Gulf of Mexico black tip shark stocks in
41 Amendment 5a. And that was finalized on April
42 18th, and the FEIS came out then. And then,
43 the Final Rule is in July. And then, the
44 commercial and recreational management
45 measures were also implemented, became
46 effective that summer.

47 And so, Amendment 5b was just dusky
48 sharks, what we are going to talk about today.

1 We did a Notice of Intent to Prepare a DEIS on
2 April 24th. And then, we are going to move
3 forward from here, after we discuss the
4 Predraft, into the Proposed Rule stage. We
5 are expecting to get that out in the fall of
6 this year.

7 And so, just looking back on the
8 stock assessment that we're working off of,
9 the SEDAR 21 came back with the result of dusky
10 sharks still being subject to overfishing and
11 the stock being overfished, the same results
12 as the 2006 stock assessment.

13 But because dusky sharks had been
14 prohibited since 2000, the stock assessment
15 used a catch-free model, looking at catch
16 rates rather than landings and that sort of
17 thing, and came up with a new rebuilding
18 timeline. The previous one was 400 years.
19 The stock assessment is 100 years. And also,
20 instead of giving us a TAC number, something,
21 because there's no landings, we got a
22 recommendation to reduce fishing mortality by
23 58 percent.

24 So, that's what we're dealing with.
25 We're dealing with a species that is not
26 authorized for retention in the commercial or
27 recreational fishery, and we need to reduce
28 fishing mortality.

29 So, because we went through the whole
30 draft stage with a lot of the dusky shark
31 measures, we set up the Predraft kind of in a
32 similar way to what you would see in an DEIS.
33 So, we have got a bunch of alternatives that
34 we think meet the purpose and need of Amendment
35 5b, and we have kind used this in the NEPA
36 context of things.

37 But, remember, right now, we are at
38 the Predraft stage. So, all ideas are back on
39 the table. Okay? So, you just want to keep
40 that in mind when we are making comments.

41 And the assumption that we are using
42 here in the Predraft is our reasonable
43 alternatives are consistent with the 10
44 national standards of Magnuson. They must be
45 administratively feasible, and they can't
46 violate other laws. And they must be
47 consistent with our HMS FMP. And working with
48 a purpose of managing the fishery resources in

1 a manner that maximizes resource
2 sustainability while minimizing
3 socioeconomic impacts, and the need is to end
4 overfishing on dusky sharks and rebuild stock.

5 We are also working off of similar
6 assumptions that we used in the Draft on where
7 to target a reduction in fishing mortality.
8 Because of restrictions to the bottom longline
9 shark fishery from Amendment 2, and kind of
10 what we have control over the shark research
11 fishery, and what we have done in the last year
12 is to put caps on dusky shark interactions at
13 very low levels, the alternatives that are
14 included in the Predraft are focused on the
15 recreational fishery and the pelagic longline
16 fishery.

17 So, first, I will step through what
18 we have for recreational management measures.
19 So, we took kind of what we had in the Draft
20 and, then, all of the public comments that we
21 received, and tried to pull together some
22 measures here that address the public
23 comments. So, some of the measures are
24 similar to what you have seen previously; some
25 are different, and some are modified.

26 So, Alternative 1, A1 here, is no
27 action. Don't change any of our management
28 measures for recreational retention or size
29 limits, and that sort of thing. Probably
30 won't meet the purpose and need of what we're
31 trying to do here. And I just want to point
32 out that we have a new minimum size for the
33 hammerhead sharks of 78 inches.

34 Alternative A2 -- and this was
35 something that we heard a lot in public
36 comment -- was to require HMS angling and
37 charter head boat permit-holders to obtain a
38 shark endorsement when they get their permit
39 and, then, have certain requirements
40 associated with that endorsement.

41 And here, we are thinking that they
42 would need to have a NMFS-approved shark
43 identification placard onboard at all times
44 when they're recreational fishing for sharks.
45 This would do a couple of things. It would
46 give us a better sense of who is out there and
47 targeting sharks. Right now, if you get one
48 of these recreational permits, it authorizes

1 you to recreationally fish for all HMS.

2 So, we don't have a specific number
3 of folks who are really interested in sharks.
4 We have the kind of overall recreational
5 angler number.

6 And also, we find in the recreational
7 fishery we have got problems with species
8 identification, especially with these
9 carcharhinid species like dusky sharks are
10 very similar to other species. And we think
11 that some of the recreational landings are due
12 to species misidentification. So, having a
13 shark identification placard onboard, raising
14 awareness of not only species identification,
15 but also the rules and regulations, we think
16 would be beneficial to dusky sharks.

17 And then, kind of hand-in-hand with
18 that, we heard a lot of comments on just
19 increasing public outreach and on ID and on our
20 specific regulations. And we could do that in
21 a number of ways through ID guides, other
22 informational type of materials and, also,
23 trying to think about targeting more online
24 resources on our shiny, new website, that sort
25 of thing.

26 Another alternative here, A4, that
27 we heard feedback on from the AP here and
28 others, would be just to prohibit retention of
29 all ridgeback sharks in the recreational
30 fishery. Right now, there are a couple you
31 can still retain, oceanic white tip and tiger
32 sharks, putting them together with some of our
33 other prohibited species and just being able
34 to use a blanket statement of prohibiting all
35 ridgeback sharks might communicate things
36 better, make people understand what is
37 allowable and what is not.

38 In the Predraft, we would not apply
39 this to smoothhound sharks. We think that
40 there's enough of a difference in
41 identification. They also have a predorsal
42 ridge which we could use as a distinguishing
43 characteristic between those and the other
44 ridgeback sharks.

45 Alternative A5 would be to request
46 that certain states, specifically add New
47 Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia, and
48 the ASMFC to extend their existing shark

1 closure from July 15th to July 31st.

2 One thing we tried to do in Draft A5
3 was to modify the dates of the Mid-Atlantic
4 shark closure off of North Carolina, which
5 runs currently from January 1 through July
6 31st, to better line up with neighboring
7 states, to give North Carolina more equitable
8 access to the shark fishery.

9 So, in A5, it was proposed to shift
10 the dates by 15 days, so that the end date would
11 be on July 31st and the start date would be on
12 December 15th. We got comments that that
13 wouldn't work out, but we felt that we couldn't
14 shrink the time of the closure and reduce
15 protection on dusky sharks in those areas.

16 So, this is just a little bit
17 different approach to kind of line those dates
18 up and extend a little bit of extra protection
19 for dusky sharks in that region during that
20 time period.

21 Alternative A6 would be to increase
22 the minimum size of all recreational-caught
23 sharks that currently have a size limit,
24 except for the hammerheads, to 89 inches fork
25 length. And this was a similar alternative in
26 Draft A5. I think it was 96 inches for dusky
27 sharks, and that was based on size and maturity
28 of 50 percent of females, which was 93 inches,
29 and then, rounded up to 8 feet just for
30 enforcement purposes.

31 Since the Draft came out, there has
32 been new scientific data on age/maturity of
33 dusky sharks, and 50 percent size of maturity,
34 based on the literature, is now at 89 inches
35 fork length. And we also received comment
36 that there's really not a need to round up to
37 a specific foot length for enforcement
38 purposes. So, we have this alternative in
39 here of 89 inches fork length for all sharks.

40 Alternative A7 would be to allow just
41 catch and release of all Atlantic HMS-managed
42 sharks. And so, retention would be
43 prohibited. And then, that would minimize
44 any incidental landings of dusky sharks from
45 misidentification or not understanding what
46 is allowable to be retained.

47 And then, finally, just closing the
48 recreational shark fishery, and there would be

1 no targeting for sharks for retention or even
2 for catch and release.

3 And so, that is what we have for the
4 recreational measures. For the commercial
5 management measures -- and these are based,
6 again, on the PLL fishery -- we have the no
7 action; just leave things as they are, and
8 commercial measures would remain the same.
9 They might not meet the purpose and need.

10 We have in Alternative B2 more of a
11 gear restriction measure. We didn't have
12 these included in Draft A5. And so, we
13 included this based on public comment. So, it
14 would be a limit on the number of hooks per set.
15 It would be limited to 750 hooks -- we got that
16 specific number in comment -- and no more than
17 800 assembled gangion on the boat at anytime.
18 So, you would have some extras. You could
19 also have all the components to assemble as
20 many gangions as you want, just no more than
21 800 assembled onboard at anytime.

22 We have taken a look at some of the
23 data that we have seen as far as number of hooks
24 used per set. It really depends on the target
25 species. It seems like for swordfish,
26 targeting swordfish and yellowfin tuna,
27 average hooks per set are less than 750. So,
28 this could cap that and make sure that the
29 number of hooks per set wouldn't increase.
30 But, for targeting some other species like
31 mahi, it seems like they use more hooks per
32 set, according to the data that we have. And
33 so, this might be a limiting factor on those
34 fishermen.

35 Alternative B3 would be a
36 requirement on release protocols. Fishermen
37 would need to release all sharks not being
38 retained or brought onboard using a dehooker
39 or cutting the gangion less than 3 feet from
40 the hook to minimize trailing gear on the
41 sharks, with the idea of increasing the
42 post-release survival of sharks, including
43 dusky that are not usually brought onboard or
44 retained.

45 Alternative B4 would require the use
46 of weak hooks in the PLL fishery. Weak hooks
47 are already required in the Gulf of Mexico.
48 So, this would be applying them throughout the

1 rest of the Atlantic. They may have reduced
2 the number of mature dusky sharks caught on PLL
3 gear. They get fairly big, but there is not
4 a whole heck of a lot of data on their
5 effectiveness. But this was another approach
6 that was included based on public comment.

7 Alternative B5 would be to develop
8 dusky shark hotspot closure areas for vessels
9 fishing with PLL gear. And this is a map that
10 you have seen. In the Draft A5 we included
11 this in there as one of our approaches to try
12 to reduce interactions with dusky sharks in
13 specific areas, based on logbook data that we
14 had, trying to minimize those areas in time and
15 space as best as we could.

16 So, in the Predraft there is an
17 appendix with 48 maps. And these maps look at
18 the HMS logbook data and are Pelagic Observer
19 Program data. They plot interactions and,
20 also, catch per unit effort in terms of number
21 of dusky sharks caught per 10,000 hooks for
22 each month of the year. And they're summed up
23 from 2008 to 2012.

24 And we wanted to present that
25 information. So, we got a lot of feedback on
26 looking at the observer data and the logbook
27 data and coming up with the different
28 approaches for hotspot areas.

29 So, I would really encourage you to
30 take a look at those maps and give us feedback
31 on whether the previous hotspot closure areas
32 seem like they are viable areas, I guess for
33 candidates for closures to reduce
34 interactions.

35 And we lay out all the data based on
36 those areas and, also, the Amendment 7 gear
37 restricted areas. So, you can get an idea of
38 what those possible gear restricted areas, how
39 they might impact dusky shark interactions.

40 And then, also, in the Predraft we go
41 kind of a different route than we did in the
42 Draft A5 as far as analysis of the hotspots.
43 The way the gear restricted areas are analyzed
44 in A7, we took a lot of the comments from A5
45 as far as looking at redistribution of effort
46 and doing it more on individual vessel basis
47 rather than assuming that everybody will be
48 able to redistribute. And so, we would use

1 that approach in looking at the impacts of
2 these potential closure areas.

3 Alternative B6 would also take a
4 similar approach to one of the alternatives in
5 Amendment 7 and would look at allowing
6 conditional access to some of these dusky
7 shark hotspot closure areas, with the primary
8 objective of providing strong incentives to
9 avoid dusky sharks and reduce interactions
10 and, also, balance that with providing a
11 reasonable fishing opportunity.

12 In the Predraft there's a couple of
13 graphs like this. When you look at some of the
14 Pelagic Observer Program data and, also, the
15 HMS logbook data, a smaller percentage of the
16 fleet seems to make up a large percentage of
17 the dusky shark interactions. In this
18 example here we have 21 vessels making up 70
19 percent of observed dusky shark interactions,
20 so out of 132.

21 So, it would be taking a look at that
22 and, then, coming up with performance
23 criteria. It could be similar to what was
24 proposed in A7; it could be different, and
25 allowing access to vessels that can avoid
26 dusky sharks.

27 B7 is also from public comment, and
28 it would be prohibiting PLL fishing based on
29 water depth. And so, in this alternative we
30 use 100 fathoms. That was one of the depths
31 that was provided to us.

32 In the Predraft we take a look at
33 different depth bins by 50 fathoms and how many
34 interactions are seen in some of the logbook
35 data, and what those CPUEs are.

36 So, there could be a number of
37 different approaches as far as which depth to
38 use, but with the idea that restricting
39 certain areas where dusky sharks, fishing in
40 certain areas where dusky shark interactions
41 are more prevalent might be beneficial to
42 avoiding them.

43 Alternative B8 would be to increase
44 outreach and education, requiring all vessels
45 to have a shark ID placard, so they can better
46 identify dusky sharks and we can get better
47 data and better avoidance.

48 And then, also, possibly coming up

1 with a dusky shark fleet communication
2 protocol, relocation protocol, similar to
3 some of the things that are out there for
4 marine mammals and the take reduction teams.
5 You know, if one vessel is interacting with a
6 number of dusky sharks, they can let the rest
7 of the fleet know that dusky sharks are in this area,
8 to avoid that area, and then, to also move away
9 from the area or be required to move away from
10 the area. And this alternative also came from
11 a number of public comments.

12 B9 is kind of the extension of the
13 ASMSC closure area alternative that I
14 discussed in the recreational measures. And
15 it would be included for the same reasons I
16 talked about.

17 And B10 would be to remove pelagic
18 longline gear as an authorized gear for
19 Atlantic shark permit-holders.

20 So, that is what we have in the
21 Predraft. Like I mentioned before, we are
22 going back through the amendment process.
23 So, we are not to the draft stage. We are
24 still in Predraft. So, all ideas are on the
25 table.

26 So, let's open it up to hearing about
27 that. And we are going to kind of keep this
28 informal comment period open until April 30th.
29 So, we'll take your comments now, but, then,
30 feel free to, if you want to digest a little
31 bit and send some additional comments, feel
32 free to send them to me. I am at
33 peter.cooper@noaa.gov, or anybody else on the
34 team.

35 Thank you.

36 MR. RAAB: So, let's see if there are
37 questions or comments on the options that were
38 put forward or any other options that you think
39 would be better than the ones that you have
40 just seen. We are open to all of that.

41 Sonja?

42 MEMBER FORDHAM: Thank you.

43 Sonja Fordham, Shark Advocates
44 International.

45 I would like to digest, but thank
46 you. It is quite clear how you have broken it
47 down.

48 I have one question, one

1 recreational and one commercial question, and
2 then, I am going to ask you to go back to that
3 map.

4 But, for the recreational, can you
5 review the rationale behind like a move that
6 would ban retention of tiger sharks but not
7 smoothhounds? Like how would you justify the
8 tiger sharks being banned and not the
9 smooth-hounds?

10 And then, for the commercial, the
11 fact that there is no yet an option that would
12 deal with restricting soak time, which we
13 talked a little bit before. Can you just
14 explain, is that because that was considered
15 by the industry to be like exceptional
16 unpalatable or is it because the research just
17 really isn't there yet, or a combination?

18 And then, on the map of the area
19 closures, I think Bob and I were probably just
20 going to have some questions about whether
21 that map represents -- again, I don't see very
22 well at the moment -- but whether that
23 represents what you are proposing or how it
24 compares to what was proposed, and how long?
25 Because it says that we are going to develop
26 them, but, then, there's some blocks on the
27 map. So, a little bit of clarification there
28 would help.

29 Thank you very much.

30 MR. COOPER: So, for including tiger
31 sharks and oceanic white tip, that was one
32 alternative that we received or comment that
33 we received specifically from the Advisory
34 Panel and others to kind of simplify things.

35 I think there is enough of a
36 difference between a smoothhound, which does
37 have that predorsal ridge which is a specific
38 identifier, you know, a key characteristic
39 that is different than these other ridgeback
40 sharks which do not have that predorsal ridge.
41 So, I think that is one distinction.

42 MEMBER FORDHAM: Sorry. It is more
43 about how you justify -- if tiger sharks aren't
44 found to be overfished, and neither are
45 smoothhounds, how do you -- it is more like,
46 policy-wise, how do you justify taking away
47 something that's not considered overfished
48 but not doing the same precautionary measure

1 for another shark that could be confused?

2 You can think about it if you would
3 like to.

4 MR. COOPER: Well, no, I mean, it
5 would be to prevent the incidental take of
6 dusky sharks and simplifying it for people,
7 yes.

8 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: I think the
9 idea is that people can distinguish
10 smoothhounds more readily based on the
11 predorsal ridge than trying to carve out like
12 what we have now, where we have, you know, a
13 few exceptions, and we still have dusky sharks
14 coming in. So, I think it is trying to key-in,
15 again, on the dusky shark and confusion on
16 that, and using the characteristics that we
17 think might work.

18 MR. COOPER: So, restriction on soak
19 time, yes, that is something we talked about,
20 and it is something that we can continue to
21 consider. I think there's other aspects as
22 far as safety at sea that come into play when
23 we're restricting soak time.

24 And then, as far as the map, these are
25 just all of the hotspots closures that were
26 included in Draft Amendment 5, but they are
27 just kind of on the map. They are limited in
28 time and space. So, some of the closures only
29 take place in one month out of the year, and
30 others take place in a couple, but not at the
31 same time as the other ones.

32 So, this is just kind of a
33 representation of the breadth maybe of all the
34 closures, but taking a look at the specific
35 maps in the appendices or the appendix, since
36 it is only one, all the maps, they show when
37 those closures occur and what months. So, you
38 can see where the interactions are occurring,
39 what the CPUEs are during those times, and
40 where the closures are specifically. So,
41 this is just kind of a representation of
42 everything that was included.

43 When taking a look at the maps, we can
44 modify these area. Nothing here is set in
45 stone. So, you see what was previously. So,
46 it gives you a reference point of where we were
47 at and, then, where could we go with this sort
48 of measure. That is the question.

1 And was that it?

2 MEMBER FORDHAM: Yes.

3 MR. COOPER: Okay.

4 MR. RAAB: Jeff? Then, Martin,
5 Bob, Rusty, and Terri.

6 MEMBER ODEN: Thank you.

7 Jeff.

8 I really don't even know where to
9 start on this. I don't know. It is a good
10 thing I don't have a blood pressure monitor
11 right now.

12 But, anyway, hotspots. I recently
13 had, I would like to say, the pleasure of
14 participating in a SEDAR 36 on snowy grouper.
15 Interestingly enough, in that, we were very
16 glad to finally see that they had gotten rid
17 of a head boat index, which was the only
18 fishery-dependent indice in that particular
19 fishery.

20 And the head boats operated in 40
21 fathoms inward usually. Interestingly
22 enough, snowy grouper were from 75 fathom
23 seaward.

24 And essentially, that's what we are,
25 and you acknowledge in this document, when you
26 talk about 100 fathoms in and potential
27 closures, and the fact that we do participate
28 primarily in over 100 fathoms. And so, we
29 could, essentially, if you all wanted to take
30 it in the same light they were taking that
31 indice, you know, we are operating on the
32 fringe of that fishery. And instead of trying
33 to crucify us over it, you could consider that
34 as an abundance indice.

35 But, there again, in talking to
36 Karyl, you know, a while back, a couple of AP
37 meetings back, she was telling where dusky
38 sharks discards on logbooks are -- you know,
39 it's an abundance indice, right, Karyl?
40 Okay?

41 Well, then, again, you propose to
42 shut us down over 13 over three years on the
43 point. You know, one of the best, prime
44 fishing spots on the East Coast, in the month
45 of May, 13 over three years, and you call that
46 a hotspot, when Charlie Locke catches 230 in
47 the Research Fishery inside of 25 fathoms? I
48 mean, we are operating on the fringe of this

1 fishery, and yet, you are trying to crucify us.
2 I mean, look, we gave up the directed
3 shark fishery. You know, there is no future
4 in it. The Shark Research Fishery right
5 now -- I don't mean to say there is none; maybe
6 in the South Atlantic, you know, those guys,
7 blacktips, but in our area if we have got -- you
8 know, forget the sandbar fishery; it's history
9 if we have got to work around duskies.

10 And the designed inefficiency in the
11 Shark Research Fishery is just so incredible.
12 I mean, you're running from the truth. You
13 don't want to know what's actually happening.
14 I mean, it is just designed that way. You have
15 150 hooks set, you know, there in the Research
16 Fishery, and let's hope there aren't any
17 duskys. Otherwise, we're going to have to
18 hold you to that or not fish.

19 I mean, we used to fish. And I mean,
20 our gear pelagically is not designed to shark
21 fish. As in Gordie's case, the individual who
22 had 179 the other day and got a \$23,000 fine,
23 he was using gear that was not designed to
24 catch sharks. It was mahi gear, 300-pound
25 leaders. We used to fish
26 7-to-9-hundred-pound leaders. He ends up
27 catching 179, had over 200 hooks bit off.

28 And where's the transparency in this
29 Shark Research Fishery that we can't get our
30 hands on? These guys want it known. And yet,
31 you won't let us have this information to
32 defend ourselves.

33 The duskys are inside, well inside,
34 of 10 fathoms. To that point, you're talking
35 about trying to shut down fisheries inside of
36 100 fathoms, pelagic fisheries. There's mahi
37 fisheries that operate in there. Okay? In
38 the case of those, they're set -- you know,
39 they're different.

