

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

ATLANTIC HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES
ADVISORY PANEL MEETING

Silver Spring, Maryland
Wednesday, September 4, 2019

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3 NOAA Fisheries Atlantic HMS Management Division

4 BENNETT BROOKS, Facilitator

5 PATRICK AUGUSTINE
6 Recreational

7 ANNA BECKWITH
8 South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

9 RICK BELLEVANCE
10 New England Fishery Management Council

11 KARYL BREWSTER-GEISZ
12 NOAA Fisheries HMS Management Division

13 CRAIG BROWN
14 NOAA Fisheries Science Center

15 MARY COGLIANO
16 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

17 ENRIC CORTES
18 NOAA Fisheries Science Center

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20 NOAA Fisheries Atlantic HMS Management Division

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23 MARCUS DRYMON
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1 PARTICIPANTS (CONT'D):

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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4 WALTER GOLET
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1 C O N T E N T S

2 Welcome and Introductions

3 Overview of Recent Activities/Rulemaking

4 Amendment 12 (HMS FMP Objectives) Scoping

5 Leadership Update

6 Shark Population and Depredation Discussion

7 HMS Rulemaking Scoping Review for Amendment 13
(Bluefin Tuna); Amendment 14 (Sharks); and

8 Data Collection for Spatial Management of
HMS Fisheries

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10 General Category Cost Earnings Survey Summary

11 HMS Recreational Roundtable Discussion

12 Public Comment

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

2 (8:35 a.m.)

3 MR. BROOKS: So good morning, everybody
4 and welcome to the fall advisory panel meeting for
5 the highly migratory species program. It's good
6 to see everybody here. My name is Bennett Brooks
7 with the Consensus Building Institute, and it's
8 always good to be back here, so thanks for having
9 me yet again.

10 We are, as you can see, a little light
11 around the table. Obviously, there's a hurricane
12 and that's affecting a lot of peoples' lives, and
13 so that is what it is. So we expect to have a
14 much larger group joining us by phone and the
15 webinar. So we'll, obviously, be trying to patch
16 people in that way. So we just want to
17 acknowledge that from the outset. So more
18 opportunity for folks to fold in.

19 Also, want to just acknowledge Randy
20 Blankinship is in his new role as chief of the HMS
21 division. So it's good to have Randy upfront.
22 And Randy will be sharing the duties upfront over

1 the next two days with Karyl Brewster-Geisz as
2 well. So you'll see them swapping in and out as
3 we move along.

4 And just as always, just thank everyone
5 for being here, making the time. We really do
6 understand and appreciate what it means to carve
7 out a couple of days to be here. I know there's
8 an ICCAT meeting following this for some or many
9 of you, so it just means a little bit even more of
10 a hit. So thanks for being here.

11 I'll walk through the agenda in a
12 second, but before we do that I want to just go
13 around the table and around the room and see who's
14 here. And, Mark, we'll start with you.

15 MR. SAMPSON: Mark Sampson, Ocean City,
16 Maryland charter boat captain.

17 MS. WILLEY: Angel Willey, Maryland
18 Department of Natural Resources.

19 MR. PIERDINOCK: Mike Pierdinock,
20 charter boat captain, Massachusetts.

21 MR. IWICKI: Steve Iwicki, recreational,
22 Cape May.

1 MR. BROOKS: You got it this time, Rick?

2 MR. WEBER: Yeah, got the lucky mic.

3 Rick Weber South Jersey Marina and Tournaments
4 Recreational.

5 MR. GRAVES: John Graves here
6 representing the U.S. ICCAT Advisory Committee.

7 MR. KANE: Raymond Kane, Cape Cod,
8 Massachusetts, commercial.

9 MR. PURMONT: George Purmont,
10 commercial.

11 MR. GOLET: Walt Golet, University of
12 Maine, Gulf of Maine Research Institute, academic.

13 MR. DRYMON: Marcus Drymon, Mississippi
14 State University and Mississippi, Alabaman Sea
15 Grant. I'm the state rep for Alabama.

16 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Dewey Hemilright,
17 Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

18 MR. AUGUSTINE: Pat Augustine, New York,
19 recreational.

20 MR. SCANLON: Marty Scanlon, President
21 Blue Water Fisherman's Association, commercial.

22 MR. SCHALIT: David Schalit, I'm

1 president of the American Bluefin Tuna
2 Association, commercial.

3 MS. BECKWITH: Anna Beckwith, South
4 Atlantic Council.

5 MR. ROOTES-MURDY: Kirby Rootes-Murdy,
6 Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

7 MR. NAVARRO: Fly Navarro, recreational.

8 MR. GETTO: Steve Getto, American
9 Bluefin Tuna Association, commercial.

10 MR. WEISS: Alan Weiss, Blue Water
11 Fishing Tackle Company, commercial.

12 MR. HARRIS: Luke Harris, Gulf Shores
13 Alabama, commercial.

14 MR. KERSTETTER: David Kerstetter, South
15 Eastern University in Ft. Lauderdale, academic.

16 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Randy Blankinship,
17 Chief Atlantic Migratory Species Management
18 Division.

19 MR. BROOKS: Okay. Great, thanks. And
20 I don't think we have folks on the line yet, so I
21 think once we get them patched in we'll pause and
22 see who's joining us on the phone as well.

1 So just to give a quick scan of the
2 agenda, as always, it's a busy agenda. Lots to
3 cover. And I think it's a little bit more
4 compressed than usual, perhaps, just because we
5 have the ICCAT meeting following. So we'll finish
6 up by noon on Thursday. We'll stay in plenary the
7 entire conversation so we won't have any breakout
8 sessions. And, as you'll see, there's a lot of
9 the agenda that is focused around scoping sessions
10 that have been held over the summer and other
11 scoping documents, as well as, sort of, the usual
12 updates.

13 We'll start in a minute with Randy's
14 overview of recent HMS activities, rulemakings,
15 and then the remaining morning we'll start first
16 looking at scoping for A-12 which is the national
17 standard guidelines and policies directives.
18 After that, Chris Oliver will be here to give us a
19 brief welcome from leadership. And after that
20 we'll have an in-depth discussion on shark
21 depredation and shark populations. Sort of, the
22 agency's been getting a lot of comment around the

1 increase in depredation, so this is a chance to
2 sort of take a step back, see what's happening
3 with population, see what's happening with
4 depredation, and then have a conversation with you
5 all about that.

6 After lunch we have a number of
7 different topics we'll cover. They'll be feedback
8 from three scoping efforts that the agency's been
9 through. One on bluefin tuna management, the
10 second on shark management, and the third on data
11 collection of special management for HMS
12 fisheries.

13 We'll then have a brief presentation on
14 the survey results from the General category cost
15 earning survey. This is, sort of, preliminary
16 results, but a chance for you to get a sense of
17 what the agency is picking up there. Not on the
18 agenda is, at that point, we will hear from Fish
19 and Wildlife service which will give us an update
20 on the CITES listing of shortfin mako sharks.

21 Later afternoon we'll spend about just
22 under two hours or so having a roundtable on HMS

1 recreational issues. We do these round tables
2 periodically which is just a chance to kind of
3 open up an issue, a chance for the agency folks to
4 talk about the kinds of things they have been
5 hearing, put those on the table, hear from you all
6 as well. Other issues that maybe they haven't
7 surfaced. And then have a general conversation
8 about what are you all thinking, where might the
9 agency think about heading. It's a fairly open
10 conversation and a good way for the -- for Randy
11 and folks to get a feel for where some of these
12 issues might need to go in the future.

13 We will have public comment from 5:30 to
14 6:00. And let me just note, if the rec roundtable
15 requires more time staff is all prepared to after
16 public comment continue that on, and if it needs
17 to go past 6:00 that works for us. So we'll just
18 follow your lead on that.

19 The other thing that will happen after
20 6:00 is, as traditional, a no host social down in
21 the lobby. So, obviously, encourage everyone to be
22 part of that.

1 On day two it will be shorter day.
2 Again, just til noon. And we have four main
3 topics. We'll start with stock assessment updates
4 on yellowfin tuna, white marlin, and shortfin
5 mako. On second topic will be kind of the usual
6 bluefin tuna fishery update, in-season management
7 actions, catch trends, etcetera.

8 The third topic we'll hear about the
9 compendium that HMS staff has been putting
10 together that's summarizing HMS actions and their
11 rationale. And then lastly, we'll hear from
12 enforcement folks on what's been going on in their
13 world. Then we will have public comment and our
14 wrap up, etcetera. So that's the game plan for
15 the agenda. Any topics that we haven't -- don't
16 have on the agenda now that are critical to bring
17 up?

18 Okay. And I don't think I said this
19 yet, but in the back room there is food and there
20 are refreshments, and we have John Graves and the
21 ICCAT advisory committee to thank for that. So,
22 John, thank you. Everyone else, don't get used to

1 it. But eat. Eat and drink today like there's no
2 tomorrow, but I think it's gonna be here tomorrow
3 too, is that right, John? Okay. So eat and drink
4 today like there is gonna be a tomorrow, but
5 tomorrow really knock yourselves out.

6 Couple of ground rules, just before we
7 jump in. Just a reminder, I think everyone in the
8 room knows this, but the advisory panel is here to
9 give input for the agency to hear your thoughts
10 and comments. You are not here and you're not
11 convened to give consensus advice, but your
12 perspectives really are helpful for the agency as
13 they shape different rules going forward.

14 What we ask of you all as participants
15 around the table is, one, participate. Share your
16 thoughts. You all are here because you represent
17 different perspectives and sectors. And the
18 agency can't do its job as well as it could if
19 you're not sharing, so please make sure they
20 understand what's important, what thoughts you
21 have.

22 At the same time, stay focused on the

1 agenda. Be brief in your comments. We always
2 have a lot to cover and there's always a lot of
3 people who want to get into the conversation. So
4 you can help others around the table by doing
5 that. And, as always, just be respectful in your
6 comments. There are differing viewpoints. We
7 expect that, but talking about why they're
8 different in a way that's respectful of each other
9 is always important.

10 At the end of a day and a half Randy
11 will do a synthesis, as is the custom here. It
12 will be a little bit more high-level, followed by
13 a more detailed synthesis, but we'll have that as
14 well, and, of course, the meeting summary.

15 Last few things, when you want to get in
16 the queue if you turn your tent card up that's
17 helpful for me to see. I do tend to follow along,
18 but I also tend to break from that cause I want to
19 allow for conversation back and forth, and if
20 folks haven't been talking much and some folks
21 have been talking much, not that that would ever
22 happen here, I always want to give a chance for

1 the quieter voice to weigh in.

2 If your cell phones are not off or on
3 silent please do so. And if you need to have side
4 conversations please step away from the table.
5 It's really distracting to folks if you're
6 talking. I know we all think we whisper quietly,
7 but we really don't. So that's it. Any
8 questions? Randy, over to you.

9 MR. BLANKINSHIP: All right. Thank you,
10 Bennett, and welcome, everyone, to the fall
11 advisory panel meeting. I'm very glad to see
12 everybody that's here. I know that we're a little
13 bit low in numbers because of folks that have been
14 affected by Hurricane Dorian. And, you know, I
15 know that that's been on a lot of folks' minds.
16 Certainly on our minds down in the southeast.

