

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

ATLANTIC HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES  
ADVISORY PANEL MEETING

Silver Spring, Maryland  
Monday, December 7, 2020

1 PARTICIPANTS:

2 Panel Members:

3 ALAN WEISS

4 ANDREW COX

5 ANGEL WILLEY

6 BOB HUETER

7 BRUCE POHLOT

8 DAVID KERSTETTER

9 DEWEY HEMILRIGHT

10 EVAN HIPSLEY

11 GEORGE PURMONT

12 GREG HINKS

13 GREG MAYER

14 GREGORY SKOMAL

15 JASON ADRIANCE

16 JEFF ODEN

17 JOHN GRAVES

18 KATIE WESTFALL

19 KRISTIN FOSS

20 LUKE HARRIS

21 MARCO HANKE

22 MARCUS DRYMON

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2 MARK SAMPSON

3 MARTIN SCANLON

4 MEGAN DUNPHY-DALY

5 MICHAEL PIERDINOCK

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18 ALAN WEISS

19 RICHARD WEBER

20 JEFF ODEN

21 SCOTT TAYLOR

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## 1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (9:46 a.m.)

3 MR. BROOKS: Good morning, Bennett  
4 Brooks with the Consensus Building Institute. It  
5 is good to be with you all again and this is a  
6 pretty quick one after our last one. So, it's  
7 nice to talk to you all as recently as this. Once  
8 again, we are still in our Zoom world, and I think  
9 we're all getting better at it. So, again, I will  
10 just -- every call I say this to anybody I'm  
11 talking to, thank you all for being so willing to  
12 adapt and make this work. Hopefully, sometime in  
13 the not too distance future, we will all get to  
14 gather together again, but for now, this is where  
15 we're at. I want to just hand it off to Randy  
16 Blankinship to give a welcome from HMS, and then  
17 also let him invite Kelly Denit. And then we'll  
18 come back and we'll walk through the agenda and  
19 ground rules, et cetera. So, Randy, I'll hand it  
20 off to you.

21 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Sure, thanks, Bennett.  
22 And thank you to everybody who's joined the

1 meeting today. We're really excited to be able to  
2 get together with you all for the discussion on  
3 the topics that we've got at hand. I want to  
4 really to extend my welcome to you all. I wish  
5 you all happy holidays and Merry Christmas as  
6 well. Hope things are going well for you and your  
7 families.

8 We're holding this one-day Advisory  
9 Panel meeting to discuss three topics. One, is  
10 Draft Amendment 14, dealing with shark management.  
11 And this draft was released following our  
12 September Advisory Panel meeting and the comment  
13 period ends on December 31st. But we wanted a  
14 chance to spend some time with you all  
15 specifically talking about this, since we're  
16 weren't able to talk about it in the September  
17 meeting.

18 We also will be talking about billfish  
19 management. Specifically, the marlin and  
20 roundscale spearfish landings in 2020 and  
21 potential management options that we have under  
22 our existing regulations that we -- that's been on

1 the table for 2021. And I think that will be an  
2 informative discussion this afternoon and  
3 certainly one that we'll look forward to getting  
4 your input on.

5 And then third, is the Electronic  
6 Technologies Plan. And this is an initiative.  
7 This plan is one that a few years ago was  
8 developed on a regional basis within the Agency  
9 and has been updated at least some status reports  
10 a couple of times. And is now undergoing an  
11 initiative to update those plans on a regional  
12 basis then for HMS. And we'll spend some time  
13 talking about that a little bit later this  
14 afternoon.

15 So, I do want to also bring to your  
16 attention that this year's ICCAT negotiations are  
17 happening via correspondence. There's not an  
18 annual meeting, but it is happening via  
19 correspondence. And it is an ongoing negotiation  
20 via correspondence even right now over a  
21 protracted length of time. And because that is an  
22 ongoing negotiation, I wanted to specifically

1 mention that we will not be discussing the  
2 negotiations of ICCAT in this meeting today. And  
3 so, I hope that you all can honor that request,  
4 and appreciate kind of the sensitive nature of  
5 those ongoing discussions. So, we'll refrain from  
6 talking about that.

7           With that, once again, I just want to  
8 thank you for taking your time out of your busy  
9 schedules to meet with us today. Your input on  
10 these issues that's on the agenda will be very  
11 helpful for the work that we do going on. And so  
12 that's it for me. I'll turn this over to Kelly.  
13 Kelly, if you want to talk.

14           MS. DENIT: Great, thanks, Randy. Good  
15 morning, everyone. I hope that you all had a nice  
16 Thanksgiving holiday, albeit probably a very  
17 different holiday than you normally do. I hope  
18 you nevertheless were able to spend some time with  
19 family or friends and relax a little bit before we  
20 head into the holiday season here as Randy  
21 mentioned.

22           I will just throw in my comments along

1 the lines of Randy that we really appreciate you  
2 all taking the time today to talk with us. In  
3 particular, I know that as it relates to Amendment  
4 14 and the Electronic Technologies Plan, sometimes  
5 those kinds of things can feel a little less  
6 tangible because we're setting frameworks for  
7 follow-on action. But really appreciate you guys  
8 focusing in and giving us as much of your feedback  
9 as you possibly can today. That's the real value  
10 here and we greatly appreciate all of your  
11 different perspectives. So, with that I'll hand  
12 it back over to Bennett and I wish you all a happy  
13 holiday season, and thanks again for all your  
14 input today and taking the time to be with us.

15 MR. BROOKS: Great, thanks. Thanks,  
16 Kelly. I'm glad you could be with us today. So,  
17 again, just sort of welcome to everybody. We, you  
18 know, we've got a pretty focused agenda today as  
19 Randy mentioned to you. There's really just three  
20 topics we're looking to talk about, and I'll just  
21 put a little more of the timing on that. This  
22 morning, we will talk about Amendment 14 and shark

1 management issues that Randy just talked about.  
2 We have an hour and a half for that. We have  
3 tried on this meeting, again, as we did last time,  
4 to put in a pretty gracious amount of time after  
5 each of these topics so we make sure that we have  
6 enough time for conversation, enough time for  
7 questions, enough time for HMS staff to hear your  
8 thoughts because that is the goal here. So, we  
9 really -- we've really tried to build in a good  
10 chunk of time there.

11 We will take that conversation to 11:30,  
12 and then we'll break for lunch from 11:30 to 1:00.  
13 So, again, we know you all have many, many things  
14 on your plate. So, think about 11:30 to 1:00 as a  
15 chunk of time that you absolutely have available  
16 to you to do whatever you need, whether that's  
17 making phone calls, answering email. We really  
18 encourage you to use that time to do that so we  
19 can all stay really focused when we're talking.

20 We'll come back from lunch at 1:00.  
21 That's when we'll take up the blue marlin, white  
22 marlin, roundscale, and spearfish management

1 issues that Randy talked about. We'll have an  
2 hour for that. So, from 1:00 to 2:00, we'll talk  
3 about billfish issues with a 15-minute break at  
4 2:00, and then come back at 2:15 for the HMS  
5 Electronic Technologies Plan conversation with  
6 Brad McHale. Again, another hour for that. And  
7 then we will have public comment from 3:15 to 3:45  
8 p.m., and then we will adjourn.

9           So, it's a pretty straightforward  
10 agenda. It should take up most of the day. But  
11 again, we really hope we've put in a good chunk of  
12 time for conversations and also breaks, again, so  
13 we can have focused conversations. Ground rules,  
14 our usual ground rules apply here. Just, again,  
15 contribute. We need to hear from you and really  
16 want to encourage the folks who don't typically  
17 weigh-in to weigh-in. You have important thoughts  
18 and perspectives that we want to hear, that the  
19 HMS staff want to hear. So, I really do encourage  
20 folks who may be are just a little more inclined  
21 just to listen to the conversation, to weigh-in.

22           Share your time, as always, you know,

1 making time for other folks to weigh-in is good.  
2 If someone said something that is meaningful that  
3 you agree with, feel free to throw in the chat  
4 something like, ditto, you know, just agree with  
5 what -- just agree with what Mark said. Or, you  
6 know, or just a quick verbal ditto. It would help  
7 us get everyone into the mix. Yeah, ask questions  
8 of each other, ask questions of staff if you don't  
9 understand something.

10 I think we all know this, but for  
11 members of the public who are there, this is not a  
12 consensus seeking body. This group is convened to  
13 get the HMS staff as individual advice. That  
14 individual advice is super helpful in helping HMS  
15 navigate a way forward that makes sense and is  
16 wise and likely to garner support, but it is not  
17 consensus seeking. And as always, we just  
18 encourage everyone to really focus on bringing  
19 sort of the best available data and information  
20 into discussion. You know, characterize data if  
21 it's preliminary, if it's peer review, whatever it  
22 is, just help us understand what you're folding in

1 so we could all make sense of that data together.

2 To members of the public, our AP  
3 panelists are our primary discussants. So,  
4 throughout the day, when we open up for  
5 conversation, that conversation is for the formal  
6 members of the panel. But as I mentioned a minute  
7 ago, we will have a public comment period at the  
8 end of the meeting at 3:15. So, that will be your  
9 chance to weigh-in if you want. As well, always  
10 look to Randy and his staff to bring in if there  
11 are other experts on call who you think can inform  
12 the conversation. Then I just look to you, Randy,  
13 or the presenters to invite your colleagues in as  
14 necessary and helpful to inform the conversation.

15 And then lastly, just kind of the  
16 virtual rules that we're in here. As you know,  
17 you know, everybody is muted until you're  
18 recognized and then brought into the conversation.  
19 If you want to get into the conversation, again,  
20 please raise your virtual hand and if you click on  
21 the participants box, you'll see that virtual  
22 hand. You were all using it quite well a moment

1 ago. So, that's how you want to get recognized  
2 and that is really the way for us to see you. If  
3 for some reason, you're not seeing that or you  
4 can't find the hand, if you throw something in the  
5 chat, we will see that you want to get in and  
6 we'll try to bring you in that way.

7 One thing to note, and this may be a  
8 little different than the last time, I can't  
9 recall. But last time we had both the chat and  
10 the Q&A. Our sort of collective debrief on that  
11 was it wasn't necessarily very helpful to have two  
12 different streams available to be putting in  
13 questions or comments. So, we're just going to  
14 have chat available. So, if you're hunting for  
15 the Q&As, you will not find it. Just put whatever  
16 thoughts you have or questions you have into the  
17 chat. That chat will go to sort of the staff  
18 that's managing the conversation and then we'll  
19 sort of put stuff back out to the full AP and  
20 public so that it can inform the conversation.  
21 So, that's how that will be handled.

22 I will run the queue like I usually do,

1     which is just trying to, in general, take hands up  
2     in the order that they come.  But, again, deviate  
3     that a bit, a) if it's helpful to have a  
4     conversation back and forth between a couple of  
5     people, but also if there's folks who we're  
6     hearing from a lot, I will jump the queue, bring  
7     up voices who we haven't heard from just so we're  
8     getting a nice mix of AP members into the  
9     conversation.  And I will try to identify a couple  
10    of speakers at a time just to give folks who are  
11    opening up the mute buttons a little bit of a  
12    heads up.

13                 When we get a really long queue, I ask  
14    you to be patient.  I won't read out all 15 names,  
15    but believe me, I will get through it, and there's  
16    always someone at the end of the list, so, don't  
17    judge terribly for it because I have -- I'll try  
18    to manage that correctly.

19                 Finally, any tech issues, please chat or  
20    email Matt or Pete or Nick Alvarado and we will  
21    jump on that and try to get that fixed as quickly  
22    as possible, but hopefully it will be smooth.  I

1 think that's it for me. Again, just I encourage  
2 everyone to stay comfortable, stay focused, so we  
3 can have a good conversation. And with that,  
4 Randy or Pete do you have anything to add? I'm  
5 going to just hand it off to Guy DuBeck who's  
6 going to walk us through the Draft Amendment 14  
7 presentation on shark management. Again, I think  
8 we'll look at probably about 20 or 30 minutes of  
9 presentation and then open that up for discussion.  
10 Guy, all yours.

11 MR. DUBECK: All right, thank you. Can  
12 you hear me okay, Bennett?

13 MR. BROOKS: Perfectly, as I take myself  
14 off mute.

15 MR. DUBECK: Sure, no problem. All  
16 right, well, I'm going to bring up the  
17 presentation, everyone. All right, so, let me  
18 finish that. My name's Guy DuBeck here to talk  
19 about Draft Amendment 14. And this is about shark  
20 quota management. And as was mentioned, you know,  
21 Amendment 14 will be a framework action.

22 So, first of all I'm going to start off

1 with the list of acronyms. These are things we  
2 plan to use throughout the presentation and it's  
3 throughout the document. I'm just going to point  
4 it out -- point out a few of them that we had  
5 planned to have referenced a lot. That's the ABC,  
6 or acceptable biological catch. ACL or annual  
7 catch limit. SDC or status determination  
8 criteria. And then TAC, which is total allowable  
9 catch.

10 So, starting Amendment 14, it kind of  
11 all started with NS1 guidelines. So, the NS1  
12 guidelines require management measures to prevent  
13 overfishing and achieve optimal yield on a  
14 continuing basis. So, the guidelines provide  
15 guidance on how to achieve these requirements. In  
16 2016, the revisions to these guidelines allowed  
17 for increased management flexibility as a result  
18 of lessons learned through the implementation of  
19 annual catch limits and accountability measures,  
20 or AMs.

21 Generally, the OFL is greater than the  
22 ABC, which is greater than the ACL. Or you may

1 consider OFL equal to ABC, which equals ACL if  
2 sufficient analysis and justifications are on  
3 preventing overfishing. Something similar to how  
4 we have set up in shark fishery right now, where  
5 we have the OFL equals the ABC, which equals the  
6 ACL, which was established in 2010, under  
7 Amendment 6.

8 So, here's a little history of HMS and  
9 the status determination criterias and annual  
10 catch limits. So, the '91, amendment to the '91  
11 FMP defined those status determination criterias.  
12 It consolidated FMP, incorporated those without  
13 any changes. And as I mentioned, Amendment 3  
14 established the ACL mechanism for federally  
15 managed sharks. Amendment 5b clarified that the  
16 ACL for prohibited shark species equals zero. And  
17 Amendment 14 does not plan to make any changes to  
18 the ACL for prohibited shark species to go into  
19 that effect.

20 Here is a list of objectives for  
21 Amendment 14. There's it's kind of a slimmed down  
22 version. In the document, we have a lot more

1 detail so, I'm just going to hit a few of them.  
2 So, one of the objectives is to optimize the  
3 ability for the commercial shark fishery to  
4 harvest quotas, while also considering fairness  
5 among sectors. We're going to revise the ABC  
6 control rule methodology to increase  
7 accountability and transparency. We're also going  
8 to revise the ACL framework to reflect changes  
9 based on those methodology changes. And also, we  
10 want to increase management flexibility to  
11 appropriately react to scientific uncertainties,  
12 changes in stock status, or changes to allowable  
13 harvest levels to also ensure stability within the  
14 fishery.

15 So, now, here's a list of the five  
16 topics that we'll be discussing. First one, Topic  
17 A, is the ABC control rule. Topic B is the  
18 phase-in of the ABC control rule. Topic C is the  
19 annual catch limit development. Topic D is a  
20 carry-over of underharvested annual catch limits.  
21 And then the last one, Topic E is the multi-year  
22 overfishing status determination criteria. So, in

1 the sequential slides, I plan to talk about each  
2 one of these topics and then go into more detail  
3 about the preferred management options.

4 For the ABC control rule, we have three  
5 options. Option A1 is no action. So, maintain  
6 status quo, which is what we established in 2010  
7 in Amendment 3, where we had the OFL equals the  
8 ABC, which equals the TAC, which equals the sum of  
9 sector ACLs. Option 2 is to create a standardized  
10 ABC control rule. So, that would be one size fits  
11 all. So, regardless of the stock status or the  
12 species, we create one standardized one for all  
13 authorized shark species.

14 However, we currently prefer Option A3,  
15 which is to create a tiered ABC control rule.  
16 What I mean by that is the tiers may be  
17 assessment-based level focused or based on  
18 scientific uncertainty. The science center is  
19 still developing these tiered ABC control rule,  
20 these different tiers. We are thinking that the  
21 tiers would be very similar to how the South  
22 Atlantic has the snapper-grouper fishery. Where,

1 you know, they have tiers based on assessed --  
2 unassessed or assessed with high level of data  
3 uncertainty. But this will be implemented for all  
4 authorized shark species.

5 Moving on to phase-in ABC control rule  
6 options. So, this one we got four options here.  
7 First one is B1, no action. So, do not phase-in  
8 ABC control rules. So, that means that currently  
9 how we have now is once we implement regulations,  
10 we just automatically change with the changes.

11 Option B2, the preferred option, is to  
12 allow consideration of phase-in ABC control for  
13 modifications in the ABC, whether they're up or  
14 down, which I'll go in more detail in the next  
15 slide. Option B3 is to use the phase-in of ABC  
16 control rule for only healthy stocks and no  
17 phase-in for overfished or overfishing stocks.  
18 Option B4 is a use phase-in control rule, ABC  
19 control rule, unless the stock is overfished with  
20 overfishing occurring.

21 So, for the preferred option, B2, so,  
22 we're going to consider phase-in of ABC of any

1 modifications. This will be evaluated on a  
2 stock-by-stock basis. This could, as I mentioned,  
3 could be any reduction or increase in the ABC,  
4 regardless of the stock status, that could be  
5 phased in over a three-year period. It could be  
6 if we're talking about, you know, a 5 percent  
7 change, then we could just implement it right  
8 away. But if we're talking a larger change, like  
9 50 percent, we could phase that in over a  
10 three-year period. Some factors that would  
11 influence those, like I said, the percentage of  
12 change in the ABC or impacts to the market.

13 Moving on to the ACL development  
14 options. Option C1, no action. So, that would,  
15 you know, make no change in the current framework  
16 that was established in Amendment 3 in 2010.  
17 Option C2, which is the preferred option is  
18 actively manage the sector ACLs with commercial  
19 and recreational, and I'll go in more detail about  
20 that in the next slide.

21 Option C3, this established a reserve  
22 sector ACL. Pretty much now we haven't moved into

1 the fishery where we have a reserve sector where  
2 they could divvy out available quota in season or  
3 the end of the season two different comm to their  
4 commercial operational user groups. Option C4 is  
5 to establish the ACLs for each management group as  
6 a whole, without focus on individual species. So,  
7 with this option, we go back to years ago where we  
8 used to manage everything as far as management  
9 groups. So, that would large coastal, small  
10 coastals, and pelagics without consideration of  
11 what the stock different levels are based on stock  
12 assessments and individual species as we have now.  
13 C5, which is another preferred option, is to  
14 establish the ACL for each management group  
15 without commercial ACL quota linkages, and I'll go  
16 into more detail about that in the next slide.  
17 And then Option C6 is it creates species-specific  
18 ACLs with commercial ACL linkage.

19 So, here's the new framework for the  
20 Amendment 14 for non-prohibited shark species  
21 where we have here OFL and ABC control rule  
22 between the OFL and the ABC. We have a management

1     uncertainty buffer in between the ABC and the ACL.  
2     Management uncertainty buffer will include all  
3     sources of non- HMS fishing mortality, research  
4     mortality, could be just the uncertainty between  
5     assessments or level of the stock. A little  
6     buffer there. Then we have the ACL.

7             Then we divide the ACLs into two  
8     separate ones. You have the recreational ACL and  
9     that would be all sources of recreational  
10    mortality whether harvest or dead discards in one  
11    ACL where we would actively manage that on a  
12    three-year rolling average where then whether per  
13    quota as long it's -- if the ACL is not exceeded,  
14    then we can make management changes. But if it is  
15    exceeded, the recreational ACL is exceeded, so  
16    there could be some management measures put in  
17    place.

18            Then you have the commercial sector ACL  
19    where we have the -- all sources of commercial HMS  
20    mortality. We have the commercial dead discards  
21    and then what's left is commercial quotas. Right  
22    now, we actively manage the commercial quotas

1 under Amendment 14. And in the future, we'd be  
2 actively managing the commercial dead discards.  
3 So, we would, similar to the recreational sector  
4 ACL, we have a three-year rolling average where we  
5 monitor the dead discards and make changes to the  
6 commercial quotas and the commercial sector ACL  
7 per quota.

8 So, then a more detailed look at  
9 preferred options under the ACL development, and I  
10 had mentioned we -- C2 we'd be actively managing  
11 the ACLs and we'd be evaluating those on a regular  
12 interval as I was discussing with the framework.  
13 And then Option C5 would be for removing quota  
14 linkages. So, right now we have -- we have some  
15 management groups in the Atlantic and Gulf of  
16 Mexico that are linked based on gear types or how  
17 they're fishing, more the incidental where they  
18 would be targeting one species and incidentally  
19 catching the rest.

20 Or the preferred option here is the  
21 management groups will not have species linkages,  
22 therefore, would not close when one species has

1 reached its quota. So, examples in the Atlantic,  
2 we have the aggregate large coastal and hammerhead  
3 management group slates. Once either of those  
4 quotas are reached, we would not close the other  
5 one and leave -- and so as the hammerhead quota is  
6 reached, we would then just close the hammerhead  
7 management group and allow commercial fishing to  
8 continue on aggregate large coastal.

9           However, I want to point out with this  
10 kind of option because we are removing the  
11 linkage, there is the potential for added dead  
12 discards. So, just point this out is that the  
13 management of the commercial quotas could be  
14 reduced to compensate for the removing of  
15 linkages. So, just that's a possibility.

16           Moving on to the next one. So,  
17 carry-over of unused -- for underharvest of the  
18 ACL options. So, the first one, the D1, is no  
19 action. So, currently the (inaudible) are where  
20 we only allow 50 percent of carry-over of the base  
21 quota of commercial landings of healthy stocks.  
22 So, right now that only allows carry-over of the

1 Gulf of Mexico blacktip, Gulf of Mexico  
2 smoothhound, and Atlantic smoothhound management  
3 groups.

4 Option D2 restricts you to distribute  
5 any unused catch to the sector where the  
6 underharvest occurs. So, if we have commercial  
7 underharvest, then underharvest can go back to the  
8 commercial. If the fishery was recreational, go  
9 to recreational. Option D3 is distribute any  
10 unused catch across all sectors based on the  
11 regulatory proportionally -- proportion of the  
12 sector distribution. So, if there's a say 60/40  
13 split between commercial and recreational, then  
14 the unused -- the underharvest would be split by  
15 them and then given back to their sectors based on  
16 that 60/40 split.

17 Option D4 is any unused portion of the  
18 ACLs will go to their reserve sector ACL. Since  
19 we do not prefer creating a reserve sector box in  
20 our framework, we don't prefer this option right  
21 now. D5 is to allow carry-over of any unused to  
22 equal distribution. So, that would be 50/50

1 split. So, if anything is under underharvest  
2 would be 50/50 split to the different sectors.

3 Option D6, preferred option, is to allow  
4 carry-over for any unused underharvests of  
5 commercial landings only under certain conditions.  
6 So, this option would allow underharvest to of  
7 only commercial underharvests. So, this would  
8 where I said before, under certain conditions -- I  
9 should say under, yeah, certain conditions, this  
10 is for stocks that are healthy, have overfishing  
11 occurring, or have an unknown stock status would  
12 be eligible for the carry-over. So, right now,  
13 you allow carry-over of -- you allow, you know,  
14 the underharvests of say the aggregate large  
15 coastal complex to be carried over.

16 Carry-over will not occur for stocks  
17 that are both overfished or subject to  
18 overfishing. So, you have those Atlantic  
19 blacknose that underharvest would not be allowed  
20 to be carried over. But again, this option  
21 restricts to the availability of underharvests and  
22 carry-over as long as it is not -- the ABC is not

1 exceeded.