40 There's two types of mahi fish.
41 Some guys set across the stream, drift with it.
42 You know, they set it, let it soak all night.
43 Those of us that set inside, we will set three
44 times a day, seven or eight miles. We fish it
45 after 30 minutes. We eat a sandwich, cut the
46 bait, or not cut the bait. I mean, gut the
47 fish and go about our business. And then, set
48 back or haul the gear. Thirty minutes later

1 we do it again. We do it three times a day.
2 There is no more tallied in anything
3 in it other than mahi. That's it.
4 So, I mean, to say, broadly, let's
5 just close it down inside of the fishery, I
6 mean, that's wrong.
7 Seven hundred and fifty hooks, that
8 works for me. I don't know about other guys.
9 I mean, that definitely works for us. I mean,
10 that's pretty much the high end on what I would
11 do anyway, the very high end of it.
12 Anyhow, are we discussing the
13 Research Fishery after this? I guess we're
14 going into that in a little bit? Or can I just
15 go ahead and get it out now?
16 (Laughter.)
17 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: Just give us
18 what you've got.
19 (Laughter.)
20 MEMBER ODEN: What's that?
21 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: Just go ahead.
22 MEMBER ODEN: Well, anyway, it is
23 designed to fail, everything you're doing in
24 the shark fishery. You know, you've got a
25 Research Fishery now that has just been bumped
26 up. You've got considerable quota being
27 added to it. And the guys will never even
28 catch 10 percent of it. That's just the way
29 it is designed, at least in the Mid-Atlantic.
30 I mean, hey, we can't run from the
31 truth. You all seem to be very good at hiding
32 from it, you know. And that is unfortunate
33 for us because we have lost the fishery. Now
34 you are trying to take our pelagic longline
35 fishery from us. I mean, we gave it up. I
36 mean, by the time you all finally decide to
37 admit the truth, you know, advocacy will have
38 finished the shark fishery off because every
39 little kid in this world is going to think a
40 shark is Bambi.
41 You know, we can't sell our fins now.
42 You know, it's designed to fail, everything
43 you're doing.
44 So, I mean, I've kind of got it out,
45 but I'm sure I'll have more.
46 Anyway, thanks.
47 MR. RAAB: Thanks, Jeff.
48 Martin, you were next.

1 MEMBER SCANLON: Yes, well, the
2 first thing I want to address is, it starts
3 over there in the recreational. And even
4 though I don't usually like to comment in the
5 recreational end, that's not my field of
6 expertise; however, in Alternative 5 there,
7 when it talks about extending the change in the
8 time where you're closing, you know, the
9 time/date there, you seem to want to have a set
10 date on a calendar year.

11 And I talked about this in the
12 summertime, where it may be best to look at
13 where you're closing that. If you are going
14 to have to have it closed for two weeks, to have
15 it closed in relation to the moon. I mean, I
16 don't know when -- I don't know the purpose of
17 it, whether it is because of spawning. But do
18 they spawn on the moon, off the moon, or when
19 do they spawn? Every year is different. The
20 moon changes every year.

21 So, I believe that if you are going
22 to have two-week closure for a particular
23 reason, then you need to do it right. If
24 you're close it, close it in reference to the
25 moon or when they would be spawning, so you get
26 the most effect, the effectiveness of it, and
27 you don't punish the fishermen.

28 I mean, you're seeing that now in the
29 bluefin industry where, you know, you have got
30 areas closed at the wrong time. These guys
31 aren't, you know, the fish aren't there when
32 it is closed, or the fish are there when it's
33 closed, and they're not there when it is open.

34 And you're setting yourself up for
35 the same thing here. And one of the reasons
36 why I address this is because it does mention
37 that further on into the commercial end, on
38 that aspect. So, that is one thing that I
39 think you need to look at. If you do have any
40 type of closure, you need to have it in
41 reference to the moon, not so much on a
42 calendar basis.

43 Looking through this thing here,
44 also, you know, I agree with Jeff there as far
45 as the 750 hooks maximum in those hotspot
46 areas. I also agree that you need to identify
47 those hotspot areas. That is important to us
48 and our attempt to avoid certain things. That

1 is very important to us.

2 I don't agree with the amount of gear
3 you're allowed to have on standby because, you
4 know, that really puts you at a disadvantage.
5 I mean, you're not really -- you know, a lot
6 of things happen in the course of setting a
7 gear. And to only have 50 additional hooks to
8 have already pre-prepared to go out -- when we
9 leave the dock, we try to prepare as much gear
10 as we possibly can.

11 And that allows us, instead of having
12 to worry about maintaining gear throughout the
13 trip, we can take more time in releasing the
14 things you want us to release. That is an
15 important factor. You know, if we take the
16 time to build gear, it is taking away from time
17 to prepare or do the things that you're asking
18 us to do.

19 The other issues I have here is with
20 the weak hook. I don't think you need to go
21 to a hook as weak as you're using in the Gulf.

22 I, myself, prefer the 16 Eagle Claw,
23 which is a step up above the hook in the Gulf.
24 For an example, you know, in February here,
25 where you are aware of what the interactions
26 with the bluefin -- you didn't want
27 interaction with the bluefins we have had this
28 past year, which is contrary to what the belief
29 was and where we should or should not have been
30 interacting with them.

31 While boats around me were
32 interacting with the bluefins, I happened to
33 have 37 straightened-out hooks in that same
34 timeframe. In that timeframe, we interacted
35 with a lot less bluefins than they did because
36 of that reason.

37 So, I mean, those hooks are very,
38 very effective as far as in a broad variety of
39 these species, bluefin, these duskys. I
40 mean, that hook right there is not going to
41 hold them duskys. I will tell you that right
42 now. It will straighten that thing out like
43 nothing.

44 So, I mean, that would be a very
45 effective -- that in itself would be a very
46 effective measure. You could probably
47 eliminate all these other things.

48 The other issue here is, you know,

1 when these hotspots -- I agree that you need
2 to identify; you said identify where your
3 potential hotspot areas are. One of the
4 things that I see missing here in a proposal
5 that I coauthored with Billy McIntire here
6 was, you know, you have these hotspot areas
7 identified, but I don't see a clear and
8 distinct what measures should or could be
9 taken by the fishery, by the fishermen, in
10 order to avoid further interaction.

11 You know, one of the things that we
12 talked about, I talked about in that proposal
13 was that, you know, at that time of the year,
14 they were talking about closing these hotspot
15 areas to us the fish are migrating southerly.
16 So, one of the things that can be done is that,
17 when you do have an interaction, the
18 communication protocol is very, very
19 important. It has been very, very effective
20 in reducing our interactions with turtles and
21 with whales. So, I don't see why it wouldn't
22 be effective with these dusky sharks.

23 And as you interact, if somebody does
24 have interaction, broadcast it on the radio.
25 And this way here, the boat that it is
26 interacting with, believe it or not, is
27 probably not going to interact them the next
28 day because those fish are on the way down
29 south. But they can inform the vessels that
30 are further down the bank that those fish are
31 on the move and they are on their way towards
32 them.

33 So, that is an important criteria to
34 add into this. You talk about education.
35 That could be a part of the education. There
36 should be almost a placard for that, on how to
37 successfully avoid further interactions on
38 those sharks.

39 Other than that, you know, I am
40 totally against any hard-core or
41 line-in-the-sand closures because we can see
42 now that, if this would have proved anything,
43 it proved that that doesn't work. Because
44 that Hatteras area, where everybody was
45 supposed to be banned from, and that's where
46 they are, and everything else, I mean, they
47 didn't show up there until February, any
48 bluefin. Nobody was catching any bluefin

1 there.

2 And I have fished down below that
3 corner for the past five years, and we have
4 never had an issue with the bluefin there.
5 You know, we're lucky we catch the one or two
6 that we want to catch to bring in with that
7 bycatch.

8 And for the first time since I have
9 been fishing there, we had an abundance of
10 interactions there that we didn't want to
11 have. So, I mean, that goes to show you, and,
12 also, that relates to other areas that should
13 have been open to us, that we wouldn't have
14 even been there in the first place, as far as
15 that goes, but that is another amendment
16 altogether.

17 But I believe that is about all I have
18 to say there on that right at the moment there.

19 MR. RAAB: Thank you, Martin.

20 Bob, you were next.

21 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: I'm sorry, I
22 have one follow-up question. So, we did
23 include a communication protocol measure.
24 What I heard, just so I am clear, are you saying
25 that what would need to be also communicated
26 is information on how to avoid or is this not
27 the same thing as that?

28 MEMBER SCANLON: I think you just
29 need to elaborate it on a little bit more,
30 Margo, as far as, aside from just communicate
31 it, it's okay to communicate that they are on
32 their way there, but what do you do about it?
33 You know, we need to look at, if you get that
34 information, how to utilize it.

35 You know, do we move off the bank
36 further? Like you have it at 100 fathoms,
37 which I think to me is acceptable. I don't
38 basically fish or set my gear ever within 150
39 fathoms. I mean, it just gets too dirty in
40 there. So, I don't fish in there. And I
41 don't exclusively mahi fish, so it doesn't
42 affect me that way. But other guys do.

43 When you do get that information and
44 you find out what type, you know, what should
45 you be communicating? What depth you were in?
46 You know, things like that should be
47 communicated with the rest of the fleet: what
48 depth the fish were seen in, you know, where

1 they were caught, and that type of stuff.
2 Whether they were dead or alive, that is
3 another important factor, so you know when
4 they actually bit.

5 You know, do you set the gear later
6 sometimes? These are some of the things just
7 for an example, you know. Do you set the gear
8 a little bit later? Do you move the gear off
9 the bank an extra 50 fathoms to assure that
10 you're not going to interact with them? You
11 know, these are all things that are very easily
12 done.

13 As far as the recreational measures
14 and the educational measures, I think that's
15 sufficient in the recreational industry. I
16 think that we showed that, you know, by
17 educating -- a lot of the problems that have
18 occurred here, especially in the
19 recreational, is just uneducated, you know,
20 non-knowledge.

21 I mean, those people, you know, we
22 had those 1200 illegal landings. The next
23 year there weren't because, basically, those
24 landed to people that didn't understand,
25 didn't know.

26 So, just the education of the issue
27 I think is going to be a big part of solving
28 the problem.

29 MR. RAAB: Thanks.

30 Bob?

31 MEMBER HUETER: Yes, thanks.

32 Bob Hueter, Mote Marine Lab.

33 I have got a couple of questions,
34 Pete, and thanks for your presentation.

35 And the first one, I probably should
36 know the answer to this, but I don't. So, I'm
37 going to ask you. The overfishing that is
38 occurring, is that due to landings of dusky
39 sharks, obviously, illegal landings in the
40 recreational and commercial fisheries or is
41 that due more to an assessment of what the
42 mortality is at the boat in terms of dead
43 discards and post-release mortality? Are
44 there significant landings still going on?

45 MR. COOPER: Well, as far as the
46 recreational fishery is concerned, we,
47 through the whole A5 process, gone through the
48 data that we have, and we don't see a whole lot.

1 Sometimes it is extrapolated with large PSEs,
2 that sort of thing. The LPS data was used in
3 the stock assessment and, also, it was
4 Observer Program data from the pelagic
5 longline.

6 And with the catch-free model, they
7 are using catch rates. So, as far as landing
8 are concerned and a stock assessment
9 situation, I don't think that they are
10 specifically incorporated into that model.
11 But, then, again, I am just trying to interpret
12 the stock assessment. So, I am not an expert
13 there.

14 MEMBER HUETER: Yes, I appreciate
15 that. But this is an important distinction
16 because there is a big difference between
17 reducing interactions and reducing landings.

18 For example, species ID education,
19 I'm always for that. But, if these fish are
20 not being kept and brought in, then that is
21 kind of a fluff issue. It is not going to buy
22 you a whole lot.

23 So, my main point is this: in this
24 case, and Mike Sissenwine should be happy
25 about this, because we actually have a
26 numerical target for this measure of 58
27 percent reduction in mortality.

28 So, I am finding it very hard to
29 assess and comment on all these various
30 alternatives because we are not told what each
31 of these is going to buy us toward that 58
32 percent reduction. I mean, what is the gain
33 for the pain in each of these cases? And that
34 is important in terms of making a decision.

35 So, have the Science Centers done
36 that assessment alternative-by-alternative
37 to say, okay, 4B, or whatever, you know, buys
38 us 10 percent toward the 58 percent, and so on
39 and so forth? Because that is really a very
40 important criterion for making a decision
41 about which of these measures to go with.

42 MR. COOPER: Well, we haven't had
43 the Science Center analyze what you would get
44 as far as mortality savings and that sort of
45 thing.

46 When we went through the Draft, A5,
47 with the hotspot closure areas, we calculated
48 percent reduction in interactions and assumed

1 that, the way the fleet would operate, a
2 reduction in interactions would equal the same
3 reduction in mortality since the sharks aren't
4 retained. So, you are not having that sort
5 of -- it would be post-release mortalities.
6 That was included.

7 And we still didn't kind of get to
8 that target. So, I think some of the advice
9 that we have is that we have got the stock
10 assessment. So, are we going to take a -- and
11 I am drawing a blank here as far as the
12 approaches -- but is it going to be a specific
13 target number or is it going to be more working
14 on different approaches to reduce mortality
15 and what we are seeing out there, you know,
16 with the data that we have?

17 And we know that some mortality is
18 occurring. So, how do we reduce it, actually?

19 MEMBER HUETER: Yes, and I just
20 would urge that that analysis be done because
21 I am absolutely certain that it could be done
22 in many, if not most, of these alternatives.
23 Now some of them are a little bit more
24 experimental and speculative, such as using
25 weak hooks. How is that going to change the
26 interactions?

27 But I am sure that a lot of these
28 alternatives are based on data of
29 interactions. So, it is not easy, but it is
30 straightforward to go back to those data and
31 see what percentage they would represent in
32 the overall mortality picture. And then,
33 make decisions based on good bang for the buck
34 as opposed to just picking things off the shelf
35 that sound nice.

36 And I will just say one last thing
37 about the species ID situation. I really
38 think, you know, shark species ID is just a
39 constant challenge, especially for
40 recreational fishermen. It seems to me that
41 we could take the step of just prohibiting
42 ridgeback sharks, period, at this point.

43 And I don't know why we are not
44 putting the oceanic whitetip on the prohibited
45 species list. I know they are not caught very
46 much, but that is because there are not too
47 many of them out there. So, I don't see that
48 as a problem.

1 The tiger shark, that is another
2 question. And I think there is a possibility
3 here that we could exempt the tiger shark in
4 the same way that smoothhound is exempted,
5 because it is more identifiable. Most sport
6 fishermen and all commercial fishermen can
7 identify a tiger shark from the others.

8 But just make it easy as far as ID and
9 just prohibit the ridgebacks with those two
10 exceptions.

11 MR. RAAB: Thanks, Bob.

12 We have got a little more than 15
13 minutes. So, if we can be really concise in
14 our comments and our responses? We have a
15 long queue.

16 Rom, you were next.

17 MEMBER WHITAKER: Rom Whitaker,
18 Hatteras Charter Boat.

19 Bob brought up a very good point, and
20 I will use an HMS term. You could or could not
21 institute all of these recreational measures.
22 As far as duskys are concerned, I really don't
23 think in my area that it would make any
24 difference. And I will address some of the
25 alternatives.

26 And the reason I say that is that, in
27 the for-hire industry, we all pretty
28 much -- the guys that do bring in occasional
29 sharks, other than a mako and thresher -- now
30 they're two sharks that we do catch. They are
31 trophies. We bring them in. We like to bring
32 them in.

33 And even I have noticed in the last
34 few years the recreational guys in our area
35 that go out there targeting sharks know; they
36 know exactly what they can keep and what they
37 cannot keep.

38 I do agree with Bob on A4. I think
39 it is ridgeback sharks. That is pretty
40 simple, you know, very clear, precise. You
41 can get the word out.

42 As far as A2, I have to have an HMS
43 permit to catch sharks. You know, I carry a
44 hard book around, and I must have seven or
45 eight pages in there with different permits.
46 So, I certainly don't want to have another
47 endorsement.

48 You know, people that catch sharks,

1 they get permits; they should know what to do.
2 No more permits.

3 A3, outreach, you know, you can't say
4 enough. I don't know if there's somehow, you
5 know, some of these things you buy now, you
6 have to check a block that I've looked at this
7 or I've read this. Maybe you put a chart in
8 there with ridgeback sharks and say, "Can you
9 identify all these? If you can, check the
10 block, and then, we will send your permit."
11 But, anyway, outreach, yes.

12 A4, I agree with that.

13 A6, 89 inches, I don't know where in
14 the world that came from, but an 89-inch shark,
15 an 89-inch mako is a big shark. That would be
16 a rare event, to catch one that big in our area.
17 Most of our fish are 50 to 75 inches. But it's
18 a trophy, you know, one per day.

19 But I don't carry a gun on my boat,
20 and I really don't want to, but an 89-inch mako
21 would do some damage. You would need
22 something to subdue it. So, I am totally
23 opposed to that.

24 And A7 and A8, I am opposed to both
25 of those.

26 Thank you.

27 MR. RAAB: Thank you Rom.

28 Rusty?

29 MEMBER HUDSON: Rusty Hudson.

30 With regards to the DEIS, Peter, what
31 is the timing for that with 5B for us to be able
32 to comment on?

33 MR. COOPER: Well, you know, we are
34 in Predraft right now. So, we have the
35 comment until the 30th. And then, when the
36 DEIS would come out in the fall, it would
37 probably be a 60-day comment period.

38 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: Yes, one note
39 on timing. This action has been found to be
40 significant under OMB. And so, there's an
41 additional review. They have up to 90 days
42 for that at least. So, if we are a little
43 squishy on the timing, it is because of that
44 extra step that is outside of our ability to
45 really control.

46 MEMBER HUDSON: Okay. With that
47 said, that at least gives me anticipation of
48 when I can look at some of the information

1 there.

2 You brought up the catch-free model,
3 Peter, with regards to '06, when it was a
4 400-year rebuild; 2011, with a 100-year
5 rebuild. The terminal year in the '11
6 catch-free model was 2009 data.

7 We're almost five years out on that
8 now. It should be updated in-house since it
9 was an anonymous internal thing on the first
10 effort. The second effort was SEDAR 21, and
11 we did have known reviewers involved at that,
12 but, then, your SSC-type approach is in an
13 anonymous role inside the Science Center after
14 the review workshop for dusky.

15 In the sense of how to go forward with
16 some of the stuff that we would flesh-out at
17 an SSC meeting with trying to set an ABC
18 normally, and those types of things, that we
19 could possibly run extra sensitivities. One
20 of the sensitivities, of course, is like the
21 Mexican component because of that
22 16-to-20-percent tag recovery situation.
23 That is a pretty important feature. I don't
24 know how much of the Mexican effort can be
25 reduced by us. And if it is all just a
26 unilateral again that is affecting the PLL as
27 the choke spacing, I have left that alone now.

28 With your options under
29 recreational, the A4, the ridgeback exempt, it
30 seemed like there was some input from the
31 recreational industry that they could deal
32 with that ridgeback situation, the
33 smooth-dogfish exception and the tiger
34 exception. I tend to agree with Bob with the
35 oceanic whitetip. You might need to examine
36 the known science on that and the status in our
37 Atlantic region.

38 The A6, the 89-inch corresponds with
39 the new minimum size fork length for the dusky
40 at 227 centimeters, or 89.3, whatever it is,
41 inches. I don't think you need to do that to
42 all sharks. I don't even think you need to do
43 it to anything except maybe a tiger shark in
44 case you want to just have those really nice,
45 big trophy tiger sharks in a certain capacity.
46 But we do have explosion going on for 20 years
47 of pups, too. And they eat a lot of sea
48 turtles.

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(Laughter.)

With shifting over to commercial stuff, the option or alternative B3, in your image you should show the line cutter. The line cutter is going to be the easiest way to deal with a big animal like that, an adult dusky at the side of the boat. You are not bringing it in the boat. You are not going to be able to dehook it very easily. You are going to wind up dealing with situations there, circle hook situations, everything else.

And I will not speak at this time for anything with regards to hook limitations or weak hooks and stuff. I believe that stakeholders, actual people that have the experience in the field and know the size of the boat, know the amount of gear that they set, normally set, depending on the spatial/temporal issues, you need to take their stuff into account for sure.

The dusky pupping time period, now you know we have a big explosion of both dusky pups and sandbar pups in the HAPC. And part of your motivation of shifting to the July 31st end-date for the HAPC and, also, the potential expansion up to Delaware Bay of the HAPC for both sandbar and dusky, it is the type of thing that I think July 31st is an overreach. I think July 1st would be just fine.

Since you're going to have to try to get the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission onboard with that one, it is a little closer to the June 1st date that we spoke for our coastal sharks over on this coast, and you all listened. And so, we have got that start date.

We do have a certain amount of blacktip that will get up into the Onslow Bay area, and it has not got a lot of predomination of sandbar pups and stuff there. So, the guys can get a little lick on some non-sandbar.

As far as the Research Fishery and all the stuff that goes on in there, some of your timing is a little wrong. You're going to get into masses of pups that time of the year, like with what was said about the Charlie Locke situation. It is not good when you do

1 the Barney Fife fishery and you wind up with
2 hundreds of little duskys, you know. That is
3 a whole lot different than the larger duskys,
4 the adult duskys, that you are really trying
5 to focus on.