17 For those of you all, just as a
18 reminder, my position is actually located in St.
19 Petersburg, Florida. I will be staying down
20 there. And so myself and the southeast branch
21 down there have been concerned about the storm, as
22 it was predicted to go across Florida for a while

1 there about a week ago. And I know that as that
2 happened and as people were preparing in the
3 Northern Gulf for that potential, and people
4 preparing along the Atlantic seaboard for that
5 potential there were a lot of folks that were
6 concerned and needed to adjust flights and make
7 travel plans, and plan to stay closer to home in
8 order to, you know, to be able to be with their
9 family to prepare their homes and their properties
10 and all of that. And I know that there are still
11 folks who are in the process of doing that or have
12 already done that. And so that has affected, you
13 know, our attendance here, and rightfully so.

14 Last week we were still trying to make a
15 decision, coming to a decision point about whether
16 to actually hold this meeting given the fact that
17 so many of our advisory panel members were going
18 to be affected potentially. And we appreciate you
19 all bearing with us through that process as we
20 gathered information, and as the storm got closer
21 and the forecast became a little bit more refined,
22 and we were able to make the decision that we did

1 to carry on.

2 And part of that is because of the
3 technological abilities that we have and that we
4 will be recovering here in a moment for remote
5 participation for those that weren't able to
6 travel. We certainly -- we're hoping that that
7 was going to be up and running right now. And I
8 know Pete is still working to try to get that
9 fixed, so we'll have some of those folks joining
10 us in a moment.

11 But we still have a great deal of
12 concern, of course, for those that have been
13 affected by the storm or are being affected and
14 will be affected by the storm as it continues on.
15 We know that that situation is not over, and many
16 of you all are still monitoring that as it moves
17 north along the Atlantic Coast. Those that were
18 affected by the storm or will be certainly are in
19 our thoughts and prayers, and particularly those
20 folks in the Northern Bahamas.

21 So, as Bennett said, we've got a full
22 agenda over this day and a half. It's a short

1 meeting. We're glad you're here, once again.
2 We're looking forward to the input that you all
3 will provide for us that will help us to make the
4 best and most informed decisions that we possibly
5 can, and we also rely upon you all to carry
6 messages back out to the folks that you know and
7 that you have contact with to help them know and
8 be informed about what's happening without HMS
9 management.

10 But before we get into the overview
11 presentation I want to take a moment to share with
12 you a bit of somber news. That's certainly somber
13 for those of us in the HMS management division,
14 and I wanted to spend a little bit of time talking
15 about that. A little over two weeks ago our good
16 friend and colleague Joe Desfosse passed away
17 after a sudden and unexpected illness.

18 This is a picture of Joe, a good picture
19 of him. Some of you all knew him from the
20 meetings, or maybe even professionally outside of
21 that. He has been working in the HMS Management
22 Division for many years, and this was a big loss

1 not only, you know, for us in HMS, but also more
2 broadly there was a sense of loss because his
3 wife, Lisa Desfosse, is the director of the
4 Southeast Fishery Center Pascagoula Laboratory in
5 Pascagoula, Mississippi.

6 And so there were a lot of our NOAA
7 folks that were affected by Joe's passing. Joe
8 not only left his wife behind, but also his
9 daughter who's 16 years old. Pardon me. Her name
10 is Jaime and a very sweet girl.

11 Joe was a vital part of our division.
12 He was responsible for doing a lot of our data
13 pulls, a lot of our data analysis, working as part
14 of the e-dealer team. He was very vital in the
15 things that he did for us. His absence,
16 obviously, impacts us emotionally, it will impact
17 us workload-wise, and he leaves a hole not only in
18 our hearts, but also within the work that we do
19 within HMS Management Division.

20 We'll miss his sense of humor and his
21 presence and his friendship. And so, at this time
22 I would like to have just a moment of silence to

1 remember Joe. And if you would just join me in
2 that moment of silence.

3 Okay. Thank you. I appreciate that and
4 I think the division appreciates that. We'll
5 transition now into our overview presentation.
6 This is something that we start off all of our
7 meetings to kind of catch you up on a few things
8 that are happening, some things that have happened
9 since we last met which wasn't that long ago, just
10 a little while ago in the springtime.

11 And within this overview presentation
12 I'll touch on a few things that are not
13 specifically in, you know, more developed agenda
14 items. Those things on the left side of this
15 slide include just touching on subjects such as
16 the adjusted quotas and status of the adjustment
17 of quotas for albacore, swordfish and bluefin, an
18 update on Amendment 5b for dusky sharks, and the
19 litigation associated with that, new information
20 coming out from the Southeast Fishery Science
21 Center in the form of the new tech memo for
22 protected species, and the upcoming rule that

1 we'll have for implementing some small changes
2 that occur as a result of that.

3 Also, touching on the pelagic longline
4 bluefin tuna area-based management measures and
5 weak hooks. And that proposed rule that is out
6 for public comment right now. During this
7 overview will be the time that we spend on this
8 subject and the discussion to follow would be the
9 time to make comments on that, in addition to
10 public comment later at the end of the day.

11 We'll also give you a quick update on
12 the IBQ three year review. Not covered in the
13 review, and that will be the subject of these
14 other agenda items, as Bennett has gone through or
15 listed the things there on the right-hand side.
16 And the discussion, at this point, following its
17 overview should -- any discussion related to those
18 subjects should be put towards those agenda items
19 later on in the meeting.

20 So since the spring AP meeting we did
21 publish the proposed rule for the bluefin tuna
22 pelagic longline area- based and weak hook

1 management measures. As I said, that's out for
2 public comment through September 30. We've had a
3 number of scoping meetings on different
4 initiatives that involve Amendment 13 and the
5 revamp of management for bluefin tuna. Amendment
6 14 dealing with sharks. And, also, on data
7 collection for spatial management.

8 We did just publish in the Federal
9 Register yesterday a notice of availability for
10 Amendment 12 scoping document, so that is now in
11 scoping as well. We've had several in season
12 actions for adjusting retention limits that
13 include bluefin, swordfish General commercial
14 permit, and for Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico
15 sharks. We've had some fishery closures that we
16 normally do through the year for bluefin tuna in
17 different categories, recreationally and
18 commercially. And quote transfers for bluefin
19 tuna and Gulf of Mexico sharks.

20 We've also had a lot of activities on
21 our operational side of things that include
22 issuing exempted fishing permits and scientific

1 research permits, 34 of those, the shark research
2 fishery permits that were issued, 226 tournaments
3 registered, workshops that were held for shark
4 identification and protected species, safe
5 handling and release workshops. And we are up to
6 with the HMS news about 5,800 subscribers to that.
7 That is an excellent way to get information about
8 HMS news, about HMS happenings, so we encourage
9 folks to sign up for that.

10 And then a little snapshot here because
11 these are a couple of, you know, relatively new
12 things within the year is the number of
13 recreational shark endorsements on the HMS angling
14 permit. And that is about 57 percent of the
15 permits that are issued have those endorsements.
16 And then on the Charter/Headboat commercial sale
17 endorsements that is about 41 percent of those
18 permits that have been issued that have those
19 commercial endorsements.

20 So one thing that we anticipate being
21 able to announce very soon is the final
22 adjustments for quotas for bluefin, Northern

1 albacore and swordfish. When this is announced
2 and published in the Federal Register it will be
3 effective on filing. And this action, you know,
4 adjusts the 2019 baseline quotas based upon the
5 under harvest from 2018 of the quotas. And on
6 this slide are the final numbers for each of
7 those. For Northern albacore, for swordfish, both
8 north and south, and for the bluefin tuna reserve
9 category. So this is something to be, you know,
10 aware of that this is coming very soon. That
11 these are the final numbers.

12 Then a little bit of an update on
13 litigation associated with Amendment 5b and dusky
14 sharks. Just a recap that in 2017 in April we
15 finalized the rule for Amendment 5b which ended
16 overfishing and began to -- it dealt with
17 rebuilding of dusky sharks. In May of 2017 Oceana
18 filed lawsuit against the agency, and in March of
19 2019 the court issued an opinion remanding to the
20 agency to consider all relevant data related to
21 dusky shark bycatch in the HMS and non-HMS
22 fisheries.

1 And so a document was submitted to the
2 court and that was to be done by August 2. That
3 was met. And so that document is now posted
4 online. It was posted there in early August, and
5 the website, the link to it is right here on this
6 slide if you wish to take a look at what that
7 remand document looks like.

8 On the updated information for handling
9 and release of protected resources the Southeast
10 Fishery Science Center released its updated tech
11 memos. What used to be that we referred to as
12 Tech Memo 580. That was distributed at all of our
13 workshops. It is now changing to two different
14 tech memos. One is Tech Memo 735 dealing with
15 careful release protocols. The second one is Tech
16 Memo 738 which is the design standards.

17 There are a few changes in here from
18 what we have been requiring in the pelagic
19 longline and gillnet fisheries, but not really big
20 changes. So all previously approved gears are
21 still approved and for those slight changes that
22 are occurring there are a couple of new gears that

1 are approved and there's a couple of
2 specifications on certain gears that changed.
3 We'll be initiating a rulemaking to codify those
4 minor changes in the future.

5 So related to the pelagic longline
6 bluefin tuna area-based management measures and
7 weak hook management measures proposed rule that I
8 mentioned earlier and, once again, that is in
9 comment period right now through September 30.
10 We're still receiving comments on that, and we
11 know that several of you all have commented on
12 this at the public hearings or submitted written
13 comments. And we appreciate those and we're
14 looking forward to keeping more comments on this.

15 We've had a number of public hearings on
16 this subject and two conference calls, and then we
17 have a rescheduled or an additional, I'm sorry, an
18 additional public hearing in Gloucester,
19 Massachusetts coming up September 19. We've
20 received a lot of comments both in favor and
21 opposed to the preferred alternatives in this, and
22 we'll continue to look at those comments as they

1 come in.

2 A quick update on the three-year review
3 for the IBQ program or the individual bluefin tuna
4 quota program. We spent quite a bit of time in
5 the spring meeting going over the draft three year
6 review that has been out, and are in the process
7 of finalizing that report. In that finalized
8 document we don't anticipate that there will be
9 any substantive changes to the conclusions or
10 recommendations from the draft, and the link to
11 the draft is here in this slide as well. But you
12 can be on the lookout for that final report coming
13 out later this September.

14 So as usual, we have this slide in here
15 just to highlight that we have regular updates on
16 landings for different species and species groups
17 available online, and here are the links to those.
18 If you wish to take a look at those please do so.
19 There's a lot of really good information there to
20 track through the season.

21 And then on the recreational side of
22 things, related to some of the surveys and

1 updates, as most of you all are aware, and we've
2 mentioned in previous meetings that the MRIP had
3 adjusted and changed to the new fishing efforts
4 survey that adjusted a lot of numbers. A lot of
5 the councils have been dealing with the changes
6 that result from that for the council managed
7 species. And for some HMS some of those estimates
8 also changed and are being incorporated into
9 management, including sharks and also in reporting
10 to ICCAT as appropriate as well. The large
11 pelagic survey redesign continues and that work
12 will continue in looking at, potentially, some new
13 techniques for that survey. An initial pilot
14 study is planned for this coming year to test some
15 of those modifications to the survey.