2 So, we go to the last option considered  
3 in Amendment is multi-year overfishing status  
4 determination criteria.

5 Option 1 is no action. So, don't make  
6 any changes to current status quo. Option E2 is  
7 to change stocks annually in response to fishing  
8 mortality estimates. So, that would be every year  
9 potentially changing the stock status for all of  
10 them based on the mortality, that mortality for  
11 that year. Our Option E3 is the preferred option  
12 as far as comparing a three-year average of  
13 fishing mortality to the OFL to determine the  
14 overfishing status.

15 So, what we mean by that is, you know,  
16 we have this rolling average to help account for  
17 recent data uncertainty. It could determine if  
18 the stock is -- stock is or is not subject to  
19 overfishing. So, example as I talked about  
20 earlier, is if the Atlantic blacknose, say if it's  
21 overfished with overfishing occurring, and it's  
22 not eligible for any underharvests based on that

1 criteria, based on the stock criteria. However,  
2 under this if the three-year average of the  
3 mortality is under, we would make that change that  
4 says it's not subject to overfishing anymore and  
5 then potentially rollover any underharvest of the  
6 commercial quota. However, this option, E3 in  
7 Amendment 14, we are not planning to change an  
8 overfished stock status. That's something we do  
9 in assessments only.

10 So, those were the management options.  
11 Here's kind of a list of the public webinars we  
12 had. We had two public webinars. They weren't  
13 very well attended virtually. They had one or two  
14 people each time, did not get any public comments.  
15 We have the AP today. We also have given this  
16 presentation to a couple of councils, you know,  
17 also we'll be speaking at the Atlantic Fishery  
18 Management Council this afternoon. But, you know,  
19 encourage folks to definitely look at the  
20 Amendment 14 website to read through the document  
21 and we'll take comments now in a few.

22 So, timeline as was mentioned earlier,

1 you know, Amendment 14 public comment ends at the  
2 end of the year, December 31st. We plan to the  
3 coming year, review the public comments, and  
4 hopefully release final Amendment 14 sometime in  
5 2021. So, using the framework action then we  
6 begin the process of adjusting the shark quotas  
7 based on the new frameworks and plan to implement.

8 So, I guess right now, we'll be taking  
9 public comments. And if, you know, if you have  
10 any afterwards, feel free to submit those to  
11 regulations.gov or myself or Karyl Brewster-Geisz.

12 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thanks, Guy, very  
13 much. So, we've got a good chunk of time here,  
14 you know, up to an hour maybe even a drop more if  
15 we need it. I know the Agency is very interested  
16 in getting comments. So, I'd like to open this up  
17 to the AP for any comments you might have on the  
18 proposed amendment and on any aspects of it. So,  
19 we've got five different pieces here to talk about  
20 each with several different options.

21 So, as folks weigh-in, it would be great  
22 to, you know, sort of reference which piece in

1 particular, which topic in particular you want to  
2 -- you want to give a comment on. So, again,  
3 invite folks to comment, share your thoughts with  
4 HMS staff. And the best thing to do would be to  
5 raise your hands so I can see who would like to  
6 get into the conversation. At the moment, I am  
7 not seeing anything in the chat, or any hands  
8 raised, which could mean that HMS staff really  
9 stuck their landing on this. In which case, it'd  
10 be good to hear that too. Sonja, if you could --

11 MR. DUBECK: We've got a couple in  
12 there, yeah.

13 MR. BROOKS: Okay, yeah, Sonya?

14 MS. FORDHAM: Hi. Can you hear me okay?

15 MR. BROOKS: Yeah, go ahead.

16 MS. FORDHAM: Is it okay if I just ask  
17 four questions and then come back in a few minutes  
18 with my comments?

19 MR. BROOKS: Sure.

20 MS. FORDHAM: I'm used to that old  
21 framework. I'll just put the questions out there  
22 first. I'm just wondering in the tiered approach,

1 and that's not for grouper fish, I'm just  
2 wondering how many years that's been going on?  
3 And if there's anymore, you know, lessons about  
4 that would be helpful. Under the ACL development,  
5 I'm wondering -- maybe I missed it, but when you  
6 talk about at regular intervals, what that means?  
7 Or at least an estimate.

8           When you say under the active management  
9 of recreational dead discards, you had said that  
10 you would make -- you would track the discards and  
11 make changes appropriately. Can you give me an  
12 example of what that would mean? How that would  
13 be different from the current situation? And my  
14 last question is can you just talk a bit about the  
15 argument for removing the linkages for something  
16 like hammerhead sharks. Thank you.

17           MR. DUBECK: Sure. I'll try answering  
18 and cover all. I think the first one was about  
19 the South Atlantic Council and how have they had  
20 that tier approach in? I have to go back and  
21 double-check that. I don't remember exactly when  
22 that was put in. But they've had the tier

1 approach in, I think, five or six different tiers.  
2 I have to double-check that for you on there. And  
3 remind me, your second question was about the  
4 recreational ACL, correct?

5 MS. FORDHAM: Yes.

6 MR. DUBECK: Yeah, and you said that  
7 what, you know, why? So, right now, with the  
8 recreational -- so, right now, we only, like I  
9 managed -- like I mentioned, we only manage and  
10 pretty much look at constantly the commercial  
11 landings. After we do assessments, we set up  
12 proxies for commercial dead discards and  
13 recreational mortality and put those as proxies  
14 and taking them off the top and not looked at or  
15 calculated against the ABCs, OFL, or TACs until  
16 the next assessment and it's really analyzed.

17 So, under this scenario, we would be  
18 looking at those on a regular basis being like we  
19 do the -- every year we do a three-year average.  
20 And then depending on what the ACL, recreational  
21 ACL, or commercial ACL, we would make appropriate  
22 management changes depending on if it's over or

1 under or whatever it is.

2 MS. FORDHAM: So, an example of when  
3 it's over.

4 MR. DUBECK: Right now, I mean, we have  
5 -- we have bag limits for some shark species, you  
6 know, one. And then we have size limits for some  
7 of the shark species. We're still evaluating what  
8 those management measures would be. However, you  
9 know, in some other fisheries, you know, they, you  
10 know, they reduce bag limits. They increase size  
11 limits or close fishing for that species or  
12 management group. So, it, you know, we're still  
13 evaluating what they would be. But, you know,  
14 similar to other fisheries, that's what they do.

15 MS. FORDHAM: But isn't closed fishing  
16 to mean these species really come prohibited for a  
17 temporary time?

18 MR. DUBECK: Just be closed for the  
19 season, similar to how we in commercial fishery  
20 where we closed, you know, the commercial quotas  
21 once they get reached or close to be reached. And  
22 then from there, we'd open the following year as

1 long as the quota wasn't overharvested at severe  
2 levels.

3 MS. FORDHAM: Okay, I think we missed  
4 one. I was just under the ACL development.  
5 What's the regular interval?

6 MR. DUBECK: It would be annually. So,  
7 we do a three-year rolling average. So, similar  
8 to how we do in our shark season rule where we  
9 kind of do commercial quotas and whether it's  
10 underharvested or overharvested based on the base  
11 or adjusted quotas. We would be potentially  
12 looking at, you know, annual adjustments.

13 MS. FORDHAM: Great.

14 MR. DUBECK: And then you said based  
15 about the hammerhead, correct?

16 MS. FORDHAM: Yes, for the --

17 MR. DUBECK: Yeah, your last question --

18 MS. FORDHAM: Well, the example the  
19 linkages, yeah.

20 MR. DUBECK: Yeah, I mean, so, I mean,  
21 we are setting up, you know, the ACL, the ABCs,  
22 everything for each management group. So, if

1 removing linkages resolves where, you know, the  
2 potential dead discard number would be so large,  
3 there may be no commercial quotas for some  
4 management groups. Then we'd have to take a  
5 different stand, potentially, or make other  
6 management changes depending on what that is.

7 I mean, I was just using that as an  
8 example. Another example is the blacknose and the  
9 small blacknose, small coastal, where you have a  
10 small, very small blacknose quota of about, you  
11 know, 35,000 pounds linked to a 100,000 pound  
12 quota. So, it's just, you know, we probably use  
13 our management group, our management group  
14 analysis, but if the quotas are so small because  
15 of that potential, you know, removing the dead  
16 discards, you know, we'd probably look at other  
17 management measures to help us properly manage  
18 each stock and measure it.

19 MR. BROOKS: Great.

20 MS. FORDHAM: Yeah, I was still just  
21 trying to get like the argument or the rationale  
22 for making that getting rid of linkages being a

1 preferred. Like, what's it going to make better?

2 MR. DUBECK: Well, we would actually be  
3 optimizing, potentially optimizing our commercial  
4 quotas. I think right now some quotas are -- some  
5 quotas in commercial fisheries closed down pretty  
6 early because of some of these quota linkages.  
7 But also, you know, recently the commercial quotas  
8 haven't been harvested. And not all, you know, in  
9 some of the fisheries they have this where they  
10 don't have quota -- excuse me -- linkages. They  
11 have either smaller bag limits or reduced quotas  
12 because, you know, remove linkages, things like  
13 that. So, just some things we're considering for  
14 our management -- for the shark fisheries to help  
15 utilize and pretty optimal yield for the entire  
16 fishery.

17 MS. FORDHAM: Okay, thank you. I'm  
18 going to come back in a few minutes with just a  
19 few comments, but that helps me. Thank you.

20 MR. BROOKS: Great, thanks, Sonya. And  
21 your questions at least it looks like a couple of  
22 others with hands went down, so, I think you asked

1 a few questions that were helpful for everybody.

2 So, thanks.

3 Let's go to Jason Adriance next and then  
4 Katie Westfall and then over to Mike Pierdinock.  
5 So, Jason, please.

6 MR. ADRIANCE: Thanks, Bennett, and good  
7 morning, everyone. I actually just had one  
8 clarifying question, but then a second one came up  
9 with that discard discussion. So, I'll ask those  
10 questions and then save comments for later on and  
11 see where the discussion goes.

12 The first question is on Topic E where  
13 you discuss the three-year average, and I  
14 apologize if this is in the document. Is that a  
15 geometric mean or just a straight up three-year  
16 average? I'm stuck.

17 MR. DUBECK: Yeah, so, the, you know,  
18 that's why in that, you know, detail that we're  
19 still figuring that out. But, you know, most  
20 years it's usually average, but, you know, we have  
21 to figure that out.

22 MR. ADRIANCE: And so, the discard

1 discussion I thought I was kind of clear on how  
2 things are utilized, but then maybe it confused me  
3 a little bit and I apologize if it's just me. So,  
4 I wanted to clarify the way you handle those dead  
5 discards is you account for them in the assessment  
6 and it's, therefore, reflected in the quotas? Or  
7 did I hear that that is done and then there's some  
8 more accounting during the harvest? I just wanted  
9 to make sure. It almost sounded like some double  
10 counting of discards and I just wanted to clarify  
11 that. Thanks.

12 MR. DUBECK: Yeah, no, I appreciate it.  
13 Yeah, so, sorry if I wasn't clear about it. So,  
14 when we do the assessments, we count for all  
15 sources of mortality of the shark species or  
16 stock. And then from there, we calculate what the  
17 TAC would be, and then we take off the top. We  
18 take off the recreational mortality and then the  
19 HMS mortality, commercial dead discards, whether  
20 it's HMS or non-HMS. And then that's all taking  
21 off, and then what is left over is commercial  
22 quota. And those are proxy numbers that are used

1     until the next assessment.  You know, we haven't  
2     -- for example, you know, some assessments we've  
3     had done and two years ago, quite a few years ago,  
4     and we know some of the fishery has changed  
5     between HMS and non-HMS for recreational fishery  
6     too.

7                 So, we know that we -- to properly  
8     manage the fishery should be more flexible and  
9     monitor those.  And trying to figure out, you  
10    know, what those accurate numbers on this  
11    three-year rolling average to properly reflect  
12    what's going on in the fishery.

13                MR. ADRIANCE:  And again --

14                MR. DUBECK:  And whatever they are, we  
15    would calculate those and then what's left over,  
16    would be the -- we'd actually put out like what is  
17    the commercial ACL between here's the commercial  
18    dead discard number, here's the commercial quota,  
19    and here's what the recreational ACL would be.

20                MR. ADRIANCE:  Okay, so, like on a yes,  
21    no, basis, removals are accounted for.  All those  
22    removals are accounted for in the assessment and

1 then the quotas are projected from that, correct?

2 MR. DUBECK: Yes, yes.

3 MR. ADRIANCE: All right, thanks, Guy.

4 MR. BROOKS: Great, thanks, Jason. I'll  
5 let you lower your hand. Let's go to Katie and  
6 Mike and if we can stick with the clarifying  
7 questions for a little bit still. I think that's  
8 really helpful, and then we can circle back for  
9 perspectives. Katie.

10 MS. WESTFALL: Sounds good, Bennett.  
11 Thanks so much. And thanks for the presentation,  
12 Guy. Yeah, I just had one clarifying question  
13 before getting into comments. On Topic D, the  
14 carry-over of underharvested ACL, in the draft  
15 amendment at one point on page 24, it said that  
16 carry-over would not be possible for stocks that  
17 are overfished. And then later in the document,  
18 it said that on page 28, it says that carry-over  
19 would be possible for overfished stock. So, I  
20 just wanted to get a clarification on that.

21 MR. DUBECK: Yeah, so, stocks that are  
22 overfished with overfishing occurring, would not

1 be eligible for carry-over. But if it's say,  
2 overfished with no overfishing occurring, as long  
3 as the mortality stays below the OFL and we're  
4 accounting for that in the rebuilding plan, we  
5 plan to allow commercial underharvest to give them  
6 back or carried over as long as it does not exceed  
7 the ABC. So, as long as everything stays on under  
8 the ABC, we could allow commercial carry-over.

9 MS. WESTFALL: Great, that's helpful.  
10 Thank you.

11 MR. BROOKS: Great. And, Guy, a quick  
12 question in the chat are Puerto Rico fisheries  
13 commercial and rec taken into account in these  
14 assessments?

15 MR. DUBECK: Yes. Yeah, so, commercial  
16 -- I mean, so, any landings commercially and  
17 recreational from Puerto Rico fisheries are  
18 counted towards the Gulf of Mexico stocks. If  
19 there is a individual stock for that species, for  
20 example, you know, blacktips commercial -- I mean,  
21 Gulf of Mexico blacktips, and those are counted  
22 for in assessments.

1 MR. BROOKS: Great, thanks. Let's go  
2 back to the queue again just stick with clarifying  
3 questions here for a bit. Let's go to Mike  
4 Pierdinock and then Rick Weber.

5 MR. PIERDINOCK: Hi, good morning.  
6 Thank you. Thank you for your presentation. Just  
7 two clarifying questions. With Option A3, it  
8 mentions authorized species. Is that consistent  
9 with the definition that we have for what  
10 (inaudible) retain? That's the one question. And  
11 then with Option B2, there's language there,  
12 factors that influence the use of phase-in could  
13 change the ABC and impacts on the market. Now,  
14 does that market include -- well, I'm assuming  
15 it's commercial, but does it also include impacts  
16 recreationally to the recreational and for-hire  
17 community? Would that be included in the  
18 definition of market or the intent of that item?  
19 Thank you.

20 MR. DUBECK: Thank you. So, the answer  
21 to your first question, would be that it would be  
22 for all authorized shark species, so all of the

1 ones we currently retain commercially or  
2 recreationally. So, that would be authorized  
3 species is what I mean by that. And then by  
4 market, yeah, I mean, we, you know, markets there  
5 are different markets. There's commercial and  
6 recreational, and it could be a factor for  
7 determining what the phase-in reduction or  
8 increase of the ABC control rule itself, yes.

9 MR. PIERDINOCK: Thank you.

10 MR. BROOKS: Great. Let's go to Rick  
11 Weber.

12 MR. WEBER: Good morning, Guy. Just a  
13 couple of questions here. In your ACL framework  
14 slide, it mentions a number of times taking into  
15 account all sorts of mortality. Is there anything  
16 here that is adding new sources of mortality to  
17 the calculations? Or is there anything changing  
18 in the math?

19 MR. DUBECK: No, no. So, all of this is  
20 already being counted in the stock assessments.  
21 We just, you know, we do in our final amendments  
22 when we do address the changing in the stocks of a

1 species we do lay these out in tables of like,  
2 okay, so, in (inaudible) commercial, you know,  
3 work, you know, harvest and dead discards are, you  
4 know, recreational. This is what a fishery  
5 potentially with its HMS management. So, they are  
6 already accounted for. So, we're just clarifying  
7 where they are to be in the framework checklist.

8 MR. WEBER: All right, very good. And  
9 sort of continuing on the theme then. When you  
10 talk about proxies for dead discards in recs, are  
11 you talking about dead discard or PRM?

12 MR. DUBECK: Total mortality. So, total  
13 between harvest dead discards everything so  
14 recreationally, we set up based on the assessments  
15 and some analysis we've done, those proxies are  
16 just, you know, calculated so total recreational  
17 harvest and mortality is kind of been together and  
18 for that ACL and, again, this is a proxy that we  
19 don't -- we don't evaluate on a yearly basis.  
20 It's something we want to do in the future.

21 MR. WEBER: I think I understand. Is  
22 there anything comparable for commercial?

1           MR. DUBECK: Well, you mean about the  
2 way we manage it or?

3           MR. WEBER: Well, if we're calculating  
4 -- if we're calculating a proxy for commercial or  
5 for recreational, is there any --

6           MR. DUBECK: Sorry. Yes, I apologize,  
7 yes. So, yeah, so, right now we do have proxies  
8 for commercial dead discards within the HMS  
9 fishery and outside the HMS fishery that we've  
10 kind of just taken off the top for the same thing  
11 we do the recreational fishery now. And then like  
12 I said, with anything that's left over right now  
13 that we actively manage is the commercial quota  
14 that is monitored and, you know, so that landing's  
15 updated regularly.

16          MR. WEBER: I don't follow -- I don't --  
17 I honestly don't follow it closely so, you had me  
18 at yes just to make sure that the two sectors are  
19 being treated equally. And along those lines,  
20 when we're talking about carry-over, why is the  
21 proposal in D that there is no carry-over for  
22 recs?

1           MR. DUBECK: Well, right now, it's, you  
2 know, you said that commercially we are monitoring  
3 the landings on a very regular basis.  
4 Recreational, so, but, you know, recreationally,  
5 if the recreational ACL is underharvested for many  
6 years, we could potentially make management  
7 changes to that. You know, we do have, you know,  
8 right now we have, as I mentioned, you know, one  
9 shark at fifty four inches, you know, then it's --  
10 then changes for hammerhead and makos. But if,  
11 you know, the stock and management group is  
12 healthy enough, there could be avenues for higher  
13 retention limits in the recreational fishery.

14           So, I'm not just leaving the  
15 recreational fish, we're not just going to leave  
16 the recreational fishery out. So, that timeline  
17 right now on an annual basis, we only allow  
18 carry-over to commercial quotas because that's  
19 something we are very confident with commercial  
20 landings. And we monitor those, you know, we have  
21 -- we get regular weekly, and we send out monthly  
22 landings updates.

1           MR. WEBER: Then in the form of a  
2 question leading to future comment, could you tell  
3 us some of your thinking that has you not  
4 preferring the reserve sector? What steered you  
5 away from the idea of a reserve sector since we do  
6 use that in bluefin?

7           MR. DUBECK: Yeah, so, again, with the  
8 bluefin tuna -- tuna fishery as most of you know,  
9 is we are -- we get active landings of commercial  
10 and recreational. You know, there's recreational  
11 reporting of that species. We don't prefer the  
12 reserve sector, you know, reserve sector right now  
13 because we don't have that in shark fisheries. We  
14 only have that for the commercial landings. You  
15 know, we have the dealers, fishermen landing  
16 there. We have the dealer, you know, supports.  
17 Nothing on a daily or regular basis for  
18 recreational landings. And with the reserve  
19 sector, you would be taking away part of the ACL  
20 to be put in a reserve sector that would be tough  
21 to move that inseason-wise to the different ACL  
22 sectors to make sure the quotas are, I mean, ACLs

1 are not over, you know, overharvested. And again,  
2 we have the proof in tuna fishery and they  
3 regularly do that. They manage those numbers very  
4 accurately. But right now, in the shark fishery,  
5 we just have the commercial landings that we do.

6 MR. WEBER: Thank you. Thanks.

7 MR. BROOKS: All right, let's try to get  
8 a few more folks in. Again, maybe a couple more  
9 minutes of clarifying questions and then start  
10 shifting to any comments. Let's go to Marty  
11 Scanlon and then to Rusty. And again, the folks  
12 who've gotten their questions answered, I'll let  
13 you lower your hands unless you're back in the  
14 queue for comments. So, Marty, you're open.

15 MR. SCANLON: How will all this be  
16 applied to, you know, ICCAT managed shark species,  
17 especially shark species that are already being  
18 managed under ICCAT?

19 MR. DUBECK: So, if the ICCAT does give  
20 the U.S. a TAC, a quota, or ACL, we would manage  
21 to that number similar to how we do with other  
22 fisheries. Right now, this is just for like the

1 ones that are not been determined by ICCAT and  
2 some of the domestic shark species that are -- we  
3 are managing -- we are managing the other ones  
4 too, but we are trying to actively evaluate on a  
5 annual basis.

6 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Marty, any other  
7 clarifying questions?

8 MR. SCANLON: No, not at this time.

9 MR. BROOKS: Okay, Rusty, clarifying  
10 questions.

11 MR. HUDSON: Can you hear me?

12 MR. BROOKS: Yeah.

13 MR. HUDSON: Okay, great. First, as far  
14 as Atlantic blacktip and the final report,  
15 December 11th I believe it's due. How long will  
16 it take you to be able to turn around the not  
17 overfish and not overfishing result and establish  
18 a quota and pull us off of that large coastal  
19 shark aggregate? That's the first question.

20 MR. DUBECK: Thanks, Rusty. So, I'm not  
21 sure if that date is still --

22 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: I can answer that,

1 Guy.

2 MR. DUBECK: Okay, thanks.

3 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: So, Rusty, as far  
4 as I know, yes, we're still expecting the final  
5 report right around December 11th. I am sure we  
6 will share that once we have it. As far as the  
7 result of establishing not overfish no  
8 overfishing, that will probably take us several  
9 months in terms of establishing a quota. We would  
10 need Amendment 14 to be in place and then our  
11 follow-on rulemaking. So, the same thing that  
12 we're waiting on for the Gulf blacktip and for  
13 sandbar, we are trying to finish Amendment 14 and  
14 then move on to the follow-on rulemaking that  
15 would establish all the quotas.

16 MR. HUDSON: That's great. Can you  
17 still hear me?

18 MR. BROOKS: Yes, we can, Rusty.

19 MR. HUDSON: Okay. Scallop hammerheads,  
20 we're getting to start a research track 2021  
21 through 2023. We are in with the scallop, the  
22 great and the smooth. And being that there were

1 six scalloped hammerhead stocks around the world  
2 that were analyzed that the sightings were two of  
3 them were not having the overfish or overfishing  
4 conditions and so, one of those happened to be  
5 Maine to Texas and the other was in another part  
6 of the world. But with our Caribbean territories,  
7 of course, you have a overfished, overfishing,  
8 whatever, we had a problem with that stock because  
9 it's separate genetically.