6 But the 19 to 21 years to maturity for
7 the animals, I still have a little problem with
8 that. I know that the new aging has extended
9 the potential longevity of that animal by
10 about another decade to 40-some years. That
11 is still, you know, half its life it has not
12 even been part of breeding. That is a little
13 weird for me, too.

14 The weak hook under B4, again, let
15 them deal with that, the people that know.

16 The hotspots. The grid size that is
17 on here, could you give me an idea what those
18 squares, not the big ones, but the ones inside
19 the big ones, what is the size of those in
20 lat/long?

21 Hey, what is the size of those
22 squares on this? One degree?

23 Have you done any spatial and
24 temporal overlay of those hotspots for your
25 bluefin tunas and be able to see if there is
26 any timing interactions with that situation?
27 I mean, you have got two different amendments
28 going on, and you've got a little time to be
29 able to look at it. It is just something to
30 throw out there.

31 Skipping on, B6 --

32 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: Rusty, can I
33 stop you?

34 MEMBER HUDSON: Yes.

35 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: If folks are
36 chatting, could you please move maybe into the
37 alcove, so that we can hear? Thank you.

38 And to that direct, yes, we are
39 looking at both bluefin and dusky shark in the
40 maps. You will see in the maps in the back
41 both are indicated on the maps.

42 MEMBER HUDSON: Okay.

43 MR. COOPER: Well, bluefin
44 interactions are not, but the areas that are
45 proposed for gear restricted areas in A7 are
46 included in the map, but it is dusky sharks.
47 But you were talking to see if bluefin tuna
48 overlap with the dusky shark proposed closure?

1 Is that what you were saying?

2 MEMBER HUDSON: Spatial/temporal.

3 MR. COOPER: Spatially and
4 temporally, yes.

5 MEMBER HUDSON: And the reason I'm
6 saying that is because the adult dusks,
7 again, back to the 16-20 percent tiger
8 captures from Mexico, you have a northern and
9 a southern migration after the wintering.
10 Northering come up the coast; southering
11 heading back in the fall. And there is a
12 certain amount of residential animals, of
13 course, but, then, there is a certain amount
14 of those that are transient.

15 And so, you have a timing thing that
16 you can actually anticipate. We, in some of
17 the situations where the adult dusks come in,
18 and we had later bottom longline fishing
19 experiences with like golden tile in that 100
20 to 140 fathoms, we have seen those animals
21 moving through, huge animals. I mean, they
22 are as big as they grow.

23 And so, all these pups are coming
24 from somewhere over the last 14 years since we
25 eliminated the landing of those, although I
26 did see you had five that were landed in your
27 commercial stuff, four in one year and one in
28 another year.

29 MR. RAAB: Rusty, how much more do
30 you have, because we have a long --

31 MEMBER HUDSON: I have got three
32 more points --

33 MR. RAAB: Okay.

34 MEMBER HUDSON: -- and then, I will
35 be there.

36 I had a little issue trying to deal
37 with the 21 vessels, the 70 percent observed,
38 and the 132 sharks involved there, the five
39 years divided into that. And so, it is just
40 something I had to kind of think about.

41 But we are used to having the
42 swordfish guys set their gear back in the
43 eighties and nineties for dusky and sandbar
44 specifically at that time of the year, March,
45 April, and May, between Daytona or off of the
46 east coast of Florida, sort of the South
47 Carolina range, specifically to catch the
48 dusks.

1 But, once we eliminated the dusky as
2 a category and other types of restrictions we
3 put on them, that effort of moving into that
4 shallows, you know, the 50 to 150 fathoms, was,
5 like it was said, Martin, mud-up and all that
6 other type of stuff. It gets a little messy
7 in there.

8 And I know, when I swordfish, I would
9 be out in axis of the stream, and I would know
10 how my gear would swing in and where I would
11 wind up.

12 So, with that said, the outreach I
13 think is a great idea under B8.

14 B9, I already said. You ought to
15 consider an alternative of July 1st end-date.
16 That would be more fair to the Mid-Atlantic
17 people and the other fisheries that can occur
18 there.

19 And that's it.

20 MR. RAAB: Thank you.

21 We have got our corner there, Terri,
22 Walter, then, Greg.

23 MEMBER BEIDEMAN: Okay. Well, I
24 haven't read the whole thing, so more comments
25 will be coming.

26 But just off the first blush, you
27 know, I see issues with regard to the hook
28 limitations, particularly in certain areas,
29 since it doesn't seem to specify where
30 exactly. It just says "pelagic longline gear
31 aboard". So, that would mean our distant
32 water fleet would also be constrained to that.
33 And I suspect they won't be happy with that
34 idea. They are a long ways from tackle
35 stores, you know.

36 The dehooking sounds like a really
37 good idea, but, you know, it might be
38 dangerous. Certainly, if you can cut the line
39 the best you can, that would be good, but I am
40 concerned about requiring people to stick
41 their hands in the water and try to remove
42 hooks from live sharks.

43 Weak hooks I think require an awful
44 lot more testing. They may work for some and
45 not for others. Cautious. We lose a lot of
46 catch using weak hooks, and we don't need to
47 be able to go out fishing for very long before
48 we start losing more catch than we can keep,

1 and we can't fish anymore.

2 Again, keeping in mind that this is
3 a species that is prohibited to possess, no one
4 is targeting them. They are all incidentally
5 caught, accidentally caught, and we are trying
6 to achieve less than zero.

7 Hotspot closures, as has been said
8 before, these are migratory, maybe not as
9 migratory as some others, but still migratory.
10 And I don't know. It says here, "HMS
11 commercial permit-holders couldn't fish with
12 pelagic longlined gear in these areas."

13 And it is my understanding that all
14 kinds of hooks, not just pelagic longline
15 hooks, seem to be interacting with these
16 species. So, if they are, in fact, hotspots,
17 then they should apply to all hooks that are
18 capable of catching them, in my opinion, if
19 they are that hot. So, something to think
20 about, an equity issue.

21 I don't know about the 21 vessels. I
22 hope by this time you have had a conversation
23 with them to find out if there was a vessel ID
24 problem, or even with the observers, if they
25 were particularly accurate. So, it is not a
26 lot of vessels to talk to. It would be nice
27 if we could make sure that that's the truth.

28 For some folks, I don't know if
29 anyone is fishing inshore of 100 fathoms. We
30 still continue to have this loophole with
31 this, not the HMS guys that periodically
32 target mahi because they have permits and they
33 have requirements for doing certain things and
34 not doing certain things, and having certain
35 kinds of hooks.

36 But we do have a permitted mahi
37 fishery out of the South Atlantic Council that
38 continues to target in these fishing areas,
39 fishing with J-hooks. And they are not
40 subject to our regulations. However, I am
41 quite certain that they are interacting with
42 a whole lot of the stuff that we are talking
43 about at this table. And that continues. It
44 may not be a large number, but neither are we.
45 So, the impact might be great.

46 So, I would be interested in seeing
47 some information on that. We don't usually
48 see it. So, I think that would be helpful.

1 Placards, I kind of joke, I guess we
2 are going to need like a rolling board or
3 bigger wheelhouses to put all these placards,
4 but I'm not opposed to them necessarily.

5 We don't fish inshore in state
6 waters. So, I don't care when they open.

7 And removing pelagic longline gear
8 as an authorized gear would not necessarily
9 reduce the bycatch of dusky sharks. It would
10 just remove their, I guess, being reported,
11 unless, of course, you couldn't go fishing, in
12 which case it would remove the catch and
13 bycatch of a whole lot of things. And I am not
14 in favor of that.

15 So, I think that there's a lot of
16 things that need to be looked at. And given
17 the fact that we are dealing with a species
18 that we really aren't allowed to catch and
19 keep, and that we are not exclusively
20 interacting with -- we have other countries
21 that interact with the very same group -- I
22 mean, we are doing pretty much everything we
23 can do. And I think that somewhere along the
24 line it is going to have to be good enough.
25 So, I am looking for that. Where is that good
26 enough? You know, we did our part, and we have
27 been doing it for a decade. So, recognition
28 of that would be good.

29 Thanks.

30 MR. RAAB: Walter.

31 MEMBER GOLET: Hi Pete, thanks for
32 the presentation. Walt Golet, University of
33 Maine, Gulf of Maine Research Institute.

34 Just a quick question on alternative
35 B5 on the third bullet point there, it says
36 analysis of hot spots are going to use the most
37 recent redistribution.

38 What was the justification, if you
39 could remind me, for using just the most recent
40 distribution for proposing the hot spots and
41 if we have a longer time series, are those hot
42 spots sensitive in space and time to the
43 extension of that time series?

44 MR. COOPER: So, the redistribution
45 methodology that was used in the draft
46 Amendment 5, assumed that all the hooks in the
47 hot spot areas would be redistributed to
48 nearby areas and then that was calculated to

1 determine the amount of dusky's that would be
2 reduced by closing that area and then also the
3 economic impact associated with it.

4 What was done moving forward from
5 there, we got a lot of, you know, some guys
6 wouldn't be able to redistribute because most
7 of their effort would have taken place during
8 that area. They don't have the capacity to go
9 to offshore areas further outside of the
10 closure areas and those sorts of things.

11 So and looking at the gear restricted
12 areas in Amendment 7, we took an approach on
13 an individual vessel basis, so I wasn't
14 specifically involved in it and it's outlined
15 in the pre-draft but it took a look at the
16 percentages of sets that a vessel would take
17 in a certain gear restricted area and then
18 determine their ability to fish in different
19 areas and the CPUEs of the different areas that
20 they had fished in would be applied to the
21 hooks that were redistributed.

22 So it had, I think it's a more robust
23 methodology of trying to see what would
24 actually occur if certain areas are closed.

25 We are adding in more recent data in
26 the maps that are included in the pre-draft
27 here. I think we went to 2010 in the draft or
28 was it

>08 through

29 >10 or, yes, and so we've 2011
30 and 2012 data in there so 2008 through 2012 to
31 try to look at the previous hot spot areas and
32 see if they still apply to the more recent log
33 book and Pelagic observer program that we do
34 have.

34 MEMBER GOLET: So what's the base
35 year to start this analysis of the hot spots?
36 When did -- I guess that's what I was asking.
37 What's the length of time? What was the
38 justification for the length of time?

39 MR. COOPER: So 2008 with Amendment
40 2 and how things changed since then.

41 MEMBER GOLET: Is there no data
42 before that? Why was 2008 chosen, just
43 specifically, is there chronological data for
44 these areas that goes back prior to that 2008
45 time period?

46 MR. COOPER: There is. We picked
47 2008 based on Amendment 2 which changed the
48 shark fishery.

1 MR. RAAB: Greg?

2 MEMBER SKOMAL: Thank you, Pete.
3 Greg Skomal, Mass. Marine Fisheries.

4 I think when I look at some of the
5 recreational measures, of course, I hear Steve
6 James screaming in my ear right now because,
7 you know, we don't catch dusky sharks in New
8 England and Southern New England and we've got
9 a pretty comprehensive tournament database
10 going back 27 years that indicates we've got
11 only three interactions total with the duskys,
12 two were released and one was brought in back
13 in the late >80s.

14 So we don't get duskys, yet I see
15 measures like, you know, minimum sizes and
16 potential closures that would clearly
17 penalize our fishermen substantially. I mean
18 we basically want mako sharks, threshers and
19 occasionally catch blue sharks, but in terms
20 of retention, it's the first two.

21 And as Rom indicated, those are
22 89-inch fish is a big fish when you talk about
23 makos and threshers.

24 So I'd like to see if you could, some
25 kind of a regional approach at least in looking
26 at, you know, where's the mortality happening?
27 Who can it be attributed to? And don't unduly
28 penalize fishermen who just don't interact
29 with these animals. Thank you.

30 MR. RAAB: Michael?

31 MEMBER SISSEWINE: Yes, I would
32 certainly echo a lot of the comments I've
33 heard, particularly Greg's comment just a
34 moment ago.

35 Robert's comment as well earlier on
36 about trying to quantify the various impacts
37 of the proposed measures, I think that is
38 important. It's not easy. Even if it's just
39 rank ordering the importance of them when you
40 can't actually put a numerical value on it
41 would be a major help to the decision making
42 process.

43 Along with that, I also think that
44 there needs to be some more formalized
45 evaluation of what the sources of the
46 mortality are. I mean right now, we have an
47 assessment that indicates that the fishing
48 mortality is about, I think if I remember

1 correctly, about 1.59 time FMSY.

2 Where is that occurring? What are
3 the various segments of fishing activity that
4 are generating that mortality because those
5 need to be related to what the solutions are.
6 And I don't think that information has been or
7 that sort of analysis has been done at this
8 stage.

9 I have one, I'll be very brief, I have
10 one general comment about this and that also
11 relates to one that Rusty made and that is, it
12 seems to me that with -- particularly with
13 respect to the Pelagic Longline Fishery there
14 are all sorts of measures that all relate to
15 bycatch reduction.

16 And, you know we mentioned the
17 bluefin as well as this one and there are also
18 marlin issues and turtle issues and so forth
19 and so on. And I'm wondering if strategically
20 this shouldn't be a step back into in looking
21 at strategically the whole picture of Pelagic
22 Longline Bycatch as a comprehensive approach
23 rather than trying to deal with it with each
24 individual species, you know, in sequential
25 manner the way it has evolved in the past.
26 Thank you.

27 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: One response
28 there. For folks, there was a lot of and more
29 detailed analysis of sources of mortality
30 things in the original draft EIS. So again,
31 this is been an iterative process for building
32 on that but there is a lot more information in
33 that if folks want to look back at that.

34 MR. RAAB: So, we've got Scott,
35 Allan and Rick.

36 MEMBER TAYLOR: So, I also want to
37 comment on and pick up the lead from where you
38 left off in regards to that because that is the
39 issue is that this isn't going to be the first
40 and it's not going to be the last time that the
41 PLL fleet or species that we may interact with
42 is going to become an issue.

43 And that this Amendment 5B to me is
44 akin to telling the U.S. Government to protect
45 our borders but not use the military to
46 interfere in any country's affairs.

47 That there's some things that you're
48 directed to do that are just inherently in

1 conflict.

2 If you're successful, you're going
3 to have more interactions. So whatever
4 course of action that you're going to take
5 essentially, there's going to be a likelihood
6 that there's going to be some level of
7 interaction.

8 We're not talking about take, we're
9 not talking about targeting. We're talking
10 about levels of interactions.

11 The weak hook solution is a disaster
12 for us. I understand that the dynamic of the
13 people that are involved in there but if you
14 talk to the fishermen, we are a swordfish
15 fishery primarily.

16 If you want us to just target
17 juvenile fish then the weak hooks work but
18 anybody that's actively engaged in swordfish
19 and I just unloaded a boat this week that came
20 out of the Gulf of Mexico.

21 They can't -- they're not going to be
22 financially viable there because the fish that
23 they're targeting, they're losing. They
24 didn't interact with a single bluefin, there
25 was not a single bluefin interaction but all
26 the sizable markers for all practical purposes
27 were lost.

28 So, you know, I've said this before,
29 I'm certainly not envious, it's not an
30 enviable situation that you're in because this
31 is really a clear cut case of where your
32 mandate under -- to do something about, you
33 know, the dusky requires you to take action,
34 but the action may potentially impact the
35 commercial viability of the very industry, at
36 least our industry, that we're looking to
37 protect.

38 And I would tend to also agree with
39 some of the other things that were said is that
40 in general, you know, that the PLL fleet tends
41 to fish deeper than where most of these dusky
42 interactions are.

43 And that also something that Rusty
44 has said, you know, in another meeting that was
45 interesting is that we actually did see some
46 duskys down on the Turks and Caicos in deep
47 water. So you know, that these stocks are
48 straddling stocks. They're not limited to

1 here and we don't -- it's my opinion that
2 regardless of what action that we take, I don't
3 know how you're going to avoid the., you know,
4 at a certain CPU a level of interaction, you
5 know, with the fish.

6 And I know that Tim would agree with
7 me. We were kind of whispering even though we
8 shouldn't have that the ability to use a
9 dehooking device on a dusky shark on any of
10 these boats would be dangerous at best from a
11 practical experience.

12 One, the sharks have got a very, very
13 hard mouth and, you know, to try to actually
14 do and remove the hook out of the shark is going
15 to do far more damage to it than to simply get
16 as close as you can to the leader and remove
17 it and allow, you know, the salt water
18 environment to sort of, you know, eliminate
19 the shark.

20 It's certainly an approach that I
21 believe in from practical experience from
22 billfishing that this thought that you can
23 bring the billfish to along side the boat to
24 the point of where he's going to be submissive
25 enough to reach down and remove the hook from
26 his mouth versus having the fish come in hot
27 to the boat, getting as close as you can to the
28 leader and not interfering with him and
29 allowing them to swim off is far less invasive,
30 you know, to the animal than to have them reach
31 the point of submissiveness at the side of the
32 boat.

33 And that's, you know, the goal is
34 that when we have these interactions and we
35 want a release, the least that we can -- the
36 less that we interfere with the animals, you
37 know, the best.

38 But this Amendment 5B goes right to
39 the core of the survivability of the PLL fleet.
40 Maybe not today, but it's no different than
41 this or bluefin or whatever other species may
42 be coming down the line for us, which is that
43 you can't keep imposing actions on what is
44 really the cleanest, Pelagic Longline Fishery
45 any place in the world.

46 And this panel and HMS has got to take
47 a lot of credit for that. But, you know, we're
48 really to the point that where the things that

1 you're imposing or attempting to impose to
2 affect a result one place is dramatically
3 limiting commercial viability in the other in
4 an industry that's taxed from bait costs and
5 fuel costs and operational costs and
6 regulatory oversight that a lot of these boats
7 are just marginally profitable at this point
8 and the difference of losing, for example, on
9 weak hooks ten or 15 markers on a trip may be
10 the difference between whether the boat was
11 profitable or not for the trip.

12 And so, you know, I would encourage
13 you in this particular case, and usually this
14 is not the position that I take, to not take
15 specific action against the -- that's going to
16 impact the PLL fleet in terms of our ability
17 to be able to operate the business and catch
18 simply because we're interacting with a
19 species that, from all appearances, appears to
20 be recovering.

21 I mean if it's not recovering in a no
22 take fishery, then the only other solution is
23 you just stop all fishing all together because
24 it's not just the PLL fleet, it's everybody
25 that's involved, you know, with it.

26 And that's about all I've got to say.

27 MR. RAAB: So we've got Allan, Rick
28 and Carrie haven't spoken yet. We're about 15
29 minutes over so let's try to be concise and
30 then we'll -- Jeff, you can have the last word.

31 MEMBER WILLIS: I'll be concise.

32 On A4, I don't think any anglers, in
33 my experience, will confuse an oceanic
34 whitetip or a tiger with a dusky. If the
35 science says that there is an available
36 resource and a recreational angler is
37 interested in those species then I don't see
38 the logic of prohibiting them on confusion on
39 whether or not it's a dusky.

40 On A6, an 89-inch fork is a big fish.
41 I certainly wouldn't want an 89-inch shark on
42 my center console. I've said this previously
43 on -- forcing recreational anglers to only
44 take large reproductively mature sharks is, to
45 me, counterintuitive. Those are the sharks I
46 would want reproducing and it's really
47 dangerous having actually put an eight foot
48 shark on a boat once, it was stupid. I'll

1 never to it again.

2 And on A8, that's a bad idea.

3 Thanks.

4 MR. RAAB: Rick?

5 MEMBER BELLAVANCE: Thank you.

6 Rick Bellavance, Charter Boat Operator from
7 Point Judith, Rhode Island.

8 Greg Skomal kind of alluded to where
9 I was going to go when he mentioned that he
10 three interactions with dusky sharks and the
11 recreational fishery over time. I remember
12 talking about that up the road when we were
13 addressing the whole document before we broke
14 it up.

15 And I have a question and then I'd
16 like to comment after that, if I could.

17 Do you think when we're done with all
18 of this process, it goes to public hearing and
19 comments, command and all that other stuff
20 that we're actually going to shut down the
21 recreational shark fishery? Just kind of a
22 question.

23 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: That's the
24 kind of thing that I can't say yes or no.
25 We're still early on. I'd like to think not
26 but to say no, it's in the list of reasonable
27 alternatives.

28 So, you know, there's opinions on
29 that but I can't say.

30 MEMBER BELLAVANCE: Yes, so my
31 opinion is probably not and we're trying to
32 foster relations with the recreational
33 community and even presenting for options an
34 alternative that's probably not
35 really -- definitely needed, but probably not
36 going to happen, you're just asking for a
37 couple hundred thousand form letters that say
38 don't do that and it might be just a waste of
39 everybody's time. You might want to think
40 about taking that one right out, seven and
41 eight.

42 And again, fostering those
43 relationships. You know, three interactions
44 with dusky sharks that's real landings,
45 incidental landings of dusky sharks and the
46 recreational fishery, you're going to close it
47 down, close all shark fishing down but, you
48 know, there's a few more in the commercial

1 world and we're not considering closing the
2 commercial fishery down. And I'm not
3 suggesting that you do.

4 I just think the reality of some of
5 these alternatives and why put something out
6 into the public's hands that, you know,
7 chances are not going to happen.