16 On the Endangered Species Act side of
17 things, a couple of updates. First of all, not an
18 update which is that consultation is ongoing for
19 all HMS fisheries, and that consultation will
20 include all the listed species, including those
21 that were recently listed such as Bryde's whale,
22 oceanic whitetip and giant manta ray.

1 And then, also, the one update is to let
2 you all know that on August 1 the agency was sued
3 by Defenders of Wildlife and Center for Biological
4 Diversity for failure to complete consultation
5 under the ESA on oceanic whitetip and giant manta
6 ray. The oceanic whitetip recovery planning
7 workshop for the Atlantic and Caribbean is
8 upcoming this fall, and there's the contact
9 information for Chelsea Young if you wish to get
10 more information about that.

11 So while there's a lot happening within
12 the division there is a lot happening outside of
13 the division that some of those activities have
14 the potential to affect HMS management and our
15 constituents in HMS fisheries. And so some of
16 those things we've listed here with associated
17 websites where you can go to get more information
18 about those activities. One of which is the
19 recent CITES listing in Appendix 2 for long fin
20 and shortfin mako. And we will have, you know,
21 later on today some folks from the U.S. Fishing
22 and Wildlife Service that will be around to help

1 answer some questions related to that. It's a
2 very new happening that we're still wrapping our
3 minds around.

4 Also, expansion of Flower Garden's Banks
5 National Marine Sanctuary in the Gulf of Mexico.
6 And the Gulf of Mexico coral Amendment 9 which
7 seeks to add some protections for some of the deep
8 water corals and HAPCs or habitat areas of
9 particular concern associated with those coral
10 areas. And then, also, some shark fin banned
11 bills that are moving through Congress, and the
12 expansion of a Florida Keys National Marine
13 Sanctuary which has a DEIS out for that and is
14 under comment period right now. So that website
15 is available as well.

16 MR. BROOKS: If you could pause for one
17 second. Anna just wants to jump in quickly on
18 this.

19 MS. BECKWITH: Folks on the phone say
20 they can't hear us. They're only listening to
21 some very, very bad music.

22 MR. BROOKS: Yes, thank you. I think

1 that's not a surprise to us, but not good. We're
2 working on it. Thank you.

3 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Yeah, and thanks,
4 Anna.

5 MR. BROOKS: I don't know if someone can
6 send a note out to webinar participants just
7 letting them know that we know, if that hasn't
8 happened already.

9 MR. BLANKINSHIP: We might be able to do
10 that on the AP email distribution list, if
11 anything.

12 MR. BROOKS: Okay.

13 MR. BLANKINSHIP: I know Pete's still
14 working on it, and I know that I actually have
15 been getting texts as we've been talking from
16 people that are texting me about this too. So
17 can't read them all right now.

18 MR. BROOKS: Okay. Thank you.

19 MR. BLANKINSHIP: But we'll move ahead.
20 So one thing that we have certainly been aware of
21 and in communications with you all and folks that
22 are not AP members as well is that we get a lot of

1 data requests and we take those requests
2 seriously. You know, we've got a number of them
3 over the last several months.

4 Our goal is always to be as responsive
5 as we possibly can with those data requests. But
6 we also have to consider a lot of other things as
7 we strive to be responsive to those data requests,
8 including staff availability, the amount of folks
9 that we have to actually accomplish our, you know,
10 our regular work in addition to dealing with data
11 requests, and the associated workload and
12 balancing priorities there.

13 There's also a lot of data
14 considerations associated, you know, things like
15 the completeness of the data that are available
16 that would provide accurate information that is
17 easy to understand, and whether or not the data
18 request -- you know, if the data that's requested
19 is actually, you know, applicable for the purpose.
20 In addition to needing to meet and stay true to
21 our confidentiality requirements under the
22 Magnuson-Stevens Act. So those come into play as

1 well.

2 We also consider things like the timing
3 with advisory panel meetings, the stage or
4 rulemakings, in some cases, and other
5 considerations. And so, for instance, if we've
6 got an AP meeting, if we've got something in
7 proposed rule stage where a lot of information has
8 been put out in an EA or a DEIS and all the public
9 has that information, and we get a data request
10 that comes in from a specific group something it
11 may be a little bit challenging to provide
12 information to a specific group, and then that
13 group have that information and not the entire
14 public.

15 And timing that with AP meetings can be
16 helpful sometimes because we may be able to, if
17 that subject is on the agenda, be able to share
18 information at the AP for consideration. However,
19 in some cases we might not be able to accomplish
20 that for various reasons. Maybe it's not on the
21 agenda, maybe it's too close to the AP meeting or
22 something like that, and so it makes it difficult

1 then to get information out in a good way for the
2 public to be able to consider, in addition to all
3 the other things that are considered here. So
4 just know, I'm spending a little bit more time on
5 this, that we are very sensitive to striving to be
6 responsive to those data requests, but we can't
7 always meet then 100 percent, but we will always
8 try to do our best.

9 So looking ahead to some things on the
10 horizon. As I mentioned, you can look forward to
11 the three year review for the IBQ program later
12 this month. Upcoming final actions on the 2020
13 shark specs rule, the proposed rule to come, and
14 then final rule is scheduled or planned for
15 November.

16 And then, of course, the bluefin tuna
17 area-based management measures and weak hook
18 management measures final EIS and final rule to
19 come in 2020. And then, several other proposed
20 rules that we anticipate will be coming. As I've
21 mentioned, the shark specs rule, the current --
22 I'm sorry, not the current, but the spatial

1 management data collection proposed rule which
2 will follow on scoping. The Amendment 13 proposed
3 rule and Amendment 14 proposed rule to follow on
4 scoping. And Amendment 12 that's currently in
5 scoping and we don't anticipate there will be a
6 rule actually following that rulemaking, but
7 further action on that to come.

8 So communication is our goal with this
9 meeting, and one of our goals is to minimize the
10 chance that there are surprised over the long
11 term. So we like to share with you all what's
12 happening in the agency, but we also like to hear
13 from you all what's happening with your
14 constituents and folks that you represent so that
15 we minimize those surprises.

16 We want you all to be informed and we
17 want to be informed. And in that process and in
18 this exchange we want to strive for, obviously, us
19 all to achieve a great deal of respect through
20 that dialogue. We hope that you all will listen
21 and engage, and not only engage with us, but also
22 with your constituents. And on our end, we will

1 work to ensure our compliance with all of our
2 requirements, to raise the issues that we think
3 will be relevant for you all and for the public,
4 and we will be listening to what you all have to
5 say.

6 So, once again, we're going to cover a
7 lot of ground and we're looking forward to your
8 input and potential solutions to a lot of the
9 issues that we face with these management
10 initiatives that we have going on.

11 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Randy. Let's see
12 if there's any questions or comments. Before I
13 get to David I know a couple of AP members came in
14 late, so I'll just let you quickly introduce
15 yourselves. I think you both came in a little
16 late, right?

17 MR. SKOMAL: Greg Skomal, Massachusetts
18 Division of Marine Fisheries.

19 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Greg.

20 MR. BELLAVANCE: Rick Bellavance,
21 representing the New England Fishery Management
22 Council.

1 MR. BROOKS: Great.

2 MR. ESPINOZA: Raimundo Espinoza,
3 non-profit in Puerto Rico.

4 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thanks and welcome.
5 That was it, right? Good. So questions,
6 comments? David?

7 MR. SCHALIT: In connection with the
8 communications goals, Randy, that you mentioned
9 before there are a great many people from -- in
10 connection -- that are connected with our fishery,
11 a bluefin fishery who are imminently aware of this
12 meeting and very curious about what will have
13 taken place. And as is traditionally the case, as
14 I recall, the wrap up is something that you will
15 do at the end of the meeting, and my question is
16 when would that wrap up be made available online?

17 MR. BLANKINSHIP: So we'll have two
18 versions, one will be at the very end of this
19 meeting. We'll have a very high-level just, kind
20 of, very few takeaways, kind of like we did at the
21 last meeting. And then we'll be following up to
22 flesh out those, you know, kind of rounded out

1 more takeaways of what we heard from the AP and
2 posting those online.

3 And that, we anticipate, I think, I
4 don't remember the exact timing of what we did in
5 the spring, but we were shooting for about a week
6 or so later. And I think that's probably a
7 ballpark of what we might shoot for in this case.
8 You know, don't hold us to exactly a week, but
9 we'll strive for that. And then, of course, would
10 have the opportunity to hear back from any of you
11 all once we post those and you take a look at
12 them. If you think something doesn't quite
13 reflect, you know, what you think was said or what
14 you said, and then we can see about tweaking that.

15 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Randy. Other
16 questions or comments on anything Randy's
17 presented so far? Okay. If not, I think I have a
18 question for you, Randy. We are 15 minutes ahead
19 of schedule and I'm always inclined to jump ahead,
20 except for the fact that we don't have the webinar
21 up and running yet. So I wonder whether we should
22 take a break, see if that gets our webinar up and

1 running and then jump in on schedule.

2 All right. To AP members who are
3 patching in by webinar, good morning and welcome.
4 Our apologies for the technical difficulties here.
5 We have done the welcomes and Randy's walked
6 through his overview of recent activities. At
7 this point what we want to do is pause and invite
8 AP members who are on the line to just let us know
9 that you're there, name and organization so we
10 know what AP members are on the phone.

11 MR. HUDSON: This is Rusty.

12 MR. BROOKS: Rusty, okay. Thanks,
13 Rusty. Who else?

14 MR. STROVEL: This is Gabe Strovel from
15 the International Gaming Fish Association. I
16 still can't get access to the webinar.

17 MR. BROOKS: Okay. Thanks.

18 MS. MILLER: Good morning. This is
19 Shana Miller with the Ocean Foundation. I now am
20 in the webinar and can hear, so thank you for
21 taking care of that, and I will be there tomorrow
22 morning, so I look forward to seeing you all.

1 MR. BROOKS: Okay. Great. Thanks,
2 Shana.

3 MR. TRIAL: This is Perry Trial from
4 Texas Parks and Wildlife.

5 MR. BROOKS: Good morning.

6 MR. RILE: Morning.

7 MS. FOSS: This is Kristin Foss, Florida
8 Fish and Wildlife.

9 MR. BROOKS: Good morning.

10 MR. GREGORY: Randy Gregory, North
11 Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries.

12 MR. BROOKS: Hey, Randy. Morning.

13 MS. REMSBERG: Hi. This is Lauren
14 Remsberg from (inaudible) Office of General
15 Council.

16 MR. BROOKS: Morning, Lauren.

17 MR. WEGMAN: Scott Pierto Wegmen,
18 Cornell Cooperative Extension Marine Program in
19 New York.

20 MR. BROOKS: Can you say the name again
21 please?

22 MR. WEGMAN: Scott Pierto Wegmen,

1 Cornell Cooperative Extension Marine Program in
2 New York.

3 MR. BROOKS: Okay. Thank you. Anybody
4 else?

5 MR. DURKEY: Yes. Steve Durkey with HMS
6 is on the line too.

7 MR. BROOKS: Great. Hey, Steve.

8 MS. MCCANDLESS: Cammy McCandless from
9 (inaudible).

10 MS. STEPHAN: Dianne Stephan with HMS
11 Gloucester.

12 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Could the speaker
13 right before Dianne say your name again?