10 And so, eliminating the linkage for the  
11 scalloped hammerhead from Maine to Texas is a good  
12 move as far it goes. But I'm not sure what you  
13 would do with the Caribbean under these  
14 circumstances particularly since we weren't even  
15 be able to hop on the results of the research  
16 stock and I'm assuming they're doing those stocks  
17 until after the 2023 culmination of that effort.  
18 That being said, the recreational, the (inaudible)  
19 calibrations, the PSEs, the fact that (inaudible)  
20 the rays are three months long and a 45-day delay  
21 after each (inaudible), they normally --

22 MR. BROOKS: Hey, Rusty. Rusty, Rusty,

1 I'm --

2 MR. HUDSON: Yes.

3 MR. BROOKS: -- going to jump in for a  
4 minute. Your sound quality is a little off. I  
5 don't know if you're using a speaker, but we want  
6 to make sure we can hear you clearly. Go ahead.

7 MR. HUDSON: Is that a little better?

8 MR. BROOKS: Much, much better. Thank  
9 you.

10 MR. HUDSON: I had the volume down a  
11 little bit because I think I speak too loud. I  
12 can't hear myself. Anyway, that --

13 MR. BROOKS: That's perfectly fine.

14 MR. HUDSON: Okay, that being said, it'd  
15 be like June of '21, 2021 then we'd have the  
16 recreational numbers. And I'm not sure how you're  
17 going to work that. That three-year thing might  
18 be useful for them particularly because they're  
19 not (inaudible) allocation. Particularly, when  
20 they -- the potential is these three calibrations  
21 might have some high PSEs. We just don't know  
22 until we see it here and how it unfolds on each of

1 the (inaudible).

2 Unknown status on them is very bull and  
3 lemon. I think John Krasen (phonetic) did with  
4 bull --

5 MR. BROOKS: Rusty, you're -- we're  
6 losing you again (inaudible).

7 MR. HUDSON: Can you hear me?

8 MR. BROOKS: Better.

9 MR. HUDSON: Still hear me? Okay.

10 MR. BROOKS: Yeah.

11 MR. HUDSON: The unknown status for bull  
12 and lemon, you know, I saw they employ some over  
13 and the bull, blacktip and soon the Atlantic  
14 blacktip that label seems that it could be mixed  
15 with those other polymers. But the unknown status  
16 (inaudible) be some over even because they're not  
17 considered overfish in that group.

18 MR. DUBECK: Yeah, so, they're part of  
19 the aggregated large coastal complex for the  
20 unknown. As long as the ABC that we establish is  
21 not exceeded, we could allow carry-over of the  
22 unused, that underharvest and commercial landings

1 to next season.

2 MR. HUDSON: Okay. The last thing is  
3 the OFL being greater than the ABC. The ABC is  
4 generally greater or equal to the ACL. If we wind  
5 up having a good stock status, we can always have  
6 a buffer both for the recs and the commercial.  
7 So, you know, I like some of the (inaudible).  
8 Thank you.

9 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Thanks, Rusty.  
10 Let's go to Alan Weiss then Greg Hinks for any  
11 clarifying questions and then just open it more  
12 broadly for comments. Alan.

13 MR. WEISS: Thank you. Just a quick  
14 question if we could look back at Slide no. 9.

15 MR. DUBECK: This one here?

16 MR. WEISS: Yes. Yeah, and under the  
17 first option shown it says for HMS stocks. Does  
18 that mean HMS stocks -- stocks of sharks managed  
19 by HMS or HMS species in general?

20 MR. DUBECK: It'd just be the shark  
21 stock that we're referring to here. This is just  
22 (inaudible) --

1                   MR. WEISS: Everything -- it's  
2 understood everything only applies to sharks that  
3 we're discussing here?

4                   MR. DUBECK: Mm-hmm.

5                   MR. WEISS: Okay, thanks.

6                   MR. BROOKS: Great. Greg Hinks.

7                   MR. HINKS: Hi, can you hear me?

8                   MR. DUBECK: Yep.

9                   MR. HINKS: Sorry, I'm walking in some  
10 of the history you mentioned. I'm just curious  
11 since we're discussing removing the linkages  
12 between some of the groups for quota management,  
13 what was the reasons for the linkages initially  
14 anyway?

15                   MR. DUBECK: Originally, they were put  
16 in place to because of the proxies we have and set  
17 up with assessments that are we are actively  
18 managing the dead discards to ensure that they  
19 would stay at the same level as those determined  
20 at that time from the analysis. But since we are  
21 going to be actively managing the commercial and  
22 recreational ACLs, everything, we could actively

1 then remove the linkages and make adjustments to  
2 the commercial quota if the, say the commercial  
3 dead discard number gets too large, or make other  
4 management measures if appropriate.

5 MR. HINKS: Got it. Thank you.

6 MR. BROOKS: Great. All right, Greg,  
7 I'll let you lower your hand. I'm going to go  
8 back to the top of the queue here. I've got Walt  
9 waiting to come in and then Jason. And then I  
10 know Sonya and Katie and a couple of others said  
11 you would like to come back. So, invite folks to  
12 reraise their hands whenever they feel ready.  
13 But, Walt, up to you.

14 MR. GOLET: Sorry, nope. I'm not sure  
15 why it was raised. I thought I lowered it. My  
16 bad. I apologize.

17 MR. BROOKS: Okay, all right, great. We  
18 can try to lower it again. There it goes, thank  
19 you. Jason.

20 MR. ADRIANCE: Thank you, Bennett. So,  
21 I think overall it's a -- this is a pretty decent  
22 amendment. And I think it hopefully goes a long

1 way to fix some issues with the fishery. One of  
2 the concerns I have is the ABC control rule. I  
3 know it could be a hard thing to work with. And I  
4 know you mentioned the South Atlantic as an  
5 example. And I just wanted to note that different  
6 councils have different levels of risk that  
7 they've adopted. And so, looking at just the  
8 South Atlantic may not -- I hope you look at the  
9 other ABC control rules because in the Gulf, for  
10 example, that council may have a higher level of  
11 risk that they'll entertain, which then factors  
12 into the individual ABC control rules that the  
13 council's SSCs use. So, I just wanted to mention  
14 that. That that's looked at in consideration when  
15 you go to develop this because the devil's in the  
16 details when it comes to the ABC control rule and  
17 I can tell you from years of discussions on ABC  
18 control rules that it can be a fun time had by  
19 all. Thanks.

20 MR. BROOKS: Thanks.

21 MR. DUBECK: Thanks, Jason. Yeah, I  
22 just want to clarify is that, yeah, so we are

1 going to be looking the other councils too. It's  
2 just that, again, you use the South Atlantic as an  
3 example. It has different tier where they looked  
4 at assessment level and (inaudible) to level too.  
5 And then the other councils do look at the  
6 different uncertainly levels and that's something  
7 the science center will be doing. And we plan to  
8 build those in depending on what they come back  
9 with.

10 MR. BROOKS: Great, thanks. Katie or  
11 Sonya, would you like to come back in?

12 MS. WESTFALL: Yeah, sure, I'm happy to  
13 provide some comments. I think Jason made a  
14 really good point that the devil's in the details  
15 on the ABC control rule, and glad to hear the  
16 science center is working on that. It certainly  
17 makes -- seems to have more risk adverse control  
18 rules for stocks of greater uncertainty and their  
19 location limits, and greater vulnerability of  
20 overfishing. Certainly, it's hard to comment  
21 without knowing what the exact tiers and  
22 thresholds will be. So, it would be good to have

1 more information to be able to comment more  
2 thoroughly on that one.

3           On Topic C the ACL development. I'm  
4 really glad to hear that the Agency is moving  
5 toward actively managing the sector ACLs, the  
6 commercial and recreational sectors. I think  
7 that's a great move. Being able to do this well  
8 really depends on timely and accurate data.  
9 Still, I think in addition to this, you know,  
10 preferred option, it would be good to have a plan  
11 for how exactly the Agency is going to be doing  
12 this particularly for sharks caught as bycatch or  
13 discards, and for the recreational sector. So, in  
14 order for this option to also be really effective,  
15 all the sources of mortality need to be considered  
16 here including other fisheries by management  
17 states and councils. So, I hope the Agency really  
18 looks at this holistically.

19           And then some concerns about the  
20 carry-over of underharvested ACL. I think for  
21 species that are experiencing overfishing and are  
22 overfished, I think that carry-over should really

1 not be allowed and underharvested really  
2 contribute to improving the status for those  
3 stocks in those conditions. Also, some concerns  
4 about being able to carry-over quotas for unknown  
5 stocks.

6 And then lastly, on the multi-year  
7 overfishing status, some concerns around the  
8 preferred option. I think any stock status change  
9 should really come from an assessment and the  
10 Agency should focus on ramping up its capacity to  
11 be able to assess more stocks instead of being  
12 able to just change the stocks and satisfy not  
13 exceeding overfishing limit on that three-year  
14 rolling average. So, (inaudible) my comments.  
15 Thanks.

16 MR. BROOKS: Great, thanks so much.

17 MR. DUBECK: Thanks. I just want to  
18 clarify something real quick there.

19 MR. BROOKS: Yeah, please.

20 MR. DUBECK: I apologize. So, Katie,  
21 so, we do not allow carry-over of stocks that are  
22 overfished with overfishing occurring. So, that

1 would be the threshold. But if it's overfished  
2 with no overfishing occurring, then we allow the  
3 carry-over. I just wanted to clarify that.

4 MR. BROOKS: Great, thanks, Guy. Let's  
5 go to Sonya and then to Kristin Foss. Sonya.

6 MS. FORDHAM: Thank you. I think Katie  
7 did a great job setting that up from maybe a  
8 little bit more optimistic. So, I just second her  
9 positive comments about, you know, moving towards  
10 more risk averse control rules and active  
11 management and second everything she said about  
12 the data.

13 I will add just a bit more trepidation  
14 and concern. I do agree with everyone's concern  
15 of, you know, it's kind of hard to digest this  
16 without concrete examples and the devil in the  
17 detail stuff. But I'm a bit concerned overall as  
18 the main focus, though, seems to be optimization  
19 of the fisheries and basically taking as many  
20 sharks as might be available and I don't see a  
21 whole lot of measures in there to ensure or boost  
22 recovery. So, I think it's still a bit focused on

1 taking as much as possible, and that makes me  
2 nervous.

3 I am someone who touts the success of  
4 some of our (inaudible) shark fishery management  
5 successes around the world, and I really am eager  
6 for progress and sustainability examples. But I  
7 have to remind people that we still do have a  
8 number of shark species that are in pretty rough  
9 shape, apparently still have a lot of uncertainty  
10 as everyone knows in terms of mortality and the  
11 stock status of these animals. And so, I would  
12 just say, again, that we -- particularly for these  
13 species, there's a whole lot of reasons to act  
14 cautiously and that really be risk averse.

15 So, I have talked to my conservation  
16 colleagues. You'll probably hear more from them  
17 today maybe, but we'll consider written -- at  
18 least written comments for the record. I need to  
19 learn more about the tiered ABC but from just  
20 general leanings, we're phasing-in the ABC control  
21 rule, control options. I admit that I seem to be  
22 gleaning a few things from how you've structured

1 your options. But it seems like B3 might be the  
2 most precautionary considering that phasing-in for  
3 only stocks that are not overfished or not being  
4 overfished. So, I'm leaning towards that. I  
5 would add in adjustments that these stock  
6 assessments should be, you know, relatively recent  
7 when we're working off those frameworks, and that  
8 we need to be mindful of unknown species and give  
9 them -- give the supply a real precautionary  
10 approach to species of unknown status.

11 I think in general, the conservation  
12 community in my opinion, has been -- still  
13 continues to support a more species-specific  
14 approach for shark management, recognizing we have  
15 a seriously broad diversity in terms of threats  
16 and life history of these animals. So, we're  
17 leaning in the C category, I think, to at least I  
18 am, leaning towards these six, although I will,  
19 given discussion today, try to learn more about  
20 the quota linkages and how that's balanced by more  
21 active management and have that into the sink.  
22 But as I've already hinted, we still have a lot of

1 concern particularly about hammerheads.

2 Like Katie said, I think I'm pretty  
3 solid. I don't think I would change a position to  
4 support B1, the status quo, or no actions in terms  
5 of how we -- of carrying-over underharvest. I'm  
6 particularly uncomfortable with allowing  
7 carry-over if overfishing is occurring. I just  
8 think it's too risky for sharks. And the last  
9 set, the E sets, I'll have to give that some  
10 thought. So, thanks, in the meantime.

11 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thank you, Sonya.  
12 And, obviously, the comment period's open for, you  
13 know, several more weeks and understand the folks  
14 will want and need time to put together more  
15 comprehensive comments. Let's go to Kristin Foss  
16 and then over to Dewey. Kristin.

17 MS. FOSS: Thanks for the presentation,  
18 Guy. So, overall, the amendment seems that this  
19 could provide some additional flexibility and more  
20 active management regarding our shark fishery.  
21 And I think this could possibly help address some  
22 of the issues with increased reporting, the

1 negative shark interactions, depredations that  
2 we're all hearing.

3           Going to the other comments provided for  
4 the ABC control rule, I would continue to work  
5 with the SSC on developing those ABC tier levels.  
6 Really look into the data that goes into each of  
7 those tiers. And then with the carry-over you  
8 noted that this will be on a stock-by-stock basis.  
9 So, I'm going to caution if the species is  
10 overfished, not to hinder those rebuilding plans.  
11 This is something the Gulf Council I know has  
12 discussed in their carry-over amendment. So, just  
13 looking more into maybe those discussions how  
14 they've handled some of that would be helpful.  
15 Thanks.

16           MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Kristin. Dewey,  
17 you're up. Dewey, you there? We're not hearing  
18 you yet. Dewey, you might have to hit star -- oh,  
19 okay. Dewey had to jump off. Rick Weber, I know  
20 you mentioned before you might like to get back in  
21 with some thoughts. Do you want to jump in now,  
22 we've got -- I don't see anybody in the queue

1 right now. Oh, wait, yeah, I got Rick and then  
2 Mike Pierdinock. Rick.

3 MR. WEBER: Yeah, thanks. I'm agreeing  
4 with everyone who's saying that the devil's going  
5 to be in the details. You know, I mean, A, B, and  
6 C are all allowing for consideration of. There's  
7 a lot of work and a lot of discussion still to  
8 come as we look at what we're giving you our  
9 blessing to consider. It's really going to depend  
10 on what comes back.

11 I hear what you said about the reserve  
12 sector D, and I understand that. If there was a  
13 way to overcome it, I think the reserve sector has  
14 worked out well in bluefin and I might make it a  
15 long-term goal to move towards that. Because  
16 what's nice about the reserve sector, is you are  
17 always giving and never taking. There is no  
18 reallocation. You're giving something that didn't  
19 belong to anyone as needed in it and I think it  
20 has served us well.

21 As we're talking about depredation, just  
22 very tangentially, but it's still a primary

1 concern of those on the water. Maybe we should be  
2 looking more at species-specific management as  
3 well. I might look a little bit as Sonya said  
4 towards C6 because we may have places where we can  
5 do a little bit more species-specific harvesting  
6 and possibly even region-specific. Possibly  
7 there are geographic regions so that we're not  
8 considering these things homogenously distributed.  
9 We may have regions of sufficient to, darest I  
10 say, overabundance.

11 And further, although I understand the  
12 purpose of the assessments, the idea of averages,  
13 I just like it in general. Anything that smooths  
14 out year-to-year variations, I think is a healthy  
15 way for us to look at fisheries. Thank you much.

16 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Rick. Mike  
17 Pierdinock.

18 MR. PIERDINOCK: Thank you. Rick just  
19 stole my thunder. I mean, I'll second his  
20 thoughts. I mean, one of the main objectives here  
21 is to address the depredation that we're having in  
22 our observations of tuna cut-offs or groundfish

1 cut-offs. Our fish getting bitten in half by  
2 increased populations of sharks in certain areas.  
3 And with the recommendation that maybe this should  
4 be species-specific, I would hope that would be  
5 taken in consideration.

6 As far as with the preferred options in  
7 general, I'm for them. I will forward comments in  
8 the future. But this is positive to see to  
9 address the problem we're having from Maine all  
10 the way down to the Gulf for whatever whether it's  
11 porbeagles, blue sharks, or a species down south,  
12 or even great white sharks, but they're not on the  
13 authorized list. That's why I specifically asked  
14 about the authorized list. But I do understand if  
15 something is not authorized, there's a whole other  
16 mechanism that you have to go through to get them  
17 back on that list. That's my comments. Thank  
18 you.

19 MR. BROOKS: Great, thanks.

20 MR. DUBECK: Bennett, can I just jump in  
21 real quick?

22 MR. BROOKS: Yeah, please.

1 MR. DUBECK: Sorry.

2 MR. BROOKS: Yeah.

3 MR. DUBECK: I just want to -- so, a  
4 couple of people mentioned about the  
5 species-specific rule. We do have  
6 species-specific shark management groups. We have  
7 the Gulf of Mexico blacktip. We have the Atlantic  
8 blacknose. So, we do have some species-specific.  
9 We have sandbar, Atlantic blacktip, probably  
10 around the corner and final assessments. And  
11 we're trying to go more species-specific with our  
12 assessments. For a goal we go more species --  
13 potentially species-specific management groups.  
14 So, we do have some, maybe more to come. Just  
15 letting you know we do have some of that right  
16 now.

17 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Guy. I'll note  
18 that in the chat both Marcos and Wally Jenkins  
19 dittoed Rick Weber's comments as well. And then a  
20 concern from Yamitza Rodriguez that a concern that  
21 in Puerto Rico, commercial quota is zero and  
22 recreational data collection is limited. So, when

1 these are applied, the data used will probably not  
2 represent the reality of Puerto Rican waters. So,  
3 consideration there.

4 Back to the queue, we'll just invite  
5 Rick and Mike and Kristin to lower your hands.  
6 Okay, Dewey's back on. Let's go to Dewey and then  
7 to Scott Taylor and then to Rusty. Dewey, you're  
8 it. Dewey, you there?

9 MR. HEMILRIGHT: I'm on now.

10 MR. BROOKS: Okay, great. We got you,  
11 good.

12 MR. HEMILRIGHT: All right, yeah. The  
13 page you have there, page 11 or Slide 11. My  
14 question is, how are you going to actively manage  
15 the ACLs of the recreational industry given you're  
16 using MRIP? And MRIP has waves, and once the  
17 waves finish, it's 45 days later. Are you all  
18 going to change MRIP and go with the pelagic  
19 survey for accounting for sharks? There's a  
20 highly variability in the MRIP surveys of sharks  
21 called discarded. And so, these seems like you  
22 all's going to go to another -- to accurately

1 manage, you're going to go to another methodology  
2 of accounting besides MRIP, which has -- it has  
3 its major problems. Is that's what going to  
4 happen, Guy?

5 MR. DUBECK: No, we're planning to use  
6 all sources of recreational data sources. Some  
7 data sources are better for some species than  
8 others. You know, LPS is better for more of the  
9 pelagic shark species. Yeah, MRIP is better for  
10 some of the more coastal, some of the blacktips,  
11 small coastal species. We plan to use all of them  
12 when we're looking at all the shark species, all  
13 (inaudible) species. We plan to then from there,  
14 there's a three-year rolling average. We  
15 understand that the most recent year data is the  
16 most unreliable. That's why we're using the  
17 rolling average. So, we plan to look at those  
18 different landings too because, you know, they are  
19 estimates. Sometimes they're pretty consistent  
20 from year to year. Sometimes they jump up or  
21 drop. But we will be evaluating those when we get  
22 those. But I can't tell you a specific example

1 because I don't know what they are at this time.

2 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yeah, how about  
3 specific to the MRIP stuff when you have numbers  
4 or estimates that have a precision of standard  
5 error of 75 to 80 percent? What's the mechanism  
6 to ground proof those or what are you all going to  
7 be doing in the future? I've looked at the MRIP  
8 numbers that have been produced for ICCAT in some  
9 particular years that were, you know, they added  
10 2014 that the recreational industry pulled 814  
11 metric tons of makos and nobody believed that, but  
12 yet it was used. So, what are you all going to do  
13 in the future to ground proof these and what's  
14 your mechanism to fixing these percent of PSEs  
15 given that we got two sectors here of managing the  
16 sharks? But what's going to change? What's the  
17 good news? Thank you.

18 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Dewey.

19 MR. DUBECK: Yeah, so -- yeah, so, we  
20 are, you know, we're still looking at this. You  
21 know, there's a proposed measure. If it does get  
22 finalized, we're going to be figuring out the

1 methodology with the science center folks on how  
2 to actively do that.

3 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Dewey.

4 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yeah, that's something  
5 that probably the HMS participants would like to  
6 hear. You know, I understand actively managing  
7 and we're still evaluating. But the mechanism on  
8 exactly how it's going to work would be great to  
9 hear in the eight days. Thank you.

10 MR. BROOKS: Great, thanks. Thanks,  
11 Dewey. And I think that sort of maybe thinking  
12 back to some of the earlier comments around  
13 (inaudible) scale seeing how this all would be  
14 important and helpful to AP members. I'll note  
15 that Mark Sampson's also put a thumbs up to ditto  
16 what Rick and Mike said before about  
17 species-specific ACLs and again, with an eye  
18 toward the perhaps geographic management of  
19 individual species down the road.

20 Let's bring in Scott Taylor and then  
21 Rusty and then back to Jason if you're back in the  
22 queue, Jason, Rusty, and Scott. Scott Taylor.

1 MR. TAYLOR: You got me?

2 MR. BROOKS: Yeah, we got you.

3 MR. TAYLOR: So, I appreciate all the  
4 hard work that goes into, you know, these  
5 management plans for all of these, you know,  
6 species a bit. I think that everybody else has  
7 pretty well covered the questions that I had.  
8 This has gotten more of along the lines of a  
9 general question and the comments with, you know,  
10 with, you know, we've heard several people mention  
11 the depredation issue and we spent some time  
12 talking about that on the -- at the last AP  
13 meeting.

14 You know that there have been  
15 substantial developments in terms of marketability  
16 through on a lot species that are fin dependent in  
17 terms of their commercial viability, you know, of  
18 these species to the point that we can't even get  
19 anybody to go out and shark fish because of the  
20 value of the meat itself without the ability to  
21 market the fins has become so problematic  
22 particularly down here, you know, in Florida.

1           And being as that this Agency is still  
2     at the -- a part of the Department of Commerce and  
3     that various different pieces of legislation that  
4     continue to be ongoing, the variation between the  
5     individual states, I don't see how we separate out  
6     the commercial viability of these species with, in  
7     particular, as we're setting up these management  
8     plans, without there being some sort of effort  
9     from this Agency to, you know, address some of the  
10    ongoing concerns, and the industry's available,  
11    you know, availability to be able to market this  
12    product. It's gotten so confusing out there that  
13    I'm sure as Karyl and you both know, in  
14    particular, the sandbar fishery down here in  
15    Florida that's always been a big lucrative fishery  
16    in the past, it's been difficult even getting  
17    participants down here or any real effort in the  
18    fishery. And I was just wondering whether or not  
19    that you all had made any inquiries or headway  
20    into addressing some level of continuity so that  
21    we essentially --

22           MR. BROOKS: Scott, we --

1                   MR. TAYLOR:  -- because the odds, you  
2 know --

3                   MR. BROOKS:  Hey, Scott, you just cut  
4 out briefly.

5                   MR. TAYLOR:  Okay.

6                   MR. BROOKS:  Maybe if --

7                   MR. TAYLOR:  I said that whether or not  
8 that you've made any headway in, you know,  
9 addressing sort of, you know, these individual  
10 issues so that we do have a, you know, commercial  
11 effort on some of these species that are not  
12 strictly meat dependent.