8 That's just my comments. Thanks.

9 MR. RAAB: Carrie?

10 MEMBER KENNEDY: I'm Carrie
11 Kennedy, Maryland DNR.

12 I just have two process questions.
13 The first is alternative A4 -- attention of all
14 ridgeback sharks in the Atlantic,
15 recreational shark fishery.

16 So if this was something that was
17 ended up in the final rule, would ASMFC
18 Fisheries Management plans have to reflect
19 that? So that's my first question.

20 And my second is how might the
21 options change, you know, looking at the time
22 line for the ESA, it looks like, you know,
23 finding the 12-month progress report is due
24 out in May, you know, early summer. And the
25 timing of a proposed rule on this isn't
26 possibly until the fall.

27 So I'm wondering about the timing and
28 the implications for this as a proposed, you
29 know, when we get to the proposed rule how it
30 might change from what we're looking at now?

31 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: So on the
32 ASMFC, I think this would be something that we
33 would certainly discuss with them as soon as
34 we can. I think Myron wasn't able to be here
35 today and Coastal Sharks aren't on the agenda
36 for May but certainly it's relevant and we
37 would be likely going to them with what we're
38 proposing and then what's final, we would want
39 to coordinate.

40 In terms of the ESA time line, I think
41 that it's a separate process but certainly
42 domestic actions inform that process. As
43 Maggie Miller indicated protective measures
44 can be part of their decision making and so the
45 position that we're in is we don't have
46 additional protective measures after the
47 assessment showing continued overfishing.

48 So I think we are at some greater risk

1 than we would have been if we had implemented
2 measures already.

3 So they're different statutes.
4 They're different criteria. They're different
5 processes. But certainly they are informed
6 by each other. I think it's an excellent
7 point and something we should all be aware of.

8 MR. RAAB: Jeff, did you want a final
9 word before we take a break?

10 MEMBER ODEN: Yes, thanks.

11 Obviously, there's going to be
12 displacement from Amendment 7, especially in
13 our area, you know. And I know you're looking
14 for solutions and, again, I still challenge
15 anybody to call us a hot spot area. You want
16 a hot spot, you know, come get a local shark
17 fisherman and we'll show you where it's at.

18 But nonetheless, we will be probably
19 not fishing the point, you know, during the
20 winter months. I mean provided, who knows, I
21 mean this year, again, to the point you've
22 heard a few times, you know, there, February
23 before the bluefin showed up in our area.

24 But I don't know what's going to come
25 out of Amendment 7, but there will be
26 displacement and that's going to be, as was
27 said before, you know, it needs to be carried
28 comprehensively into, you know the bycatch as
29 a whole.

30 Another point I'd like to make, line
31 cutters, our turtle gear, best tool in it is
32 that line cutter. You can cut that hook by
33 that shark's mouth six inches from his face.
34 There's very little residue of mono. You've
35 got just the hook there and those hooks aren't
36 going to last long.

37 And one other thing, to the point
38 there with the possible IBQ on sharks, you
39 know, for the vessels that you -- 21 vessels,
40 I'm probably one of them. And again, you
41 know, it was because I may have fished in the
42 area and I reported, you know, a few duskys
43 whereas perhaps it wasn't in my best interest,
44 you know.

45 I mean the simple fact is, you all
46 want to make an issue where there really isn't
47 any. And again, from a fisherman's
48 perspective, you need to really understand

1 that because there's so much misinformation
2 or, you know, when I hear some of the voices
3 at the table, it's -- I don't mean to be
4 condescending but clueless is really how I
5 look at it.

6 And anyhow, again, thanks.

7 MEMBER AUGUSTINE: Just a point of
8 clarification. When would you end up putting
9 Amendment 5 out because we have a May meeting
10 for ASMFC and an August meeting ASMFC and it
11 will have to go to the shark board, Coastal
12 Shark Board and they'll want to have public
13 hearings, if possible. So I need an idea when
14 you're going to put the -- will it before
15 May -- the May meeting? Will we be informed
16 by that or?

17 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: No, I'm fairly
18 confident about that.

19 We are asking for your input by the
20 end of April, so certainly not May. Given the
21 OMB review step, I think August might not
22 happen either.

23 MEMBER AUGUSTINE: The sooner the
24 better.

25 MR. RAAB: Well thank you all for a
26 very spirited set of comments. Let's take a
27 ten minute break and we'll kind of recalibrate
28 the schedule. So just ten minutes and then
29 we're back at five after.

30 (Whereupon, the foregoing matter
31 went off the record at 10:55 a.m. and went back
32 on the record at 11:08 a.m.)

33 ME. RAAB: So here's the question,
34 we're thinking that we would -- we've heard
35 that some of the folks particularly interested
36 in sharks may have to leave before 2:30 so what
37 we'd like to do is flip the agenda items and
38 do the Amendment 6 on Shark Fisheries
39 Pre-Draft before lunch and then the
40 Recreational Update right after lunch and we
41 just want to make sure that we're not
42 endangering some of the recreational people or
43 are mess anybody else up if we do that. So is
44 that a problem for anybody?

45 Do the shark now and then right after
46 lunch, again short lunch, we'll go to the
47 recreational update. Okay? So can we have
48 our Amendment 6 folks?

1 That means we'll probably go until
2 about ten after 12 and break for lunch then
3 until about ten after one and then we'll pick
4 up from there.

5 MS. HOGAN: Okay, hi everyone, I'm
6 LeAnn Hogan with HMS in Silver Springs.

7 So I'm going to be discussing the
8 Amendment 6 predraft and I'll go through a
9 little bit of a background, refresh your
10 memory a little bit on where we have been and
11 where we're likely to go with Amendment 6.

12 So I'll be discussing potential
13 management options, permit stacking,
14 subregional quotas, the sandbar shark quota
15 and then we will open it up for questions and
16 discussion.

17 The predraft and this presentation
18 are on the website so you can follow along.

19 Okay, so where have we been. Here is
20 a step back in time. We, in 2010, we published
21 an ANPR on the future of the shark fishery
22 where we look at changes to the quota
23 structures, the permit structure and we talked
24 about the idea of catch shares for the shark
25 fishery.

26 We then in 2011 published a Notice of
27 Intent and we announced our intent to consider
28 measurers to increase the flexibility in shark
29 management and then we requested public
30 comment. We did five catch share scoping
31 workshops and we also announced a control date
32 for eligibility to participate a potential
33 catch share program.

34 So during the comment periods for
35 these two rulemakings, the NPE and the NOI, we
36 received comments in support of and opposing
37 catch shares.

38 Those that opposed catch shares
39 raised concerns that we didn't have enough
40 science require to implement a catch share
41 program that we needed to consider different
42 regional differences in the catch -- excuse
43 me, in the shark fishery.

44 Those in support said that catch
45 shares would maximize prices and efficiency,
46 potentially decrease dead discards. It would
47 potentially make fishermen more efficient and
48 could be more predictable for fishery

1 managers.

2 So since the 2011 NOI, there have
3 been many changes in the shark fishery, some
4 at the federal level, some at the state level.

5 We published the final rule for
6 Amendment 5A and this amendment, as you all
7 know, established several new commercial
8 shark management groups and quotas and
9 implemented -- thank you -- implemented
10 linkages between specific management groups.

11 There were the changes to the state
12 shark management with the shark fin possession
13 bans and then the Shark Conservation Act which
14 we've talked about a little bit to where it
15 required sharks to be landed within fins
16 attached and that proposed rule published on
17 May 2, 2013.

18 And we are currently working on
19 developing proposed measures to implement the
20 smooth dogfish specific provisions including
21 the Shark Conversation Act which we won't be
22 talking about here.

23 Okay, so a combination of the ANPR
24 and the NOI comments and based on the recent
25 shark fishery trends has led us to reconsider
26 whether catch shares is really the best
27 management tool for the Atlantic shark
28 fisheries at this time.

29 We believe that short-term
30 management measures may be a better fit for the
31 fisheries to address the current problems
32 facing the fishery. So our goal is to
33 implement management measures that have the
34 flexibility that can adapt to the changing
35 needs of the fishery while still maximizing
36 the sustainable yield of the Atlantic shark
37 fisheries and staying within the current shark
38 quotas.

39 So the predraft includes potential
40 measures that explore changes to the current
41 regional quotas and the permit structures and
42 that we feel that can be implemented in
43 relatively short time period, one to two
44 years.

45 So we are specifically soliciting
46 your opinion and advice on the range of options
47 that we preset in the predraft as well as other
48 measures that you think could be addressed and

1 considered in this rulemaking process.

2 So the first option I will discuss is
3 permit stacking. Throughout the years, we
4 have received comments stating that increased
5 trip limits could provide more efficiency for
6 shark fishermen and improve market
7 conditions.

8 If we were to implement a permit
9 stacking system, what that would mean is that
10 fishermen with multiple limited access
11 permits could use them concurrently on one
12 vessel essentially having an aggregated or a
13 higher trip limit.

14 Now this could provide additional
15 opportunities and a more efficient use of the
16 resource for fishermen. However, it also
17 could result in quotas being potentially
18 harvested more quickly due to higher trip
19 limits.

20 Okay. So we considered different
21 options for eligibility of permit stacking.

22 So one option that we looked at is
23 limiting the permit stacking to only directed
24 permit holders and this table you will see it
25 splits by region how many currently directed
26 permit holders there are is the first column
27 here.

28 Okay, sorry. Let me see, the middle
29 button. Sorry. The middle button.

30 Okay so this is the current number of
31 total directed permit holders in each region.

32 Here you have the triple pack permit
33 holders, everyone knows what that is,
34 swordfish, shark, tuna and those are the tripe
35 pack owners that currently have a directed
36 shark permit.

37 And then the last column here is the
38 current number of acted directed permit
39 holders. And that means that those are
40 defined as permit holders that have landed one
41 shark per year based on the 2013 HMS E-Dealer
42 reports. That's what the -- how we define
43 active in this.

44 Okay, so the second option we are
45 considering is to limit the permit stacking to
46 directed and incidental shark permit holders.
47 And this table gives you to the total number
48 of incidental permit holders, triple pack

1 permit holders with incidental permits and
2 then the incidental permit holders.

3 So one thing with this option that we
4 would need to consider is whether directed
5 permits could be stacked with an incidental
6 permit or vice versa. So that's something
7 that we need to consider.

8 And then the third option is whether
9 to limit permit stacking to only the active
10 directed permit holders.

11 And then one thing that we would
12 consider with this option is if active
13 directed permit holders could stack a shark
14 permit that they obtained from an inactive
15 permit holder. So that's something that we
16 would have to consider.

17 And with all of these options, all
18 three options, we would also need to consider
19 removing shark permit upgrading restrictions.
20 So we would we would not touch those for
21 swordfish permits, but for the triple pack
22 owners, we would need to consider removing the
23 shark upgrading permit restrictions if we're
24 going to consider stacking.

25 Okay. So along with eligibility, we
26 also have to consider what the actual trip
27 limit options would be. And we're
28 considering three options.

29 The first is a one for one. For
30 example each stacked permit is equal to one
31 trip limit. For example, if you have three
32 permits, you would be limited to three trip
33 limits.

34 So if you have a trip limit of 36
35 aggregated large coastals per trip, that, you
36 know, times three would be 108 per trip.

37 The second option would be three
38 permits would equal two trip limits. So you
39 would have 36 per trip, times two would be 72
40 per trip.

41 And then the third option we are
42 considering is each stacked permit is equal to
43 less than half of a triple net so somewhere
44 below that 72 per trip number.

45 We're also looking at options to
46 consider how many permits can be stacked on one
47 vessel whether it's a maximum of two or a
48 maximum of three permits stacked per vessel.

1 Okay, so that is the permit stacking
2 option. Moving away from that and on to
3 subregional quotas.

4 We have received a lot of comments
5 during our shark season rules and also from the
6 HMS AP members throughout the regions that
7 often request different season opening dates.
8 The different shark management groups due to
9 the subregional differences in the shark
10 fisheries.

11 So subregional quotas could better
12 account for these regional differences by
13 allowing different season opening dates.
14 However, you know, there are potential
15 concerns for unequal distribution if we base
16 those quotas off of historical landings. And
17 then obviously finding the appropriate place
18 to split those regions.

19 So in the predraft, here's what we
20 are currently considering. In the Atlantic
21 region, we are considering subregional quotas
22 for the aggregated large coastal sharks and
23 the hammerhead sharks. We're also
24 considering those subregional quotas for
25 non-blacknose small coastals and blacknose
26 sharks.

27 In the Gulf of Mexico, we are
28 considering subregional quotas for the
29 aggregated LCS, the hammerhead sharks and
30 blacktip sharks.

31 If you notice in the Gulf of Mexico,
32 we are not considering subregional coastals or
33 blacknose because we reviewed those landings
34 from 2010 to 2013 and the landings of those two
35 management groups primarily occur, 99.5
36 percent of those landings occur in Alabama and
37 Florida. So we are considering maintaining
38 those current quota management groups and not
39 splitting them.

40 And then lastly in the Caribbean, we
41 are considering creating the Caribbean as a
42 separate region for the management of large
43 coastals, small coastals and Pelagic sharks.

44 Here is a map of the potential
45 subregional quotas for the Atlantic. As you
46 see here in the Atlantic, the boundary would
47 be a state boundary between North Carolina and
48 South Carolina. This would be the North

1 Atlantic/South Atlantic Region.

2 In the Gulf of Mexico, the split
3 would be a line between the Mississippi and
4 Alabama. This would be the Eastern Gulf and
5 the Western Gulf.

6 Okay, shifting to just the Atlantic.
7 Specifically in the Atlantic, we are
8 considering, like I said previously creating
9 these subregional quotas for the aggregated
10 large coastals, hammerhead groups and we would
11 base those on landings from 2008 to 2013.
12 We're considering starting that time frame in
13 2008 because of Amendment 2. That's when the
14 major changes to the shark fishery happened.

15 And also in the small coastals,
16 creating subregional quotas for non-blacknose
17 small coastals and the blacknose shark
18 management. Based on landings from 2010 to
19 2013, this time period is different because
20 Amendment 3 was a major small coastal fishery
21 management plan amendment which was
22 implemented in 2010.

23 So this table shows you what the
24 potential subregional quotas would be for the
25 Atlantic, aggregated large coastal and
26 hammerhead sharks. This column shows you in
27 metric tons, dressed weight, what those would
28 be.

29 As you can see, the South Atlantic
30 Region had the highest landings of aggregate
31 LCS, so here's the landings. This is the
32 percentage of the landings that were of the
33 quota and this is how we came up with what the
34 potential subregional quotas would be.

35 For hammerhead sharks, the regional
36 landings fluctuated but they were pretty
37 similar with the North Atlantic getting 44
38 percent and the South Atlantic would get
39 around roughly 56 percent of the quota.

40 We are considering maintaining the
41 current quota linkages in the Atlantic between
42 the aggregated LCS and the hammerhead sharks.
43 So those would not change, that quota linkage.

44 Moving on to small coastals. This
45 table is very similar and it shows you what the
46 potential subregional quotas would be for the
47 small non-blacknose, small coastal, and the
48 blacknose sharks.

1 For the Atlantic non-blacknose small
2 coastals and the blacknose, the majority of
3 the landings, as you can were caught in the
4 South Atlantic, here's 69 percent, 97 percent.

5 We are considering maintaining the
6 quota linkage between these two groups in the
7 South Atlantic. However, in the North
8 Atlantic, we are considering eliminating the
9 linkage between the non-blacknose and the
10 blacknose due to difficulties. So the
11 potential blacknose quota in the North
12 Atlantic would be .5 metric tons.

13 So we are considering just
14 prohibiting blacknose sharks in the North
15 Atlantic because of the difficulties of
16 monitoring such a small quota. So the North
17 Atlantic would still be able to land
18 non-blacknose, small coastal.

19 okay, moving to the Gulf of Mexico.
20 For the LCS fishery, again, considering
21 creating the subregional quotas for the
22 aggregated LCS, hammerhead and blacktip
23 sharks.

24 If you can see that the majority of
25 the landings come from the Western Gulf area
26 for blacktip sharks. Seventy-eight percent
27 of the quota would go to Mississippi,
28 Louisiana and Texas for blacktip sharks.

29 For aggregated LCS, the regional
30 landings have fluctuated some and the Eastern
31 Gulf region had the highest landings in 2009
32 of aggregated LCS and the Western Gulf had the
33 highest landings in 2013. So the split would
34 be pretty similar between the Eastern Gulf and
35 the Western Gulf for aggregate LCS.

36 And finally, hammerhead sharks, as
37 you can see the majority of the landings come
38 from Alabama and Florida. So it would be a 95
39 to 5 percent split. And we are Actually
40 considering prohibiting hammerhead sharks
41 from the Western Gulf very similar to the
42 blacknose situation in the Atlantic due to
43 difficulties in monitoring a 1.1 metric ton
44 quota.

45 And then finally, moving to the
46 Caribbean. Currently, the Caribbean is not a
47 separate region from the Atlantic or the Gulf
48 of Mexico for the management of sharks. Shark

1 landings are essentially prohibited in the
2 Caribbean for fishermen who hold an HMS
3 Caribbean small boat permit, actually the
4 retention limit is zero which was implemented
5 in Amendment 4.

6 And right now, we are considering
7 expanding that prohibition to all shark permit
8 holders in the Caribbean.

9 Okay, the last option that is in the
10 predraft is that we are considering deals with
11 the Sandbar Shark Research Fishery quota. If
12 you'll remember in Amendment 2, we established
13 a shark research fishery that has mandatory
14 observer coverage and federal commercial
15 shark fisherman can apply to the shark
16 research fishery and are selected randomly on
17 an annual basis to participate.

18 And here, we list some of the
19 benefits, I won't read those, that we feel the
20 benefits of the Shark Research Fishery.

21 And as part -- I would mention that
22 as part of the Shark Research Fishery,
23 fishermen can land and sell the available
24 Shark Research Fishery quota for sandbars and
25 other large coastal, small coastal and Pelagic
26 sharks.

27 So this graph shows the numbers. So
28 the numbers above here reflect the number of
29 research vessels that have been in the shark
30 research fishery each year. And you can see
31 in blue the sandbar quota and then in red, the
32 sandbar landings.

33 So from 2008 to 2013, the amount of
34 Sandbar Shark Research landings has declined
35 and this is due to limited availability of the
36 observers. We only have so many observes that
37 we can deploy on vessels.

38 And just to note, the 2014 Shark
39 Research Fishery has begun. That quota is the
40 same as in 2013 and there are five vessels
41 participating in that research fishery.

42 So on average, only about 64 percent
43 of the quota has been caught over this time
44 period, 64 percent of the sandbar quota, yes.

45 So as I was mentioning, a limited
46 number of boats that can be managed through the
47 Shark Research Fishery have consistently been
48 able to catch that sandbar quota. And because

1 that quota is not being fully utilized, we have
2 received comments from commercial fisherman
3 and HMS AP members that we should consider
4 allowing fishermen outside of the Shark
5 Research Fishery to land sandbar sharks.

6 Now the status of sandbar sharks,
7 based on the last dock assessment, has
8 improved. It's gone from overfished with
9 overfishing occurring to overfished, no
10 longer overfishing occurring.

11 In addition, the available sandbar
12 quota has increased due to the -- and we have
13 now paid off all the under harvest and it's
14 been accounted for so the quota has increased.
15 Therefore, we are considering implementing a
16 new commercial sandbar fishery quota that
17 would allow commercial fishermen to
18 incidentally land a limited number of sandbar
19 sharks outside of the research fishery.

20 We could collect with this
21 additional -- with these additional landings,
22 we could collect additional information on
23 abundance and distribution of sandbar sharks
24 for stock assessments. Fishermen obviously
25 could have additional fishing opportunities
26 to land this commercially valuable species.

27 However, there could be an incentive
28 also to target this overfished species.

29 Okay, so this is a very number
30 intense table, but we are considering three
31 options with regards to the eligibility for
32 this sandbar quota and I've highlighted the
33 first column.

34 So the option one is that only
35 directed shark permit holders would be
36 allocated this commercial sandbar quota.

37 The current number of directed
38 permit holders is 219, that's this number
39 here.

40 So basically what this would mean is
41 that if we took the average number of unused
42 sandbar research quota, this would mean that
43 here is seven sandbar sharks per year, that's
44 what the directed permit holders could get.
45 And this allocation could range anywhere from
46 two to 17 sandbar sharks per year. It depends
47 on how much unused research quota is
48 available.

1 And I would like to note that the
2 calculations here are based on the average
3 weight of a sandbar to be 50 pounds dressed
4 weight.

5 So the second option here
6 highlighted in this column is the directed and
7 incidental shark permit holders which is a
8 total of 472 would get a sandbar shark
9 allocation.

10 And this would be, as you can see, an
11 average of three of however that could range
12 anywhere from one sandbar to eight sandbar per
13 year depending on, again, how much of that
14 research fishery quota is unused.

15 And then the last option would limit
16 that commercial sandbar quota to only the
17 active directed shark permit holders which is
18 about 90. So that increase the number of
19 sandbar average to about 17 per year and then
20 could fluctuate -- it could be as high as 41
21 or as low as four depending, again, on the
22 unused research quota.