14 MS. MCCANDLESS: Cammy McCandless with
15 NOAA Fisheries in (inaudible).

16 MR. BROOKS: All right. Thank you,
17 Cammy. Anybody else?

18 MR. ADRIANCE: Yeah, this is Jason
19 again. I heard some people are able to access the
20 webinar. When I click on the link provided in the
21 email it says it's no longer active.

22 MR. BROOKS: Let's see if maybe someone

1 can send you out a fresh link.

2 MR. COOPER: Jason, go to the website on
3 the agenda and try to access it through there.

4 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Jason, Pete says go to
5 the link in the agenda and try to access it
6 through that.

7 MR. ADRIANCE: Okay. Hold on. I'm doing
8 that right now.

9 UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: Yeah, that's what
10 worked for me. I had the same problem Jason is
11 addressing.

12 MR. BROOKS: Okay. And last folks on
13 the webinar still to introduce themselves.

14 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE 1: And, Jason, it
15 took, like, I mean, at least five minutes for it
16 to connect, but it eventually did connect for me.

17 MR. ADRIANCE: Okay. I've got myself in
18 now so it's working.

19 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Okay, good.

20 MR. BROOKS: Okay. Great. Well, thanks
21 to all of you and, again, our apologies that it
22 was a little clunkier this morning than we had

1 imagined.

2 MR. BLANKINSHIP: You want to just make
3 sure that they don't have anything they want to
4 say in the discussion following.

5 MR. BROOKS: Yeah, good point. AP
6 members on the phone, any questions or comments
7 from the presentation you didn't hear? But some
8 of you probably saw it, so you might have had a
9 question or two. Anybody?

10 UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: I missed most of
11 it myself, so.

12 MR. BROOKS: Okay.

13 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE 1: If maybe
14 somebody could email it around. I wasn't able to
15 get in until (inaudible).

16 MR. BROOKS: Okay.

17 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE 1: Maybe if
18 somebody could email it.

19 MR. BROOKS: It should be on our
20 website, I believe. If you go to AP page in the
21 meetings.

22 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Okay. Apparently,

1 it's not on the website yet, but it will be
2 shortly.

3 MR. BROOKS: So we're working to get it
4 online. Then you can just get it from the
5 website, okay.

6 MR. BLANKINSHIP: So I'll just say for a
7 moment, thank you for your patience as we are,
8 obviously, kind of dealing with some circumstances
9 that are not our normal ones, one being an
10 adjustment because of the hurricane and having so
11 many people on the phone instead of here in
12 person, and then a little bit of technical
13 difficulties. So as we are continuing to adjust
14 in a lot of ways to the storm please continue to
15 have patience with us and thank you for that.

16 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. All right. Well,
17 let's push ahead then and jump into the 9:30 item
18 a little bit earlier and invite Sarah and Rick up
19 to the table. They will be going out shortly for
20 scoping on HMS national standard guidelines and
21 policy directives. This is about four or five
22 different issues wrapped into one. And so we'll

1 get an overview of what they'll be taking out to
2 scoping and have an opportunity, obviously, for
3 your questions and comments after the
4 presentation. So, Rick and Sarah.

5 MR. PEARSON: Good morning. My name is
6 Rick Pearson. I'm joined by Sarah McLaughlin this
7 morning. We are going to talk about Amendment 12
8 for which the scoping document was just released
9 last week. As Randy indicated earlier, we do not
10 anticipate the need for rulemaking with this
11 amendment. It will mostly be just changes to the
12 FMP.

13 The purpose of Amendment 12 is to comply
14 with recent -- what's going on? Is to comply with
15 recent Magnuson-Stevens Act.

16 MR. BROOKS: Let's take a five minute
17 break, enjoy the wonderful refreshments that John
18 has brought for us, but stay close 'cause we'll
19 get going as soon as we can.

20 MR. PEARSON: As I indicated the scoping
21 document for Amendment 12 was released last week.
22 The purpose is to comply with recent Magnuson-

1 Stevens Act...

2 MR. BROOKS: Rick, hang on one second.
3 We've got a little bit of (inaudible).

4 MR. PEARSON: The purpose of Amendment
5 12 is to comply with recent Magnuson-Stevens Act
6 national standard guidelines and NMFS policy
7 directives. It addresses five separate issues.
8 The first is to reassess the HMS FMP objectives.
9 The second is to review stock status determination
10 criteria for internationally managed HMS. The
11 third is to review standardized bycatch reporting
12 methodologies for three additional gears; to
13 consider triggers to determine when to review
14 allocation decisions for quota managed HMS. And
15 the fifth is to consider timing of the release of
16 the annual HMS Stock Assessment and Fishery
17 Evaluation report.

18 For each issue the scoping document
19 describes two options, along with the pros and
20 cons. Basically, those two options are either
21 review, reassess, or consider the issues or no not
22 review, reassess or reconsider the issues. So

1 with regards to conducting this exercise to
2 reassess, review or consider these five issues,
3 basically, the main pro is that that would be
4 consistent with our national standard guidelines
5 and policy directives.

6 By reassessing the fishery management
7 plan objectives we hope to address the changing
8 needs of HSM fisheries since the objectives were
9 last reviewed in 2006. It may reduce
10 inconsistency between international stock status
11 determination criteria and domestic SDCs. It
12 updates the bycatch reporting methodology for
13 several fisheries. It would establish triggers to
14 determine when to review quota allocations. And
15 finally, the fifth issue by slightly adjusting the
16 timing of the annual SAFE report it provide
17 flexibility for publication of that report to
18 account for unexpected events, including
19 furloughs, staffing shortages, and data shortages.

20 The cons with reassessing, reviewing, or
21 considering these issues is that there may be some
22 potential unknown effects associated with changing

1 HMS FMP objectives and other measures. If we were
2 to not conduct this exercise, one of the pros
3 would be that if the FMP objectives have
4 accomplished the requirements of the
5 Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Atlantic Tunas
6 Conservation Act and other applicable laws, there
7 may be no need to reassess them.

8 Similarly, stock status determination
9 criteria would remain unchanged for all HMS, and
10 we could still do quota allocation decisions
11 without establishing formal triggers. The cons
12 associated with not moving forward with Amendment
13 12 is that we would be inconsistent with recent
14 national standard guidelines and NMFS's policy
15 directives.

16 There would be continued inconsistencies
17 and confusion between international and domestic
18 stock status determination criteria, and HMS
19 constituents would not have access to updated
20 standardized bycatch reporting methodology
21 descriptions for tuna green-stick, swordfish buoy
22 gear, and recreational tuna speargun fisheries.

1 So the first issue is the reassessment
2 of HMS FMP objectives. You're recall we dedicated
3 an entire presentation to this one issue at the
4 spring meeting, so I'm not going to spend a whole
5 lot of time on this particular issue. However, I
6 will focus a little bit of time on some of the
7 suggestions that we heard from the Advisory Panel
8 at that spring meeting.

9 You'll recall that there are 16
10 objectives in the 2006 HMS FMP, and there are
11 other objectives associated with the 11 subsequent
12 amendments. Per the final rule revising National
13 Standard 1 guidelines indicates the FMP objectives
14 should be reassessed on a regular basis to reflect
15 the changing needs of the fishery over time. You
16 can see some of the recommendations that the
17 National Standard Guidelines make for how we
18 present the HMS FMP objectives.

19 So the scoping document describes four
20 methods that we've used to reassess the
21 objectives. The first thing that we did is what
22 we call a gap analysis. Whereby we looked at the

1 11 subsequent amendments published since 2006 to
2 see if there are any concepts that we could obtain
3 from those 11 amendments. The second approach
4 that we've taken is to just simply look at the FMP
5 objectives, potentially combine similar
6 objectives, use more inclusive language,
7 streamline or modernize the language.

8 And we've also looked at some examples
9 from other fishery management councils to see if
10 we could add or revise our objectives, similar to
11 how other councils have been revising their
12 objectives. Several councils are also undertaking
13 this same activity.

14 Then, finally, we presented this
15 presentation to the HMS AP, and we have included
16 the suggestions that we received from the spring
17 AP meeting. So, as I indicated, we looked at the
18 11 amendments published since 2006 and we found
19 four concepts that we might want to roll into the
20 FMP objectives. That would be to regularly assess
21 and update HMS essential fish habitat and analyze
22 impacts on HMS EFH as necessary.

1 Then there was also the concept of
2 facilitating regionally tailored HMS management
3 strategies similar to what was established in the
4 amendment that establish the commercial Caribbean
5 small boat permit, so more of a regional approach.
6 To address biological reference points such as
7 annual catch limits and accountability measure, if
8 applicable. That would be primarily for non-ICCAT
9 manages shark species. And then to address the
10 concept of providing flexibility to HMS fishery
11 participants to utilize alternative fishing gear
12 and techniques.

13 The next way that we assessed the FMP
14 objective was just to take a look at them to see
15 if we can combine, broaden, streamline, or
16 modernize existing objectives. I'll just go into
17 Objective 5 here. Originally reads, minimize
18 adverse, social and economic impacts on fishing
19 communities and recreational and commercial
20 fishing activities during the transition from
21 overfished fisheries to healthy ones. Consistent
22 with ensuring achievement of the other objectives

1 of this plan and with all applicable laws.

2 So we're thinking about rather than
3 minimizing adverse impacts that it may be more
4 appropriate to optimize social and economic
5 benefits to the nation in managing HMS fisheries
6 consistent with ensuring achievements of other FMP
7 objectives and all applicable laws. So just kind
8 of tightening that language up a little bit.

9 Here is a couple of other examples that
10 you can look at and that are also contained in the
11 scoping document of just streamlining or combining
12 objectives. These are a couple of the examples
13 that we have found that other fishery management
14 councils have implemented. One is to promote
15 understanding, compliance and effective
16 enforcement of HMS regulations. So that's just to
17 incorporate that concept of enforcement within our
18 objectives. And then also to promote
19 ecosystem-based science to support and enhance
20 effective HMS management.

21 So a lot of this you all saw at the
22 spring AP meeting. We also tried to solicit

1 recommendations and suggestions from Panel
2 members, and these are some of the recommendations
3 that we received from the HMS Advisory Panel and
4 from public comment. One, that our objectives
5 refer to management strategy evaluation, to
6 encourage the development of better technologies
7 to reduce bycatch and post-release mortality, to
8 promote bilateral cooperation for coastal shark
9 species through regional fishery management
10 organizations, to include more long term and
11 historical data for stock assessments, i.e. data
12 rescue, and promote the use of more technology in
13 data collection, to ensure better and more stock
14 assessments to eliminate unknown shark stock
15 status, and to consider more frequent shark stock
16 assessment updates.