13                   MR. BROOKS:  Guy, do you want to jump in  
14 on that at all?

15                   MR. DUBECK:  Yeah, so, I'm, you know, we  
16 are fully aware, Scott, of some of the concerns  
17 that some of the shark researchers are having.  
18 And this year is kind of, you know, things this  
19 year between COVID and zero coverage and then, you  
20 know, the potential selling of the fins.  
21 Amendment 14 is going to be talking about setting  
22 a framework for this action and then we're going

1 to potentially change management measures in the  
2 future. We are doing a review of the shark  
3 fishery and some of those things we're including  
4 in there are a full review of the commercial and  
5 recreational and (inaudible) factors that are  
6 impacting the shark fishery and (inaudible)  
7 market. And we plan to talk about that in that  
8 document. But that's all I got.

9 MR. TAYLOR: So, obviously, you know,  
10 that there are several species that have no  
11 commercial viability in terms of the meat alone.  
12 And so, it doesn't -- it's not simply the sandbar  
13 fisheries that is going to be impacted. And just,  
14 you know, I want to just reemphasize that we  
15 really need some help from the Agency itself. You  
16 know, when you have other agencies within the  
17 government such as the Fish and Wildlife and the  
18 other (inaudible) and what went on down here with,  
19 you know, Greg Abrams and Mark Harrison and just  
20 the overall concern of anybody that even is a  
21 legal dealer to involve themselves at this point  
22 unless there's some continuity and understanding

1 exactly, you know, the nature of this that from a  
2 dealer standpoint, without the economic benefit of  
3 the fin part -- of the fin value, there really is  
4 not the economy, the economics in order to go out  
5 and fish for these species.

6 And so, you know, it obviously a lot of  
7 the information that you all deal with in terms of  
8 them designing these plans and catch data and  
9 everything else comes from the commercial sector  
10 that if we're essentially eliminating these  
11 commercial fisheries, there's obviously going to  
12 be a cessation in the flow of data that you all  
13 really need in order to be able to do this. And  
14 again, I'm going to emphasize that at some point,  
15 the Agency needs to try to come up with a plan to  
16 have a much more nationally cohesive understanding  
17 of what it is that we're doing.

18 I think the general public is  
19 misinformed about these shark fisheries that the  
20 benefit of and the way that the U.S. allows for  
21 the sale of these fins. And I'll leave it alone  
22 at that. I think everybody else on the call

1     pretty much understands where we, you know, where  
2     we are. And my hope was is that the Agency was  
3     going to be doing something to address this  
4     particularly in light of some of the legislative  
5     stuff that's going on as we speak right now to  
6     outlaw essentially fin sales completely in the  
7     U.S.

8             MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Scott, very much.

9             MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: So, Scott --  
10     Bennett, if I could jump in.

11            MR. BROOKS: Yes, please, Karyl.

12            MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: So, Scott, I  
13     definitely appreciate what you're saying. I do  
14     want to remind you and the other panel members  
15     that we do have a number of web stories that we  
16     posted regarding shark fin bans and marketing  
17     sharks in general. We have one specific about  
18     eating sharks and then we also have Chris Oliver's  
19     statement about a ban. So, we do recommend that  
20     getting the word out that way. In terms of the  
21     individual states, we reviewed some of them. I'm  
22     hoping in the future we can continue reviewing

1 some of the other states and bans as we did in the  
2 past. Where we end up with that, I don't know.

3 As Guy mentioned, we are doing our shark  
4 review. If you remember, (inaudible), he  
5 presented that at the last AP meeting and  
6 hopefully that can shed light on other things  
7 including the fin bans, the market, and  
8 depredation. So, there's a lot going on in the  
9 shark fishery right now. It's a lot more than  
10 just A14. I definitely recognize that the devil  
11 is in the details and we'll see where we can go  
12 with this.

13 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Karyl. I'll note  
14 that Marcos has said in the queue, the geographic  
15 management is important for the Caribbean region  
16 as well. So, just to note that. Let's go to  
17 Rusty and then Jason.

18 MR. HUDSON: Yeah, thank you, Bennett.  
19 I had gotten knocked off for some reason a little  
20 while ago. But with the recreational I believe  
21 you have a predominantly a catch and release  
22 situation. And down here in South Atlantic, we

1 have a software thing that's going on with my fish  
2 count. It'd be nice if you took your recreational  
3 registration list and be able to do a percentage  
4 of those people and be able to get a better idea  
5 of the species-specific because with the  
6 commercial when we unload, we have to be  
7 species-specific. I believe we're somewhere  
8 around 100 percent, which is a really good thing.

9           Market demand is what runs the show for  
10 us and as long as somebody wants some meat or  
11 fins, and I understand that some of the stuff in  
12 Hong Kong's getting a little bit more loosened up.  
13 But, you know, again, we have to have a process of  
14 being able to bring the fins from here to there.  
15 And there's predation issues, you know, up in the  
16 northeast like Mike talked about the porbeagle,  
17 the great whites, some issues there. You know, we  
18 have issues with two species in particular, three  
19 probably, when you count sandbar, you count dusky,  
20 and you count bull sharks, and it just depends on  
21 where you're at between the Mid-Atlantic and  
22 Texas.

1           And those three animals our sandbar was  
2     an update. It needed to be a full benchmark. Our  
3     dusky is a catch free. It needs to be a full  
4     benchmark or something that is a little bit more  
5     comprehensive at the total range of the animal,  
6     the genetics of the animal, et cetera. And the  
7     bull sharks are unknown status, but I'm pretty  
8     certain that Jason and Louisiana and other people  
9     can tell you a lot of stories about bull sharks.

10           So, that all being said, depredation  
11     issues are going to require some thought because,  
12     you know, there's all kinds of people complaining  
13     from Maryland to Texas and down in the Caribbean.  
14     It's obvious we have possibly gotten way ahead of  
15     any rebuilding things. But until you're actually  
16     viewing the stock assessment that can show that  
17     science, I mean, we run into that with our red  
18     snapper. We run into that with a lot of other  
19     stuff that I've been involved in. And I swear I  
20     was so happy to be part of the Atlantic blacktip  
21     stock assessment because based on what I saw from  
22     the peer reviewers and stuff, that was a good day.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Rusty. Jason, over  
3 to you.

4 MR. ADRIANCE: Thanks, Bennett. Yeah, I  
5 want to echo the thoughts on any of these shark  
6 management groups that we can move to single  
7 species I think will be a good thing. And since I  
8 can't go one meeting without saying it and Rusty  
9 mentioned it, especially Gulf of Mexico bull  
10 sharks. I think a careful person could likely  
11 walk the coast of Louisiana on the backs of bull  
12 sharks. So, I think anything that can be about  
13 the single species is a good thing, especially for  
14 managing those species where we have an abundance  
15 of them. And in turn, that will help those  
16 species we're more concerned about as well by not  
17 lumping them in a management group and potentially  
18 having just unintended dead discards. Thanks.

19 MR. BROOKS: Great, thanks. Thanks,  
20 Jason. And I'll note that Steven Getto in the  
21 chat is also echoing given the depredation  
22 problems that are sort of coastwide, good to see

1 the action to try to optimize shark fisheries  
2 within the quota frameworks. Dewey, your hand is  
3 still up. Is that because you want to get back in  
4 or it's just left over? All right, let's go to  
5 Jeff Oden. Jeff.

6 MR. ODEN: All right, so, a moment ago  
7 there, I believe it was Rick, who just spoke  
8 talking species-specific. And I too would love to  
9 see that happen. The other day I was looking out  
10 and you all had posted numbers of monetary value  
11 of fins species of, I guess, the high end. It  
12 looked like \$13. It used to be \$25 or 30. And  
13 anyway, on small coastal -- no, on smoothhound, it  
14 was a buck 45 for, you know, the fin value on that  
15 particular species. Then it said small coastal at  
16 456, which I don't know what is included in small  
17 coastal, but Atlantic sharpnose is what we're used  
18 to catching and that's what we call small coastal  
19 here. And that is \$1.50, that is more than you're  
20 going to get for a fin off one of those here.

21 I mean, in this day and age, nobody  
22 bothers with them. And for that reason, I know

1 this Agency has been kind of proactive on our  
2 behalf lately and I certainly wish that we can get  
3 the same exemption that we have. I know I spoke  
4 on this a lot and you all understand my concerns.  
5 We catch these species. The fins are worthless.  
6 We can't clean them. And at sea, without the  
7 optimum way the fish house wants them, without  
8 having to clean them twice. We clean them once,  
9 get the guts out of them, and come in and have to  
10 cut the fins and all off a second time. It's  
11 onerous for the fish house workers. They're two  
12 or three hours later waiting on us to clean them.  
13 It's just ridiculous. And anyhow, I would  
14 certainly love to see an exemption for this. And  
15 I know that probably has to go through Congress as  
16 I've been told. But that's just my comment and  
17 anyway, thank you.

18 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Jeff. I am not  
19 seeing any other hands raised on my attendee list,  
20 but Heather, if you're seeing anything from your  
21 end, please let me know. Okay, she's not seeing  
22 any others. We've got about five minutes left so

1 I think we're kind of hitting the mark here.  
2 Dewey, are you wanting to jump back in? Maybe  
3 not. If you're on mute, you need to take yourself  
4 off mute, and if you're using the phone, you might  
5 try \*6.

6 All right, in the meantime, I just want  
7 to thank everyone for a lot of good comments here.  
8 I think I -- I hope and trust that gave Guy and  
9 Karyl and folks who worked on this a lot of  
10 feedback here. I think there was a lot of support  
11 from any of the pieces that were in here,  
12 optimization, flexibility, active management, a  
13 more risk averse control rule. Lots of pushes  
14 around species-specific, geographic specific if  
15 you could get there. The move towards three-year  
16 averaging did get a lot of comments.

17 Some of the concerns that were  
18 highlighted. The flipside of optimization, a  
19 little bit, is that pushing too far? A number of  
20 comments around sort of precautionary approach  
21 around stocks of unknown status. A lot of --  
22 several comments on overfished, overfishing, and

1 just sort of the extra care that needs to be taken  
2 there. Comments which I think we've heard at  
3 many, many meetings around the needs for, you  
4 know, with this kind of approach, better data of  
5 data assessments, et cetera. And then the  
6 comments we've heard from risk and others -- from  
7 Rick and others around flexibility is good, but  
8 that devil will be in the details and sort of how  
9 that rolls out will be really important.

10 And I think that sort of calls for and  
11 several people talked to this, the need for  
12 ongoing conversations that really kind of making  
13 sure the AP is up to speed on all of that as it  
14 rolls forward. And then lastly, some of these  
15 comments on the end -- at the end around the  
16 marketability and sending, which obviously, are  
17 not part of this rule, but I just want to note  
18 that.

19 And then I'll note in the chat a comment  
20 from Angel. I really agree with single species  
21 management need for more assessments on Maryland  
22 catch card, census, include sharks, and management

1 flexibility is good. So, with that, I think I'll  
2 hand it back to you, Guy, for any final comments  
3 you want to make. And then I think we should  
4 break for lunch.

5 MR. DUBECK: Thank you Bennett. I want  
6 to thank everyone for supplying such, you know, a  
7 lot of good comments and questions and I look  
8 forward to any written comments you want to send  
9 in before December 31st, we have a, you know, a  
10 lot to consider moving forward with the final of  
11 14. Thank you.

12 MR. BROOKS: Okay, Karyl, anything from  
13 your end before we jump?

14 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: No, just a huge  
15 thank you to all of the people who provided  
16 comments. Thank you so much.

17 MR. BROOKS: Great. All right, well,  
18 thanks, everybody and again, Guy, thanks for the  
19 presentation and leading that conversation.

20 We're going to break for lunch. It is  
21 11:30. We will return at 1:00 with the billfish  
22 conversation. So, again, use the time to address

1 whatever you need to address. When we get back at  
2 1:00, we can start sharp. And if you're hooked  
3 into (inaudible) web, my recommendation is to mute  
4 and just turn your video off, so you stay all  
5 attached. Randy, was that you wanting to jump in?

6 MR. BLANKINSHIP: It is. I was just  
7 going to quickly mention that for this afternoon's  
8 agenda item on the Electronic Technologies Plan  
9 that the presentation for that has now been posted  
10 online. I wanted to highlight that for folks in  
11 case they want to look at it ahead of time.

12 MR. BROOKS: Good, thank you, Randy.  
13 All right, so, let's break for lunch and we'll be  
14 back. We will start up at 1:00 sharp. Thanks,  
15 everybody.

16 (Recess)

17 MR. BROOKS: Welcome back everyone. We  
18 are pushing through the afternoon portion. We  
19 will have a conversation on Billfish management  
20 here in a minute which Jen Cudney will lead us  
21 through. We'll take a break around 2:00. We'll  
22 then come back and turn the conversation over to

1 Brad McHale who will talk to us about HMS  
2 electronic technologies plan going forward here  
3 again, another hour long conversation, and then we  
4 will have public comment at 3:15.

5           You know we have a couple more AP  
6 members join in, which is great. So thanks to  
7 those who have been able to patch in since we  
8 started this morning. And finally, again, any  
9 member of the public who wasn't on this morning,  
10 the conversation between now and 3:15 will be  
11 focused on the Advisory Panel Members. But again,  
12 we will have an opportunity at 3:15, we have a  
13 half hour set aside for public comment. And so  
14 that would be your opportunity to call in on the  
15 issues that you might like to.

16           So we'll spend the next hour on billfish  
17 management to catch folks up on recent harvest  
18 trends, and then think about counting in FMPs and  
19 management approaches for 2021. Again, we have  
20 something like a 20 or 30 minute presentation and  
21 then about 40 minutes for conversation.

22           So with that, Jen, I think over to you.

1 MS. CUDNEY: All right. So thank you so  
2 much. So as Bennett said, we're going to be  
3 chatting over the next hour about Billfish and  
4 Billfish management.

5 2020 has been a very unusual year, we've  
6 had a lot going on. So within the context of  
7 talking about billfish we want to think not only  
8 about the stock status and some of our ICCAT  
9 marlin management obligations, but we also need to  
10 think about what we are required to do  
11 domestically.

12 We're going to also be looking at some  
13 of the recent marlin harvest trends that have  
14 been, you know, especially in 2020, and our  
15 Quarter Three billfish accounting update. So this  
16 is we end up doing our billfish accounting on a  
17 quarterly basis and we wanted to give you guys a  
18 chance to look at our most recent numbers.

19 And then we're going to be segueing into  
20 management approaches that are available to us as  
21 the need arises, and we've got some discussion  
22 prompt questions to round out the presentation at

1 the very end.

2 Okay. So setting the stage, we manage  
3 marlin because they're managed at ICCAT. Marlin  
4 stock status for blue marlin is currently  
5 overfished with overfishing occurring. The most  
6 recent stock assessment was done in 2018.

7 For white marlin and roundscale  
8 spearfish, these two species are assessed together  
9 as a single stock. They are considered overfished  
10 but overfishing is not occurring. The most recent  
11 stock assessment for white marlin and roundscale  
12 spearfish was done in 2019.

13 So at the ICCAT level the U.S. has held  
14 to a 250 marlin recreational landings limit which  
15 was first included in an ICCAT recommendation in  
16 2001 and has since been carried forward in all  
17 subsequent ICCAT recommendations.

18 The ICCAT Recommendation 1905  
19 established the most recent resulting program for  
20 marlin, and it maintains again that U.S. 250  
21 marlin limit. Fish recommendation had a somewhat  
22 new item in that if any contracting party exceeds

1 its landings limit during any two consecutive  
2 years the landings limit shall be reduced on or  
3 before the adjustment year, but at least 125  
4 percent of excess harvest. And there is no carry  
5 forward of under harvest starting with the 2020  
6 catches. So previously we've been able to carry  
7 forward a certain percentage of any under harvest.  
8 We usually haven't chosen to do this, but it has  
9 been an option.

10           Some of the other things that are  
11 included in that resulting plan are general desire  
12 to minimize release mortality through various  
13 means. And for recreational and sports fisheries,  
14 specific requirement to take appropriate measures  
15 to ensure that released fish are released in a  
16 manner that causes the least harm. So this is why  
17 we have been so intent recently on making sure  
18 that people understand that they are not supposed  
19 to be taking a fish out of the water for photos.

20           The rebuilding plans have the same  
21 minimum sizes as what we have domestically in the  
22 U.S., and also terms for that prohibition of sale.

1           So from a domestic standpoint, we  
2     implement the provisions of ICCAT through our  
3     consolidated HMS FMP and our requirements through  
4     ATCA. Basically this table here shows you for  
5     each species, whether it's blue marlin or, like  
6     roundscale spearfish, the current minimum sizes  
7     that we have on the books. However, depending on  
8     the situation, if we find ourselves in a position  
9     where we need to manage our landings, i.e. slow  
10    them down, we have the option to adjust the  
11    minimum size to within a range as specified in the  
12    middle of the table for each of these species.

13           So for blue marlin that's a range of 117  
14    to 138 inches lower jaw fork length. And for  
15    white marlin we have the ability to adjust  
16    landings, excuse me, adjust the minimum size to  
17    between 70 to 79 inch lower jaw fork length. So  
18    it's a couple of inches difference between the  
19    minimum size and that adjustable range for white  
20    marlin and roundscale spearfish, but there is a  
21    pretty good jump between the current minimum size  
22    for blue marlin and where we would start with that

1 adjustable size range to manage those landings for  
2 blue marlin. And then if the 250 marlin limit is  
3 reached or projected to be reached, we would then  
4 go to catch and release only fishing as needed, as  
5 we said.

6 So again, just emphasizing that sale is  
7 not allowed, all U.S. landings are recreational in  
8 nature. And as we said, there is a provision  
9 about underharvest but we also have overharvest  
10 provisions as part of our accountability measure.  
11 So we are required for our domestic regulations to  
12 subtract overharvest from the landings when it's  
13 for the following year. There's a little bit more  
14 timing flexibility for ICCAT but we implement this  
15 on an annual adjusting basis for domestic  
16 regulations.

17 And then finally, one of the interesting  
18 things about our billfish regulations is that once  
19 we do decide that some sort of in-season  
20 management measure has to be taken up, we have to  
21 wait 14 days between when we publish that  
22 management measure in the federal register and

1 when it's actually considered effective.

2 All right. So coming back to the recent  
3 marlin landing trends. This is zoomed in a bit on  
4 2020, we'll see in a few minutes a slide that  
5 shows a graph of landings through time. So you'll  
6 be able to kind of clearly see the increase that  
7 we've been experiencing with our recent landings.

8 But in 2020, especially in Quarter 3, so  
9 July through September only, we had a very high  
10 number of white marlin and roundscale spearfish  
11 landings, mainly through tournaments. So we  
12 compared the total number of landings in Q3 again,  
13 July through September, in 2019 and compared that  
14 to landings from the same time period in 2020.  
15 And we noticed that there was a 42 percent  
16 increase in Quarter 3 from one year to the next.  
17 Further examination of the landings and of some of  
18 the data that was received from the tournaments  
19 suggested that there was a high proportion of kept  
20 fish. We noticed that landings and discard  
21 (inaudible), there were several people in the  
22 division and the Science Center that were involved

1 in this analysis. But it was noted that landings  
2 and discard and participation were not very  
3 different than in previous years, generally.

4 There were many white marlin and  
5 roundscale spearfish landings and blue marlin  
6 landings that were falling into the size ranges  
7 that were in between the minimum size and our  
8 adjustable ranges. So for example we had many,  
9 many of the landed fish were in the 69 to 70 inch  
10 lower jaw fork length size classes for white  
11 marlin and roundscale spearfish. So if you  
12 remember, our minimum size was 66, and the low end  
13 of the range for adjustment that we could start  
14 with was 70. So in this case, you know, we didn't  
15 really have an option to even look at 69 inch  
16 middle range if we felt like we needed to.

17 Most of the blue marlin landings fell  
18 between 99 inches and 116 inches in Quarter 3,  
19 respectively. So because in September we had  
20 basically run our accounting protocol and  
21 determined that we felt that the 250 marlin limit  
22 was reached and exceeded, we implemented an

1 announcement that the fishery would go to catch  
2 and release only. This was the first time that we  
3 had ever changed from open fishery to catch and  
4 release. And it was considered effective from  
5 September 30th through the end of the year, so  
6 December 31st.

7 All right. And this is a graph showing  
8 recent marlin harvest trends by year through time.  
9 So you can see that prior to this year we've been  
10 kind of hovering around the 190 mark for our total  
11 number of landings. Our current most recent  
12 estimate is having us at 233. So you might be  
13 thinking well wait a minute, you said that you  
14 exceeded the 250 limit. And that is because we  
15 had information earlier this fall that suggested  
16 that we had, but we have since revised three  
17 different ones of our turning protocols, new  
18 estimates of where we were at against that 250  
19 limit.

20 Okay. And because of that, because we  
21 get information in, we always consider that they  
22 are preliminary and may be effected by time lags.

1     When we receive data our accounting protocol  
2     combines input from six different data sources.  
3     So on a fair minimum we ran our accounting  
4     protocol on a quarterly basis. But sometimes we  
5     get information that suggests the need to run it  
6     more frequently. And we will do that whenever it  
7     is needed.

8             We also have late data that comes in  
9     from your reportings, from the tournaments, or  
10    through some of these data sources. And then we  
11    also have normal QA/QC processes that occur, you  
12    know, from the partners that help us manage these  
13    data or, you know, as we combine all these  
14    different data sources ourselves. And that can  
15    change the numbers, you know, from one accounting  
16    protocol run to the next.

17            Now we had a unique issue in 2020 that  
18    caused us to think that we had exceeded the limit.  
19    And that was the integration of the eTrips  
20    Electronic Reporting System. So that came on line  
21    for HMS reportings this summer. It was sort of a  
22    soft release where folks at eTrips were able to

1 suddenly, well, not suddenly, but they were able  
2 to start reporting Atlantic HMS through that  
3 reporting program. The incorporation of this data  
4 did not occur smoothly into our existing  
5 databases. We had released fish that were  
6 mistakenly pushed into landings data tables, and  
7 so that elevated our estimates. We have of course  
8 since identified the error and corrected it.

9           So you can see in the next three bullets  
10 on this slide that we had notations for a  
11 preliminary Q3 update that was identified as  
12 needing to be run in early September. Our final  
13 Q3 landings update which was run in November, and  
14 then a revised landings estimate that was updated  
15 in December once we had recognized and corrected  
16 for this eTrips data error.

17           So that pulled us from 268 billfish  
18 landed to 276. And then once we corrected for  
19 that eTrips data error we went back down to 233.  
20 And I have the species composition breakdown for  
21 our most recent landings estimate at the bottom of  
22 this slide.

1 All right. So if we find ourselves in a  
2 situation where an overage has occurred or is  
3 projected to occur, there are a couple of things  
4 that we will start thinking about as we started to  
5 think about this fall.

6 One would be whether or not we needed to  
7 adjust for an overage. And so in this case if we  
8 had our hypothetical 2020 overage where we thought  
9 that we were at one point at 276 billfish landed,  
10 we would do an initial adjustment the following  
11 year to account for that overage. So in this  
12 example if we had indeed finalized the year and a  
13 landings limit of 276 billfish, that would have  
14 been an overage of 26 fish. So we would have  
15 removed that from the marlin 250 limit and ended  
16 up with a 2021 limit of 224 marlin to start the  
17 year.

18 Now because again of various delays and  
19 receiving different data sources, late reporting,  
20 and QA/QC, those final adjustments and additional  
21 measures might have been needed for our Q4 update.  
22 We always run these time protocols about three to

1 four weeks after the end of a quarter and because  
2 of the end of the year processes we won't start  
3 running that accounting protocol for Q4 until the  
4 end of January. So this allows for a little bit  
5 of extra time to, you know, do what we need to do  
6 behind the scenes to prepare any sort of infusion  
7 action if necessary.