23 And that, in terms of management
24 options is all I have. So here are the next
25 steps for Amendment 6.

26 We will consider the advisory panel
27 input on the predraft measures. I don't have
28 it up on the slide, but we are considering
29 comments and input until April 25th. At that
30 time we will consider the comments and begin
31 to develop the draft FMP Amendment and the
32 proposed rule.

33 If ready, we would like to present
34 the draft FMP Amendment to you to the next
35 Advisory Panel meeting this fall and then we
36 would consider the proposed rule hearings in
37 the fall of 2014 and hopefully have a final
38 amendment and a final rule available in 2015.

39 And again, because this potentially
40 would coincide with the beginning of the shark
41 fishery, we may consider delaying
42 implementation until the start of the fishing
43 season, depending on how the timing goes.

44 So that is all I have and we are
45 interested in your feedback and we'll take
46 questions. Thank you.

47 MR. RAAB: Questions and feedback?
48 Rusty, you're up.

1 MEMBER HUDSON: Rusty Hudson.
2 Thank you for the presentation, LeAnn.
3 As far as some of my wish list that
4 I put together with Guý yesterday, there's not
5 a bunch of stuff there associated with that.
6 So I'll include that in my written comment.
7 We just submit it to HMS Margo or something by
8 April 23rd? Okay.

9 Back to the one shark qualification,
10 was that any kind of shark or was that a large
11 coastal shark?

12 MS. HOGAN: Large coastal.

13 MEMBER HUDSON: Okay, that's good.
14 Yes.

15 I also felt that when we get into the
16 sandbar situation of being able to allocate
17 there, the only people that have any current
18 history since

19 >08, of course, are the research
20 fishery participants.

21 In order to then include some of the
22 directed guys that are active, I would say that
23 it'd be a good idea to have them, you know, have
24 their log book history or whatever that has
25 sandbar specific for say 2003 until 2007.
26 That might be useful for the nonresearch
27 participants because some people that had
28 NOVAs and NOPS and had to go through whatever
29 five, seven year kind of moratorium from
30 participating in research.

31 Again, a question on, I guess it's on
32 Slide 15 we have a map now and I want to know
33 just exactly down here at the Monroe/Dade
34 County line, you know we made that shift for
35 large coastals, nonsandbar so that we didn't
36 get mixed up with the Gulf blacktip and that
37 allocation made all the Keys virtually a Gulf
38 Strata.

39 Now are we going to return to the
40 South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
41 realm if we go to these new regions so that
42 everybody from Monroe/Dade County all the way
43 to the Tortuga's on the south side of US 1 would
44 technically be in the South Atlantic region
45 now instead of the Gulf region?

46 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: I mean I think
47 it's all open but I think we weren't thinking
48 that we would make that change. I think we
49 were thinking we'd stick with the current

1 line.

2 MEMBER HUDSON: Okay. And you also
3 said you were going to possibly take a step
4 back from the catch share thing and I know
5 there's some people and there's a lot less
6 permits involved over in the Gulf but you do
7 have the potential with the Gulf blacktip
8 shark stock assessment from SEDAR 29 to
9 increase up to as far as four million pounds
10 was an option. But you know, you probably
11 don't want to go that far.

12 Whether they go to a catch share or
13 not, it should always be a referendum and not
14 a weighted one. That way, you have the
15 fairness with all participants that have a
16 history.

17 I don't know about the permit
18 stacking. I mean, you know, if you were to
19 increase the Gulf stuff, you wouldn't need
20 permit stacking, you simply just need a bigger
21 allocation. You could then put a bigger trip
22 limit in place for the non-sandbar there.

23 You don't have a trip limit for small
24 coastals right now and that's been the way that
25 was. I do think you should eliminate the idea
26 of choke species status with blacknose, with
27 the nonblacknose, small coastals because you
28 left a whole lot of weight on the table. So
29 we've got underfishing going on with those,
30 the sockhead are not considered overfished.

31 So by just setting either a trip
32 limit or a moratorium on any landings, you
33 know, particularly in areas where there is
34 very little blacknose allowed to be landed
35 whether it's going to be this new North
36 Atlantic or whether it's the Gulf.

37 That would be a useful function so
38 that the guys that do fish small coastals and
39 able to, you know, feed people that resource
40 wouldn't be choked out.

41 And as far as a lot of my other
42 thoughts, the Caribbean Fishery Management
43 Council, how many directed shark permits exist
44 down there right now?

45 MS. HOGAN: We can look. I don't
46 know that number off the top of my head, but
47 we can look at that. There's B

48 MEMBER HUDSON: Okay, well, I know

1 that there had been at one time like one or
2 something like that. It wasn't very much and
3 I always treat them as a whole world different
4 in my mind and I think they'd like to be treated
5 the same way.

6 So with all that said, I'll just
7 include all my other stuff in a written comment
8 in case you'd ever want to incorporate some of
9 this stuff. But again, I want to emphasize
10 back to prohibited shark species, you need to
11 do some science there, 17 years is a long time
12 and only dusky has been viewed and I think
13 there is some science like with Cuban night
14 sharks and the oceanic whitetip and a few
15 others that might be able to not be as data poor
16 as some of the others. Caribbean reef, but
17 then again, we're mindful of the fact that the
18 two main components of our fishery has always
19 been and would always be sandbar and blacktip.

20 So thank you very much.

21 MR. RAAB: Jason then Bob.

22 MEMBER ADRIANCE: Thanks, Jason
23 Adriance.

24 I'm going to start with kind of your
25 subregion here and the aggregated versus
26 blacktip. That is a little bit of an issue for
27 Louisiana because it's a mixed fishery a lot
28 between bulls and blacktips mainly so we
29 still, there's still a little bit of issue
30 between reaching one before the other.

31 And I'm not sure if it ends up being
32 a wash splitting that out regionally, the
33 aggregated. I'm sure Martha could comment on
34 that because it's likely Florida and Louisiana
35 that makes up the majority of that catch.

36 And we ran into that last season
37 where we consulted with Carol and actually let
38 our season go a little longer because people
39 were -- because of the mixed nature of the
40 catch. One was under, one was likely going to
41 be over. So there might still be a little bit
42 of work to be done there.

43 I'm not opposed to subregional
44 quotas but I think it may need to be looked at
45 a little different or a little more.

46 As far as permit stacking, I'd also
47 like to see if you look at some of the
48 historical state fisheries where there's a

1 state water fishery and a potential of
2 increasing a limit there along with doing this
3 permit stacking.

4 And also keep in mind that Louisiana
5 has one trip per day, it's not multiple trips.
6 So that trip limit would be a daily limit.

7 And that's all I have for now.
8 Thanks.

9 MR. RAAB: Bob?

10 MEMBER HUETER: Yea, Bob Hueter,
11 Mote Marine Lab.

12 First the subregional division
13 seem -- they make sense to me, seem to make
14 sense on sort of a broad scale. Remind me, are
15 those regions -- is the division based on where
16 the sharks are landed or where the sharks are
17 caught?

18 MS. HOGAN: It's landed, yes where
19 they're landed.

20 MEMBER HUETER: Landed, okay. So
21 there may -- we may have to watch out for some,
22 you know catch here and land there because
23 you're making the geographic divisions finer.

24 The other thing is on the Sandbar
25 Research issue, I'm very concerned about
26 opening this up at this time and possibly
27 increasing effort.

28 I do appreciate the desire to sort of
29 spread the limited wealth that's there among
30 other boats, but I'm not sure that now is the
31 time. We've just gotten finally past an
32 overfishing state and to do this right now, I
33 don't know it's called for, especially since
34 the problem, as you laid it out is not that
35 enough sharks are being caught, it's an
36 observe issue.

37 So I would like to see us consider
38 either fixing that observer program issue, and
39 we're not talking about dozens of boats here.
40 So let's fix that and/or consider the use, the
41 implementation of video monitoring on the
42 research boats.

43 We are seeing this working pretty
44 well in the Gulf and the grouper/snapper
45 fishery on an experimental basis. We're
46 talking about a limited number of boats here
47 and that would -- and video monitoring would
48 be conducive to that and the reef fish guys

1 like video monitoring because then they don't
2 have to carry an observer and they consider
3 having a camera to be less invasive than having
4 to deal with an observer.

5 So think about doing that before you
6 just being to take, you know, let the genie out
7 of the bottle again and put us back to an
8 overfishing state.

9 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Bob, I just
10 want to clarify, Jackie read my mind when LeAnn
11 and Margo were answering you and came over with
12 the answers.

13 So in our electronic dealer
14 reporting system, the sharks are counted where
15 they were caught, not where they were landed.
16 So that's where the subregionals would be,
17 where they were caught.

18 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: And just one
19 other point, the observer issue is funding.
20 And that's not an easy fix observer program
21 lines have not gotten increases. So I'm not
22 sure that's immediately fixable.

23 MEMBER HUETER: Well, I have to then
24 follow-up to that because to go back to the HMS
25 Research plan discussion earlier today. If
26 you engage your external partners more in this
27 process then process then we can help advocate
28 for that sort of thing and possibly help with
29 funding priorities, you know, in ways that you
30 can't internally. So that to just put that
31 message out there one more time.

32 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: So one more
33 thing in response to the question earlier
34 about the permits in the Caribbean. So the
35 electronic dealer indicates that we do have
36 people landing the Caribbean but we do not
37 actually have any directed permit holders in
38 the Caribbean.

39 MR. RAAB: Carrie, you're next and
40 then Jeff, Sonya and David.

41 MEMBER KENNEDY: Carrie Kennedy,
42 Maryland DNR.

43 In regards to the sandbar shark
44 possible quota, I have a little bit of concern
45 because I feel like having a sandbar shark
46 fishery contradicts what you're trying to
47 accomplish in Amendment 5B because you know,
48 the sandbar shark fishery is so closely tied

1 to dusky interactions, allowing for a directed
2 fishery would then increase those dusky
3 interactions and you're asking folks to take,
4 you know efforts and reduce their interactions
5 in Amendment 5B.

6 So I just think you have to just, I
7 urge caution that you don't go through all this
8 trouble in 5B to then increase dusky
9 interactions in, you know, Amendment 6.

10 Thanks.

11 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Thanks Carrie.

12 Can I just make one note on that, if
13 you look at the numbers of sandbar, it's per
14 year so I don't think we're looking at a
15 directed sandbar fishery, this would just
16 allow, if they happen to catch a sandbar
17 incidentally while they're fishing for other
18 things.

19 So just definitely noted conflict
20 with A5B but I do want to make sure that people
21 know that it's not a directed sandbar we're
22 thinking of.

23 MR. RAAB: Jeff?

24 MEMBER ODEN Thanks, to Carrie's
25 point, you know, it really is a moot point in
26 the Mid-Atlantic, you know, with duskys on a
27 pedestal as they are. I mean there's no
28 future for our fisheries. I mean we're not
29 going to be able to fish for a sandbar or in
30 our case, you know, we can't even discuss
31 sharks, really.

32 I mean, as you see in the Shark
33 Research Fishery, they have to tiptoe. I mean
34 they literally have to tiptoe just to, you
35 know, execute the fishery. And as we see what
36 recently happened with my friend, you know, he
37 just tried to keep from discarding fish and
38 ends up with a major fine for doing it.

39 Another question I have is, you know,
40 with the shark fishery, what about the state,
41 you know, with sandbar fishery, what about the
42 state fisheries unpermitted vessels concern.
43 I don't know how y'all are going to address
44 that. I haven't seen it. Are they going to
45 be allowed to take or I was just curious, you
46 know?

47 But again, the permit stacking, you
48 know, up our way, why bother. I mean that,

1 we're done. So game, set, match, we give it
2 up, you know, just quit, just leave us alone
3 is all we want to be done.

4 I mean literally and so there really
5 is no future and to me, if you know the way the
6 shark fisheries is being operated, the
7 research fishery, if you're not going to let
8 us, you know, see the data, I know it's coming
9 down the line, you know, again, I understand
10 you're confidentiality issues. But you know,
11 we can't get to it.

12 My friends, they go out and catch,
13 you know, 300 out of 450 hooks have sharks on
14 them and the rest have no bait and, you know.

15 Then my other friend there, you know,
16 I mean that's what's happening in this fishery
17 and it's not just here, it's Florida. I mean
18 I hear it from the guys who've been in the
19 Florida Research Fishery and, you know, we
20 can't see this data. I mean that seems to be
21 the only directed fishery that's really going
22 to show anybody what's actually happening.

23 And again, CPUs are going through the
24 roof. I used to set 1,000 hooks every time and
25 if I caught 200 sharks on 1,000 hooks, that
26 was, you know, the highlight of the year.
27 These guys are doing that on half the year or
28 more. And with gear not even designed to
29 catch sharks.

30 Anyhow, you know, I know it's just
31 anecdotal but I've got to keep throwing it at
32 you, sorry.

33 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: So I'm
34 probably poking the bear here. But what data
35 do you mean when you say we're not letting you
36 see the data? The data has been used in the
37 assessments. We've been sharing the
38 summarized data of what's been caught, how
39 it's been caught, all of that. So I'm just
40 confused by what you mean by that?

41 MEMBER ODEN: What I'm trying to say
42 is you've designed this fishery to run from the
43 very fish you're trying to assess. I mean
44 again, you know, I mean these guys are trying
45 to, you know, catch sandbars and give you
46 indices on duskys and yet tiptoe around them?
47 I mean I don't get it. I mean I literally
48 don't. I mean I'm not straight on the

1 methodology you all use in your science. I'm
2 good like Rusty or Sonya, you know, I mean or
3 Bob.

4 Again, I'm just a lowly fisherman.
5 I'm out there and my eyes don't lie. You know.
6 And, you know, there's climate change deniers
7 and there's dusky deniers. That's my B okay.
8 Anyhow.

9 MR. RAAB: Sonya?

10 MEMBER FORDHAM: Sonya Fordham,
11 Shark Advocates International.

12 I just want to briefly, I want to
13 agree with everything that Bob said and just
14 echo the bit of concern about reopening
15 sandbar fishing at this particular time when
16 they're still overfished.

17 And I appreciate the comments about
18 the observer issue. And I also would try to
19 do a bit more in terms of helping with funding.

20 But I would point out, I'm no expert
21 on observer coverage but it does seem that the
22 video monitoring is one of the big advantages
23 is that it's less expensive than a person.

24 So and then I appreciate your
25 comments about it not being a directed sandbar
26 fishery, but I also think Carrie's comments
27 raising the possibility of competing
28 objectives in terms of reducing dusky
29 interaction was also a good comment.

30 So I just wanted to align myself with
31 those. Thank you.

32 MR. RAAB: David?

33 MEMBER STILLER: As for the sandbar
34 thing, I think, I mean it's originally a
35 research fishery only thing. I mean if you
36 let the fishermen still or let guys apply for
37 a permit like you did already let them apply
38 for a permit and then let them fill out the data
39 instead of having to carry observers because
40 you can't afford the observers, let the
41 fishermen bring the data sheets that y'all
42 supply and fill out that and just let them fill
43 out -- I mean so it's not a directed fishery
44 and you still have your research and you're
45 still getting what you want which is what
46 establish that research fishery for anyway.

47 And then the split between -- as for
48 the split between Western Gulf and the -- let's

1 see the Western and Eastern Gulf there at the
2 Alabama/Mississippi line, I think that'd be
3 fine. And the subregional quotas would need
4 to be changed about like Jason said,
5 especially if the hammerhead quota, if that
6 would be a choke species or something, that
7 would definitely need to be changed or that'd
8 shoot Louisiana in the foot real quick.

9 I think three permits and three -- if
10 you allow -- if we do the permit stacking, I
11 think three permits per vessel would be all
12 right and only stack directed permits. I
13 don't know why they'd have to stack incidental
14 permits.

15 Let's see, shoot. I know there's a
16 lot more than that, but I'll get to it in a
17 minute.

18 MR. RAAB: Thanks, David.

19 Rusty, you're back up.

20 MEMBER HUDSON: Thank you very much,
21 Rusty Hudson.

22 Let me emphasize that since we've
23 made this change to the research fishery,
24 we've become a day boat fishery with our
25 directed folks. And the point of catch and
26 the point of landing is probably not very far
27 different simply because of the 33 now the 36
28 shark limitation.

29 We have done a thing at council
30 level, the South Atlantic Council, with both
31 black sea bass and golden tile recently and
32 back to the criteria of the people before the
33 research fishery, it would be an idea of doing
34 an endorsement system which isn't a catch
35 share system, it's just somebody that could
36 then participate in the sandbar fishery which
37 would not be a directed fishery but be an
38 incidental type situation because the
39 allocation looks very low right now.

40 Underfishing is definitely
41 occurring. That's more insurance for the
42 rebuild plan meaning that we're
43 getting -- gaining ground at the moment. But
44 we have other fish, sharks in our inventory
45 here that we're allowed to catch that are also
46 not known status or like the Atlantic blacktip
47 and stuff or perhaps might be overfished in
48 some capacity. So we can't use that as an

1 excuse.

2 We ended the overfishing. Dusky is
3 the overfishing issue that we do have still.

4 And so with that kind of stuff in
5 mind, we can get a little more creative. The
6 ideas of observer was how I was told that
7 there'd be at least a subset of the non-sandbar
8 fishery that could potentially be observed in
9 one of two ways, physically or with other type
10 electronic stuff. I guess George LaPointe's
11 not here so we can't really go into to what he
12 has going.

13 But that's just a through that keep
14 in mind it's a day boat fishery. We're not at
15 a 4,000 pound trip and any of those type of
16 things. We don't have people ranging up and
17 down following the fish. They're just going
18 out their door, coming back in their door.
19 And we have probably some of the best quality
20 shark going on the market and if you get a
21 little bit so that the sandbars can go to the
22 non-sandbar guys in a way, then you have more
23 data.

24 Now something that Jeff brought up is
25 the fact that, I said it earlier when we did
26 SEDAR21, our terminal year was 2009. So you
27 had 2008, 2009 data maybe from the research
28 fishery that got, you know inputted in there,
29 possibly in a confidential way. I don't know.
30 I'd have to go back and reflect on that.

31 But we don't have the rest of the
32 stuff in there and you have definitely had a
33 downturn the last couple of years because you
34 don't have the money for the observers.

35 So being creative might be useful for
36 at least keeping some food on the table for
37 people and keep some of them fishing.

38 Thank you.

39 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: Just one thing
40 I want to get out here is the idea that
41 electronic monitoring is cheaper, that hasn't
42 actually been the case universally.

43 MEMBER HUETER: Not electronic,
44 video

45 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: Okay, well,
46 I'm viewing them or considering them the same,
47 particularly in situations where it's used for
48 quota monitoring of species that look very

1 similar. That means that there's then a
2 person watching every single hour of every
3 single tape. And that actually, in the end,
4 sometimes has not been cheaper than a person
5 on a boat.

6 It really varies on the species. It
7 varies on the fishery and what your objectives
8 are. But the idea that, oh that's cheaper
9 isn't always been found to be true.

10 MR. RAAB: Bill's for that point, I
11 think Bob's for that point and it's -- oh that
12 point too. Okay, well then, Scott was first,
13 so go ahead Scott.

14 MEMBER TAYLOR: I think everybody in
15 the agency knows how involved I've been in the
16 electronic monitoring for our own boats for a
17 different reason. Margo and I would, you know,
18 like to kind of make two points to that end.

19 One, we found a cost effective way of
20 doing that.

21 Secondly, the -- what's an
22 interesting outcropping of what's happened is
23 the behavior of the individuals on the boat
24 when they know the camera's over their
25 shoulder.

26 And that while, from a practical
27 standpoint, you would be 100 percent correct
28 in that to have somebody sitting there
29 watching an hour of monitoring for every hour
30 that takes place of fishing out there would be
31 somewhat expensive. I would argue that that is
32 not necessary in order to affect the same
33 result.

34 One of the issues that we had that
35 this ties into which is enforcement.
36 Enforcement, and if they were here, I would
37 tell them to their face, they're inherently
38 lazy in that, you know, this is a situation
39 where if there's tape and there's an offense
40 that's going to be on the tape would have some
41 teeth in order to be able to actually affect
42 a positive message that goes on out there.

43 The cases that really need to be made
44 and should be made, you know, and sort of in
45 general that are out there are very difficult
46 for them. So maybe lazy is not the right word.
47 But you know, because at the end of the day,
48 they're still answering to legal counsel.

1 So this particular type of a
2 mechanism while I think the industry to a
3 certain extent is throwing itself under the
4 bus, it becomes clear cut.

5 So what I would propose from the
6 standpoint of monitoring would be that, and
7 the numbers people are much better than I am,
8 is that a sampling tied to another mechanism
9 that -- and these tapes and the video itself
10 can be viewed comfortably at two or three time
11 speed, you know, in order to be able to really
12 see what's going on there. You don't have to
13 kind of watch it at real time. It becomes
14 pretty boring, you know, to watch that way.

15 And the technological advance that's
16 there, you know, it's substantial. So if you
17 were going to have somebody sit there watching
18 every second of every haul back, that would be
19 the case. But you're not there anyway.

20 And that the -- one of the other
21 things said that's absolutely true is that
22 given the choice of whether or not the crews
23 are going to have a physical person on the
24 vessel or the camera watching the fishing
25 activity, they will take that camera watching
26 the fishing activity hands down.

27 You know that a lot of these boats are
28 cramped. There's not a lot of space that's on
29 them and, you know, that there is no time for
30 privacy for lack of a better description.