17 There seems to be a lot of shark related
18 recommendations here. To consider language for
19 either limiting or increasing fleet capacity to
20 ensure that fleet capacity is commensurate with
21 stock status. So the concept there is not just
22 looking at limiting fleet capacity to ensure that

1 capacity is commensurate with stock status, but in
2 certain situations to increase fleet capacity as
3 stocks rebuild, to address the need to increase
4 revenues for commercial fisherman so that the
5 fishery is economically sustainable, to add a new
6 objective to include ecosystem-based fishery
7 management.

8 MR. BROOKS: Operator, are you able to
9 mute our teleconference participants?

10 OPERATOR: Yes, one moment.
11 Participants are muted.

12 MR. BROOKS: Thank you.

13 OPERATOR: You're welcome.

14 MR. PEARSON: And so those were, sort
15 of, more specific things for adding objectives.
16 Then we also got recommendations that there should
17 be measureable goals specified in the FMP
18 objectives. There was also a comment that the
19 current FMP objectives reiterate Magnuson-Stevens
20 Act goals are all of those FMP objectives needed,
21 and finally, FMP objectives should not use
22 ambiguous language.

1 So we certainly have a lot to work with
2 over the next coming months, and I anticipate that
3 this will be, you know, one of the more labor
4 intensive aspects of Amendment 12 is just
5 reassessing the HMS FMP objectives. So the second
6 issue is the review of stock status determination
7 criteria and Sarah will address that.

8 MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Okay. Under the
9 Magnuson-Stevens Act annual catch limits and
10 accountability measures apply to all fisheries
11 unless otherwise provided for under an
12 international agreement in which the United States
13 participates. For these stocks, the National
14 Standard 1 guidelines provide that NMFS may decide
15 to use the status determination criteria defined
16 by the relevant international body.

17 Although the National Standard 1 final
18 rule doesn't require a review of international
19 status determination criteria, it allows NMFS to
20 consider their appropriateness and applicability.
21 And this could apply to some ICCAT-managed
22 Atlantic tunas, swordfish and billfish.

1 This slide shows summarized information
2 regarding international and domestic stock status
3 under the respective thresholds. The
4 international thresholds are more conservative
5 than the domestic ones, i.e., the international
6 threshold is at a higher biomass level where a
7 stock is considered overfished if the assessed
8 biomass is below the biomass at MSY, maximum
9 sustainable yield. And the biomass in any given
10 year divided by the BMSY -- if that's less than
11 one, that's what we're talking about.

12 The domestic thresholds or the minimum
13 stock size threshold, the MSST, those generally
14 account for natural mortality, and often take the
15 form of $1 - M$ (natural mortality) times the
16 biomass at MSY. The highlighted rows show where
17 there are differences. So, for instance, for
18 yellowfin and West Atlantic sailfish we have
19 differences as shown on the next slide.

20 So for the yellowfin 2016 assessment,
21 you're going to be hearing about the new
22 assessment tomorrow, I believe. The ICCAT status

1 was overfished because the biomass at 2014 was
2 less than BMSY. The domestic status was not
3 overfished rebuilding because the biomass in 2014
4 was greater than the minimum stock size threshold,
5 but it was considered not rebuilt yet because the
6 biomass in 2014 was less than BMSY. So the issue
7 was we have a different threshold for overfished
8 status internationally and domestically.

9 For West Atlantic sailfish the ICCAT
10 status was not likely overfished. For the
11 domestic status, we don't have that term likely.
12 We have not overfished, rebuilding. So use of the
13 international status determination criteria may
14 reduce confusion because it will be consistent
15 with the ICCAT stock assessments. Stocks not
16 previously identified as overfished, however,
17 could be overfished under this higher threshold.

18 Under the Magnuson Act we must assess
19 the effectiveness of the ICCAT rebuilding plan and
20 U.S. compliance with the rebuilding plan. Now,
21 the management implications can be mitigated by
22 having an international rebuilding plan, and U.S.

1 Compliance with those rebuilding plans. And some
2 of these stocks the U.S. catch is so small that we
3 have relatively little impact internationally.

4 Now, also continued use of not likely
5 for sailfish could create some uncertainty and
6 that might not be fixed with this amendment. That
7 might be something that we need to address at
8 ICCAT.

9 MR. PEARSON: The third issue is review
10 of HMS standardized bycatch reporting methodology,
11 the Magnuson-Stevens Act indicates with respect to
12 any fishery we must establish standardized bycatch
13 reporting methodology to assess the amount and
14 type of bycatch that is occurring. Some of the
15 required procedures may include observer programs,
16 electronic monitoring and reporting technologies,
17 and self-reported mechanisms.

18 So the Magnuson-Stevens Act requires
19 that we establish SBRM. To clarify that NMFS
20 publishes a final rule establishing guidance to
21 establish consistent procedures used to collect,
22 report and record bycatch data in a fishery. It

1 clarified the requirements to identify SBRMs in
2 FMPs, indicated how -- and SBRM meets its purpose
3 based on a fishery specific analysis. So we need
4 to analyze each fishery and report upon the
5 standardized bycatch reporting methodology,
6 including the characteristics of the bycatch, the
7 feasibility of the methodology, any uncertainty of
8 the data, and how the data resulting from the
9 methodology are used to assess bycatch in the
10 fishery.

11 So these are all of the HMS fisheries.
12 The ones that are in bold are the ones that we
13 have yet to document standardized bycatch
14 reporting methodology. So we anticipate doing
15 that in Amendment 12 for the swordfish buoy gear
16 fishery, for the tuna green-stick fishery, and for
17 the recreational speargun fishery for BAYS tunas.
18 And we're also going to be looking at the bycatch
19 reporting methodology for all of our other
20 fisheries to see if they need to be updated, but
21 the primary fisheries, buoy gear, greenstick, and
22 speargun.

1 This is just a description of the SBRM,
2 the type of data collection. So there's
3 self-reported data, such as logbooks. There's
4 open access reporting requirements for the
5 recreational fishery under hmspermits.noaa.gov,
6 and there's individual bluefin tuna quota program,
7 and VMS catch reporting. So these are some of the
8 data collection methodologies that constitute
9 SBRM. Observers, the Large Pelagics Survey, and
10 the MRIP, and electronic monitoring. The pelagic
11 longline camera systems for bluefin tuna bycatch
12 reporting.

13 Amendment 12 would ensure consistency
14 with the final rule by including descriptions of
15 SBRM for green-sticks, speargun and buoy gear.
16 All FMPs must be consistent with the final rule by
17 February 2022, and then we must conduct a review
18 every five years to verify continued compliance.

19 The fourth item in Amendment 12 is the
20 consideration of allocation triggers for quota
21 managed HMS. A recent fishery allocation policy
22 directive created a transparent process for

1 accessing when a fishery allocation may need to be
2 reviewed and what should be considered. It
3 describes a three-step mechanism to assure that
4 fishery allocations are periodically evaluated.
5 For fisheries with an allocation triggers should
6 be identified within three years or as soon as
7 practicable.

8 Only one trigger would need to be met to
9 reach a fishery quota allocation review. An
10 example of triggers that could be used to initiate
11 a review include public interest, time or fishery
12 indicators, meaning changes in the fishery.

13 So in the scoping document we've
14 preliminarily identified five potential triggers
15 to initiate a quote allocation review. The first
16 would be public comment received by NMFS with new
17 information to review. That's currently one of
18 the methods that we do use. So that's public
19 interest. If we do not receive any comment or
20 nothing else has changed a maximum of ten years
21 between review of the allocation for management
22 group and/or species. So that's time.

1 The third is a species or management
2 group stock status change based on recent stock
3 assessment or ICCAT recommendation, so that would
4 be a fishery indicator. If there's a substantial
5 change in effort or participation in HMS
6 fisheries. Again, a fishery indicator. Or the
7 implementation of a national rule making that
8 impacts HMS fisheries. So these are the five
9 triggers that we have preliminarily identified to
10 initiate a quota allocation review.

11 This is part of a larger process for
12 adaptive management. It's a three step process
13 and we are right now at step -- well, we're at the
14 beginning of step one. The allocation trigger is
15 met. Step two, if an allocation trigger is met,
16 say there's a significant change in participation
17 in a fishery then we ask is a review necessary.
18 Then we would ask are the FMP objectives being
19 met, so that's kind of how this Amendment 12 is
20 tying together some of these steps.

21 So a fishery allocation trigger is met.
22 Then we say, well, are the FMP objectives being

1 met, and have fishery conditions changed. If we
2 answer yes to any of those in step two then we
3 would proceed to step three which is analysis and
4 evaluation of allocation options for an FMP
5 amendment. That would require a formal
6 rulemaking, formal analysis, public comment
7 period, the full range of the formal rulemaking
8 process. So it's not just automatically if a
9 trigger is met then we change the allocation. We
10 still have to stay are the FMP objectives being
11 met, is it necessary to review this quota
12 allocation for this fishery, and then we go
13 through a formal rulemaking process with public
14 input.

15 And, finally, and this is somewhat of a
16 new addition to Amendment 12, we want to address
17 the timing of the publication of the annual HMS
18 safe report. Currently, the FMP specifies that
19 the safe report will be released to the public by
20 the winter of each year. That's in the FMP. We
21 are considering options to provide more timing
22 flexibility, and this was kind of especially the

1 case this most recent year. In the case of
2 government furloughs, staff unavailability, data
3 unavailability, weather events, or other
4 emergencies.

5 We intend to continue to strive for
6 releasing the safe report annually by the winter
7 of each year, but we just want to provide a little
8 bit more flexibility so that we're not tied to
9 that deadline publishing by the winter of each
10 year.

11 So this is the Amendment 12 timeline.
12 Currently, we are in the scoping period. It's a
13 60-day comment period that ends November 4. We
14 anticipate having a draft FMP amendment in 2020,
15 and a final FMP amendment in 2021. So still very,
16 very early in the process. We encourage you to
17 continue providing input on Amendment 12. We're
18 only conducting one webinar for this. It will be
19 October 8, and there is the information for the
20 webinar, and hopefully, we'll have a little bit
21 better luck.

22 Oh, is that October 9. I'm sorry,

1 October 9 from 2:00 to 4:00. There's the webinar
2 information, and as I indicated, hopefully, we'll
3 have a little bit better luck than we've been
4 having this morning with the webinar. But I want
5 to thank you all for listening to this
6 presentation and now we'll address and questions
7 or comments.

8 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thanks, Rick and
9 Sarah. And before we get to comments, just to
10 webinar participants, and I guess to everyone
11 around the table, the overview document is now
12 online, so if you want to access that that will be
13 there. And, operator, if you would open up the
14 lines that will be helpful.

15 And let's start with folks -- if webinar
16 participants, we've got your lines open in case
17 you have comments. If you could please mute
18 yourself if you're not talking that would be
19 helpful so we don't have any background noise.
20 Thanks. Let's start with webinar participants and
21 see if you have any questions or comments for Rick
22 or Sarah on anything they just presented.