8 All right. So aside from doing overage  
9 adjustments, again, as you recall we still have  
10 the ability to adjust the marlin minimum size if  
11 it's needed. So there are three questions that we  
12 grapple with when we're looking at the known size  
13 adjustments. And that would be which species,  
14 what that adjusted minimum size would be, and when  
15 would we implement the adjustment.

16 So regarding which species, you know, we  
17 technically could have the option of just making  
18 an adjustment for blue marlin, we could do it just  
19 for white marlin or roundscale spearfish, or we  
20 could make an adjustment for all species. And  
21 this is really going to depend on the situation  
22 that prompted the need to do this type of an

1 adjustment.

2           Similarly on our adjustment on size, we  
3 have the ability to go from 99 inches to anywhere  
4 between 117 to 138. So depending on the situation  
5 and the overage, we might pick something on the  
6 lower end of the spectrum or the higher end of the  
7 spectrum for blue marlin and then also  
8 respectively between 70 to 79 inches for white  
9 marlin and roundscale spearfish.

10           And then the timing of the adjustment.  
11 So we want to try and implement this as soon as  
12 possible, is there a deadline by which we would  
13 need to implement it based on the fishery and when  
14 the, you know, the timing of the fishery. I mean  
15 these are all questions that we would need to  
16 consider as we move forward.

17           So looking at the species. So for  
18 example this year we have to think about, you  
19 know, preliminarily whether or not this might need  
20 to be done. And we knew that white marlin and  
21 roundscale spearfish were a, you know, there were  
22 a lot of cursory landings of those species. And

1 interestingly, if you look at the catch  
2 composition of white marlin and roundscale  
3 spearfish and blue marlin against the total number  
4 of billfish related against that marlin 250, you  
5 can see that we have a pretty even split early in  
6 our time series, so 2013 to about 2018, it's about  
7 a 50/50 split between a blue marlin and the other  
8 two species.

9           However, in the last few years we're  
10 seeing many more white marlin and roundscale  
11 spearfish being landed. So that raises the  
12 question, if you have more of one species being  
13 landed than the other, do you need to make an  
14 adjustment for both, for all species, or just the  
15 ones that are relevant?

16           All right. I mentioned the timing.  
17 Billfish harvest is highly seasonal so we notice  
18 definite trends in looking at recent landings data  
19 through time, mainly a summer fishery. The graph  
20 on the left, at least it's on the left of my  
21 screen when I'm looking at it, shows average  
22 annual billfish findings come up from 2017 to

1 2019. And there's some darker bars that show blue  
2 marlin and some lighter bars that show white  
3 marlin and roundscale spearfish.

4           So you can see when you're looking at  
5 landings averaged over a three-year period of time  
6 you've got quite a few blue marlin being landed  
7 throughout the summer. But if you look at the  
8 white marlin and roundscale spearfish landings  
9 there is a notable peak that's occurring in  
10 August.

11           Same types of trends occurred, so the  
12 graph on the left, again, is just 2017 to 2019,  
13 our average annual landings. The graph on the  
14 right is just looking at 2020 data. Because of  
15 course we wanted to see what was going on this  
16 year and why this year was so unusual. We see  
17 similar types of trends in terms of the  
18 distribution of catch for blue marlin through the  
19 summer, also for white marlin and roundscale  
20 spearfish peaking in August. But these graphs,  
21 they're kind of, they're set at the same scale so  
22 you can see that there was a notable increase in

1 the number of white marlin and roundscale  
2 spearfish landed in August.

3 So this raises that question of, you  
4 know, if we have a very, very concentrated season  
5 for white marlin and roundscale spearfish, that's  
6 where we want to make an adjustment, do we really  
7 need to implement something early in the year when  
8 it's possible that implementation at a more  
9 specific time could laser in the effects that we  
10 really wanted to see with any sort of inseason  
11 adjustment.

12 All right. So we also have to consider  
13 what minimum sizes are appropriate. As we talked  
14 about, we have a range within which we can  
15 operate. So we completed an analysis looking at  
16 2017 to 2019 data to estimate potential reductions  
17 that we might see by selecting different minimum  
18 sizes for white marlin and roundscale spearfish,  
19 for blue marlin, and for all the species at  
20 different times of the year using landings data  
21 that was averaged out again from 2017 to 2019. We  
22 were using data for those three years because even

1     though all this stuff was happening in 2020, we  
2     wanted to look at complete landings estimates for  
3     an entire year because of the timing question.

4             We looked at the length frequency  
5     distribution of landings and computed the average  
6     annual number of fish that were caught per one  
7     inch size bin. Then we figured out what the  
8     incremental reduction in per size bin could be.  
9     In other words what are the cumulative effects of  
10    adding another inch to the minimize size in terms  
11    of the number of fish that you're removing from  
12    potential harvest.

13            We did this for every one inch size and  
14    option that we have under the adjustable range.  
15    Once we figured that out we were able to look at  
16    the effects of just working with one species or  
17    another or looking at all species under different  
18    minimum size adjustment combinations.

19            So what you're looking at on the slide  
20    is the table on top is looking at what would  
21    happen hypothetically if we made adjustments based  
22    on percentage reductions against the marlin 250

1 limit early in the year. Okay. So we've got, and  
2 in this case I've got the data table that spans  
3 the entire adjustable range but we were mainly  
4 interested in looking at what the minimum impact  
5 would be if we chose the lower range of the  
6 adjustable limit. So for example 70 inches for  
7 white marlin and roundscale spearfish and 117  
8 inches for blue marlin.

9           So we noticed that if we made no  
10 changes, of course there would be a zero percent  
11 reduction in the marlin 250 limit landings. If we  
12 just made an adjustment to the white marlin and  
13 roundscale spearfish minimum 5 to 70 inches, we  
14 anticipated a 25 percent reduction in overall  
15 marlin landings against that marlin 250 limit. If  
16 we had made a 117 inch minimum size requirement we  
17 estimated that the percent reduction would be  
18 about a third. So that would reduce the  
19 hypothetical landings against that marlin 250  
20 limit by a third. And if we had made this  
21 adjustment again early in the year for both  
22 species, we're looking at close to a 60 percent

1 reduction in overall landings against that marlin  
2 250 limit.

3           So we did the exact same analysis.  
4 Instead of making an adjustment early in the year,  
5 we would look at a full, you know, all months of  
6 data, we looked at what would happen if we had  
7 made that adjustment at the start of Q3, so  
8 roughly July 1st. So same thing, you don't make  
9 any adjustments, you're going to get a zero  
10 percent reduction. If you made an adjustment to  
11 117 inches, we're going for blue marlin, we  
12 calculated that there would be an approximate 15  
13 percent reduction in overall landings. If we'd  
14 done just a minimum adjustment for white marlin  
15 and roundscale spearfish, we're talking about a  
16 24, almost 25 percent reduction. And then if we  
17 had made at the start of Quarter 3, based on this  
18 analysis, if we made an adjustment for all species  
19 considered, we're talking about a potential  
20 reduction of the marlin landings by about 40  
21 percent.

22           So interesting to note here is that you

1 do see a pretty notable difference based on the  
2 timing of the adjustment for blue marlin. We go  
3 from a 33 percent reduction to a 15 percent  
4 reduction, depending on what quarter you do this.  
5 However, the impact of making an adjustment on  
6 white marlin are not very different. And that is  
7 probably a function of the fact that the season is  
8 so concentrated in August.

9 All right. So we talked a lot about  
10 percentages. What does that mean for actual  
11 numbers? So if we took those percentages that we  
12 estimated from our analysis and applied that  
13 against that example overage of 276 billfish that  
14 we estimated at one point through September 30th,  
15 that could have potentially reduced our landings  
16 under that marlin 250 limit, if that is where we  
17 had landed, by a reasonable number. So if we had  
18 made adjustments to the white marlin and  
19 roundscale spearfish minimum size limit we would  
20 probably, justify assumptions that you are going  
21 to have similar conditions from one year to the  
22 next until like frequency distributions across

1 your catches. But we would have estimated that  
2 we, you know, would reduce our landings to around  
3 206 to 208 fish depending on when you implement  
4 those changes.

5           If we had done a blue marlin  
6 reassessment, we've got the numbers here,  
7 indicating that we would be down around here, 183  
8 fish, or 223 fish, depending on the timing of when  
9 we made that adjustment. And if we had made a  
10 minimum size adjustment on all billfish as the  
11 minimum adjustable size for each species, then we  
12 would have been either at 113 fish for Q1 or 165  
13 fish for Q3.

14           All right. So while we strive to be  
15 proactive in tracking our landings and on managing  
16 our fisheries, the compressed usage for billfish  
17 means that we may find our management activity  
18 being reacted to high landings events. So this  
19 past fall gave us a great example of that. We  
20 have to have realistic expectations concerning the  
21 time needed to receive and respond to either  
22 increased landings or an overage. So in one case

1     again, we attempt to slow the landings down  
2     whereas the other case we'd be reverting to catch  
3     and release fishing.

4             So we have on this slide to give you an  
5     idea of events that occurred this fall when our  
6     best available information suggested that we might  
7     be in an overage situation. For example when we  
8     realized the high landings were occurring in  
9     August, we had a combined lag time of nearly five  
10    weeks needed to run the accounting protocol, that  
11    takes about a week, to finalize a program  
12    responsive inseason adjustment, this time it was  
13    to go to catch and release only. And then we had  
14    to wait for that two week regulatory delay to go  
15    through before something could actually be  
16    considered effective.

17            And during this delay we noted that an  
18    additional four billfish were landed. So at least  
19    one of those fish, the circumstances were such  
20    that it was recognized that we were in a  
21    preparation mode to go to catch and release. But  
22    there was still some anxiety to land that fish

1       anyways.

2                       Therefore, before we project a need to  
3       adjust to catch and release or implement a minimum  
4       size we have to take into account continued  
5       harvest that is likely going to occur between when  
6       we provide notice and when it is actually  
7       implemented.

8                       And we also have to anticipate the  
9       inclusion of additional fish coming in as they are  
10      finalized through our regular accounting  
11      protocols. For example we have some tournaments  
12      that are multi months or year round, and they send  
13      us their reports after the last period of fishing.  
14      So if you have a tournament that lasts six months,  
15      they might be sending their reports in as soon as  
16      their tournament time period is over, and that  
17      might be in October or November, depending on the  
18      species and where they're at.

19                      Let's see, there is also some harvest  
20      that would otherwise occur in the fourth quarter  
21      of a fishing year if you don't have catch and  
22      release. It's generally small but it does happen.

1 So we usually do see an increase in fish from Q3  
2 to Q4 in our landings protocols. So even that we  
3 have to be precautionary in our approach to  
4 billfish management. So even though our most  
5 recent estimation of landings has us under that  
6 marlin 250 limit, due to the slim margins we  
7 decided to retain the catch and release  
8 requirement through the end of the year because we  
9 anticipate that additional fish are going to be  
10 coming in and we are at a 17 fish margin between  
11 where we estimate that we're currently at and that  
12 limit.

13 All right. So I am almost done talking.  
14 We have a couple questions that we'd like to hear  
15 your thoughts of course and anything related to  
16 billfish management, but we want to hear, you  
17 know, your thoughts on what we might expect to  
18 happen in 2021. Do we think the landings are  
19 going to keep rising, data base errors  
20 notwithstanding? We have been observing an  
21 increase in landings over the last couple of  
22 years. And that could still continue, possibly,

1 you know, some of our scientists are thinking that  
2 the fish are becoming more available, the stock's  
3 recovering and there just might be more out there.

4 Or was 2020 anomalous? We've also heard  
5 that, you know, fishing is one of the safe  
6 activities that people can do and still socially  
7 distance. So there might be more fishing in 2020  
8 just because it is considered a safe activity.

9 If the marlin 250 landings limit was  
10 exceeded, what response is the most appropriate to  
11 start with? Like we said, we have the ability to  
12 adjust minimum size for certain species, we can  
13 select within a range for those species, and we  
14 have timing options. So these are all things that  
15 we need to think about related to a circumstance  
16 when we look at these types of minimum size  
17 adjustments.

18 And then finally, we always see this as  
19 an opportunity to think about how to improve our  
20 management structure. So this fall certainly  
21 illustrated some of the challenges that we have  
22 under our current process. So we see this as an

1 opportunity to review and improve the process, and  
2 we'd like encourage feedback along those lines.

3           So do we still need that two-week window  
4 for delayed implementation? It was originally  
5 implemented so that people had time to adjust to  
6 the regulations but maybe in a digital age we  
7 don't need it anymore.

8           We also realized that many of our  
9 landings again were occurring in that window  
10 between our current minimum sizes and the  
11 adjustable size ranges. So does that mean that we  
12 need to reevaluate where our adjustment minimum  
13 size ranges are?

14           So that is it for now. There are  
15 several of us in the division that work on the  
16 billfish management issues this fall. If you have  
17 any questions you can of course reach out to me  
18 through email, you can reach out to us moving  
19 forward. Cliff Hutt, Nic Alvarado, and I are  
20 points at the moment for billfish management.

21           MR. BROOKS: Great. Thanks so much,  
22 Jen, great presentation. Maybe I'll let you go

1 back just one slide just so those questions are  
2 (inaudible). Thanks. I've got a couple of people  
3 in the queue, Tim Pickett, Rick Weber, and Alan  
4 Weiss, your hand is up. But I think that may be  
5 left over. As we did this morning, why don't we  
6 start and see if there are any clarifying  
7 questions, and then invite folks to weigh in on  
8 any of these questions that Jen has put out there.  
9 And I'll note at least one person asked what is  
10 LJFL, that's lower jaw fork length, so folks know.

11 Tim, we will start with you.

12 MR. PICKETT: All right. Well, I saw  
13 Rick's hand was up before mine, I was going to  
14 defer to him, but I'll kind of start.

15 You know, I thought of coming down a  
16 little bit and been talking with a couple of  
17 customers of mine on the recreational side of  
18 things. You know, this was an exceptional year  
19 tournament-wise because, as like was mentioned,  
20 you know, this is one of the few things that you  
21 can do is go fishing. So, you know, I know there  
22 was record turnouts at the White Marlin Open and

1 the Mid-Atlantic and things like that, which I  
2 think definitely contribute to a lot of this. I  
3 have a feeling that a lot of this is all mostly  
4 tournament landings.

5 But I would urge you to, you know, these  
6 were major economic contributors to the areas that  
7 they were held in a year that the economy was  
8 suffering because of all of this. And, you know,  
9 I would be very clear with what you're planning on  
10 doing. I think making an inseason adjustment  
11 right before tournament time would be a very  
12 difficult thing for a lot of places. And we have  
13 to understand, you know, how big these tournaments  
14 are, you know, in not only the local effect that  
15 they have but, you know, speaking from, you know,  
16 tackle supply, you know, tackle shop, bait  
17 supplier, things like that, a lot of people kind  
18 of plan their year and a lot of these traveling  
19 boats plan their year on what they're going to be  
20 doing tournament-wise. So I think if there is an  
21 adjustment it needs to be made very, very early on  
22 so people can adjust to it and tournaments can

1 adjust rules and I'm sure Rick advocates that  
2 because he's extremely directly involved in that.

3 But I think you need to involve the  
4 tournament organizers and, you know, try and get a  
5 commonplace decision going on there, you know. If  
6 they're aware of the issue that's at hand I'm sure  
7 they'll make adjustments, you know, to kind of  
8 curb that. You know, I don't think now's the time  
9 to do anything drastic, and I think now that  
10 they're aware of the issues and, you know, I was  
11 in contact with a couple of customers of mine and  
12 they're aware of the issues and, you know, as long  
13 as the adjustments aren't made drastically  
14 inseason, I think, you know, that they'd be  
15 willing to work with whatever you have going on.

16 So other than I'll defer to Rick,  
17 because this is really Rick's business.

18 MR. BROOKS: And before you sign off, do  
19 you have any of, knowing Jen's earlier data that  
20 showed that 2018 and '19 were sort of a tick above  
21 things had been. Does that sort of indicate  
22 anything to you or do you still see 2020 as really

1 anomalous?

2 MR. PICKETT: Well I mean all you have  
3 to do is look at the, you know, you can go, I have  
4 it pulled it up on my computer right now, the  
5 White Marlin Open, and you go back through the  
6 history of their tournaments and see, registration  
7 was kicking up every year, you know. Boat  
8 builders are very busy, you know, the whole  
9 recreational fishing business is very busy right  
10 now and it's continuing to be busy. You know, I  
11 think that's reflected on the economy that we  
12 have. And people are spending money, you know,  
13 baby boomers are retired and even though it's just  
14 people, people are spending money in that  
15 business, and you'll continue to see landings go  
16 up I feel, you know, as these events become more  
17 and more popular, you know. It's just the way it  
18 is. But most of these people are all  
19 conservation-minded people. And, you know, they  
20 release all their billfish if there's not, you  
21 know, \$4 million on the line. I think you'll  
22 continue to see them being popular. And this year

1 was exceptional I think but it was definitely  
2 following the trend of more people fishing.

3 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thanks, Tim, I'll  
4 note that, mark those, say in the agreement what  
5 you had to say. And, folks, just so you know, the  
6 list that I get may not track how the order that  
7 your hands go up, they just show up a little bit  
8 more random. So I'm working on the list showing  
9 me how hands go up.

10 All right. Rick Weber, and then we'll  
11 go to Mike Pierdinock.

12 MR. WEBER: Yeah, so many thoughts. Tim  
13 is correct, I mean in all of his summary there.  
14 The industry absolutely, A, in the assumption that  
15 it is predominately tournament driven. I thank  
16 the Agency and I respect the Agency for not  
17 calling that out directly. It's your fairness and  
18 professionalism that may keep you from doing it  
19 and I appreciate that.

20 By the same token let me confess it.  
21 There's a lot of tournament action going on in  
22 these numbers. And that's relevant to what I'm

1 going to say next. Which is, you know, Tim has a  
2 note on there that high landings were flagged in  
3 the third week of August. That is a true  
4 statement. High landings were flagged after the  
5 third week of August because I called in to say we  
6 have an issue. Before my event was over I had  
7 called CGS, RFA, and IGFA to say we have an issue.

8 Before the week was over I had spoken to  
9 a number of tournament directors. Jim Motsco of  
10 the White Marlin Open is on this call, I expect  
11 you'll hear from him if he has anything to say  
12 during public comment.

13 We are all in agreement that we have a  
14 problem. We're all in agreement that we will  
15 solve our problem whether the government acts or  
16 whether it does not. We do not want to trigger  
17 the ICCAT threshold. We are aware of it. Many of  
18 us don't always think it's fair and possibly  
19 capricious, possibly whatever, but that's neither  
20 here nor there.

21 250 is what 250 is, and 250 has been  
22 sufficient for a very long time. And your

1 tournament operators are committed to getting back  
2 below, safely below, not just below, but safely  
3 below 250. I am looking at, if you allow it, I  
4 would prefer to go to 69 myself, whether you do or  
5 not. I will be announcing that not real long, I  
6 expect a move to 69 inches will reduce my landings  
7 by approximately 25 fish. I know that White  
8 Marlin Open is looking at comparable action. Once  
9 again, whether the government acts or whether the  
10 government does not act, he is intending to reduce  
11 his landings by 25 fish or so.

12 This would put us safely back below 250.  
13 Now Jen did say something very relevant there, and  
14 that is all things being equal. The question is,  
15 why we haven't approached 250. What is going on?  
16 I have a personal belief and it is layman only.  
17 We have no way of seeing below 66 inches right  
18 now. Landing a fish below 66 inches is not legal.  
19 We have switched to circle hooks, we have put in  
20 any other number of regulatory impacts. One thing  
21 a biologist will tell you is that these things  
22 grow long before they grow thick. So a five limit

1     only is going to lead to a number of tall, lanky  
2     teenagers.

3             If I asked you the weight of somebody  
4     that was six feet tall, you would have a hard time  
5     answering that question. Because in general a  
6     teenager gets tall and lanky and gets to size  
7     quickly and then we all put on weight and become  
8     the people you know us today.

9             This is, as I understand it, what goes  
10    on with White Marlin. So what we've had recently  
11    is a lot of long, lanky fish that in my estimation  
12    this year crossed that 66 to 68 inch threshold.  
13    We suddenly had an abundance. I'm hoping it's a  
14    marching cohort. If it were a marching cohort, to  
15    be fair, we have an interesting management  
16    problem. Because that will mean that our size  
17    limits get difficult because as the fish keep  
18    growing, you know, I'm thinking of the problems  
19    that those on the councils had with flounder. As  
20    you raise bag limit you raise tonnage, it's a  
21    weirdness because we're accustomed to think "I can  
22    reduce quantity by increasing size." But in the

1 case of recovering stocks, that may not be true.

2 So our tools may become less effective  
3 over time. But our question right now is about  
4 2021. And I believe that Jim and I can reduce  
5 significantly, whether the government acts or  
6 whether it doesn't, our landings of white marlin  
7 and roundscale spearfish.

8 I think Jen properly identified in her  
9 charts -- Bennett, I'm going to use a ton of time,  
10 just so you and I are aware, this one is my baby.

11 MR. BROOKS: No, no, Rick, I wasn't  
12 going to cut you off, I was going to ask you  
13 another question. Keep going.

14 MR. WEBER: Okay.

15 MR. BROOKS: I know this is your issue.

16 MR. WEBER: All right. Another issue  
17 I'd like to get off the table as soon as  
18 appropriate in order to calm some of my  
19 compatriots. The blue marlin landings are not the  
20 problem, we're not seeing a swell in blue marlin  
21 landings. And holding that sword of Damocles of  
22 117 over those blue marlin people as if you might

1 raise their limit to 117, that would really hurt  
2 the blue marlin fishery and the blue marlin  
3 events. I'm not asking you to do it today, Randy,  
4 but the sooner that you can clarify that that  
5 weapon is not hanging over them and give them some  
6 peace of mind, unless we hit 250 or get very, very  
7 near 250, the solution should be a white  
8 marlin/roundscale solution because as Jen's graphs  
9 show, that fishery, it is a white  
10 marlin/roundscale increase that it's happening in.

11           Again, I say this is good news. I find  
12 that we're seeing local abundance. I know what  
13 the graphs say about overfished with overfishing  
14 not occurring. But there is one nation that has  
15 taken things seriously in recovering their white  
16 marlin/roundscale and blue marlin stocks. And  
17 that would be the nation that led the way with no  
18 sale provision, that led the way with circle  
19 hooks, that led the way with close zones. And we  
20 are enjoying the benefits and hassles of our  
21 localized recovery, in my opinion. I am sure  
22 there are scientists' hands going up all over the

1 place there, Bennett. But this is one layman's  
2 opinion.

3 You wanted to ask a question, Bennett,  
4 what was it, please?

5 MR. BROOKS: Yeah, I did. I just wanted  
6 to ask on the 69 inch size. I know from what  
7 you're saying it sounds like, you know, at the  
8 tournament level you'll take care of it, but I'm  
9 just curious to Jen's question. Would you like to  
10 see that sort of longer term regulatory change be  
11 put in place for 69 inches as an option?

12 MR. WEBER: I'm not sure, honestly.  
13 Again, in deference to my broader recreational  
14 brethren, what we do in tournaments may not be  
15 what should be mandated across all of recreational  
16 fishing. If we have an ICCAT limit, and that's  
17 another thing by the way, one of the things that I  
18 preach on the IAC is that we don't want to get  
19 ahead of ICCAT. And so if ICCAT is sitting at a  
20 66 inch minimum, we should defend the 66 inch  
21 minimum because I assure you there's not a CPC on  
22 that thing that will join us when we raise it up

1 to 67 or 68. Our goal should be to achieve,  
2 within a reasonable boundary, our legal limit of  
3 roughly 250. And if we can approach safely our  
4 250, we are meeting our international obligation,  
5 and we do not need to go beyond that.