31 So I really -- I say very little about
32 this at the meetings in sort of a public sense
33 but I'm a huge advocate for affecting
34 behavioral change on the vessels as a result
35 of this type of monitoring that's there. It's
36 cost effective and it's universal for all the
37 things that we're talking about.

38 Inherently all these issues that
39 we're dealing with bycatch reduction, whether
40 it's bluefin, whether it's dusky, whether it's
41 shark, all boiled down to the ability to have
42 a level of accountability on the boat and that
43 B

44 And my final comment is, Jeff, I've
45 got to tend to disagree with you about one
46 thing which is that the sacrifices that we've
47 made, we saw the results of that bearing fruit
48 in the Swordfish Longline Fishery.

1 The sandbar fishery, I don't think
2 that there's anybody from the fishery side
3 that will argue with you that those fish are
4 coming back with a vengeance. That, you know,
5 that the numbers are going to continue to
6 increase at least to anybody that I've talked
7 to and even though the agency may not be there
8 yet, that we need to be considerate of what's
9 going to happen five, ten years down the line.

10 It's kind of hard when you're trying
11 to scratch out a living right now. And that
12 we don't get exactly a lot of give backs for
13 lack of a better description but I think that's
14 why I'm here, is that, you know, that I hope
15 that at the end of the day the effort and the
16 things that we're going to put in place are
17 going to bear fruit. Maybe not for me but
18 maybe five, ten years down the line.

19 MR. RAAB: Bill?

20 MEMBER GERENCER: Real briefly. In
21 New England they recognize the same problem of
22 the cost of having somebody to look at every
23 hour of every -- and one of the approaches that
24 they're looking at is to sync up the camera or
25 the tape with the log books and that way you
26 just have to do a sampling of a period and if
27 the log book doesn't match, then you would
28 engage in a little more thorough viewing.

29 But so you only have to sample a
30 portion of the trip and if you don't have to
31 say which portion and if you find that to be
32 accurate, you could assume the rest is
33 accurate and then all of a sudden your log book
34 becomes a real great source of accurate data,
35 or not, but at least you'd know it.

36 MR. RAAB: Thanks. Bob?

37 MEMBER HUETER: Yes, Bob Hueter,
38 actually, Scott and Bill, with respect to the
39 video monitoring, I've already made my points
40 and I just want to say that this is an emerging
41 technology and this is the future and any
42 emerging technology always costs more in the
43 beginning and then the costs come down. If we
44 don't invest in this now, then we won't get to
45 where we need to be.

46 Having people observers on boats is
47 really archaic when they have the technology to
48 be able to do video monitoring.

1 And I've been very surprised. I
2 know something about this because we have a
3 center at Mote that's helping with the grouper
4 fishery. I've been very surprised that the
5 fishermen have expressed the same opinion that
6 Scott has, that they'd much rather have the
7 cameras than the observers so, I would urge you
8 to not dismiss this because of a perceived
9 expense in the beginning of the startup costs
10 of this technology. It is the future.

11 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: Well just to
12 further my comment, by no means did I mean to
13 indicate that we weren't pursuing electronic
14 monitoring. As you should well know, we're
15 implementing, not in a pilot, but full fleet
16 in the Pelagic Longline Fishery. So clearly
17 we see the value.

18 But to hear constant continuous
19 comments that it's cheaper, I think that
20 hasn't been the experience of the agency in all
21 cases and that is well documented.

22 All right, I'll quote you on that,
23 Bob.

24 But point being, I think it's
25 something to explore, I think it's a good idea.
26 We just need to make sure that it is what we
27 think it is. We're looking at the same kind
28 of auditing sample comparison.

29 But again, technology as I
30 understand it where it is, a species ID for
31 things that are very similar means human eyes.
32 A big difference between a turtle and a
33 billfish, great, camera can do that, software
34 can do that. Differences between some of the
35 other closer species isn't quite there yet.
36 so it's coming, they can identify people from
37 space, I mean individuals. But the fish world
38 isn't quite there yet.

39 Just the continuing conversation
40 about the dusky sandbar, you know, I think a
41 camera would have some difficulty but I think
42 you're right, it is coming. There's a big
43 agency push for it overall but we just need to
44 be careful of it as well.

45 MR. RAAB: Well we're kind of at the
46 end of time and lunchtime, we've got Michael
47 and Martin haven't spoken and we'll see if Jeff
48 wants the last word again.

1 Michael? Martin?

2 MEMBER SISSENWINE: Yes, I'll be
3 very quick. I do appreciate Margo's comments
4 on this issue of electronic monitoring. I'm
5 sure they're right on. But unfortunately,
6 I'm afraid that the people who aren't in
7 operational mode, which you basically are, you
8 know trying to make things happen now, really,
9 you know, we're caught in that mode and what's
10 needed is really a broader national strategic
11 look at the issue of observers or at sea
12 monitoring going from the antiquated person on
13 the deck to technology.

14 I mean clearly there are
15 difficulties in identifying things, but 20
16 years ago in the science world, we went through
17 automated identification of plankton in video
18 recordings and, you know, some species you
19 can't identify with pattern recognition
20 algorithms and some you can. I don't think
21 that level of technology and scientific
22 capability has been applied yet in the case of
23 replacement for a physical observer program

24 but I also think that these issues
25 are even broader than that, that there really
26 needs to be a rethinking of the strategy with
27 respect to sampling designs and as well as the
28 whole issue of procurement and costing of
29 observer programs and this is a broad national
30 issue that, unfortunately, for you having to
31 live with the realities of what you have to do
32 right now is hard to get your arms around but
33 as an agency, I think it's imperative to really
34 strategically rethink the whole issue.

35 Thank you.

36 MR. RAAB: Marty?

37 MEMBER SCANLON: Yes, my question is
38 why isn't it possible to, you know, we have
39 these research vessels in operation, and you
40 know, there's money to really get observers is
41 what it sounds like to me and the research is
42 important. Why isn't it possible just to
43 increase how many sharks they can land each
44 trip?

45 I mean they're involved in the
46 fishery already, why not reward these guys for
47 the work they're doing and make it a little bit
48 more economically feasible to participate as

1 opposed to looking to add more boats and like
2 more of a wildcard into the equation, you've
3 got these vessels doing a pretty good job, it
4 looks like, and avoiding the things that
5 they're supposed to avoid.

6 And then you know, just give them a
7 little bit of a break and reward these guys as
8 opposed to -- I have a directed shark permit
9 but do I really -- is one shark going to break
10 my year or it could help these guys, you know,
11 get over the hump a little bit. You know.

12 It's a simple solution until you can
13 get the money. If the funding becomes
14 available, then you can reduce it a little bit.
15 If you're interested in filling the quota,
16 it's a simple way to do it. It doesn't cost
17 anybody any more money, you get more bang for
18 your buck.

19 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: Yes, I hear
20 your point there. The way that it works is
21 that we have observer coverage on a trip basis
22 and so this is what the -- how far the observer
23 money has gotten us is for a certain number of
24 trips and this is what the catch on those trips
25 reflects.

26 And so it's not that they are limited
27 in what they can land, it's just we're limited
28 in the number of trips we can observe is how
29 it's structured now. So I think that's why
30 we're coming under. Does that make sense?

31 MR. RAAB: So thanks for another
32 spirited conversation.

33 Can I just ask in terms of public
34 comment how many people want to make public
35 comment just so we can pace ourselves?

36 One second.

37 We want to just -- what's that?

38 MEMBER GREGORY: We have a question
39 on what Marty was asking -- no trip limit on
40 the research fishery?

41 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: No, they
42 can -- there's a limit on how many hooks they
43 can put out, but they can land anything they
44 catch as long as it's not prohibited. There's
45 a lot of ins and outs on that so it's not as
46 simple as it sounds that's why there is that
47 hook limit.

48 MR. RAAB: One thing Margo and I were

1 just talking about was the option of powering
2 through the last agenda items, we don't have
3 any public comment and Margo's summary, we
4 could be done by a few minutes after one. But
5 I also I -- some people had lunch plans B- but
6 can I just see a show of hands.

7 So option one is power through, we
8 finish a little bit after one and then we're
9 just done.

10 Option two would be break for lunch
11 for an hour, come back and then we have again
12 another hour after lunch.

13 So let me just see option one, power
14 through?

15 Option two, break for lunch?

16 Okay. So why don't we do this, let's
17 power through, let's -- somebody can go
18 outside and get Pat's cookies and pass them
19 around so people don't faint.

20 So are people -- so okay so why don't
21 let's just do a ten minute B- go check out of
22 the room, back and we'll power through and then
23 we're done.

24 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGNE: And I need some
25 of Pat's cookies to get us through.

26 MR. RAAB: And we'll pass Pat's
27 cookies around. So ten minutes, no more.
28 We're starting at 12:20.

29 (Whereupon the foregoing matter went
30 off the record at 12:11 p.m., and resumed at
31 12:23 p.m.)

32 MR. RAAB: We're going to do the
33 Recreational Update now, and then since there
34 was no public comment, we'll go directly after
35 that into Margo's wrap-up.

36 MR. BLANKENSHIP: All right.
37 We'll go ahead and get started. All right.
38 Well, welcome back. There's several of us
39 that are going to tag team a series of slides
40 in this presentation, and take you through a
41 few different topics, the first one of which
42 is dealing with just touching base on, you
43 know, the Recreational Salt Water fishing
44 Summit.

45 Eileen Sobeck did a, you know, a good
46 job of hitting on a lot of the details that I
47 had planned to put in and mention to you guys,
48 so I'm not going to rehash a lot of that. But

1 I'll hit a couple of things from an HMS
2 perspective.

3 First of all, for those of you that
4 don't know me, I'm Randy Blankenship, and I am
5 the Southeast Branch Chief for Highly
6 Migratory Species Management Division,
7 located down in St. Petersburg, Florida. I am
8 one of the recreational coordinators for HMS,
9 among my other duties.

10 So I'm the Southern Recreational
11 Coordinator and the Brad McHale is the
12 Northern Recreational Coordinator. You can
13 tell from the amount of time that he's spent
14 talking on other topics, that we have many
15 other parts to our job besides that.

16 One of the things I think that as we
17 were entering the Recreational Summit, that
18 kind of captured the sentiment at the
19 beginning of that summit was a quote that Ken
20 Franke made during his -- one of his
21 presentations at the beginning, and that quote
22 was "rules without relationships equals
23 rebellion."

24 From his perspective, that meant
25 that you could have rules, and without the
26 relationship with those that are having to
27 follow the rules, that there's not -- there's
28 sometimes a lack of understanding of them, a
29 lack of buy-in, and sometimes history has
30 shown that that lack of buy-in and
31 understanding can result in problems.

32 So with that kind of beginning the
33 process of the summit, you know, I think that
34 it was very interesting to see some of the
35 practical steps that were taken and the
36 techniques that were used in the summit, to
37 help draw out a lot of the sentiment, some of
38 the issues.

39 Then work those towards developing
40 and focusing on challenges, and then actual
41 actions that will be highlighted in the final
42 report from the summit, and then that the
43 agency can use, incorporate as we look to
44 update the actual recreational fishing
45 agendas, both on a national level and the
46 regional levels.

47 So that was basically what happened,
48 as Eileen talked about. We went through a

1 really iterative process of some tools, to try
2 to get to those actual challenges and actions
3 and then prioritize those. So as I mentioned,
4 there will be a report that will come out of
5 that. MAKERS, the contractor that helped us
6 with that, will be putting that report
7 together, and then that will be incorporated
8 by the agency in some of the future work to
9 come.

10 I will mention that leading up to
11 this summit, over the last couple of years
12 there's been a lot of work that has gone into
13 that recreational initiative. Some of those
14 things included the recreational discussions
15 that occurred with the different regions.

16 Each region had their own
17 discussions. HMS had a public conference
18 call if you'll remember, back several months
19 ago, where we asked for input on the updates
20 of the regional recreational action agendas.
21 Those agendas have been finalized. They were
22 released a couple of weeks ago.

23 Copies of them are on the table
24 outside, and they're also available online.
25 Within that booklet, there's all the regions,
26 and HMS is one of them.

27 Also I want to mention specifically
28 that while Eileen asked for a raising of hands
29 about who was at that summit, specifically Rom
30 was there, Rom Whitaker was there; Rick
31 Bellavance, Jason Schratwieser was there and
32 Andrew Cox.

33 And so in just a moment, I actually
34 want -- sorry Jonathan, I didn't give you a
35 heads up about this, but I want to give y'all
36 a chance. If you have any brief comments that
37 you want to make, related to your thoughts
38 about the recreational action agenda, that
39 would be great too.

40 So from an HMS perspective, a few
41 things that we I think took from that, at least
42 initially on a first glance, was that we're
43 going to look to seriously and take to heart
44 the outcomes that come out of that summit,
45 particularly related to collaborative
46 opportunities, and specifically looking for
47 opportunities to reach out to all
48 constituents, recreational and others, and

1 open a dialogue in order to help build those
2 relationships that I talked about, related to
3 that opening quote.

4 Then also seek to build partnerships
5 where they're possible, to accomplish shared
6 interests, such as with collaborative
7 research, where that's possible, and that's
8 just one example. So with that, first of all
9 I'll say Brad, do you have anything you want
10 to add as related to a synopsis of the summit?

11 MR. MCHALE: No, not really. I
12 think Randy, I think you hit it on the head.
13 I think some of the take-home messages that I
14 got from that summit is that it was pretty
15 council-centric and go figure, given that most
16 of the fisheries around the nation are managed
17 in that fashion.

18 But there were some definite
19 HMS-related nuggets that I walked away from
20 that. One is again trying to view how you
21 build on the relationship between say the
22 agency and whether it be at a state level or
23 the recreational community as a whole.

24 I think we in HMS are well far and
25 above some of the other management groups
26 around the nation, because of this advisory
27 panel makeup, where we do have recreational
28 interests at the table and have for years. So
29 I think that's a very positive thing.

30 But then how do you even take it to
31 the next steps, and the one item that stuck out
32 to really start to entertain, some of these
33 cooperative research opportunities that
34 historically have really been viewed in say a
35 commercial context, to really start to think,
36 you know, how can some of these opportunities
37 perhaps come to fruition in the recreational
38 context.

39 Whether it's obtaining biological
40 samples from recreational catch; how do you
41 get that word out there to the fishing
42 community that, you know, if you're catching
43 a bluefin, yellowfin, bigeye, whatever the
44 case may be, how do you then get those samples
45 into the hands of scientists, to then further
46 support the information say going into a stock
47 assessment, just as an example.

48 There will be plenty more coming out

1 like that. But I thought it was an excellent
2 summit. I thought folks there, you know, kind
3 of left certain agendas at the door and really
4 kind of dug in at some of these national, as
5 well as the regional issues, and that would be
6 a part of it.

7 MR. BLANKENSHIP: So at this point,
8 I guess I'd like to just say to those three guys
9 that were there that are still here, do y'all
10 have anything that you -- just real briefly,
11 any thoughts, and if not, that's fine too.

12 MEMBER COX: Andrew Cox, the
13 Billfish Foundation. I think you guys hit it
14 on the head with the communication two-way,
15 and the collaborations for working together as
16 we move forward, to try to get better numbers
17 from the recreational communities,
18 particularly in the HMS species.

19 I think one thing that really stuck
20 out was that anglers want to know your faces
21 and know that they come and approach you on
22 these particular issues. I think a lot of
23 times they don't know who to approach, or they
24 don't know a face with a name.

25 I think if you show up at a tournament
26 or a boat show and are there to at least make
27 yourself available, they'll reach out to you.
28 I think that the more you open that door, the
29 more that communication will be there.

30 MEMBER WHITAKER: Yes. The only
31 thing I would like to add is to ring that many
32 people together and come out with what y'all
33 did, I thought it was handled very
34 professionally, and executed very well, to get
35 that much information in a couple of days.

36 In fact, I almost feel like that
37 there may be too many things on the table, and
38 somebody's going to have to condense down a
39 little bit what we decided on. But what I took
40 out of it from most of my groups that I met with
41 is that the recreational community does want
42 to engage more with management, and that was
43 a big topic.

44 But also took out that there
45 was -- there was not much confidence in
46 the -- especially when you get down into stock
47 assessments and science, and that maybe a lot
48 of these problems we have the tools to solve.

1 But they're -- a lot of them are regional
2 problems, and it's going to take some leg work
3 between the councils and HMS and local
4 regional places to fix them. Thank you.

5 MEMBER BELLAVANCE: Yep. Just
6 along those same lines, I think that since the
7 2010 summit to the 2014 summit, we've picked
8 off a lot of the low-hanging fruit and fostered
9 better relationships with the agency. It's
10 my experience that listening to the discussion
11 around the table, a lot of the heavy lifting
12 now seems like it's more on a regional basis.

13 There are concerns that we have up in
14 the Northeast that didn't necessarily apply to
15 the Gulf fishermen or the folks from Alaska or
16 Hawaii, and we probably need to think about how
17 we're going to tackle those on a more regional
18 basis. It was a very good organized event, I
19 thought.

20 MR. BLANKENSHIP: All right. Well
21 thanks for those candid responses there, and
22 with that, I think we've covered the summit,
23 and we'll move into the presentation that
24 Cliff has, talking about some of the
25 recreational studies.

26 MR. HUTT: Hi everybody. For those
27 of you who don't know me, my name is Clifford
28 Hutt. I was the Canal Sea Grant Fellow with
29 HMS last year, and now I'm working with the
30 Economics and Social Analysis Division down in
31 the NOAA Office of Science and Technology.

32 Today, I'm going to present on a
33 couple of recreational economic projects I
34 worked on last year during my fellowship. I'm
35 still wrapping up. The first is a charter
36 head boat cost earnings log book study that we
37 conducted last year from July through
38 November.

39 We received trip -- we sent log book
40 forms out to a sample of permitted HMS charter
41 head boats, got trip forms back on a little
42 over 500 trips that targeted HMS. We got a few
43 extra ones for trips that were targeting
44 things like dolphin and wahoo and what-not,
45 that dropped from that number.

46 The majority of those were from
47 the Southeast region, kind of the South
48 Atlantic and the Gulf. We got a good number

1 from the Mid-Atlantic, but from the Northeast,
2 numbers were kind of low. The bluefin tuna
3 fishery, which is a big thing up there, was
4 kind of weird last year. A lot of the tuna
5 didn't seem to really come inshore.

6 But average trip lengths for trips
7 were between eight and 12 hours from different
8 regions. The number of angler parties per
9 boat, about five to eight.

10 The primary target species in most of
11 the regions, yellowfin tuna was about the top
12 one or two in all the regions, followed by
13 sailfish was a big one in the South Atlantic,
14 and marlin, sharks and bluefin were the bigger
15 things up in the Northeast, being Maine to
16 Virginia, and sharks were the big one, you
17 know, coastal sharks were the big ones for
18 trips in the Gulf of Mexico.

19 Costs, overall total fare for trips
20 on average was just over \$2,000 for the trips
21 reported, and this varied a bit from region to
22 region obviously.

23 But the average was around 2,000 for
24 the country, and total costs on average were
25 about \$1,250. Of these, the primary cost for
26 the trips was obviously fuel. This was
27 particularly in, you know, billfish trips, as
28 they're doing a lot of trolling.

29 Next was labor, and that's for crew
30 and captain on those vessels where the captain
31 isn't the owner, average 250. It seems kind
32 of low, but that's because in most cases, the
33 captain was considered the owner and wasn't
34 included as a labor expense.

35 Beyond that, expenses were bait,
36 around an average of \$80 a trip; tackle around
37 50; ice about 35, and then various other costs
38 around 60.

39 But as you can see, fuel and labor
40 being the primary cost for these trips. We're
41 working on doing a cost and earnings model,
42 similar to what we do with the pelagic long
43 line fleet. Still developing that and
44 adopting it, and hope to have a final report
45 for this some time, you know, in late
46 spring-early summer.

47 The other project was the HMS
48 recreational fishing expenditure survey that

1 was conducted back in 2011. I was analyzing
2 the data for that last year, and at the last
3 AP meeting, I reported on the trip
4 expenditures. Since then, I've analyzed the
5 durable good expenditures, which I'm happy to
6 say were significantly higher.

7 This survey collected data on
8 expenditure data for boat trips and durable
9 goods, durable goods being any kind of goods
10 that are used in the purpose of marine fishing.

11 So boats, rods and reels, other
12 durable equipment is used over multiple trips
13 for years, vehicles for towing boats, and also
14 second vacation homes, in a case where the
15 primary purpose for buying that was to go
16 fishing in a certain area that they regularly
17 fished.

18 Total trip expenditures were
19 estimated by calculating average expenditures
20 and expanding that by the total number of
21 directed HMS private boat trips in the region,
22 and this was from Maine to North Carolina, and
23 durable expenditures, total durable
24 expenditures were estimated by expanding
25 average expenditures by the number of HMS
26 permit holders in the region.

27 You see here average expenditures
28 for durable goods in the region were over
29 \$13,000 per angler. This was primarily for
30 secondary homes, where the average
31 expenditure was nearly -- it was like \$3,700.
32 There was a case of, you know, the vast
33 majority of people survey didn't have an
34 expenditure, but those who did, it was very
35 big.

36 The next biggest one was for new
37 boats, which was also over \$3,000, and then the
38 third was for boat storage, which was over a
39 \$1,000 a year. Expanded out for over 14,000
40 HMS permit holders in the region, this
41 estimate --resulted in an estimate of total
42 expenditures of \$192 million.