1 Webinar, any questions? Comments?

2 Okay. Let's go around the room. David?

3 MR. SCHALIT: Yes, to Sarah's
4 presentation. Thank you both Rick and Sarah, by
5 the way. Regarding the stock status determination
6 criteria this is a serious -- this is an
7 important, a very important issue, particularly in
8 connection with any stocks that's being evaluated
9 or being worked on in the context of a management
10 strategy evaluation.

11 Looking forward at ICCAT, we will,
12 presumably, by 2021 have harvest control rules for
13 bluefin tuna and God only knows with the tropicals
14 it could be something that we're looking at in the
15 future as well at these fisheries. I'm
16 specifically referencing skipjack, yellowfin and
17 bigeye, would be seemingly run in accordance with
18 harvest control rules which then means that there
19 will be thresholds that will be set, key
20 thresholds in numerous areas that will be set for
21 these species.

22 So somehow or other we have to -- the

1 U.S. has to come to terms with, I don't know, how
2 it will manage its view of these stocks and these
3 thresholds that we're referencing and how that
4 will related to what ICCAT is establishing on that
5 level. So, I mean, we can take the view, for
6 example, that -- I'm just pulling this out of the
7 air. That bigeye is overfished with overfishing
8 currently taking place Atlantic- wide, but we can
9 also say, the U.S. can say that bigeye is, in our
10 view, in U.S. waters sustainably managed.

11 You know, we can do that. Although,
12 that's an eternal issue for us. So there are
13 areas in which I could see that we could deviate
14 from the ICCAT view for our own internal purposes.
15 And I think that's perfectly legitimate. I just
16 wanted to make that one comment.

17 And then getting back to what Rick was
18 saying, the period reassessment of FMP objectives,
19 in my view, necessitates the -- that we are, we,
20 as a body here, the AP, are up to speed on the
21 national standards, okay. So, for example, we've
22 had a rewrite recently of National Standard 1.

1 And as I recall my colleague Anna Beckwith here
2 received a briefing on that at the South Atlantic
3 Council, and I'm reasonably certain that Rick
4 Bellavance received a briefing on those changes to
5 National Standard 1 in the New England Council,
6 but we haven't received any such presentation.

7 So if we're going to comment on the FMP
8 in the context of the latest version of the
9 national standards I think that will be something
10 important for us to receive, that briefing which
11 explains the old version and the new version. So
12 I'm done here. Thanks.

13 MR. BROOKS: Thank you very much. Let's
14 go to Kirby and then over to Steve or is it
15 Michael?

16 MR. ROOTES-MURDY: Thank you. Can you
17 give me some more information on the fishery
18 indicators? How that, you know, what is it
19 specifically that would trigger a review?

20 MR. PEARSON: Yes, one would be a
21 significant change in participation in the
22 fishery, another might be a sudden stock decrease

1 or a stock increase, or a change in stock status
2 determination criteria from not overfished to
3 overfished. Any aspect within the fishery that
4 may change. A decline in productivity in the
5 fishery, for example. So just any significant
6 change that occurs and we think that might trigger
7 a review of allocation.

8 MR. BROOKS: Yeah, Sarah.

9 MS. MCLAUGHLIN: To David's question
10 about the National Standard 1 guideline changes.
11 I think it was two years ago that Karyl and I did
12 a presentation following this Office of
13 Sustainable Fisheries presentation on the changes
14 so we could look back a few years ago to the AP
15 presentations and point you to the summary of
16 those changes.

17 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Let's go over to
18 Michael and then over to Rick. And just a
19 reminder, if you could just start with your name
20 that will help our recorder.

21 MR. PIERDINOCK: Thank you. Mike
22 Pierdinock, my comments are specific to the ICCAT

1 and U.S. thresholds. Your examples for yellowfin
2 and West Atlantic sailfish I somewhat have the
3 same concern that Dave Schalit brought forth. Is
4 that if we were to have these thresholds
5 consistent with the international community, many
6 of which these species were a drop in the bucket
7 what we land in relation to the rest of the world.
8 And I would be considered if we did make that
9 consistency whether that could change our status
10 and have a detrimental impact on it.

11 I'm just not clear whether that is or is
12 not the case based upon the presentation. And I
13 guess I'm not 100 percent clear. Are you just
14 changing the definitions? You changing the
15 thresholds? And, if so, is my assumption here
16 would it have a detrimental impact and then change
17 the outcome. I think that's the case, but I'd
18 just like that to be validated. Because I would
19 hope that wouldn't be because, as you know, many
20 of these species are small what we land in
21 comparison to the rest of the world. And we have
22 been at the forefront of conservation measures

1 here in the U.S. far above many of the other
2 nations, and to see that that would have a
3 detrimental impact on us it'd be concerning.
4 Thank you.

5 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Rick or Sarah want
6 to weigh in on that?

7 MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Just to answer the
8 question, the threshold would change to B over
9 BMSY like it is at ICCAT rather than reflecting or
10 accounting for a natural mortality like 0.6 BMSY,
11 so technically, yes, the number changes, but as we
12 showed on this slide, we definitely would be
13 looking at the implications of U.S. compliance
14 with international rebuilding plan, and our impact
15 on global or Atlantic-wide catch which could be
16 very low.

17 MR. PEARSON: We do not anticipate any
18 implications. We would still be following ICCAT
19 recommendations. However, we may have to put a
20 memo to the file indicating that there is an
21 effective international rebuilding plan in place.
22 That the U.S. complies with that rebuilding plan.

1 And, if applicable, that the U.S. has a very
2 minimal impact on it. So, again, if we were to
3 adopt the international stock status determination
4 criteria we do not anticipate that there will be
5 any changes in domestic management.

6 MR. BROOKS: That clarifies. Rick?

7 MR. BELLAVANCE: Thank you, Bennett. My
8 question is regarding a review of the HMS SBRM.
9 I'm just trying to make sure I understand it in my
10 head. The amendment is going to include
11 descriptions for green-stick, speargun and buoy
12 because they're absent right now from the HMS SBRM
13 plan right now?

14 MR. PEARSON: Yes, that's correct.

15 MR. BELLAVANCE: So if that review and
16 inclusion of the descriptions turns out to be that
17 they're insufficient or don't meet the SBRM rule
18 would that facilitate another action to change
19 that methodology or would it also be -- those
20 changes be included in this amendment?

21 MR. PEARSON: What we anticipate right
22 now is simply a description of the bycatch

1 reporting methodologies.

2 MR. BELLAVANCE: So any necessary
3 changes to reach the overall SBRM rule would be a
4 subsequent action?

5 MR. PEARSON: Yes.

6 MR. BROOKS: Great. Let me go back to
7 the webinar folks. Any questions or comments from
8 AP members on the webinar?

9 MR. HUDSON: This is Rusty.

10 MR. BROOKS: Go ahead, Rusty. Sure. The
11 question is how do you define public interest and,
12 sort of, is there a threshold or how do you gauge
13 if there's enough public interest for that to be a
14 trigger?

15 MR. PEARSON: It's difficult for me to
16 answer that. However, if there is -- if we
17 receive one request to review allocations or if we
18 get a petition with hundreds of signatures to
19 review allocations. I'm not sure what that level
20 would be at, but the most important aspect of
21 public interest would be that the public brings
22 forth new information for us to consider why this

1 fishery quota allocation should be reconsidered.
2 So primarily based upon new information.

3 MR. BROOKS: So more substantive, more
4 than five comments equals a trigger?

5 MR. PEARSON: Yes, absolutely. Any
6 request would need to be supported with sufficient
7 new information.

8 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Rick. Any other
9 questions or comments from AP members of the
10 webinar?

11 MR. HOETER: The paucity of assessments
12 for most of the sharks particularly prohibited and
13 others that could prove to be a problem if we
14 can't find a way, whether (inaudible) eliminated
15 or something else to find ways to assess these
16 unassessed stocks. Just want to throw that out
17 there. Thank you. I'll mute myself.

18 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Any comment up
19 here or should I go to the next? Good. Rick?

20 MR. WEBER: Rick, I just want to pick up
21 on what you were saying because I think it's
22 really important. If I extrapolated Rusty's

1 concerns there's fear of the mob showing up with
2 pitch forks demanding that you do something that
3 does not bring forward new information. That
4 would be public interest. Your defense is good
5 and logical. Public interest must bring more data
6 forward, but that needs to make it into your
7 amendment because in order to trust what you're
8 saying now those words not just have to be what
9 Rick said to us now, but that needs to be
10 incorporated in.

11 MR. BROOKS: Well said. Thank you. Any
12 other comments around the table or on the phone
13 from AP members? Okay. If not, then I think we
14 can get you to a break a few minutes early. Rick,
15 Sarah, anything else you want to add in here or,
16 Randy, anything from you?

17 MR. PEARSON: Nothing here.

18 MR. BROOKS: All right. Karyl, would
19 you come up to the table?

20 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Hi. In answer to
21 Dave Schalit's question about when this panel will
22 receive the briefing on National Standard 1 that

1 was in the spring 2017 meeting. That is not
2 online, so we're working to see if we can figure
3 out how to handle that or get you comments or
4 copies of that presentation.

5 MR. BROOKS: Thank you. All right. So
6 let's get you to a break. I would ask everyone to
7 be back in their seats at 10:29 sharp. Chris
8 Oliver will be here to give leadership update. So
9 thanks all very much.

10 (Recess)

11 MR. BROOKS: If we could get folks back
12 to the table that would be good. If someone would
13 run into that back break room and just remind
14 folks again that we're starting up, that would be
15 helpful.

16 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Welcome back, as
17 everybody's coming back to the table. Please find
18 your seats. Welcome back those of you on the
19 phone. It's my pleasure to get the opportunity to
20 introduce Chris Oliver, the Assistant
21 Administrator for Fisheries and we're honored to
22 have him here.

1 He, as most of you are aware, some of
2 you may not be. He originally -- well, not
3 originally, but he hails from Alaska, originally
4 hails --

5 MR. OLIVER: Texas.

6 MR. BLANKINSHIP: -- from Rockport,
7 Texas, which is also my hometown. We share that.
8 Although we were far enough apart in school that I
9 never knew Chris when I was there. Anyway without
10 any further ado, Chris.

11 MR. OLIVER: Was I much younger than
12 you? Anyway, yeah, it's pretty big coincidence
13 that we're from the same little small town. By
14 the way congratulations, Randy, on your recent
15 appointment.

16 Good to see you everybody. I just
17 wanted to take a few minutes to come over and say
18 hello basically, make a few comments. I don't
19 want to take up too much of your time.

20 I'm actually quite interested in the
21 next agenda item. I canceled a meeting later this
22 morning to listen in on it on the shark

1 depredation thing. I've been hearing a lot about
2 that and really keenly interested in seeing that
3 presentation.

4 I just want to say thanks for your time.
5 I know in the best of circumstances, everybody's
6 got a different life, a different business, things
7 to do. So particularly given the logistical
8 challenges that the storm produced, it's good that
9 we're able to continue with this meeting, because
10 there are several significant packages, rulemaking
11 packages, that you're going to be looking at,
12 providing input on.