6 So whatever minimal regulation is  
7 required to safely get below 250, or as I would  
8 point out, as I have offered, letting industry do  
9 its job and clean things up. You know we  
10 discussed years ago, decades ago, whether or not  
11 we needed a bag limit on marlin. And we opted  
12 against it with great fear that some unknown  
13 person would be able to land hordes of marlin. It  
14 didn't happen. The industry has taken care of  
15 itself. The sector has taken care of itself.

16 I am sure that other people, and I do  
17 not mind this, though it is not the regular format  
18 for Andy and Jen, if there are questions I do not  
19 wish to be cross examined but I certainly don't  
20 mind answering them if people are interested more  
21 in what the industry can do. But I will shut up  
22 and let other people hop into this thing now.

1 Thank you for your time.

2 MR. BLANKINSHIP: I have one quick  
3 clarification question real quickly for Rick.  
4 Earlier you made a statement I believe, I just  
5 want to finish the thought. You said something  
6 about it is capricious. And you didn't follow it  
7 only talking about the 250 limit. And I just  
8 wanted to specifically, Rick, what is capricious?

9 MR. WEBER: Nothing that you've done or  
10 would do, Randy. The 250 came from nowhere. It  
11 was, I was speaking, you know, the origin of 250  
12 that did the U.S. 20 years ago voluntarily pick a  
13 number that was too low. It is that piece, but it  
14 has nothing to do with you and it's nothing that  
15 you can do anything about. 250 is 250.

16 MR. BLANKINSHIP: It is.

17 MR. WEBER: But those of us who know  
18 know that number could have been 400 or 500, all  
19 that was asked for in that negotiation was give us  
20 a number. But the number that was given is the  
21 number that we are living with, period. And I  
22 understand that.

1                   MR. BLANKINSHIP: Thanks for  
2 clarification.

3                   MR. BROOKS: Thanks. I've got four  
4 folks who want to get into the conversation.  
5 We've got about 10 minutes. So I've got Mike  
6 Pierdinock and then Angel, then Scott and then  
7 Dewey. If you can sort of try to keep it to about  
8 two minutes, that would be really good. Mike.

9                   MR. PIERDINOCK: Thank you, Bennett.  
10 Just consistent with what's already said. I mean  
11 tackle sales this year, boat sales, landing scub,  
12 you know, everything associated with the  
13 recreational industry has been booming this year.  
14 And I think it's because the weekend warriors were  
15 able to get out on the water and be out there  
16 seven days a week so that did make a difference.

17                   I also agree that the conservation  
18 measures we've done and are made at the nation,  
19 we're seeing the results of that. It's a lot of  
20 work done by a lot of people to make that happen.

21                   One thing that I just want to note  
22 that's going up here in New England. You heard me

1 speak of climatic shift and shift of our stocks,  
2 schoolie bluefin tuna and white marlin, I want to  
3 add that. We would get excited up here if we  
4 encounter white marlin south of the Vineyard off  
5 of Noman's Island and Noman Shoals maybe once a  
6 year, every few years as is dictated by water  
7 temperature. Well we were shocked and chagrined  
8 this year when we were catching them north of Cape  
9 Cod, off of P-Town, and place called Peeked Hill  
10 Bar where we're bluefin tuna fishing. So they've  
11 moved farther north. I'm not sure as a result,  
12 and this consistent with every other stock or many  
13 other stocks we see such as schoolie bluefin and  
14 white marlin, and even mahi that come farther  
15 north. As a result of that is that increasing  
16 landings, discards, and so on in addition to what  
17 Rick has pointed out.

18           So just want to point that out. But I  
19 think that our conservation measures, we're seeing  
20 the benefit of that. We have credible numbers of  
21 white marlin up here. We typically have to go way  
22 off shore to get them, and now we're seeing them

1 close to shore much more often instead of every  
2 few years, and I suspect it's because of the  
3 increased water temperature as well as  
4 availability to forage. Thank you.

5 MR. BROOKS: All right. Thanks, Mike.  
6 Angel, over to you.

7 MS. WILLEY: -- for dedication and all  
8 the work that everyone contributes in managing  
9 this quota. It occurred we had an awesome  
10 billfish season off Maryland this year, there were  
11 a lot of white marlin and roundscale spearfish  
12 available. Most of the fish landings in Maryland  
13 are from tournament participation. I've talked  
14 with our tournament captains as well as tournament  
15 operators and I feel like they have the potential  
16 to increase so we're going for tournament  
17 qualification. As Rick mentioned, more people  
18 were fishing because it was considered a safe  
19 activity this summer.

20 And I'd like to hear more public  
21 comments on making a recommendation on minimum  
22 size changes for what groupings. And last but

1 least, the Agency would consider modifying the  
2 two-week delay for more management flexibility.  
3 Thank you.

4 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thanks, Angel.  
5 Let's go to Scott and then to Dewey.

6 MR. TAYLOR: So Rick will probably be  
7 surprised that this is one area that I actually  
8 agree with him on substantially. There's so much  
9 economic benefit, bank for the buck, of these  
10 tournaments, particularly with the tournaments up  
11 in the northeast that it's got to be preserved at  
12 all cost.

13 But the real concern should be, and I've  
14 got a couple of quick questions that I'd like to  
15 ask as well. The real concern should be that we  
16 have this fixed 250 fish, you know, limit. I  
17 would be curious to know, while I was surprised to  
18 see the number of roundscale spearfish which, you  
19 know, indicates to me that almost those numbers  
20 that we're looking at are probably tournament  
21 related reporting, because the average person out  
22 there probably wouldn't know the difference

1 between a white marlin and a roundscale spearfish  
2 in a lot of cases.

3 My questions is, do we have any numbers  
4 geographically? Because one of the concerns that  
5 I think the Agency needs to be aware of, and  
6 particularly I kind of thought that I heard that  
7 there was some improvement in the electronic  
8 reporting numbers that were coming out. So, you  
9 know, we've always believed that, and this is  
10 limited to white marlin and blue marlin billfish,  
11 that recreational reporting has always been a  
12 challenge. And so as the recreational reporting  
13 numbers become better, you may find yourself in a  
14 position where you really need to protect, you  
15 know, these tournaments.

16 So I was curious, geographically are you  
17 seeing numbers from outside of the Mid-Atlantic in  
18 the summertime? Are you seeing Gulf reporting or  
19 are you seeing, well, the Gulf is that still part  
20 of the 250 number? I guess that's a question.  
21 And what about the, you know, Florida/North  
22 Carolina, how are the numbers compared to the

1 Mid-Atlantic or what was reported here in 2000?

2 MS. CUDNEY: So I think that some of the  
3 shifting towards electronic reporting for  
4 different fleets is going to help with getting  
5 some of that geographic resolution. Our folks  
6 there are reporting through our non-tournament  
7 recreational reporting avenues. Typically if  
8 they're using like our app they don't necessarily  
9 have to report geographic coordinates with their  
10 landings information. So e-Trips for example is  
11 providing a little bit more specificity with  
12 respect to the geography. So we're going to be  
13 able to tease that out a little bit better as we  
14 go forward.

15 There is some North Carolina catch card  
16 data. I don't recall off the top of my head  
17 trends regarding that particular data source, but  
18 looking at the individual state catch card picture  
19 for a general regional idea of what's going on.  
20 But then we run into terms of showing, we start  
21 drawing into data confidentiality issues as well.  
22 So we have to look at that.

1 MR. TAYLOR: Is the Gulf part of that  
2 250 number as well?

3 MS. CUDNEY: Oh, yeah.

4 MR. TAYLOR: I think that it's a genuine  
5 area to try to be proactive about in terms of how  
6 you might potentially modify some adjustments to  
7 preserve this high level of tournament activities  
8 in the summer because I do believe that as your  
9 electronic reporting improves, and it has to  
10 improve and we have to get better information from  
11 the recreational sector in general where we are,  
12 that may be a double edged sword and so I think  
13 that it is important that you be preemptive in  
14 terms of looking at ways to make sure that there's  
15 adequate quota allocation when it comes time for  
16 your Mid-Atlantic tournament season, that that's  
17 got to be preserved at all costs.

18 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Scott. Dewey, and  
19 then Alan Weiss, and then we will go to break.  
20 Dewey.

21 MR. HEMILRIGHT: I'm on now.

22 MR. BROOKS: Yep, we got you now.

1           MR. HEMILRIGHT: I had a couple  
2 questions. Are shark bitten or disqualified fish  
3 during the tournaments, how are they accounted  
4 for. Are they accounted for by the tournament, or  
5 are they accounted for by the individual that  
6 harvests or that catches the fish. That's one  
7 question.

8           MS. CUDNEY: So shark-bitten fish,  
9 they'll have to meet the minimum size, we don't  
10 have a conversion for shark- bitten fish. So the  
11 remaining carcass would still have to meet the  
12 minimum size requirements for that fish, depending  
13 on which species you're talking about. There is  
14 in eTrips I think an option to select shark-bitten  
15 fish, but that, you know, we'll kind of get that  
16 from an ancillary standpoint if that data came in.  
17 I'm not exactly sure, Rick, what you guys do in  
18 terms of accounting for shark-bitten fish in your  
19 tournament landings.

20           MR. BROOKS: Rick, you want to respond  
21 real quickly?

22           MR. BLANKENSHIP: Well, yeah, I can only

1 add to this first of all to say that, you know, if  
2 there is a, let's say a fish, I think Dewey's  
3 question maybe to --

4 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Disqualified fish.

5 MR. BLANKENSHIP: Exactly. It's about  
6 disqualified fish. And so --

7 MS. CUDNEY: Okay.

8 MR. BLANKENSHIP: So the way that is  
9 handled is that if the tournament is going to  
10 accept the fish and then they will report the  
11 fish. It's the tournament operator's  
12 responsibility to report that fish. If the  
13 tournament does not accept the fish or rejects the  
14 fish on the dock, which sometimes can happen, it  
15 isn't the angler's or the vessel owner's  
16 responsibility to report that fish.

17 MR. HEMILRIGHT: And another question  
18 would be, is it safe to say that a majority of the  
19 fish, the catch and release, by recreational  
20 industry is done non-tournament or tournament  
21 fished?

22 And is there someplace, I've asked this

1 many a time, where I can find a number for  
2 released marlins, whether it be blue marlin, white  
3 marlin, and would that come from the MRIP Survey  
4 or would that come from the large pelagic survey,  
5 because the large pelagic is only in the  
6 northeast. And then I have one more question.

7 MR. BROOKS: Randy or Jen, do you want  
8 to jump in on that?

9 Dewey, why don't you ask your other  
10 question and then let's get an answer.

11 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Are circle hooks only  
12 mandatory for tournaments, or also non-tournament  
13 recreational fishing for marlins?

14 MS. CUDNEY: They are only mandatory for  
15 tournaments.

16 MR. HEMILRIGHT: And is that because the  
17 majority of the fish are caught during the  
18 tournament, or, I'm just trying to get a, regulate  
19 a statement that by using circle hooks and I'm  
20 just curious if it was mandatory non-tournament  
21 fishing because I think there's a lot of caught  
22 non-tournaments. I was just curious about the

1 Agency's answer or reason for the ambiguity there.

2 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Yeah. So the circle  
3 hooks requirement is in tournaments only. And it  
4 was developed back in the 2006 consolidated HMS  
5 FMP. In conjunction with that tournament  
6 situation because of the, as I understand it,  
7 often the ability basically to give, you know,  
8 more effective implementation associated with  
9 tournament participation that can occur in that  
10 situation in a competition.

11 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Go ahead.

12 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Yeah. One other  
13 question you had asked was about where most of the  
14 releases occur. And I believe, and we can go back  
15 and take a look at some of the information that I  
16 think we have. I think the majority of the  
17 releases occur in tournament settings. So that's  
18 where most of the effort is.

19 And, you know, I think you asked about  
20 where a source of information is for releases.  
21 Publicly available is the Large Pelagic Survey  
22 Query, which is available on line through the NOAA

1 website. You do a search for Large Pelagic Survey  
2 Query, then you can get to the public facing site  
3 and search for release. And you are correct that  
4 Large Pelagic Survey extends from Maine through  
5 North Carolina, Virginia. And the MRIP survey  
6 does have available that same information outside  
7 of that area. Outside of that the recreational  
8 fishing surveys, the Southeast Fisheries Science  
9 Center does collect information about fish  
10 releases and tournaments. Like I said, you can  
11 reach out to them with a request, if you have one  
12 source of specific information about released  
13 fish.

14 MR. HEMILRIGHT: So based on your  
15 comment, you're saying that the recreational  
16 industry releases more fish during the tournaments  
17 than non-tournaments. Is that what you said?

18 MR. BLANKINSHIP: That's my  
19 recollection.

20 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Wow. All right, thank  
21 you.

22 Mr. BROOKS: Thanks. I want to get Alan

1 in for a brief comment or question, and then we  
2 should be pushing to a break here. And Rick  
3 Weber, I sent you a note, perhaps you can address  
4 the question that Dewey mentioned in the Chat, if  
5 that's possible. Alan, let's open Alan's line up.

6 MR. WEISS: Thanks, Bennett, and I will  
7 be brief. First of all I wanted to say for myself  
8 and I think I can speak for others, that in regard  
9 to one of the things that Rick Weber mentioned a  
10 little while ago, your friends in the pelagic  
11 longline fishery are 100 percent with you and  
12 behind you on the idea of the domestic regulations  
13 not moving further ahead of the ICCAT mandates.  
14 This has been something that we've kind of battled  
15 it over and argued about at various times over the  
16 years in terms of various species and various  
17 regulations, but ICCAT mandates 66 inches. I  
18 think it's a dangerous move to tinker with that  
19 until ICCAT mandates otherwise.

20 And with the second follow on to that is  
21 that, and this of course is more in the purview of  
22 the ICCAT Advisory Committee, is that before we

1 should even contemplate requesting the ICCAT to  
2 make anything that's on the books more stringent  
3 we should get a detailed report of the compliance  
4 with the existing regulations because a lot of  
5 times compliance is lacking in other nations. And  
6 if we're the only ones or one of the few that are  
7 complying, we have to be careful about where we go  
8 with that. Thank you.

9 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Alan, very much.  
10 And I'll just note that Cliff Hutt has thrown  
11 something in there about how MRIP does discards  
12 and permits for as well the South Atlantic and  
13 Gulf of Mexico, and Rick has just posted something  
14 to me that I will share with you. It says  
15 "Tournament fishers are generally thought leaders.  
16 They teach others. Also their techniques are  
17 different. People don't switch back when they are  
18 not in tournaments so they're learning the habit  
19 there and then they're taking it out with them  
20 when they go fishing."

21 Jen, I think you got a lot of good  
22 feedback here which I think I won't summarize for

1     sake of time right now. But I think a pretty  
2     clear message from folks on some guidance here  
3     with the main messages.

4             And industry's on top of this and  
5     they're going to track it and there a couple of  
6     things not to do. Don't go to 117, get a message  
7     out to the group, if you're a marlin fisherman  
8     that's not something they need to be worrying  
9     about and more head scratching on the 69 inch  
10    piece limit.

11            I think with that let's get to our  
12    break. We will do a short break. We will come  
13    back at 2:15 as planned because I want to make  
14    sure we have enough time for the conversation on  
15    electronic technologies, and we do need to get to  
16    public comment on time at 3:15. So let's take  
17    about a six minute break and we will reconvene at  
18    2:15.

19            Thanks, Jen, and thanks a lot for the  
20    good conversation.

21                            (Recess)

22            MR. BROOKS: I want to hand it off to

1 Brad McHale. He's going to talk to us about the  
2 Agency's Electronic Technologies Plan. I'll just  
3 leave it at that and let you take over.

4 Do you have your screen to share yet?  
5 And you may be on mute, Brad, because we're not  
6 hearing you. Can you speak? I am not hearing  
7 you, does anyone else? Okay, Brad, you're not  
8 being heard at all right now. Maybe you're double  
9 mute. Are you using the phone and the computer?  
10 Maybe using the phone try \*6. Brad, Matt was just  
11 suggesting on the Chat that you might want to try  
12 calling in. I know we had a really good sound  
13 check with you before, I'm not quite sure what  
14 happened.

15 Okay, folks, so just bear with us for a  
16 moment here. And in the meantime, Rick Weber,  
17 I'll let you lower your hand again unless you are  
18 already anticipating a question or comment based  
19 on what Brad is saying that we can't hear.

20 While Brad is doing this, do we know if  
21 we're sharing these slides? Is that Brad going to  
22 be sharing his slides, or someone else going to

1 run them for him?

2 MR. McHALE: Can you still not hear me?

3 MR. BROOKS: Now we gotcha. You're  
4 there, Brad.

5 MR. McHALE: Thank you very much for  
6 sticking with me. Sharing 2 of 1. Can you see  
7 the presentation at your end?

8 MR. BROOKS: Not yet. Now it's coming  
9 up. We're good.

10 MR. McHALE: All right. Well good  
11 afternoon everyone. It's good to not see but hear  
12 some of the familiar voices seeing that I wasn't  
13 able to join you all during the September Advisory  
14 Panel Meeting.

15 This afternoon what I'll be doing is  
16 just focusing on the national effort here where  
17 the Agency is tasked each of the separate regions,  
18 including the Highly Migratory Species Management  
19 Division, to develop an Electronic Technology  
20 Implementation Plan. Essentially what the goal is  
21 looking forward over the next five years.

22 One thing that I think we as a group are

1     pretty well versed in is that we went through this  
2     exercise a few other times in past years. The  
3     most recent update was back in 2015. You'll be  
4     able to see the link here as well. But in  
5     addition to these kind of, they tend to be more  
6     comprehensive kind of report out, we're talking a  
7     long way regarding electronic technologies,  
8     whether being for recreational fisheries or it be  
9     the commercial fisheries or the tournament  
10    monitoring, I see this as a big way we've been  
11    discussing for the past six or seven years. As  
12    well as a lot of these programs that we're  
13    partnering with other parts of the Agency because  
14    as we here at HMS recognize, our jurisdictions are  
15    overlapping with the Northeast. We're the  
16    Southeast, we're the Gulf of Mexico. We're the  
17    Caribbean, not to mention ICCAT. And how there  
18    are efficiencies when industrial reporting, or  
19    monitoring for that matter, to go step in step  
20    with one another.

21            So essentially what the goal here is  
22    that each respective region would develop their

1 plan with that five-year horizon, and to consult  
2 with either, in our case you all, the Advisory  
3 Panel, or the regional context with the council,  
4 potentially get thoughts, concerns, sort of a  
5 feedback on the various programs or approaches  
6 that the Agency is looking at or should be looking  
7 at.

8 One key driver of Why Now, what is the  
9 timeline where the last kind of update, this is  
10 about five years to date at this point. And a lot  
11 of exchange not only managing but also fishery  
12 dynamics as well as technology. But what's also  
13 kind of key to all these electronic technologies  
14 potential solutions to data collection is funding.  
15 And so a lot of the regional plans that we're  
16 looking to get released later this spring are to  
17 get out ahead of both internal as well as external  
18 funding opportunities. And a couple of those are  
19 kind of listed here is present releasing systems,  
20 whether it be electronic technologies or a catch  
21 share program, a request for proposals. Another  
22 great example externally is some of the new web

1 grants that are being funded.

2 And also what these kind of reports are  
3 intended to use is simply to provide a marker or  
4 milestone of, you know, where we've been at both,  
5 you know, in our rulemaking and implementation and  
6 monitoring, as well as kind of where we're going  
7 forward, both in the domestic sense as well as in  
8 an international sense.

9 So to elaborate on some of those  
10 objectives of the plan again, and I'll just  
11 mention, kind of do a recap, you know. How have  
12 things evolved say over the past five years. What  
13 has worked, what has not, what could be improved  
14 on, what should be scrapped. And, you know, this  
15 plan is just being safely or try to monitoring the  
16 pelagic longlines fleet right on top of that one  
17 that recently authored that a three-year review of  
18 the Amendment 7. This actually could be more  
19 appropriate to not just that programs that are say  
20 fluid within the control of the HMS Management  
21 Division, we're looking at other programs as well.

22 And then ultimately use this document to

1 establish kind of a vision of implementing  
2 electronic technologies the HMS Fisheries, and  
3 ultimately the management.

4           And then to prioritize it. So this  
5 report presents an opportunity that a logical flow  
6 that in all probability would be seen in either  
7 doing an as-is assessment or through looking at  
8 the scope of future actions that may be warranted.  
9 One of the key elements here for me that stands  
10 out is this cross regional coordination and  
11 ultimately streamlining when it comes to these  
12 sort of technologies.

13           As we have evolved I have heard the  
14 voices around the table. I can't get Rick  
15 Bellavance's voice out of my head to capitalize on  
16 and build in efficiency. And the fact that it  
17 could serve that one U.S. flag vessel may have to  
18 go to four or five different places to report on  
19 one trip. I absolutely agree. It's been kind of  
20 a long time in the making but I think, you know,  
21 the tires have finally gotten traction where  
22 there's a lot of different efforts right now where

1 the various regions, including ourselves, are  
2 collaborating and trying to capture all the  
3 different data, data elements, either a dealer or  
4 a fisherman, or somebody perhaps doing research  
5 would need to report back to whether it be our  
6 agency or agency partners by my view so though  
7 we're creating one avenue where that increase is  
8 being communicated back instead of having these  
9 stovepipes which is so archaic but yet  
10 unfortunately still exists, given the different  
11 authority to the different nuances of the various  
12 monitoring and report, whether it be the timing of  
13 when reports are due or the level of resolution,  
14 the detail that needs to be specified.

15 So this cross regional coordination and  
16 streamlining, for me, is really a key element  
17 because we're continuing to move forward. It was  
18 very apparent even just in the previous  
19 presentation where Jen was kind of mentioning how  
20 we have a new database coming through essentially  
21 a ACCSP centered application. We have  
22 unfortunately all the data mapping wasn't as

1 precise as it needed to be and all of a sudden  
2 we're getting release fish are not being, what we  
3 use officially for our catching and landings and  
4 are an artificially created number. And so that  
5 diligence is essential across the board with all  
6 these different partners. Let's make sure that  
7 not only are we providing one avenue, but  
8 ultimately the information being derived from that  
9 one comprehensive counting avenue we accomplish by  
10 using it.

11 So I think another objective for the  
12 time here is just acknowledging the changing needs  
13 of the fisheries and acknowledging some of the  
14 challenges when it comes to these sort of  
15 programs, so the scope of the various programs and  
16 how they evolve over time. A fine example would  
17 be take some of the ACCSP programs which had  
18 originated at the GARFO regional office, staying  
19 in and to include the southeast regional office,  
20 and now it's starting to include highly migratory  
21 species as well. And what comes along with that  
22 evolution to meet that goal of trying to

1 streamline how information is being collected by  
2 the Agency to ultimately minimize the burden of  
3 the regulating public.

4 Then how do you regulate that date,  
5 having largely data, especially with the  
6 revolution of technology or the need for new  
7 fisheries also cropping up. How do you then  
8 regulate these circle programs when they are  
9 multiple targets? How do you try putting  
10 (inaudible) to make sure that if that needs  
11 something in the immediate without causing  
12 disruption for our Southeast partners or our GARFO  
13 partners. Arguably they have those waters so only  
14 (inaudible) most robust histories that we possibly  
15 can to meet the ultimate goals.