43 This is compared to trip expenditure
44 total, which was estimated at just over I
45 believe \$24 million. So substantially higher
46 durable goods expenditures. Average trip
47 expenditures for tuna trips, trips that
48 primarily targeted tuna were \$540 per trip for

1 billfish, which is mostly marlin given the
2 region. It was over 1,100 per trip, the vast
3 majority of that being for boat fuel, around
4 \$800, and shark trips were \$566 per trip.

5 We then put these expenditures into
6 an economic input-output model called IMPLAN.
7 That basically you put in the expenditures and
8 it estimates four primary values. One, the
9 first being employment, the total number of
10 people employed as a result of these
11 expenditures; the other big one being total
12 output.

13 That's kind of a gross value of sales
14 by associated businesses within the economic
15 region. So as an angler, you spend a dollar;
16 then that business turns around, you know, and
17 they have costs of their own that are supported
18 by those sales, which kind of affects other
19 businesses in the region and adds up. So you
20 get a bigger kick for your buck than just the
21 expenditures the anglers had.

22 Under total output, you have value
23 added effects, which are the labor income. So
24 the employee income and payroll and company
25 profits that are supported by the angler
26 expenditures, and then you know, within that,
27 you have an estimate of labor income, which is
28 how much of that value added was just the kind
29 of personal and proprietary income supported
30 by those expenditures.

31 Overall, the 192 million in total
32 expenditures for durable goods resulted in a
33 total output of \$324 million, and that
34 includes output from the businesses where the
35 expenditures, you know, the items were
36 actually purchased; outputs from the
37 businesses that they then were spending money
38 buying stuff from; and outputs from
39 expenditures of household expenditures,
40 supported by the income of the people who were
41 employed by these businesses.

42 Within that 177 million was value
43 added. So that's income and profits, and of
44 that, 116 million were employee income, and
45 this generated nearly 2,200 jobs from Maine to
46 North Carolina. By comparison, the trip
47 expenditures totaled around 24 million, and
48 supported a little over 235 jobs.

1 The other thing I'll add, and this is
2 the last of my presentation, but the other
3 thing I'll add is last year we talked about
4 some economic proposals we were putting
5 forward, one of which was expanding the
6 expenditure survey to the Southeast and Gulf.

7 I'm happy to say that NOAA S&T is
8 redoing the economic expenditure survey over
9 the next few years. This year, they're going
10 to nationally redo the durable goods survey,
11 and in a couple of years they're going to redo
12 the trip survey.

13 As part of that, they're going to
14 redo the HMS expenditure survey for the entire
15 HMS region, from Maine to Texas. So this
16 summer, surveys will be going out to HMS
17 angling permit holders, getting their
18 expenditures on durable goods, and in a couple
19 of years there will be a survey going out on
20 trip expenditures.

21 For a full national survey, it's very
22 expensive and it was just a lot more budgetary
23 feasible to split it up into two. With that,
24 I'll pass it on to Ron.

25 DR. SALZ: Okay. Thank you Cliff,
26 and I want to thank Margo for putting me on the
27 agenda. I always appreciate the opportunity
28 to present to this group, and update everyone
29 on the progress that we're making towards
30 improving our recreational data collection
31 monitoring through MRIP.

32 As some of you probably know, MRIP is
33 much bigger than HMS. It includes all
34 recreational species. It's also much bigger
35 than just the Atlantic and Gulf. But for my
36 talk today to this group, I'm going to focus
37 on specifically MRIP as it relates to HMS. I
38 also welcome you to visit the MRIP website,
39 where you can get a lot more detailed
40 information on everything that I'm going to
41 talk about, and more.

42 So I'm going to start with a fairly
43 large project that we have underway, which is
44 to look at the large pelagic survey, and look
45 to improve both the design of that survey, as
46 well as how we produce our estimates from the
47 data we collect.

48 I have a couple of folks on the

1 advisory panel who are serving on that project
2 team. I guess I'll mention them by name.
3 Rick Bellavance and Ron Whitaker are both part
4 of that team. So you can also get more
5 information about this project from them.

6 So one of the things in response to
7 the NRC recommendation, and also similar to
8 what we did for the MRFSS survey, we are
9 looking at developing estimation approaches
10 that will be essentially design-based and
11 weighted, so that the data we collect,
12 primarily the dockside data, is appropriately
13 weighted, so that each element, each data
14 piece collected is represented proportional
15 to its occurrence in the fishery.

16 So we are working also with
17 consultants from Colorado State University,
18 one of whom was on the NRC panel, the original
19 panel, and working on a few things related to
20 this appropriate weighting. One very
21 important change that we are looking at and
22 will likely implement is to adjust our data
23 based on whether it's in a tournament or not.

24 We did a pilot study a few years back
25 under MRIP, which essentially you can go
26 online and get the full report. But
27 essentially we determined that we are likely
28 biasing estimates for some of those species
29 that are heavily targeted and caught in
30 tournaments, because of the way tournaments
31 are currently being represented in the data.
32 So we're looking to correct that potential
33 bias moving forward.

34 We also are looking at trip return
35 times, and the good news here is we compared
36 some of the information we collect on the
37 telephone, because we do an independent
38 telephone survey as far as trip return times,
39 with the information we collect on the docks,
40 and we are out there on the docks when trips
41 are coming back at the right times, because
42 we're getting a good match.

43 So it's not like we're missing a lot
44 of either late night activity or early morning
45 activity in the fishery. But again, this is
46 something that if we can make small
47 improvements here, we will moving forward with
48 the estimation. So appropriately weighting

1 for trip return times.

2 Another thing we're looking at is
3 possibly coming up with different approaches
4 for what I would consider those very rare event
5 species. So as you know, the large pelagic
6 survey was implemented because in general, HMS
7 and large pelagics are rare, relatively to all
8 fishing, you know, general recreational
9 fisheries, and so we need a more directed, more
10 targeted approach to sampling them.

11 But within the suite of HMS species,
12 there are some that are even more rare, and
13 here I'm thinking about many of the shark
14 species and some of the billfish, where
15 landings occur so infrequently that it's very
16 difficult to produce precise estimates using
17 a survey approach.

18 But we are looking at special
19 estimation methods, and this could involve
20 pooling across either states or wider
21 temporal, you know, months say, to improve on
22 the precision and hopefully the accuracy of
23 those estimates.

24 Another important potential bias
25 that was identified by the NRC in their report,
26 and one that we've been aware of for a long time
27 is the fact that when you sample dockside, you
28 don't have the opportunity to interview boats
29 that are returning to private docks basically,
30 or any private access site, that we don't
31 sample that.

32 So again, going back to the phone
33 survey data, we are interviewing these
34 captains, and they are included in the survey
35 as part of our offsite or telephone survey.
36 So one thing that we started doing was
37 comparing the private access trips with those
38 public access trips that we sample dockside,
39 and to see particularly if there are
40 differences in catch rates, because this would
41 again indicate a potential bias in our
42 estimates.

43 Preliminary assessment show that
44 there may be some difference in their trip
45 attributes, but it's very difficult to parse
46 that out given the sample sizes that we have.
47 So for this year, we put in for a MRIP project
48 which has been funded, to essentially double

1 our sample size on the telephone survey.

2 So this is going to be only in the
3 private sector. So the angling category and
4 general category telephone survey. We're
5 going to be sampling them at a higher rate, and
6 this will give us the opportunity to be able
7 to compare catch rates, to see more
8 definitively if we do have a bias associated
9 with the private access issue.

10 Okay. So just quickly, this is the
11 revised time line for the large pelagics
12 survey project. You can see we're in
13 progress. We're looking at the estimation
14 approach. We're looking at the survey design
15 simultaneously.

16 We hope to have a report out on
17 recommending a new estimation methodology by
18 the end of this year, and then of course that
19 will have to go through both internal and
20 external peer review before it is approved,
21 and we start producing new revised estimates.

22 Then you can see we hope to have by
23 the middle of 2015 the final final report on
24 this project, which will include not only the
25 new estimation approach, but the new design
26 that we hope to pilot test.

27 Okay. Switching gears to a project
28 that is wrapping up now, so this is still -- the
29 report is in draft form, but I can give you just
30 a little heads up as to what, you know, the
31 major findings and just to look out for the
32 report in the next couple of months.

33 But we did a telephone survey pilot
34 of the HMS angling category Puerto Rico, and
35 this was a biweekly survey, and I'm sorry. It
36 also included the charter head boats. It was
37 angling and charter head boat. We sampled the
38 angling category at about a 15 percent rate
39 every two weeks, and the charter boat, which
40 it's a small -- it was only about 20 to 30
41 permits. So we sampled them at a higher rate,
42 close to 30 or 35 percent.

43 The really good news from this, and
44 I should give Puerto Rico Sea Grant, the
45 University of Puerto Rico the credit, because
46 they actually implemented this with MRIP
47 funds. They got very high response rates,
48 which is if you're familiar with telephone

1 surveys, these are particularly good for a
2 phone survey.

3 We were also able to produce fairly
4 precise estimates for blue marlin total catch.
5 So this is including releases, as well as
6 directed effort for blue marlin and
7 tournament-specific blue marlin catch and
8 effort.

9 So with that high sampling rate and
10 good response rates, we were able to get some
11 decent estimates. We also concluded, one of
12 the conclusions of the report is that for a
13 rare event species, such as blue marlin, and
14 one that is likely to be a memorable catch, we
15 feel like collecting information offsite and
16 maybe with a one or two week lag may be a
17 reasonable approach.

18 So there's sort of been, you know, if
19 you talk to fisheries survey experts, there's
20 often a hesitation to collect catch data
21 offsite, you know. The feeling is that you
22 have recall bias for one thing, species
23 identification problems and also the fact that
24 you can't get, you know, good length and weight
25 measurements.

26 But we feel like for certain species,
27 where you don't have some of those issues, and
28 it is likely to be more memorable, that you
29 could use offsite methods, more likely to
30 supplement. You know, we wouldn't say to
31 replace dockside sampling, but as a low cost
32 to supplementing dockside sampling, this
33 should be something that is considered.

34 The phone survey also, even though we
35 did not produce a precise estimate for blue
36 marlin landings, we did get a fair number of
37 reports of blue marlin landings over the
38 phone. So this is information that's
39 essentially being given to us voluntarily, and
40 these numbers were much greater than the
41 numbers that were reported through the
42 mandatory NMFS, either phone or Internet
43 program.

44 So you know again, this was similar
45 to results we found a few years back, when we
46 did a characterization study, and this
47 willingness to provide information about blue
48 marlin landings on the phone, but not to comply

1 with the mandatory reporting program is
2 puzzling.

3 But to some extent it also indicates
4 that the lack of compliance or low compliance
5 rate may be due more to just forgetfulness or
6 not knowing about the requirement or some
7 other reasons, rather than some intentional,
8 you know, decision not to comply. As I said,
9 this report should be out probably within the
10 next two or three months, as it's going through
11 review now.

12 Finally, I just wanted to mention a
13 few other things related to recreational HMS
14 data collections that may be of interest, and
15 I have two minutes, so that should be plenty
16 of time. In 2013, and Carrie Kennedy can talk
17 more about this at the break, but Maryland and
18 NMFS decided to add sharks to the Maryland HMS
19 catch card program.

20 Maryland went ahead and passed a
21 rule. So it is a mandatory requirement for
22 the state, although it's not mandatory as a
23 federal requirement, and they -- so you can see
24 they got 69 shark catch cards were reported.

25 What was interesting is we compared
26 those cards with -- or we compared fish that
27 were sampled through the LPS dockside survey
28 with the catch cards, and 68 percent of them
29 actually matched. So considering this was
30 the first year the program was in place, this
31 was encouraging, that the word got out, and I
32 guess Mark Sampson deserves a lot of the credit
33 for getting that word out as well.

34 Then this year, in 2014, North
35 Carolina has decided to add sharks to their HMS
36 catch card program, although they did not go
37 ahead and formulate a rule to make it
38 mandatory. So that is voluntary at this
39 point.

40 Just finally I wanted to mention also
41 North Carolina DMF. We contracted with them
42 this year to collect bluefin biological
43 samples, primarily focused on O lists, and
44 they've already, as I've heard, collected over
45 20 O lists in 20 fish.

46 We also expanded for the LPS range,
47 from New Hampshire through Virginia, in our
48 contract with our contractor, QuanTech, the

1 ability to conduct biological sampling for
2 bluefin throughout the whole year. So
3 previously, that contract was limited to just
4 June through November.

5 But as we've seen, sometimes the fish
6 show up in say Virginia in January-February.
7 So we now have the ability to collect bluefin
8 tuna biological samplings throughout the full
9 year. With that, I think I'm probably done,
10 and I'll take any questions.

11 MR. RAAB: Any questions for any of
12 the panelists? Yep, Scott.

13 MEMBER TAYLOR: When you did the
14 phone survey work, was that for fish that were
15 caught or was that fish that was landed, and
16 that if it was fish that was landed, did you
17 compare that against the actual other landing
18 report data that we had for billfish for the
19 recreational sector?

20 DR. SALZ: You're referring to the
21 Puerto Rico study?

22 MEMBER TAYLOR: Yes.

23 DR. SALZ: Yeah. So we did ask them
24 about both, blue marlin releases as well as
25 blue marlin landings. But the comparisons,
26 we produced estimates for releases, and we
27 were able to compare some of the catch rates
28 that we got over the phone with an independent
29 tournament sampling program that Puerto Rico
30 DNR runs.

31 Those did compare favorably. So
32 that indicated to us that we are getting fairly
33 good estimates of CPUE for blue marlin
34 releases.

35 MR. RAAB: Andrew.

36 MEMBER COX: To piggyback on Scott's
37 question, Andrew Cox from the Billfish
38 Foundation, was the non-reporting coming more
39 from the charter boat sector, or was it the
40 private anglers? Did you see any correlation
41 between the non-compliance?

42 DR. SALZ: And so you're referring
43 to the landings that were reported over the
44 phone?

45 MEMBER COX: Yes, that's correct.

46 DR. SALZ: Okay. Yeah, just
47 recalling, I believe most of it was reported
48 by the angling category. So I think there was

1 one fish, and we're not talking about a lot of
2 fish here, you know, 10-15 fish. But when you
3 compare that to the number that were reported
4 through the mandatory system, it is a lot,
5 considering this was a survey sample, not a
6 census.

7 But yeah. Just off the top of my
8 head, I think most of it was coming from the
9 angling category.

10 MEMBER COX: Okay, thank you. I
11 just -- I think it's a thing that Scott has
12 alluded to all week, is that we need to have
13 potentially more outlets for the recreational
14 community to report their landings. I don't
15 know whether it be from a mobile phone app,
16 particularly for swordfish in South Florida,
17 or Central Florida with apparently white
18 marlin being landed as well that I was unaware
19 of.

20 MR. RAAB: Rick.

21 MEMBER BELLAVANCE: Just a couple of
22 comments more than questions in regards to the
23 HMS charter head boat cost earnings study. I
24 participated in the design of the survey, and
25 also was one of the random folks that got
26 sampled to take the study throughout the year.

27 In regards to the process where the
28 survey was developed, I just want to praise
29 both the agency and the contractor for their
30 efforts to reach out to industry and ask some
31 simple questions, have us review the survey
32 before it got sent out to the different
33 captains. I think that went a long way to
34 clarify some confusing parts of the study and
35 the results are probably better for it.

36 And then in regards to the
37 participation on the survey in the Northeast,
38 I will just say that the possession limit for
39 the bluefin tuna is really what's driving our
40 lack of trips out there, and we don't really
41 have a whole bunch of yellowfins. So we go for
42 bluefin, and our folks don't want to pay us the
43 money to go on a bluefin trip. So that is
44 probably reflected in the survey as well.

45 MR. HUTT: We also had some weird
46 results on the bluefin trips up there, where
47 the costs as reported were quite higher than
48 the fares. I wasn't sure. I have heard stuff

1 that, you know, the bluefin were staying
2 offshore and I don't know if it was a case of
3 guys motoring around a lot looking, trying to
4 find them and blowing a lot of gas or not.

5 But there was some funny -- there
6 were some odd, unexpected numbers up there on
7 those trips too. But that could have just
8 also been a factor of the low sample size.
9 It's hard to say.

10 MEMBER BELLAVANCE: I guess we've
11 got to charge more.

12 MR. RAAB: Wallace.

13 MEMBER JENKINS: I'm Wallace
14 Jenkins from South Carolina DNR. I've got a
15 number of questions. First on the economic
16 survey. What was your response rate on that?
17 You didn't mention that.

18 MR. HUTT: Are we talking the angler
19 expenditure survey?

20 MEMBER JENKINS: Yeah, where you
21 surveyed the chartered captains.

22 MR. HUTT: Oh, the charter captains.
23 I mean the expenditure survey was pretty high.
24 It was 57 percent. The charter captains one,
25 the response rate on that was a little weird,
26 being that it's a log book. Our weekly
27 response rates were generally over 50 percent,
28 but they had two options.

29 They could send in a trip form or a
30 no fishing form. We got a lot more no fishing
31 forms, and they were only -- they were only
32 asked to report on trips where the primary
33 target was an HMS species. So they could have
34 been fishing, but for other stuff.

35 MEMBER JENKINS: On your survey that
36 you plan for this summer, when is that going
37 to be going out, and what's going to be the
38 publicity beforehand? I mean us on the ground
39 in these states, you know, we could let these
40 folks know of the importance of it, especially
41 since we're at tournaments of, you know, of
42 responding.

43 So if you could let us know that or
44 you can tell me now, that would be great.

45 MR. HUTT: I don't know the exact
46 date it's going out. My understanding is it's
47 probably going to be in June. They're still
48 waiting for final clearance from OMB

1 associated with the Paperwork Reduction Act
2 and all that.

3 But I mean it's not the first time
4 they've done it, so it's usually a pretty
5 simple procedural thing. That survey got
6 very good response rates last time around. So
7 I don't think huge push on outreach is planned.
8 But I mean it should be, as I said, in June,
9 and you know like I said -- and it's a
10 complicated survey, in terms of how it's
11 handled in different regions.

12 Because this one's just durables,
13 it's going to be -- this will be a straight up
14 mail survey. It will go out to people.
15 They'll get a notification letter in the mail
16 at least a week to ten days before they get the
17 questionnaire, saying they've been selected.

18 Then they'll get the questionnaire
19 and then a few weeks after that, they'll get
20 another copy.

21 MEMBER JENKINS: Okay. So you're
22 not planning on surveying all the HMS permit
23 holders in the recreational fleet then?

24 MR. HUTT: No. They're not going to
25 survey all the HMS permit holders. It's going
26 to be sample, my understanding. The sample
27 size is going to be around -- or the number of
28 people who will be sent them will be around
29 between two and three thousand.

30 MEMBER JENKINS: Okay, and for Ron,
31 have you ever used your tournament survey data
32 that you have and compared it to the HMS
33 tournament reporting that each tournament is
34 required to do, as far as marlin being landed
35 and if you see any differences there among
36 those two separate reporting methods?

37 DR. SALZ: We have not looked at that
38 in any detail, no. That is something that we
39 could do for some of the species, you know, the
40 ones that they are required to report and they
41 do get accurate reports for the tournaments.
42 But yeah, I mean that's a good suggestion
43 considering, you know, if we are thinking
44 about using offsite or phone survey data to
45 supplement some of our catch information
46 definitely.

47 MEMBER JENKINS: And then the other
48 comment is is that South Carolina DNR has

1 surveyed these billfish tournaments since
2 1977, with over 90 percent of the boats being
3 interviewed on catch per unit effort type
4 data. I don't know if there is any way that
5 would be of use to you or, you know, I've given
6 it to Randy before.

7 But it might serve as a baseline for
8 trends in the fishery over time. I mean we've
9 taken a lot of effort over the last
10 30-something years to do this, and I mean I'd
11 like for it to go somewhere besides in my file
12 cabinet.

13 So I'm open to sharing that with you,
14 if it would be of any use to you all going
15 forward.

16 DR. SALZ: Yeah, we definitely
17 appreciate that, and you know, that might also
18 be something the assessment folks would be
19 interested in, if it's a consistent time
20 series. It's the same tournaments, held the
21 same time of year, they fish in the same areas.
22 That, I think, certainly could be valuable
23 information.

24 MEMBER JENKINS: Well, just let us
25 know when you want it and we'll be happy to send
26 it on, either fully analyzed or just the raw
27 Excel or Access files. Again, it's been going
28 on since '77, and there are five blue marlin
29 tournaments a year in South Carolina.

30 It's just more than the blue marlin,
31 sailfish, white marlin. It's every fish, all
32 species that are caught are either measured or
33 enumerated, if they can't all be measured.

34 MR. RAAB: Thanks. Scott, back to
35 you.

36 DR. SALZ: I just want to follow up
37 on that. Just to clarify too, is that
38 information currently going through the RBS?
39 Is it getting into the RBS?

40 MEMBER JENKINS: I'll have to claim
41 ignorance. I don't know what the RBS is. But
42 we do send it into the HMS for part of the
43 permit requirements. HMS people get it from
44 us, just numbers. I don't think we send all
45 the, you know, we don't calculate catch per
46 unit effort. But we have all that
47 information.