13 I think this administration continues to
14 look very closely at the issue of regulatory
15 reform and reducing regulatory burdens. Some of
16 the things that you're going to be considering
17 really stem from -- directly from public input
18 that we got back in the summer of 2017 when I
19 first came on board. So your input on, for
20 example, the bluefin tuna area-based management,
21 the weak hook rule, the ICCAT quota rule, the
22 shark specs rule all fit -- or could fit into that

1 bin, into that category.

2 You've got big packages with Amendment
3 13, the data collection for spacial management,
4 and the Amendment 14 primarily I guess relative to
5 sharks. Again, I just want to express our thanks,
6 our gratitude for all the work and time that you
7 put into this and look forward to seeing what kind
8 of output comes out of the meeting.

9 I don't want to take any more time. I
10 just really wanted to come over and say hello and
11 take time to hear any comments you have or if you
12 have any burning questions for me. I think we've
13 got a few minutes before we go into the shark
14 presentation.

15 Happy to take some questions. I'm
16 frankly more interested in any observations or
17 comments that you offer in the realm of what do
18 you think I need to know, what would you like for
19 me to hear, what do I need to know when you're
20 doing your work here this week. If you have
21 comments in that regard, I'd love to hear them.

22 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thanks, Chris.

1 We've got just about 10 minutes or so for
2 questions or comments, just let me set those
3 expectations, so if there's anyone who wants to
4 weigh in here. Mike, again starting with names.

5 MR. PIERDINOCK: Thank you, Chris, for
6 coming in today. My name is Mike Pierdinock. We
7 were just having a brief discussion about wind
8 turbines and the experience that we've had in
9 Massachusetts.

10 I participated in a group in New Bedford
11 that recreational, charter boat, and commercial
12 fleet was there. We all had comments and
13 continued input on the sighting of Vineyard Wind
14 turbines for the past five years, and that went
15 along and now all of a sudden it came down to your
16 desk and looks like they're finally looking at
17 what needs to be looked at.

18 I would only ask as a recommendation and
19 maybe something that could be done is that the
20 process seems to be broken. We would be told that
21 that's BOEM's responsibility, GARFO can't do
22 anything, Mass. DMF or other agencies can't do

1 anything. They're all pointing that they can
2 provide comments. We provide them the BOEM and
3 then BOEM would seem like they dotted the I's,
4 crossed the T's and got the comments.

5 But it wasn't until now that the
6 comments and concerns that we had as recreational
7 fishermen, charter boat, and commercial fleet
8 didn't seem to be heard and acted upon. There's
9 some that say, well, it's a shame, because they're
10 slowing down the sighting of Vineyard Wind where
11 I'm not saying it's a shame. If they would have
12 listened to our concerns five years ago and really
13 acted upon it and took that into consideration,
14 maybe there would be a different outcome right
15 now, because we're all for green energy.

16 Now, we have other turbines that are
17 proposed up and down the coast of the East Coast
18 and I would hope that the process isn't the same
19 there or we're going to get this situation that
20 it's going to come at the end and it's not going
21 to do what's right.

22 Ultimately as I said, I think

1 unfortunately Vineyard Wind's going to be the
2 pilot test, meaning entire East Coast. I fish
3 this area and so my hope it's not going to be to
4 our detriment of what is the outcome.

5 I'd just like to know your thoughts and
6 see if there's anything that could be done to
7 change that process, because it doesn't seem as
8 though it's heard until late in the game?

9 MR. OLIVER: Yeah, I have a lot of
10 thoughts on that. I'll try to be brief. When I
11 first came on board a little over two years ago, I
12 had a stream of people -- fishermen, fishing
13 representatives -- come to me with concerns over
14 when energy sighting. I looked at maps and they
15 said look at this map where all these proposed
16 leases and sites get fulfilled, look at this map.
17 I was pretty stunned, because it's like, wow,
18 where is everybody going to fish, where are we
19 going to do our research, so I got very interested
20 in it.

21 We formed MOU between BOEM and RODA, the
22 recreational -- or Responsible Offshore

1 Development Alliance, specifically to try to get a
2 better voice for our fisheries in the process.
3 Some of the initial attitude was, well, it's not
4 your business to look out for fishermen's
5 interest. I said, what the hell, it's not, it is.

6 We as you're aware submitted a
7 40-something page comment on the Vineyard when
8 DEIS, EIS, and part of the reason for that was
9 specifically on concerns with that EIS process,
10 and we didn't feel that it had done an adequate
11 job of assessing potential impacts to fisheries
12 into our own research operations.

13 I think that we have seen a shift in
14 attitude and I don't know if -- what the cause
15 was, whether it's a change in leadership,
16 interior, or change in philosophy of the
17 administration or the Tucker Carlson show or our
18 comment letter, a combination of all of that, but
19 I think we are seeing a shift.

20 Because we were more concerned -- as
21 concerned about putting a marker down for the
22 longer term in terms of future EIS on future

1 projects when we submitted our comments on the
2 Vineyard Wind. We didn't really expect it was
3 going to cause a delay. I'm not unhappy that it
4 has, because I think it's a reflection of they're
5 actually listening to those concerns. The
6 philosophy now is to do a credible and adequate
7 job of taking those into consideration, so I see a
8 positive change.

9 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Let me get a few
10 more folks in. I ask you to be as succinct as you
11 can just so others around the table have a chance.
12 Marty, you're up next.

13 MR. SCANLON: Well, Chris, I'd like to
14 first of all on behalf of Bluewater thank you and,
15 Randy and Brad and Peter, and everybody else that
16 is -- so does temporary HMS chief for addressing
17 some of our regulatory reforms that we've
18 requested and moving them forward.

19 The one thing I'd like to touch base
20 with you on here is that we -- in that process
21 we've talked about long-term and short-term help
22 for the pelagic industry to revitalize it. We

1 have some important decisions to be made here in
2 Amendment 13 as we move forward, especially
3 pertaining to the per se category as we look to
4 either completely close it or as it contracts.

5 The issue I'm bringing up is that we've
6 never reset the allocation, the beginning of the
7 year allocation, to the pelagic (inaudible)
8 industry. That was supposed to be done through
9 the A7 three-year review process and it is still
10 not done, still sits in limbo.

11 We've got a lot of serious questions and
12 answers to be gotten out of A-13 as we move
13 forward here and we really can't answer those
14 questions. A-13 is really at this point to me a
15 waste of time, because until you reset that
16 allocation and refix that portion of the IBQ
17 system, we don't have the answers that you're
18 going to be asking us to try to answer in A-13.

19 So how can we go about getting that
20 done, that's a major concern of the industry and I
21 think it will be a major short-term benefit to the
22 industry to get the hands of the quota into the

1 hands of the active vessels no matter -- I don't
2 know how we can do that.

3 We have several suggestions that we put
4 forward, but still seems -- it hasn't really been
5 addressed. It still sits there. We're still
6 being allocated on (inaudible) data. We've gone
7 through an A7 three-year review and now we're in a
8 post A7 year, and yet that allocation is still
9 being done pre A7.

10 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Marty. I want to
11 give the other folks a chance to get in here.

12 Chris.

13 MR. OLIVER: I think I understand what
14 you're saying. I may need some help from Randy or
15 others, but I thought that that was part of what
16 was being considered in Amendment 13 was that
17 allocation.

18 MR. SCANLON: No, it is being -- that is
19 being considered in there, but there's so many
20 important elements within A-13 that we really
21 can't answer until that gets done beforehand,
22 understanding and helping the IBQ system work

1 efficiently and effectively on behalf of the
2 pelagic (inaudible) industry.

3 MR. OLIVER: I don't know if it has to
4 be done sequentially or if that's the first part
5 you tackle in Amendment 13 and the other decisions
6 flow from that perhaps or certainly affected by
7 that. I hear your point.

8 MR. BROOKS: Rick Bellavance.

9 THE WITNESS:

10 MR. BELLAVANCE: Thank you. Thank you,
11 Chris. Rick Bellavance with Fishery Management
12 Council. I'm going to take off my counsel hat
13 here and put on my charter fishing hat for a
14 little bit and kind of (inaudible) onto what Mike
15 was talking about with the wind farms.

16 So at first I appreciate the letter from
17 NOAA regarding the draft EIS (inaudible). I
18 thought that was well written and it was certainly
19 in line with what a lot of fishermen are thinking,
20 that was excellent.

21 I also want to raise a little bit of an
22 issue with the surveying of those areas as taking

1 place right now. Whatever the devices they're
2 towing back and forth, they're mowing the lawn out
3 there every day, they're fishing in that area
4 quite often and it seems like HMS is sort of
5 absent from that area over the last two seasons.
6 I don't know if it's a direct correlation to what
7 they're doing out there, if they're surveying
8 those areas or not, but it's just something I
9 wanted to bring to your attention that I've
10 noticed on the water and little worried about.
11 It's definitely impacted the fishermen that I know
12 that fish for HMS in those areas.

13 I guess not quite sure how they enforce
14 what they're doing. I think they have some
15 surveying plans that they put together and are
16 approved, but I'm not a hundred percent sure
17 they're actually following those plans right, so
18 didn't know what the enforceability of those plans
19 were.

20 Just as an example if there's a --
21 they're not supposed to survey I don't think at
22 night, but yet we'll see them surveying just a

1 little bit before first light. Not sure how you
2 go about enforcing that or if there's any advice
3 you have to us as fishermen to bring that up to
4 folks and who we bring it up to.

5 MR. OLIVER: I don't have a good answer
6 for you, Rick. I acknowledge you brought it up
7 and I heard you and Randy heard you. I don't have
8 a good answer for you off the top of my head.

9 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. David.

10 DAVID: Thanks, Chris, for coming down.
11 I just want to add something to Mike Pierdinock
12 and Rick Bellavance's comments. It's not an
13 understatement to say that the northeast is right
14 now in a state of siege in connection with
15 offshore wind and it's hard to understand -- hard
16 to project how this is going to play out over
17 time. We're not just talking about Vineyard Wind.
18 You've seen the chart.

19 So we are seriously challenged and we
20 are leaning very heavily. In fact, the only thing
21 we can do is lean on NOAA for guidance on this.
22 For that, we absolutely appreciate that letter

1 that you sent.

2 I just want to point out something. The
3 research that has been done in Europe and
4 Scandinavia on the impacts of offshore wind, on
5 (inaudible) species in particular, does exist and
6 there's not much of it, but it all points to the
7 fact that the most -- the greatest impact occurs
8 on commissioning and decommissioning the wind
9 farm.

10 Of course, these studies were all done
11 using this methodology in which they go into --
12 they go to the site before anything's been done
13 and they survey the entire site, look for all the
14 species, the spawning areas, and so on, everything
15 that exists there, and then they reassess after
16 the wind farm has been put in place.

17 So this is really valuable information
18 that we can use to -- in our situation, but I
19 think what's happening is that we are again
20 looking for NOAA leadership on that level.

21 What we're concerned about is that
22 there's this mercantile dimension to this project,

1 which seems to have greased the regulatory wheels
2 in Washington and we are hard pressed to actually
3 be a part of that process. That's what I had to
4 say. Thank you.