16 So then how research and development,  
17 you know, I can add technologies evolving so  
18 rapidly these days, we can't get out to the curb  
19 to kick the tires on whether or not a potential  
20 electronic solution to an issue while experiencing  
21 things to fruition, or we explore different  
22 avenues or different solutions to troubleshoot

1 those potential problems. How do you then develop  
2 those programs again to meet our specific needs  
3 with more of that kind of push lines skill in  
4 mind, or international skills for that matter, so  
5 we're not necessarily falling back into old habits  
6 and then developing something that we may need a  
7 specific need of ours, but then it turns out  
8 (inaudible) for more comprehensive piece.

9           And then challenges that are always  
10 going to be in existence to these technology, at a  
11 cost. This ties back into the scope, you know, as  
12 well as not only how are they funded, what is the  
13 information they may derive from these systems,  
14 how they're being used, I mean the partners that  
15 are at the table (inaudible)and then ultimately  
16 how to translate into some of the funding  
17 discussions as well. And, you know, all those  
18 costs, you know, can it be turned down through  
19 competition versus just provide specifications  
20 versus will we take sole source. One individual  
21 but also, you know (inaudible) ongoing, she said  
22 these things turn up over the years, whether at AP

1 meetings or doing council presentations of what  
2 the costs of these sort of systems. What about  
3 software upgrades? What about storage of the  
4 data, what about (inaudible), how expensive is  
5 that? Our (inaudible), all that can be broken  
6 down to dollars and cents at some point. So  
7 obviously that's a big part of each conversation,  
8 the viability of utilizing electronic data  
9 (inaudible) respective issues. The one thing I  
10 wanted to do just other than throw alphabet soup  
11 at everyone, is touch on some of the programs that  
12 are currently involved in and touch upon some of  
13 the discussion the next hour. So to be sure that  
14 we're not missing anything, but also to give you  
15 all a respective understanding of, you may be  
16 familiar with one or two of these systems, but to  
17 give an overall as-is assessment of to where  
18 Randy's staff is currently spending it's time here  
19 in each of these programs or collaborating with  
20 these programs to essentially advocate that each  
21 and every one of these leads the HMS data as well  
22 as timing needed, to help promote their efficiency

1 in streamlining.

2 So obviously first and foremost Pelagic  
3 Longline Electronic Monitoring Program, something,  
4 you know, I've been close to working with over the  
5 last eight or nine years at this point. You know,  
6 so it's worth looking at our bluefin bycatch  
7 monitoring modality shift. (Inaudible) there to  
8 support the Individual Bluefin Quota program,  
9 managing the bycatch bluefin industry.

10 On our (inaudible) more of our open end  
11 vessels, both commercial, recreational, as well as  
12 our for-hire, if the HMS Automated Landing  
13 Reporting System. (Inaudible) that folks used to  
14 go using their open access vessel permits but also  
15 there is a scale on kind of web reporting  
16 application that seeks to report bluefin tuna as  
17 well as swordfish and some of the other species as  
18 well. But certainly those rules associated with  
19 the landings of some species and not others. As  
20 well as (inaudible) mandated versus catch effects,  
21 live discards, dead discards.

22 A system (inaudible) because it

1 potentially falls under the umbrella of the HMS  
2 Management Division. But we start to trickle down  
3 (inaudible) and then we start to expand that  
4 (inaudible). So this is something, as Jen  
5 mentioned earlier, this is essentially a ACCSP  
6 kind of vessel reporting application that is  
7 trying to meet the needs of GARFO, the southeast  
8 region, as well as HMS. And trying to blame all  
9 those needs to one application.

10           Whereas we're collaborating with our  
11 ACCSP partners and our regional partners, it's  
12 essentially trying to set up what are all those  
13 needs. So whether it be ACCSP specific, we may  
14 need a third party vendor, that they knew exactly  
15 what a system would need to include to be able to  
16 empower U.S. fishery to report on all the  
17 different fisheries that they're participating in  
18 and need replies when they go (inaudible) those  
19 reports that they need to get confirmation back  
20 but also then we don't have to worry about did  
21 this meet my (inaudible) reporting need.  
22 (Inaudible) in addition to my (inaudible), in

1 addition to my Southeast (inaudible) to  
2 essentially try to meet all the mandates.

3 The electronic double trip report. So  
4 this is a (inaudible) long standing vessel trip  
5 report (inaudible) and into the current venture.  
6 And these are mandated reports regardless of  
7 season targeted, that a lot of our HMS fisherman  
8 have (inaudible) so often hear of a different  
9 avenue that individuals might be able to afford  
10 their HMS tax simultaneously after the fish  
11 (inaudible) or some of the other (inaudible)  
12 species that all of a sudden they willingly need  
13 to have to use the HMS (inaudible) reports  
14 (inaudible) stock in standing (inaudible). You no  
15 longer have to go to two or three multiple places  
16 to report, one can kind of serve all purposes.

17 Another program kind of coming out of  
18 the Southeast is the Southeast For-Hire Electronic  
19 Reporting Program. Primarily for our charter and  
20 headboat fleets both from the South Atlantic as  
21 well as the Gulf of Mexico. But we recognize that  
22 as you proceed up and down the eastern seaboard a

1 lot of our HMS fisherman have (inaudible) for-hire  
2 permit for the coastal pelagics and permit. So  
3 this sort of reporting activity (inaudible). And  
4 I know that Jen Cudney, as well as others, have  
5 spent a significant amount of time as developers  
6 of those programs and advocating more HMS data  
7 elements to be in there to meet our respective  
8 needs. It doesn't do any good if somebody builds  
9 this fancy reporting application that may be  
10 snapper/grouper oriented and then misses the boat  
11 when it comes to saying the HMS individual that's  
12 going to have those same suite of permits. And it  
13 took a lot of time and effort endured by HMS staff  
14 to strongly advocate for HMS reporting  
15 requirements to be considered by the Gulfers and  
16 not just be ammo for thought.

17 And that kind of fishing and wishing  
18 it's going to stay true for some period of time,  
19 that we can assure HMS is (inaudible) over all  
20 these development programs so they're not playing  
21 catch up or having to wait a couple years for all  
22 (inaudible). And then the last two here I'll

1 touch on, one is HMS Tournament Reporting. And  
2 the registration which, you know, has done leaps  
3 and bounds as far as efficiency for tournament  
4 operators, as far as ease of use, and it's gone a  
5 long way. And then lastly something that I think  
6 we're familiar with is the long-standing VMS  
7 program. Whether that's marked in geographical  
8 location or also I know that for bluefin tuna we  
9 have a number of reports we submit through those  
10 systems.

11 To take a step to be more shore side  
12 centered, a look at some of what our dealers are  
13 then experiencing and utilizing when it comes to  
14 their obligations as a result of holding those  
15 dealer permits. First and foremost is one that  
16 we've spent a large amount of time discussing over  
17 the years is our eDealer program, which is  
18 essentially tracking all the different landings  
19 that are coming in and they're essentially  
20 non-bluefin tuna. In a complex monitoring and  
21 compliance reports. Especially where HMS is in a  
22 position where we have a number of different

1 species that we have extremely small quotas or a  
2 lot of (inaudible) quotas, both domestically  
3 result, internationally, that we're pretty well  
4 positioned to try to leverage these electronic  
5 technologies. And ET is a rather significant one  
6 as far as time remaining both from Agency staff  
7 through the diligence of making sure that the  
8 information is being passed through properly, as  
9 well as the compliance. Instead of falling out we  
10 make sure that, you know, dealers are dotting Is  
11 and crossing Ts or we're doing some  
12 troubleshooting whenever that's necessary.

13 We also then have our electronically  
14 bluefin tuna reporting system, which is, you know,  
15 being challenged through ACCSP or SEFHIER that  
16 we're kind of replacing the catch cards that  
17 (inaudible) for years and years. We've kept  
18 trying to get a fishery information in the past  
19 coming back to the Agency, but then if you chose  
20 to empower at zero time as possible the managing  
21 decisions, the opening, the closures or go to  
22 transfer, as the case may be. But, you know what

1 I'm saying. But essentially capturing this  
2 information when there been a transaction as  
3 quickly and efficiently as possible (inaudible) to  
4 then try to (inaudible) of HMS. As we said, some  
5 of the natural aspects, there are trade traffic  
6 documents that dealers that are involved in the  
7 trade have to complete. You just they can perform  
8 that job electronically. I just recently applied  
9 (inaudible) report summarizing trade transactions,  
10 heads on electronic as well. And includes to  
11 those dealers out there that we're volunteer, kind  
12 of kick the tires system and one's working with it  
13 and one should be pleased. We are trying  
14 ultimately to meet the goal of the customer. We  
15 should be able to ease complex reporting  
16 requirements but also assure that the information  
17 is getting to where it needs to go (inaudible)  
18 then ultimately support the ICCAT negotiations. I  
19 know compliance was brought up in a lot of the  
20 other (inaudible) one avenue that we can use to  
21 leverage that.

22 I put current reporting in there as well

1 just because, you know, it isn't quite, the dealer  
2 isn't quite (inaudible) no reason for that. I  
3 also wanted to touch on also can third party  
4 proprietors, you know, upload programs that  
5 dealers use and where the specifications are  
6 established with what needs to be in the report,  
7 X, Y, or Z, the thing does empower us to leverage  
8 the private sector. And it will ultimately allow  
9 the end users, whether it be vessels, operators,  
10 or dealers for that matter, then they try to  
11 figure out what product is going to best meet  
12 their needs, you know, very selective. You know,  
13 are you, you know, an android individual or are  
14 you more of an Apple individual? Both have pros  
15 and cons but then again it allows individuals to  
16 shop around and ultimately try to keep things cost  
17 effective as well.

18 So I've been kind of touching on all the  
19 (inaudible). Like I said, we'll be kind of  
20 building off of this, looking for your input. But  
21 we also want to make sure that we're not turning a  
22 blind eye to other regions as well. So as we

1 start to expand we're looking to improve on our  
2 electronic technologies and, as I mentioned,  
3 ultimately trying to reduce (inaudible) just  
4 acceptable, to be blunt, at this point in time.  
5 Having individuals having to go to multiple  
6 (inaudible) catch so that is a strong priority for  
7 HMS staff to again advocate for those data  
8 elements and to be included in a sort of Agency  
9 that's supported or funded application problem.  
10 Now should be the case.

11           If we do that, hopefully there will need  
12 to be a clear line of communication both internal  
13 and external, so that's talking with developers,  
14 database managers. But also you AP members, your  
15 constituency to get a feedback of, you know, a  
16 program (inaudible) that would be God awful as far  
17 as intuitive usage and that sort of feedback is  
18 going to be essential as it doesn't do anybody any  
19 good to have a system for folks to use in the  
20 general public and then get folks to actually use  
21 that to be compliant (inaudible) confident in that  
22 information.

1           Essentially (inaudible) and I'm trying  
2   to introduce (inaudible) wherever and whenever  
3   possible to make sure that if an individual  
4   selects (inaudible) that all the different data  
5   elements, like being identical so the Agency will  
6   not necessarily having to decipher, that the  
7   information did, however it comes back into us, is  
8   meeting that need and can then be digested and  
9   used to help inform the unseasoned longer term  
10  management goals.

11           As well as one thing that I think we've  
12  all experienced this year is how can some of these  
13  electronic technologies help us when we're facing  
14  the kind of challenges that we're (inaudible).  
15  Now first and foremost the management of the  
16  Atlantic Tuna Fishery this year, especially during  
17  those early months to summer where Artic  
18  (inaudible) essentially non-existent. How are we  
19  then tracking commercial fish that's being sold?  
20  Really, we just set an amount of time (Inaudible)  
21  billfish fish and what that looked like this year.  
22  Was there (inaudible) essentially how does having

1 these tools available to us the collective "us" I  
2 may have lost the (inaudible) from their  
3 respective, but also from a constituency respect.  
4 When we look at (inaudible) needing some more  
5 specific examples here, looking specifically at  
6 the Shark Research Fishery, looking to see whether  
7 or not electronic monitoring as a rule, will be  
8 managing that fishery or monitoring that fishery.  
9 I know currently we have a (inaudible) permit that  
10 studies the Cape Cod Commercial Fisherman's  
11 Association to help inform some of the gear  
12 authorization questions that struggled with over  
13 the years whether or not unauthorized gear on  
14 board a vessel precludes that vessel from catching  
15 a bluefin (inaudible). If you have a lobster trap  
16 on board you can't bluefin legally. Does looking  
17 at electronic technologies help ease our ability  
18 to introduce more flexibility in some of those  
19 cases? So we have couple experimental permits out  
20 looking at that.

21 You know a lot of (inaudible) looking at  
22 how do some systems start to merge. You know, can

1 we have a VMS and an electronic monitoring unit  
2 serve the same purpose. So we've got two systems,  
3 two service providers, two bills, (inaudible)  
4 leverage where the technology is at these days as  
5 they try to build more efficient systems so  
6 there's actually less hardware on the boat  
7 (inaudible) related to other issues, whether it be  
8 (inaudible) service providers, whatever they need,  
9 and that ultimately looking at trying to  
10 capitalize on some of the efficiencies in the  
11 ICCAT trade trafficking (inaudible) meetings as  
12 well.

13 So some of the next steps is that  
14 (inaudible) our HMS electronic technology plan.  
15 We have a target release in late March 2020, so I  
16 suspect we'll share that on a more robust version  
17 to the presentation, the draft report as well.  
18 Which I think we should be reminded that even  
19 though we're looking at releasing these reports in  
20 March, that the conversation never stops. These  
21 are essentially going to be living documents that  
22 going to continue to evolve, and given the

1 specific needs, the challenges that we're going to  
2 be discussing in more detail as they are  
3 (inaudible) And so pretty much (inaudible) not  
4 only to be sort of virtual communication  
5 (inaudible) but also through direct communications  
6 as well as the sort of regulatory actions that  
7 we're taking in getting your comments and  
8 ultimately responding to that feedback.

9 We will continue to collaborate at that  
10 national level, as well as the international  
11 regional levels to again ensure that each of these  
12 needs are represented and (inaudible) to maintain  
13 our goal of ensuring efficiency and accuracy  
14 during the authorities being imposed on vessels or  
15 dealers (inaudible).

16 When it comes to funding we'll continue  
17 to explore all sources and the different pilot  
18 programs to really kick the tires on what may or  
19 may not be a viable solution to some of the  
20 challenges that we experience in trying to catch  
21 the best information as efficiently as possible.

22 And I'm going to leave you kind of the

1 last kind of (inaudible) just (inaudible) it's  
2 perfectly clear that it didn't just (inaudible)  
3 it's really based on why, and so folks will start  
4 to see those electronic implementation plans from  
5 all the different regions as well. And it's  
6 ultimately (inaudible) report. And then if you  
7 have questions, always feel free to reach out to  
8 me but I also want to recruit Brett Alger and  
9 Laura Keeling's name here and their email contacts  
10 because they're kind of generally representing  
11 more of that national perspective.

12 I'll turn that back over to you,  
13 Bennett.

14 MR. BROOKS: Great thanks Brad. Sorry,  
15 hang on a second. Is everyone getting kickback or  
16 just me? Okay. All right. So, Brad, maybe you  
17 can just give us somewhere to open up this up to  
18 conversation and any comments that folks may have.

19 But can you say a word about what's sort  
20 of the level of (inaudible) or the feedback that  
21 would be particularly helpful for you given where  
22 this is at and what needs to happen?

1           MR. McHALE: Sure. So the level of  
2 detail obviously first and foremost, (inaudible)  
3 there isn't a draft report in front of the panel,  
4 there aren't specific things to comments on. And  
5 so while at least our report is still being  
6 drafted, really it's looking for feedback on some  
7 of the electronic technology the panel members  
8 they themselves use or their constituents have  
9 been using and whether or not it's essentially a  
10 stay the course type of feedback, you know, what  
11 we do want is one stop shopping or perhaps, you  
12 know, the scope of the different programs. Maybe  
13 that needs to be in play.

14           MR. BROOKS: Okay.

15           MR. McHALE: -- detail to really paint a  
16 picture feedback at this point. The goals are in  
17 force to kind of map out what we anticipate using  
18 electronic technologies for over the next five  
19 year horizon. So again, whether it's improving  
20 what we have in place, whether it's scraping,  
21 whether it's exploring a completely different  
22 avenue, our ears are wide open and then we'll try

1 to include a lot of that in the actual report we  
2 release.

3 MR. BROOKS: Okay. Thanks. Thank you  
4 so much. And I'll just note in the Chat  
5 (inaudible) the bluefin data DSL is also being  
6 developed for use for all the U.S. Virgin Island  
7 commercial fisheries reported. Just throw that  
8 into the mix.

9 MR. McHALE: (Inaudible)

10 MR. BROOKS: So, want to weigh in here,  
11 I will try to grab some folks who haven't been in  
12 too much yet. So again, I'll start with Steve  
13 Iwicki.

14 MR. IWICKI: Okay. Can you hear me  
15 okay?

16 MR. BROOKS: I can hear you speaking.

17 MR. IWICKI: When you're looking at  
18 this, are you including the thing that GARFO is  
19 trying to do with all the tilefish electronic  
20 reporting for recreational fishing? It's a total  
21 disaster, even just getting registered for that.  
22 So and generally speaking to guys that are

1 tilefishing are all also HMS permit holders now to  
2 do all of that. So if you guys haven't looked at  
3 that yet, I will tell you I work with a lot of  
4 contractors for a month and a half, we still  
5 couldn't make the damn thing even set up to do  
6 reporting. So just give you that little feedback  
7 that might help, we'll get the tilefishing  
8 reporting as well.

9 MR. McHALE: Thank you. We're acutely  
10 aware of that app. We're also acutely aware that  
11 the fish (inaudible) while we're trying to get  
12 that application up off the ground. We supported  
13 its effort but in a sense it didn't necessarily  
14 have the scope to really pull (inaudible) elements  
15 even though we fully informed the managers there  
16 that listen, HMS and tilefish go hand in hand,  
17 they were a little too far down the development  
18 path to really do a course correction. So that's  
19 really where we starting to emphasize here that  
20 collaboration, ensuring that all HMS elements are  
21 being at the ground level so we don't necessarily  
22 have a repeat of, although they're to be commended

1 about the tilefish off the ground, if you will.  
2 But it fell shy of ultimately meeting that goal of  
3 meeting the needs of the customer, which is going  
4 to be a tilefish and HMS (inaudible).

5 MR. IWICKI: Yeah. I mean they were  
6 basically treating you as if you were a commercial  
7 fisherman with permits and all this other stuff  
8 just to get the account set up. And I will tell  
9 you I didn't meet a single recreational fisherman  
10 that had succeeded in it or was even willing to  
11 try anymore. So I tried to be their guinea pig  
12 for about a month and a half, but like I said,  
13 they should be able to tie all this together in  
14 one system. That's all, thanks.

15 MR. BROOKS: Okay. Let's get a few more  
16 folks. Let's go to Shana and Schalit, and then  
17 Katie. Shana, you're up.

18 MS. MILLER: Can you hear me?

19 MR. BROOKS: We can.

20 MS. MILLER: Yeah, thanks for the  
21 presentation, Brad, I think that it's, you know,  
22 an exciting effort, you know, has a lot of

1 potential to really, you know, harness all these  
2 new technologies and increase the efficiency  
3 entirely so reporting and some of the monitoring  
4 programs and complementing the human observer  
5 programs. I think the, again, in the Atlantic  
6 longline fishery presents Amendment 7 has been,  
7 you know, really successful and so it'll be good  
8 to see this was gotten, you know, a broader  
9 context. And, you know, as you go through this  
10 process, you know, I'm sure that you will continue  
11 to seek stakeholder engagement and feedback, but I  
12 think it's really important to get, you know,  
13 industry focus groups involved, you know, we've  
14 obviously had some issues here with the lack of  
15 compliance, fallout from the lack of compliance  
16 over the last what, 10 to 20 years with the  
17 recreational bluefin mandatory reporting, even  
18 though you guys have made it what I consider to be  
19 quite simple to report recreationally caught  
20 bluefin at this point.

21 So you're really getting industry  
22 members involved in the design of these systems

1 and what is easiest for them I think is really  
2 important. And as you've pointed out,  
3 collaboration is key, you know, this isn't just  
4 happening for Atlantic HMS, it's happening  
5 nationwide, it's happening at all of the RFMOs and  
6 including most relevant for this group, ICCAT.  
7 You have mandates through both the tropical tunas  
8 and marlin measure at this point to develop  
9 electronic monitoring programs, and that'll be a  
10 big topic on the agenda of the IMM Intersessional  
11 Meeting next year. So I think this effort is  
12 really timely in that respect and can make sure  
13 that the HMS can continue to be a champion of this  
14 while also ensuring that ICCAT adopt standards and  
15 best practices that are consistent with what the  
16 U.S. is doing.

17 So anyways, great work, and look forward  
18 to learning more in the spring. Thanks.

19 MR. McHALE: Thanks.

20 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. I've got about  
21 folks in the que and we've got about 20 minutes  
22 before we will absolutely have a hard stop for

1 public comments because we want to be aware of  
2 that. David Schalit, and then to Katie and then  
3 to Rick Bellavance.

4 MR. SCHALIT: Can you hear me?

5 MR. BROOKS: Yes.

6 MR. SCHALIT: Okay, great. Brad, thanks  
7 very much for that presentation. A couple of  
8 thoughts. You mentioned that this ET proposal  
9 that there is a deadline at the end of March, 2021  
10 for developing a preliminary plan; is that  
11 correct?

12 MR. McHALE: That's the goal that is  
13 applying thoughts, all the different reasons to  
14 release the respective plans. Some of them may be  
15 in different shapes than others. But hopefully  
16 that's kind of when the plan will be released.  
17 But I also want to emphasize there that  
18 (inaudible) aspect of, you know, the conversations  
19 are going to continue essentially from the  
20 milestone of trying to putting that document  
21 together. So it's more about (inaudible) just  
22 happening. (Inaudible) 14 and 13 in a different

1 place to bring it all together.

2 MR. SCHALIT: Okay. So what we're  
3 talking about right now is basically developing a  
4 new solution involving technology, but we're not  
5 talking about a regulatory issue here; is that  
6 correct?

7 MR. McHALE: Absolutely. To be  
8 perfectly clear in case I've misspoken. It is not  
9 a regulatory action. This is really just a  
10 comprehensive assessment of the technology that  
11 we've been using say over the past five years and  
12 where we envision electronic technology leading us  
13 over the next five years. But maybe that  
14 ultimately might lead to a regulatory options  
15 somewhere downstream, but this product that's  
16 being produced for March of 2021 (inaudible) 2021,  
17 I got that right. It's more of modification plan  
18 versus a regulatory action.

19 MR. SCHALIT: Okay. Does this  
20 implementation plan, would it involve some general  
21 ideas in terms of the architecture we're talking  
22 about here? When I say architecture I'm

1     referencing consideration for different platforms  
2     that might be used for the same job, that sort of  
3     thing, is that something that are we going into  
4     that level of detail in this initial plan?

5             MR. McHALE: I think our problem would  
6     be another conversation on the heel of the plan,  
7     to be honest, David.

8             MR. SCHALIT: Okay. What sort of  
9     specific might we need that we're not getting?  
10    Because I mean I'm initiating this step, we would  
11    be looking at, possibly looking at multiple  
12    platforms. And I know that from monitoring from  
13    my fishermen, they very much, once they start  
14    using this Smartphone app, they actually see how  
15    easy it is. And I'm wondering how it would be  
16    possible to have a solution that runs on a  
17    computer that provides you with access to all of  
18    this reporting that you might need for your  
19    various permits, how that can actually be ported  
20    over to a Smartphone app in such a way that it can  
21    actually not provide you with such a cluttered  
22    page to look at. You know what I'm saying, that

1 actually could be very tricky. But okay, so maybe  
2 we can say that we look with a view toward that  
3 target at the next stage. Okay?