48 MR. RAAB: Back to Scott.

1 MEMBER TAYLOR: What I find most
2 interesting about this is how it really would
3 apply to the swordfish catch in South Florida,
4 which is, you know, kind of what's near and
5 dear to my heart.

6 Unless I'm misunderstanding here,
7 you have a very, very high response rate when
8 you telephone surveyed, but that there is a big
9 disparity between that number and what the
10 compliance rate was on the voluntary
11 reporting. Is that correct?

12 DR. SALZ: Not exactly. I think
13 you're confusing -- the response rate I was
14 talking about, that's just when we do the
15 random surveys and how many people actually
16 pick up the phone and we can talk to. That's
17 different from what I was talking about with
18 the compliance rate, where on the phone, in the
19 course of those random interviews, we had, you
20 know, probably 10 to 15 blue marlin landings
21 reported to the phone interviewer.

22 Those fish did not show up in the NMFS
23 mandatory reporting.

24 MEMBER TAYLOR: I asked the question
25 wrong, but I guess that's what the heart of the
26 question is, is that there is substantial
27 differences when you are on the telephone
28 interviewing an individual about what
29 transpired, versus what the data is reflecting
30 that actually did transpire; correct?

31 DR. SALZ: Yes. If by the data you
32 mean the --

33 MEMBER TAYLOR: The actual reported
34 landings.

35 DR. SALZ: The reported landings
36 through the mandatory system, right.

37 MEMBER TAYLOR: So I mean the
38 interesting takeaway from that is how did you
39 take that and apply that towards the real
40 problem? You know now obviously on a federal
41 level, there's somewhat in the way of limited
42 resources.

43 But as in South Carolina, there's
44 state resource to be able to collect data as
45 well, and maybe through some sort of a
46 cooperative effort at the state level, that we
47 could take some of that takeaway in order to
48 encourage these recreational landings that

1 would be helpful to, you know, quota numbers
2 and for accurate data.

3 I think ultimately when you do these
4 things, what we're looking for is how do we
5 really use it in the real world, other than
6 just simply from an analytical standpoint of
7 collecting the data?

8 You know, I think that just kind of
9 confirms, you know, what Andrew and me have
10 been speaking about, which is is that there may
11 be substantive differences between what is
12 actually transpiring out there and what is
13 voluntarily being reported.

14 Somehow, we have to bridge that gap
15 and find a mechanism to be able to accommodate
16 that, whether or not that's at a state level
17 or whether or not heat's a federal level or
18 whether that's cooperative.

19 I think that for -- that I'm going to
20 take this opportunity to kind of challenge the
21 recreational sector in here that you have a big
22 responsibility to get this out to your
23 constituency, you know, in the same way that
24 Terri and myself and the other commercial
25 sector have responsibility to get to our
26 constituency, that this is important stuff,
27 and you know, you can't just push it off on the
28 side.

29 Because clearly, these individuals
30 are willing to disclose, but they're not
31 willing to take the time to make the effort to
32 actually do the reporting. So it's not a
33 question of whether or not -- it's a matter of
34 the effort that's going in.

35 So I won't draw any other conclusions
36 from it, other than what the actual
37 information itself sort of suggests. But I
38 just wanted to clarify that that's what I was
39 looking at here, which is higher verbal
40 reportings than what would have been voluntary
41 reportings of landings.

42 MR. RAAB: Ron, and then Shawn.

43 MEMBER WHITAKER: Well, I guess my
44 comment, really kind of a question is to why
45 are the responses in Puerto Rico, I mean 72-82
46 percent response rate is, I don't know,
47 double, triple maybe what it is in the U.S. I
48 think, and I guess that has --

1 I hate to say it, but I think that has
2 a lot to do with the recreational fishermen's
3 confidence in the government and what's going
4 to happen to them in the U.S., you know, not
5 whether it's better to say yes or no.

6 So I think that may be -- I'd like to
7 know whatever they're doing in Puerto Rico to
8 get the response rate up. So maybe we need to
9 ask -- someone maybe can give us some insight.

10 But at any rate, and to address
11 Scott's concerns a little bit, you know, we
12 have to report swordfish, well I guess sharks
13 now, billfish, bluefin tunas, you know.
14 That's what I have to report. I do think we
15 do have some checks and balances here in the
16 U.S., and I'm kind of speaking from the
17 North-South Carolina area, Virginia even that
18 especially with the billfish, that we do
19 have -- most billfish landed are in
20 tournaments, and they're reported in
21 tournaments.

22 So you've a system there to verify
23 what you're supposed to be seeing. So that's
24 all I want to add. Thank you.

25 DR. SALZ: Just to respond to that
26 Ron, the response rates were high, but
27 compared to the for hire survey or the LPTS for
28 pelagics, they're only about ten percentage
29 points higher. So we get around 60 percent on
30 the for hire survey, and about 70 percent for
31 the private boat angling category.

32 One of the theories that I have for
33 why they were high in Puerto Rico is it could
34 be related to the Sea Grant university doing
35 the study. They may have more, you know,
36 either objectivity in the minds of the permit
37 holders, and it may be viewed as a, you know,
38 more trustworthy source. But I don't know
39 that for sure. That's just, you know, really
40 my theory.

41 MR. RAAB: Shawn.

42 MEMBER JOYCE: Yeah. The whole 70
43 to 80 percent response rate seemed really high
44 to me. I fish in the Northeast off of
45 bluefish, and both rec and commercial, and
46 there were times that QuanTech, I think it was
47 QuanTech, whomever it might have been, they'd
48 show up at my dock and ask me questions.

1 Then three weeks later, somebody
2 would call me and it might be nine o'clock at
3 night. I've been on the ocean all day long,
4 and they'd start asking me questions,
5 surveying me again, and I couldn't answer the
6 questions.

7 I couldn't remember what day.
8 They'd start talking days, and it will all get
9 confused with me. I think Andrew might have
10 said this. It would be great if there was a
11 phone app, because I know a lot of rec guys that
12 fish, and last year was a bad year.

13 But there's years that we do very
14 well with the rec fish and we release a lot of
15 fish too. But they just don't even understand
16 the requirement to report. So there's a gap
17 there. I mean maybe they pull that permit,
18 they didn't read the instructions, but there's
19 definitely a gap.

20 My question would be is when you got
21 that 70-80 percent response rate, how long was
22 it between the trip? Did they know they were
23 going to be interviewed? Did they know that
24 was coming up, because like I said, when I get
25 called two weeks to three weeks later, all the
26 data's merged with me. Like I said, I could
27 have been out ten hours that day, and my mind
28 is mud.

29 DR. SALZ: Yes. So for our
30 telephone surveys, we typically send a
31 pre-notification letter out before the two
32 week fishing period. So they anticipate that
33 the call is coming. As far as what happened
34 to you, when you got interviewed on the dock
35 and then they followed up, that's for a
36 different purpose than the phone surveys that
37 we were doing.

38 They do that as a form of validation,
39 just to confirm that you were interviewed. So
40 it's sort of -- it's a check on the
41 interviewer, the dockside interviewer, to
42 confirm that you were interviewed and to
43 verify some of the data. So it's sort of a
44 data quality control check.

45 But that's different than the phone
46 surveys we do, where we do send
47 pre-notification letters and we're asking
48 about their fishing effort for that two week

1 prior period.

2 MEMBER JOYCE: Yeah, I understand
3 that part too. But the problem is they're
4 checking on the people that came down to the
5 dock, and to be quite honest, I can't remember
6 if that guy was there on Tuesday three weeks
7 ago, or he was there on Wednesday, because they
8 come down almost every day I come back from a
9 trip.

10 Then that's the confusing part, is
11 that now I'm on the phone, you know. It's not
12 eight o'clock at night, whenever it's
13 convenient for them, and I can't even verify
14 that that's -- that I'm giving them the right
15 information. So I say please don't call me,
16 because you've already been there, you know.

17 So I'm not trying to be say -- but an
18 app would be great, because in an app, you
19 could verify it, right?

20 MR. RAAB: Okay. So we need to wrap
21 up, and now people are starting to put their
22 cards up. So could we be really succinct?
23 David, you were first.

24 MEMBER SCHALIT: Yeah. Just in
25 connection with the dockside surveys, what's
26 the protocol in connection with taking into
27 account the migratory -- shifts in migratory
28 patterns of bluefin in particular? Just by
29 illustration, for example, for several years
30 now we've had a giant and small-medium to giant
31 fishery off of Cape Cod, which vanished last
32 season more or less, I mean disappeared, but
33 reappeared seemingly off of Long Island, 20
34 miles out of Shinnacock.

35 So you had a season of maybe two
36 months of very strong recreational activity in
37 an area for bluefin, in an area which had
38 heretofore not known these kinds of landings.
39 So my concern would be that we capture that
40 data, we respond to these trends and capture
41 that data, so we have a chance to understand
42 what we're dealing with.

43 The same thing actually exists off
44 New Jersey as well. So it is a dynamic
45 situation with bluefin. They don't seem to do
46 the same thing in two consecutive years. So
47 my question for you is do you -- is this part
48 of your programming of these dockside surveys,

1 that you allow for flexibility in terms of
2 shifting your personnel around?

3 DR. SALZ: Right. Well, it's
4 certainly one of the big challenges of trying
5 to monitor a fishery that is a pulse fishery,
6 both temporally and spatially
7 very -- fluctuates greatly, you know, from
8 year to year.

9 So what we do is just try to cover our
10 bases as best we can, and have assignments
11 scheduled in all the possible places, and you
12 know, we have a site register, so we know which
13 sites they're likely to be landed at, and we
14 just, you know, try to cover those areas as
15 best we can during the months when we think
16 they have historically shown up.

17 But it's very difficult to shift.
18 You know, because the fishery comes in so
19 quickly and moves so quickly, to try to chase
20 that fishery, you know, if you want to use that
21 term, from a monitoring standpoint is one of
22 the reasons, you know, myself and some other
23 statisticians in my office are banging our
24 heads against the wall, you know, trying to
25 figure out, well how do we get the best
26 estimates, given the budget and the sampling
27 size that we're afforded.

28 MR. RAAB: Walter.

29 MEMBER GOLET: I mentioned this at
30 the last AP meeting, but I know Shawn's new.
31 There is a bluefin app that is available. It
32 is not working, but it is available.

33 It was developed by the New England
34 Aquarium, and we're in talks with them as well
35 to get it working, which is the purpose of the
36 app, and actually to diversify it, so that it
37 would be a platform usable on both iPhones and
38 Google platforms, and could be expanded to
39 other species, HMS or otherwise.

40 MR. RAAB: So thank you panel for
41 your presentation, and I just wanted to
42 double-check. There is nobody who wants to
43 make public comment? Is that true? Okay.
44 So we're going to go right to Margo for her
45 wrap-up, and then we'll let everybody go eat
46 lunch.

47 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: All right. So
48 we need to give me a minute to load the

1 presentation up. A few of my typical caveats
2 before giving this. This is intended to be
3 kind of our kind of note-taking on major
4 takeaways. It is not intended to be a
5 complete summation of the meeting.

6 That's what the transcripts are for.
7 We tend to be able to turn them around now
8 within a couple of weeks, and they will be
9 posted on the website. My other caveat is
10 that I haven't seen this. I will be seeing it
11 with you for the first time, and so I think the
12 presentations from yesterday, clearly people
13 on the staff have had more time to kind of pull
14 them together.

15 It's been a bit of live-fire exercise
16 of typing pretty quickly after the discussions
17 today. So what we're looking for from you all
18 is if we missed a major takeaway, either it's
19 missing or we didn't quite characterize it
20 correctly. I'm not looking for wordsmithing
21 exactly, but it also is something that we think
22 and have heard it's helpful for you all, to
23 kind of take back home and what was discussed,
24 again at a high level, not intended to
25 replicate the whole meeting.

26 So while we're still doing this,
27 thank you. I know a lot of you are anxious to
28 get out the door, get on the road before Friday
29 afternoon Beltway traffic hits. So I'll try
30 and read quickly. But I wanted to thank you
31 again for taking the time. I know you're all
32 very busy, and it's, you know, sometimes a
33 sacrifice to come and share your views.

34 So we really value it, value your
35 time and all of your input. We look forward
36 to continuing to hear from you all over the
37 next couple of months, and so here we go. And
38 look at this. Here you are, and I don't see
39 me, at least my face. So that's good.

40 All right. So comments from the
41 overview. We did have some of the meaty
42 discussion during the overview on the Shark
43 Conservation Act. Looking for the list of
44 nations that are not complying. Luckily, we
45 had Laura Semo from International Affairs with
46 us, mention the process is biannual.

47 So the next report would be coming
48 out January 2015. But we are currently

1 seeking public comment on information. So by
2 the end of May, we'll be looking for that,
3 although apparently it may be extended.

4 Port State Measures rule later this
5 fall, including transshipment and the unique
6 vessel identifiers, whereas the electronic
7 bluefish catch document rule would be expected
8 at the end of May, with other international
9 trade issues, and again, we can go final
10 earlier if we need to.

11 Continuing concern even just now on
12 the last discussion on recreational landings
13 concerns. The fairly long-standing concerns
14 we have now of substantial under-reporting of
15 swordfish, billfish especially in Southeast
16 Florida. Some ideas coming up from this last
17 discussion, I think, were good for that.

18 Then a note of the Caribbean Council
19 areas that we talked about earlier in western
20 Puerto Rico, opening that up for pelagic
21 fishing. On the protected resources and
22 CITES updates, discussion of take versus
23 interaction. This is including the time
24 lines of the three ESA petitions right now.

25 So I think there will be more on these
26 potentially before the next meeting. So keep
27 your eyes out. We will send these out over the
28 listserv. But these will be protected
29 resources actions. So we would be pushing
30 questions and comments on that likely to them
31 as the leads.

32 On the CITES updates, again we had
33 the Fish and Wildlife Service here. They're
34 the leads on these actions. We will continue
35 to talk to them on an agency-to-agency level,
36 sharing the concerns that you've all voiced
37 and maybe some of our own. But I would also
38 encourage you all to include and reach out to
39 them. Hearing from you all, I think, is
40 sometimes the best way to get your points
41 across on some of the logistics issues
42 specifically.

43 All right. U.S. Coast Guard NMFS
44 updates to the website. So this is the main
45 site with the link there, with where you can
46 find the penalties. So and then a lot of
47 concerns, I think, on kind of unintentional
48 non-compliance and how the penalty schedule

1 fits for that.

2 On our essential fish habit
3 five-year review, one of my big takeaways will
4 be to look into what's going on with Stellwagen
5 bank and fishing activity, and try and see
6 where that is. I might reach out to you, Mike,
7 for the Council view. Hopefully, I'll have
8 more -- be more aware of this as we move
9 forward.

10 Looking at ecosystem impacts,
11 predators in other species, and some concerns
12 I think on the level of efforts that this might
13 take. I would say it has been five years.

14 I think it is worth another look.
15 It's handy that we're also required to do it
16 on a five year schedule, so we'll be doing it
17 and are looking from you all that have
18 information that would be helpful, please send
19 it in, and we will be reaching out to other
20 agencies that have a role with, you know, the
21 offshore wind and energy. So that was all
22 good comments.

23 So I think we're getting -- I thank
24 Bill Gerencer, who has since left
25 unfortunately, for adding Brad's name under
26 the definition of perseverance. So I guess
27 this is one of the beautiful things about
28 Wikipedia. Comments overall. Don't rush,
29 as you can all see it. So I guess he's famous
30 now.

31 (Off mic comment.)

32 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: So A-7
33 comments, don't rush implementation. Take
34 the time to get it right; it's a big deal. Do
35 not reallocate quota among categories.
36 Repeat of the desire, interest in splitting
37 the action to things that would be reducing
38 discards now, maybe delaying it or phasing in
39 some of the other measures.

40 Also the need to recognize the
41 importance of the pelagic long line fishery,
42 and the need to ensure the viability, and that
43 there's discards in all fisheries. I think
44 we, through our enhanced monitoring measures,
45 are looking to increase that data.

46 Consider cumulative impacts of
47 measures. None of these fisheries are
48 operating alone. Many, many people are

1 multi-species and how the different fisheries
2 interplay, and that GRAs may miss hot spots,
3 particularly some of the variability in
4 behavior and movements of fish, as we were just
5 discussing.

6 On the general category of
7 flexibility, consider moving December
8 subquota to January. Also considering just
9 dividing by 12. For quota specification,
10 some support for full accounting of catch.
11 Continued concern about NED quota. That
12 quota should have been from the eastern
13 bluefin tuna measure. I think we have what we
14 have at the moment.

15 And then the request to consider
16 increasing the school bluefin tuna limit,
17 given the low landings rates the last few
18 years. And then also a question about the
19 appropriate venue for discussion of the
20 Mexican SCRS.

21 It looks like Rich has gone, but I
22 think we're all interested in seeing that
23 paper and taking a look at it, and I imagine
24 maybe at the ICCAT advisory committee we could
25 revisit that at the end of the month.

26 All right. More pictures. Look at
27 that. Public comment on day one. The unique
28 vessel identifiers of these commercial boats
29 greater than 20 meters. The application
30 process is free, but it will be something that
31 folks have to do effective in 2016.

32 Okay. So here's this morning. HMS
33 research plan. Discussion about the utility
34 of a separate advisory group, similar to
35 Council SSEs, and then also looking for
36 participation of experts outside the agency in
37 the development of the plan.

38 Some recognition there's a
39 difference between what is discussed at the
40 AP, in terms of depth of the science, and the
41 depth and scope that could be covered by an SSE
42 group.

43 Folks would like more participation,
44 more funding. I hear that, that would be
45 great, and non-agency scientists can provide
46 feedback on the feasibility of research goals,
47 times and costs, and consider using focus
48 groups to get a consensus of input on research

1 priorities.

2 On Amendment 5(b), everyone seemed
3 to agree on outreach, there's no outreach
4 that's bad outreach. Can't get enough of it,
5 especially I guess in the recreational
6 fishery.

7 Support for prohibiting ridgeback
8 sharks, with possibly some exceptions. 89
9 inch fish, particularly shark, pretty feisty,
10 dangerous, considering -- and increasing
11 minimum size may increase mortality on mature
12 sharks.

13 Hook limits may work for some, not
14 for others, especially limiting the number of
15 gangeons aboard. Using a dehooker can be
16 dangerous, but maybe cutting the line is a
17 better way of releasing the animal with the
18 minimal amount of gear.

19 Consider dusky shark migration
20 patterns and other factors, and looking at hot
21 spots, as well as the international issues,
22 straddling stocks.

23 Support for fleet communication as a
24 means to avoid dusky sharks, and the need to
25 be more specific in what does it mean. What
26 would someone do to avoid them. Consider
27 regional approaches where -- based on where
28 dusky mortality is occurring, and determine
29 the mortality reduction expected for each
30 alternative, and consider measures that get
31 the most bang for the buck.

32 Very recent. Amendment 6, support
33 for subregional quota split locations.
34 Continued concern about the quota linkages and
35 potential choke species. Concerns about
36 opening sandbar quota to the non-research
37 fishery, and some preference for improved
38 monitoring, including electronic monitoring.

39 Review landings of historically
40 active vessels before Amendment 2, so you have
41 a sense of who was actually fishing for
42 sandbar, and then some support for permit
43 stacking, but also concern about impacts to
44 state waters and state fisheries.

45 Recreational updates. Very real
46 time, a few minutes ago. Need more outlets
47 and outreach for recreational landings
48 reporting.

1 Mobile app. This would be
2 something, I will actually comment, that was
3 discussed some at the recreational summit and
4 some of the ideas. There's any number of
5 folks, I think, that are developing that kind
6 of approach. So I think we see the value in
7 that.

8 Appreciated MRIP reaching out to
9 industry to review the project prior to
10 conducting it. Folks would like to know about
11 surveys that are upcoming, so they can promote
12 participation on the ground, and then would
13 like survey capability to respond to species
14 fishery locations throughout the year, again
15 based on variability in the fisheries.

16 All right. So looking ahead, April
17 25th, we'd be looking forward to your comments
18 on Amendment 6 pre-draft, and five days later,
19 your comments on Amendment 5(b) pre-draft.
20 Comment period for bluefin tuna
21 specifications closes May 5th, and then we're
22 looking for EFH information by May 23rd.

23 So we'll have a busy couple of weeks.
24 Please return your name tags and table tents.
25 We will reuse them, so it can save some paper.
26 The evaluation forms are in your folders. We
27 really look at these and value your input. It
28 can be anonymous. That's fine too. We want
29 to hear what you think.

30 Please send in travel forms and
31 receipts by I guess that's next Wednesday, if
32 you can. A final thank you to you all and to
33 all the HMS staff that helped prepare all the
34 materials and analyses and responses to
35 questions, including putting together the
36 wrap-up summary literally as you're talking.
37 So thank you to all the HMSers.

38 (Applause.)

39 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: And thank you
40 Jonathan for facilitating. Enjoyed your
41 presence, and safe travels home. Stay in
42 touch.

43 (Off mic comments.)

44 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: As soon as we
45 can. All right. Thanks everybody.

46 (Whereupon, at 1:36 p.m., the
47 meeting was adjourned.)
48

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This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Atlantic Highly Migratory Species
Spring 2014 Advisory Panel Meeting

Before: NOAA

Date: 04-04-14

Place: Silver Spring, MD

was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under
my direction; further, that said transcript is a
true and accurate record of the proceedings.



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