4 MR. MCHALE: (Inaudible) directly to any  
5 future experience, which ultimately allows  
6 facilitated compliance. So those sort of  
7 conversations will definitely be appropriate,  
8 David, as we look for, you know, a lump versus  
9 split type solutions. But that may be tricky  
10 (inaudible) for getting compliance.

11 MR. SHALIT: Thanks. Well, thanks Brad.

12 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, David. Let's go to  
13 Katie then Rick Bellavance and then Angel.

14 MS. WESTFALL: Thanks, Bennett. And  
15 thanks so much, Brad, for the great presentation,  
16 after all the work you guys are doing I'm super  
17 grateful to the Agency for updating this plan and  
18 for all the leadership on electronic technology.  
19 I think HMS has really been at the forefront of  
20 electronic technology and it's really great to see  
21 that continuing. (Inaudible) high level comments  
22 I think as more technology providers are coming on

1 line for EM and ER and definitely encourage these  
2 and see the focus more on performance centers and  
3 not mandates specific technologies to really allow  
4 for innovation and avoid locking in technologies  
5 that can become outdated.

6 I also agree and I'm grateful for the  
7 update on integrated systems like EM, ER, and VMS  
8 solutions that can meet multiple goals and I'm  
9 grateful for the purpose on reducing recording  
10 redundancies and streamlining what the fishermen  
11 have to go through when they actually report at  
12 the end of the day.

13 Brad and Jen both touched on this, but I  
14 think it's really important that these collaborate  
15 with fishermen directly. There's so many  
16 excellent fishermen on the AP and in the fisheries  
17 who are creative and innovative and who really  
18 support (inaudible) from ER per usual and Scott  
19 Taylor evolved this amazing tech solution with the  
20 proposed, the Florida EFP, and there are so many  
21 others out there doing great work. And in order  
22 to really maximize the uptake and the use of

1 electronic technology I think these (inaudible) to  
2 really not only be designed to meet regulatory  
3 requirements but also with the fishermen in line  
4 and creating their needs, their business needs,  
5 and how they operate on the water. And there's  
6 just so many exciting innovations that are helping  
7 right now. And I think a collaborative kind of R  
8 and D fishery would really help needs and be the  
9 path of these new technologies in direct  
10 collaboration with the fisherman, the private  
11 sector in (inaudible) and other scientific  
12 institutions.

13           And, Brad, you mentioned there's a kind  
14 of funding out there that can be leveraged for  
15 this kind of work so I really kind of encourage  
16 that type of collaborative approach that  
17 (inaudible) on water. And, Brad, I'm curious,  
18 isn't this kind of similar to what David has  
19 touched on in terms of the vacuum architecture?  
20 Has this plan stated some of the data  
21 modernization work that Karen's been doing or we  
22 are doing kind of on the fisheries information to

1 management side? Is that going to be incorporated  
2 or is that for the separate effort?

3 MR. McHALE: (Inaudible) somewhat  
4 separate but they do obviously overlap. We are  
5 looking at some of their efforts at the FIS level  
6 and we're trying to get some of the efforts coming  
7 out of GARFO where (inaudible) reported that  
8 there's just really no bright edges to allow these  
9 discussions. Because the more you peel back the  
10 layers of (inaudible) and segueing over into kind  
11 of those efforts. But (inaudible) currently  
12 separate but obviously, you know, they will marry  
13 up a little bit further downstream. Again, the  
14 echo of keeping in the bigger picture in mind  
15 because we're trying to meet our regional  
16 respective needs that essentially those goals are  
17 the same.

18 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Brad. Those folks  
19 who have already talked, I'd ask folks to take  
20 down their hands, that would be good. Let's go to  
21 Rick Bellavance, then Angel, then Mike Pierdinock.  
22 Rick. Rick Bellavance, you there? Your line is

1 open.

2 MR. BELLAVANCE: Can you hear me?

3 MR. BROOKS: \*6.

4 MR. BELLAVANCE: Can you hear me?

5 MR. BROOKS: Yeah. You're faint but we  
6 can hear you. Just speak loudly.

7 MR. BELLAVANCE: Thanks. Can you hear  
8 me okay?

9 MR. BROOKS: No, we can barely hear you  
10 at all.

11 MR. BELLAVANCE: Is that any better?

12 MR. BROOKS: That is definitely better.

13 MR. BELLAVANCE: Good. In the interest  
14 of time I'll combine all the comments previous to  
15 mine, different ideas and support for the IT  
16 programs. I agree with all those. I have two  
17 specific recommendations that I thought I'd bring  
18 up here.

19 As Brad duly noted, as a navigator  
20 electronic reporting and monitoring and  
21 technologies for a while. And I've probably spent  
22 a lot of my hot air advocating for different

1 programs. But I did want to mention something  
2 that he started to develop that we can try to at  
3 least get on the record here and obviously the  
4 (inaudible). And that's the way that we're  
5 starting to join all these programs together  
6 toward that one stop shopping that we've talked  
7 about for years. So as I am happy to report that  
8 I can use my (inaudible) to report my HMS now as  
9 well as my dock loading reporting in this  
10 (inaudible) level stuff. And pretty soon my South  
11 Atlantic stuff I think in January will also be  
12 used. But what I've learned is that different  
13 regions have different requirements, and if you  
14 are fishing in a region that you have (inaudible)  
15 quickly, so if you have multiple permits and  
16 you're fishing in a region where you don't always  
17 run into fishing from a different management body,  
18 you're still required to put those fields in on  
19 your trip report even though you may not interact  
20 with that species every single day, occasionally  
21 even very rarely. And you still have that permit  
22 so you can technically take them when you do

1 interact with them.

2           So what I suggest is that you look at  
3 how we can restructure these programs to determine  
4 what fields you need to provide to the different  
5 agencies on a species bases as opposed to a permit  
6 basis. So if I'm groundfishing up in New England  
7 all winter long, but changes of me running into a  
8 dolphin or a wahoo are slim, but yet I'm still  
9 required to put those fields that the South  
10 Atlantic is looking for on all my groundfish  
11 forms. And I think that's a little bit burdensome  
12 and maybe not wanted by some folks. So if there  
13 was a way to restructure the programs where you  
14 say all right, I'll (inaudible) okay, now we have  
15 to do those (inaudible) Okay, there's cod, okay,  
16 now I have to do whatever fields (inaudible). I  
17 think the tuna fish one are at 66 right now, which  
18 is great. But if there were ever a time when  
19 those would show up on every trip, that would also  
20 be (inaudible) tuna, you can put those.

21           And that may be a long winded  
22 requirement across there, but that would be an

1 improvement, in my opinion, on multi reporting  
2 systems.

3 And I had another, I lost it, so I guess  
4 I'll have to pass on that one. Anyway, that's  
5 (inaudible) and thanks for all your work on  
6 (inaudible) I'll look closely to that reporting  
7 (inaudible.)

8 MR. MCHALE: And, Rick, (inaudible)  
9 through the watch and they are easily times but,  
10 yeah, the restructuring something I've had on my  
11 radar and I do see the challenge that presents.  
12 Thanks for raising it.

13 MR. BELLAVANCE: Thanks.

14 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Rick. And if it  
15 comes up within the next few minutes you could  
16 also throw it in the Chat. Okay, I think I've got  
17 four people left, and about seven minutes. So  
18 Angel and Mike.

19 MS. WILLEY: Thank you for the  
20 presentation. I agree that once (inaudible) highly  
21 desirable effort from a lot of our constituents  
22 that they desire that. And I would also recommend

1 that we just kind of (inaudible). Thank you.

2 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Angel. Mike.

3 MR. PIERDINOCK: Thank you. Thank you,  
4 Brad, good presentation of the one stop shopping.  
5 We couldn't be happier. The inconsistencies  
6 between the permits is, you know, it's  
7 problematic.

8 Rick pointed out the specific item, you  
9 know, I have a GARFO permit, I have the HMS  
10 permit, they're integrated, and now the wahoo mahi  
11 permit included in that, which adds a lot more  
12 requirements for the required effort for us up  
13 here where we're lucky to fish six months out of  
14 the year, and with that I'm lucky if I encounter  
15 mahi once every year or once every two to three  
16 years, it seems to be more often with climatic  
17 shift.

18 I agree with Rick, make it species  
19 specific. If we have to report for that day for  
20 the species we land, it would be great if we just  
21 have to do it for that day other than 365 days out  
22 of the year because it's convoluted, it's

1 confusing, it's not necessary, especially if we're  
2 not on the water. We're not in a year-round  
3 fishery for most of the year as a result of where  
4 we are.

5 Last but not least, I could get into  
6 more details at another time, I sent you some  
7 information via email, Brad. I just want to make  
8 sure we maintain our confidentiality and privacy  
9 of the (inaudible) freeze and the implementation  
10 of these measures. That's important that we  
11 continue to do such.

12 Thank you.

13 MR. BROOKS: Thank you. Over to Marty  
14 Scanlon.

15 MR. ODEN: Consolidation is good, that's  
16 all I can say. Brad, you're on the right track, I  
17 couldn't be happier. Oh my gosh, I mean just the  
18 other day I was going through my new fishing forms  
19 and I realized I've got multiple permits, I got  
20 seven permits on my boat. I ended up my fishing  
21 in early May and I realized that even though I was  
22 putting in my discards on my sep forms, I didn't

1 do the discard log book which I had been given.  
2 And actually that's the only time I've really  
3 crossed paths with the size fish here. And I'm  
4 finishing that right now so I've got to catch up  
5 on that something, you know, I've got a drawer  
6 full of about 10 different logbooks here and it's  
7 just mind boggling what we have to go through just  
8 to make a living, not to mention come home and  
9 have to do all this paperwork. So Amen, get it  
10 all on one page, please. Thanks.

11 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Jeff. Marty.

12 MR. SCANLON: Yes. The one thing I just  
13 want to add to as far as pelagic longline industry  
14 goes is that the, you know, the need to keep the  
15 VMS units and our VMS units separated. The VMS  
16 units are really to monitor movement tuna by  
17 catch, or IBQ. The other thing too is like you've  
18 been talking here is we're long overdue to replace  
19 these paper logbooks as those requirements were  
20 just as simple expansion of the vms units. I mean  
21 we already do it for the bluefins. Half the  
22 information in there that you require on those

1 paper logs already, how many hooks we set, what  
2 set it is, all of that. So that is just total  
3 redundancy, all of that. And it's just a pain in  
4 the neck. So if we could just get that, you know,  
5 expand our VMS too so we can eliminate the paper  
6 logs and, you know, and anything that helps the  
7 accuracy of the reporting of the other categories,  
8 especially when it comes to stock assessments. I  
9 mean, you know, we're having quite a bit of  
10 trouble I believe in ICCAT with all of the  
11 information is not being given is costing us in  
12 the long run there when it comes to stock  
13 assessments. So I'll leave it at that.

14 MR. McHALE: Thank you, Marty. And just  
15 along that line, like I mentioned in the  
16 presentation, I noticed the Southeast Science  
17 Center is undertaking efforts to bring the HMS  
18 logbooks or previously known as the longline log  
19 books to that electronic format as well so know  
20 those efforts certainly (inaudible) recall that  
21 all specifically. But thank you.

22 MR. SCANLON: Thanks.

1           MR. BROOKS: Again, if I can ask folks  
2 who have their hands up and have gotten in, which  
3 I think is everybody. If you could lower your  
4 hands. Shana, I seen your hand up earlier, and  
5 I'm going to assume you got coverage? Then I will  
6 note that in the Chat.

7           Rick Weber. And a slightly different  
8 point here, just sort of talking about the need  
9 and the potential for this report to be sort of  
10 aspirational and sort of inspirational I might  
11 add. Sort of how can this be done in a way that  
12 it encourages cross agency and cross government  
13 cooperation. I think that's an interesting point  
14 and one that we haven't heard yet in the  
15 conversation.

16           So, Brad, a lot of feedback there, sort  
17 of moving in the right direction, a lot of hope.  
18 I think a number of general suggestions that sort  
19 of stakeholder engagement, important and  
20 collaboration is key thinking about the platform  
21 that you're using, you know, to the extent that it  
22 could be in a phone better. Think about

1 performance standards, think if that inspires  
2 innovation, R and D, structured in a way that  
3 you're keeping a fresh look of endorsements and  
4 integrations streamlining, one stop shopping. And  
5 then some specific guidance, one around  
6 tilefishing, also some of the maps, looking at  
7 that. Most recent comments around potential  
8 report on a species basis going to be very  
9 helpful. And then pushing through the paper log  
10 books would be nice and keeping BMS and MHS  
11 separate.

12 I think that's it. I feel like I  
13 covered everyone. Is there anyone in the que  
14 left? I see Shana, Steve Iwicki, I don't think  
15 they gotten into this, we need to get your  
16 comment.

17 MS. MILLER: I obviously didn't lower my  
18 hand. I thought it was lowered but that's it.  
19 Sorry.

20 MR. BROOKS: Okay. All right. If you  
21 just lowered your hands I think you're good. And  
22 Mike and Rick. Okay. I think we're good. Brad,

1 any final thoughts from you before we go to public  
2 comment?

3 MR. McHALE: No, I think I hear  
4 everyone.

5 MR. BROOKS: Okay, great. Thanks  
6 everybody. So I want to shift to public comment  
7 at this point. So any member of the public if you  
8 would like to offer a comment for the HMS folks to  
9 hear, for the panelists to hear, this would be the  
10 moment. Hang on a second, I think I'm having an  
11 issue with my wifi.

12 Are you all hearing me still?

13 MR. COOPER: Yeah, we're hearing you,  
14 Bennett.

15 MR. BROOKS: Okay. All right. Good.  
16 Anyway, so want to invite any interested members  
17 of the public who want to share a comment to raise  
18 their hands and we can see who wants to get in.  
19 We ask the members of the public, you know, keep  
20 their comments about three minutes or so. And  
21 just remind you that this isn't an opportunity to  
22 go back and forth, you know, with Agency staff or

1 with the panelist. But we are very interested in  
2 hearing what you have to say. So with that let's  
3 see who wants to get in. Peter Chaibongsai. I  
4 apologize if I mispronounced your last name.

5 MR. CHAIBONGSAI: That's okay. Can you  
6 hear me?

7 MR. BROOKS: Yep, we can. And if you  
8 could start off, Peter, with your name and any  
9 kind of affiliation, that'll be great.

10 MR. CHAIBONGSAI: Yes. Hi. I'm Peter  
11 Chaibongsai with the Billfish Foundation. So I  
12 just wanted to say first off, great job on the  
13 presentations today. Obviously we are  
14 particularly interested in what Jennifer had to  
15 present today on the management of billfish and  
16 some of the suggested solutions. As well as  
17 hearing some of the discussions by some of our  
18 constituents in the fisheries world.

19 Just a couple quick comments. You know,  
20 as Jennifer was saying and kind of alluding to,  
21 you know, most of the harvested fish were on the  
22 white marlin and roundscale spearfish so we do

1 believe a separation of blue marlin and white  
2 marlin/roundscale spearfish makes sense, I believe  
3 as Rick had mentioned, due to the fact that most  
4 of the harvest is coming from that arena.

5 We also do agree and applaud that the  
6 Mid-Atlantic tournaments are willing to increase  
7 their minimum size above the federal limit. That  
8 will, one, obviously help lower the amount of fish  
9 being harvested. But then obviously will help to  
10 benefit the fish species themselves and the stocks  
11 themselves by less fish being caught during those  
12 tournament times. So that's great to hear. And  
13 that's going to benefit others, not only the fish  
14 but the fisheries and the industry itself in the  
15 long term.

16 We also want to mention that this is not  
17 the first time and it will not be the last time  
18 that the recreational industry will take a lead in  
19 fisheries' management. I just want to mention  
20 that fisheries, sorry, recreational fishing  
21 tournaments still currently do this. They will  
22 adjust and adapt to anything they see that needs

1 to be increased or decreased to help the fish and  
2 to help the industry. Just to give you some  
3 examples of some fairly recent, obviously the  
4 circle hooks were instituted by the recreational  
5 tournaments before it was mandated. And then  
6 looking at some of the club tournaments as well as  
7 some of the other tournaments in the Gulf of  
8 Mexico and on the East Coast that have increased  
9 their size well beyond the federally mandated  
10 minimums.

11 The other thing I wanted to mention was,  
12 excuse me, this is just a question. Is there a  
13 possibility to see the numbers that Jennifer was  
14 looking at in regards to a numbers breakdown in  
15 length for white marlin and roundscale spearfish  
16 for this past year as well as the previous five to  
17 10 years? Because I believe in her presentation  
18 she mentioned that most were over the 69 inch  
19 minimum for white marlin and such. So we just  
20 wanted, not saying that she's incorrect, we just  
21 wanted to take a look at how close things were and  
22 so forth.

1           Outside of that, the last comment I do  
2     have is I know, I apologize, I believe it was  
3     Randy that had spoken about it in regards to the  
4     release data, is that a majority of the data that  
5     they get is from the tournaments, if not all. And  
6     if I'm incorrect on this, please feel free to  
7     correct me. But if NOAA would like some of the  
8     PBS release data, we are more than welcome to  
9     share that with them as well. And that would be,  
10    obviously, throughout the domestic U.S. for their  
11    use to help understand the stock a little bit  
12    better in the effort. And that's it. Thank you.

13           MR. BROOKS: And, Peter, just before you  
14    sign off here, I've just been asked to confirm the  
15    spelling of your last name is  
16    C-H-A-I-B-O-N-G-S-A-I; is that correct?

17           MR. CHAIBONGSAI: That's correct,  
18    Bennett, and you said it perfectly the first time.

19           MR. BROOKS: All right, thank you.  
20    Let's go next to Esther Wozniak. And again, if  
21    you could start off with name and association if  
22    you could.

1 MS. WOZNIAK: Sure. Can you hear me?

2 MR. BROOKS: We can perfectly, thank  
3 you.

4 MS. WOZNIAK: My name is Esther Wozniak,  
5 I'm with the Pew Charitable Trust. And I just  
6 wanted to thank you for the presentation and all  
7 the work that's being done on this so far. You  
8 make a lot of really good points, especially about  
9 the need for standardization and efficiency when  
10 developing various EM programs across regions, we  
11 agree with this. We have engaged with multiple  
12 shell fishery management organizations. And  
13 including the countries directly to show they have  
14 tools to produce complimentary and comprehensive  
15 EM programs.

16 The tools produced by us included EM  
17 toolkits and an EM roadmap which reports data to  
18 be covered so that the key elements discussed here  
19 today such as the main clear objectives,  
20 standards, organization, make (inaudible) a lot of  
21 the basic features that have been covered here  
22 today. The U.S. is at the forefront of EM program

1 development and has an opportunity to champion the  
2 question you have getting the adoption of these  
3 tools in an international forum while ensuring  
4 consistency across programs.

5 And so finally I did want to mention, I  
6 see Brett Alger on here. I wanted to thank Brett  
7 for judging at one of our ER (inaudible)  
8 exchanges, which included representatives from  
9 Australia, Korea. I think we see from the  
10 registration of where the U.S. can be multilateral  
11 for (inaudible) discussions to raise and  
12 collaborate the nature of the EM. Thank you.

13 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thanks so much,  
14 Esther. And then let's see. I am not seeing any  
15 other -- wait, somebody else has come in. Carol  
16 Neidig, if I pronounce that correct, in the que.

17 MS. NEIDIG: Yes, Carol Neidig. Thank  
18 you. Yes. I wanted to add a point. I'm the  
19 Director of the Center for Fisheries Electronic  
20 Monitoring at Mote Marine Laboratory in Sarasota,  
21 Florida. And thank you very much, as many others  
22 have said, the presentations have been fantastic

1 and I've learned a lot.

2           And the data standardization is  
3 definitely something from our viewpoint that we  
4 are trying to work along as the panelist in the  
5 ACCSP Working Group, and so forth to go in that  
6 direction, and also working with ICES. And what  
7 we have in the snapper/grouper fishery in the Gulf  
8 is that we've been pushing hard with trying to  
9 come up, or coming up with data from electronic  
10 monitoring application on the commercial longline  
11 and vertical line vessels to record annotations of  
12 shark species. So the bycatch actual condition  
13 upon arrival and their fate. And we are trying to  
14 open some doors to be able to provide that  
15 information to those that need it, particularly  
16 for this fishery because of the impact the sharks  
17 are having with depredation of targeted catch and  
18 with gear.

19           We've also implemented or have worked on  
20 successfully using underwater camera integration  
21 with the EM systems to be able to actually  
22 identify some of the larger shark species we had a

1 difficult time doing previously that were cut off  
2 at the sides of the vessels or whether underneath  
3 the vessels.

4           But I wanted to get that out there just  
5 because we have been making some strides towards  
6 providing our data, but we want to do more of it.  
7 We've been accumulating data for almost five years  
8 so we would like to get that out so it can be  
9 used. And Dr. Bob Hueter, who is one of your APs,  
10 we have shared the data with him and he has been a  
11 co-PI on some of our projects. And we're  
12 currently providing Hammerhead data to him for a  
13 Sea Grant Project. So I just wanted to get that  
14 out there to try to open some doors for us to, you  
15 know, to work collaboratively with providing  
16 valuable information.

17           So thank you for the opportunity, I  
18 appreciate it.

19           MR. BROOKS: Thank you so much for the  
20 comments, Carol. I'm looking in the Chat and  
21 looking at the queue, and I do not see any other  
22 members of the public wanting to make any remarks.

1 So again, if there's any members of public who  
2 want to weigh in, this would be the moment before  
3 we move to adjourn.

4 Okay. In that case in a moment I'm  
5 going to throw it back to you, Randy, but I just  
6 want to thank everyone for a really good  
7 conversation. As several people just said, I  
8 thought the presentations were really excellent,  
9 very on point and clear, a lot of good information  
10 and really good conversation from all of you AP  
11 members. It's remarkable how thoughtful and  
12 focused this conversation is even though we're not  
13 in a room, it really does feel like it's  
14 generating the same level if not even perhaps  
15 better feedback for the Agency to work with.

16 So I know we lose something by not being  
17 in a room together, but thanks everybody for the  
18 focus and all the comments. And, Randy, over to  
19 you.

20 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Thanks, Bennett. I  
21 agree, I think this was a very insightful and  
22 meaningful Advisory Panel Meeting. I really

1 appreciate everybody's participation, helpful  
2 comments and questions, and just an overall great  
3 session. I know we got a lot of great feedback,  
4 exactly what we were looking for when we keyed up  
5 these agenda items. So thank you very much to  
6 everybody for that. Thank you once again for your  
7 time and spending time with us today. And we look  
8 forward to touching base again.

9 Our next meeting will be sometime next  
10 spring, we haven't decided when yet but we'll  
11 looking forward to try and figure that out in the  
12 coming few months.

13 So thanks a lot everybody, really  
14 appreciate it.

15 MR. BROOKS: Thanks everybody, have a  
16 good afternoon.

17 (Whereupon, at 3:28 p.m., the  
18 PROCEEDINGS were adjourned.)

19 \* \* \* \* \*

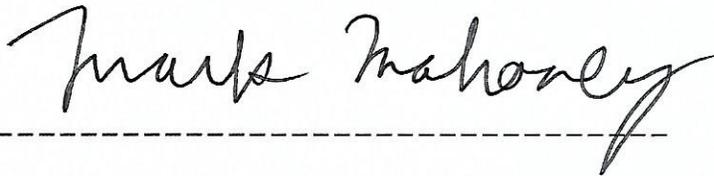
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