5 MR. OLIVER: I appreciate that and I
6 agree that up until perhaps recently the whole
7 wind energy development was flying a little bit
8 under the radar in terms of interactions with
9 fisheries particularly.

10 I've had 10 or 12 meetings on the Hill,
11 five or six meetings with Department of Interior
12 leadership, dozen meetings with industry
13 representatives, and (inaudible) three or four
14 months. So I think it's not flying under the
15 radar anymore.

16 MR. BROOKS: Pat, we'll give you the
17 last word here, 30 seconds if you could.

18 MR. AUGUSTINE: Thank you, Bennett.
19 Welcome, Chris.

20 Quick question: Nobody seems to want to
21 attack the monster in the room, which turns out to
22 be seals. All the NGOs and all the fur lovers and

1 little animal lovers love those damn things, but
2 as you know, and Mike can you tell you in his
3 area, they've basically taken over and doing a
4 great job on attacking tuna and -- sharks with
5 tuna, but striped bass and some of the other
6 nearshore fish.

7 The damn things leave shore in schools,
8 as you may know, 10, 15 at a time, and they sweep
9 the beach, sweep the nearshore waters eating
10 everything in sight.

11 Being on these endangered species lists,
12 I don't know what the hell's endangered about
13 them, because there's enough of them, I'd love to
14 kill a few of them, but that's not a good thing to
15 say. But how do we address that issue from your
16 level point of view as opposed to us sitting here
17 commiserating with each other that our nearshore
18 fisheries are under attack?

19 I (inaudible) Long Island about 25 years
20 ago, we might have had 300 harbor seals
21 anecdotally. Now I think we've got in excess of
22 5,000. When the flounder literally disappeared we

1 blamed it on cormorants. Basically it's the seals
2 that's wiping them out.

3 But, again, nobody wants to touch these
4 little creatures, so how do we go about getting a
5 balance. Economically (inaudible), we're trying
6 to balance out our commercial fishery and
7 recreational fishery. We talk about the economic
8 value of both of them.

9 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Pat.

10 MR. AUGUSTINE: We rely on all the
11 seafood coming from overseas, what do we do, how
12 do we attack the seals?

13 MR. OLIVER: Yeah, I've seen the videos
14 of thousands of them lying on the beach for miles
15 and doing some rough calculations, even in my
16 head, about how many pounds of cod or other fish
17 that they would eat and it's staggering. I share
18 your concern.

19 We had legislation last year that
20 allowed for lethal removal of sea lions on the
21 West Coast. They were eating salmon obviously at
22 some of the dams, so there's one avenue for

1 solution. The seals we're talking about are not
2 endangered, but they are protected under the
3 Marine Mammal Protection Act. Until we get
4 legislation to address that, our hands are a
5 little bit tied, but I totally share your concern.

6 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. I'm sure folks
7 have more questions or comments, but I know,
8 Chris, you've got to be pushing forward. So thank
9 you very much, appreciate it.

10 MR. OLIVER: I'm going to have to head
11 back in about an hour, but I was looking forward
12 to staying with you a little while to see the
13 shark presentation.

14 MR. BROOKS: That would be good, please.
15 All right. With that let's turn to our next
16 topic, which will take us to lunch, which is again
17 turning to this issue of depredation and taking
18 stock of what the agency's been hearing, taking a
19 step back, looking at population -- shark
20 population data, trying to get a feel for what's
21 happening with depravation.

22 We'll have Karyl open it up and then

1 we'll hear from a number of different folks from
2 the centers. We'll hear from Craig Brown, Enric
3 Cortes, and Lisa Natanson who will give us an
4 update on what they're seeing and then we'll come
5 back to you all for a conversation around your
6 experiences and your recommendations on moving
7 forward on this.

8 So, Karyl, I'm going to turn it over to
9 you.

10 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Hi all. Thank you,
11 Bennett. I want to thank Lisa and Craig and Enric
12 on the webinar who will be joining me shortly. So
13 as Bennett said, we want to talk a little bit
14 about the shark depredation.

15 I am used to sitting up in front of all
16 of you and sharing news that will make you upset
17 and angry, and I'm not sure what to make of this
18 one. I think it could make you really happy,
19 because from everything I've been hearing it
20 sounds like sharks are doing great.

21 But it could make you real upset,
22 because unfortunately sharks are also a predator

1 and appear to be eating what all of us want to
2 eat, some of the tuna, some of the swordfish, some
3 of the snapper, some of the grouper. It's all
4 being eaten by not just the seals that Pat brought
5 up, but also sharks. So that's what we're going
6 to talk about today.

7 I'm just going to set things up and then
8 either Craig or Lisa or Enric will jump in. To
9 set us up, we, the agency, have been hearing
10 increasingly from everybody, all commercial
11 fishermen, all recreational fishermen, using all
12 gear types that sharks are eating their catch. I
13 want to let you know we are hearing you. We are
14 aware of the issue. We are not ignoring the
15 issue. We would like some feedback from all of
16 you on this.

17 We aren't particularly clear on what
18 species are causing the problem. There are
19 definitely a lot of you that are saying it's dusky
20 and sandbar, and I certainly believe that in some
21 of our hotspot areas for dusky and sandbar. I do
22 not necessarily believe that in areas where dusky

1 have never really been a big competitor in the
2 area.

3 So I would like to brainstorm and figure
4 out ways to help us figure out what the species
5 are. Most of these happen so fast that there
6 really aren't any videos or pictures of it, so
7 it's all word of mouth.

8 Then I also want to stress that while
9 some sharks appear to be healthy or have stock
10 assessments showing they're healthy, like the Gulf
11 of Mexico blacktip and all of our smoothhounds up
12 and down the coast. There are others such as
13 dusky, such as sandbar that are still overfished
14 and experiencing overfishing.

15 Magnuson requires that we rebuild
16 overfish stocks, so how do we do that while also
17 balancing the needs of allowing optimal yield to
18 be caught of all of these other target species.

19 So there's just a few questions that I
20 have for all of you. I'm not expecting the
21 answers right now. We'll put the slide up again
22 after Lisa, Enric, and Craig are done with their

1 talk.

2 Just to bring them up, some of the
3 questions have to do with what sort of fishing
4 techniques or strategies have all of you
5 experienced that seem to bring in more sharks than
6 other strategies. Or does it not matter, are you
7 seeing the sharks no matter what you do.

8 Does there seem to be some sort of
9 seasonal issue, are there more sharks during
10 nursing or pupping times, or maybe it's
11 year-round. We don't have a lot of these answers
12 yet.

13 And then before we do anything, of
14 course, we want to know what are the impacts to
15 all of you, how is it impacting the commercial
16 fishing profits, how is it impacting charter
17 bookings, what is the impact to you, what are you
18 seeing on the water that we're not seeing here.
19 Then how do we get a better idea of what's
20 actually happening on the water, how do we
21 quantify the extent of the issue and where it's
22 happening the most.

1 Answers to all of these questions can
2 help us as we move forward in trying to balance
3 the needs of rebuilding shark populations and
4 letting everybody catch what they want to catch.

5 Because, I don't know about all of you,
6 but I love to eat some swordfish, some tuna.
7 Those are the first things I go to in any
8 restaurant that I go to. I always check to make
9 sure they say it's coming from the Atlantic, but
10 we do what we can.

11 So those are the questions. As I said,
12 we'll put them up after we hear from Lisa, Craig,
13 and Enric. Then after this discussion if you
14 still have questions, if you have thoughts, you
15 can always reach out to me or to any members of my
16 team.

17 This is the general number. Just ask
18 for any of us. Say you want to talk about shark
19 depredation and we'll make sure to have somebody
20 on the line for you.

21 So that's all from me. Lisa, Craig,
22 Enric is on, so I don't know which one of you want

1 to go first. You're more than welcome to come on
2 up.

3 Craig, why don't you start.

4 MR. BROOKS: Please come on up.

5 MR. BROWN: Good morning. First of all,
6 by way of further introduction, I'm the branch
7 chief down at the HMS Research and Assessment
8 branch down at the Southeast Fisheries Science
9 Center and I'm the head of the scientific
10 delegation of the U.S. to ICCAT's SCRS, which is
11 the body that's doing the assessments for the
12 various species covered by ICCAT.

13 With respect to this particular topic, I
14 actually don't have a presentation. The ones that
15 are on the website were put together by others,
16 mainly Enric, so I'll defer to him to go into the
17 details there, but I can touch in general on the
18 subject by -- well, first of all, we've
19 experienced this firsthand in our own work
20 recently.

21 One of our scientists was on a fishing
22 trip recently out of Oregon Inlet trying to tag

1 yellowfin tuna. They were somewhat successful,
2 but the majority of their fish appeared to be
3 taken by sharks before they could get them
4 alongside the boat. The reports from other
5 fishermen in the area was of high shark
6 depredation rates and there were a lot of concerns
7 about that, so we've seen it firsthand ourselves.

8 One of the issues that we have with
9 trying to address this is simply quantifying the
10 extent of the problem. Our databases haven't
11 really been structured to address this, to sort of
12 quantify. We have, for example, in logbook
13 programs or observer programs we have an option
14 of, for example, swordfish chunks, which generally
15 indicates that you only got a part of the
16 swordfish back and that's generally some kind of
17 depredation. We can't actually distinguish from
18 that whether there was marine mammal or sharks,
19 let alone whether or not which species it was.

20 This is a problem in general with ICCAT.
21 We have even less data with respect to that
22 provided ICCAT on a regular basis. So that's one

1 of the topics to think about is how can we
2 actually get the data that we would need to really
3 quantify this and correlate that with any sort of
4 abundance trends in sharks.

5 I think this hasn't been directly
6 addressed very much at all with any SCRS meetings.
7 We may need to revisit that and think about it
8 some more. It's been addressed when discussing
9 under the Ecosystem and Bycatch Subcommittee.
10 There was a paper presented on depredation by oca
11 and that pointed out that in those cases in
12 certain fisheries they attributed sometimes --
13 well, certainly more than 50 percent of the catch
14 of swordfish were lost to oca. Other studies
15 said that in general there was depredation on the
16 order of between one to three percent of the
17 swordfish and lower percent of tuna to combined
18 marine mammal and shark depredation.

19 So basically this is -- the situation
20 we're at now is that we recognize it could be an
21 issue. It can also affect our perception of stock
22 status, depending on the size, basically the

1 proportion of the catch that is lost. If it
2 doesn't make it into our records as a catch, then
3 it affects our indices of abundance, our fishery
4 dependent indices of abundance. So if, for
5 example, it's increasing over time, we may see a
6 decrease in catch rate that to some extent is real
7 with respect to reflecting abundance trends.

8 So that's basically where we're at from
9 the perspective of how it impacts our ICCAT
10 assessments.

11 MR. BROOKS: Karyl, do you want to take
12 questions on that now or kind of go through all
13 the presentations first you think?

14 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: I think it would be
15 good to go through all of them.

16 MR. BROOKS: So I see you guys down
17 there. I've got you in the queue, but we'll push
18 forward here.

19 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: So I think we'll
20 have Lisa go next. We'll set up her presentation.
21 We'll Enric last. So Enric is doing it remotely,
22 so we're hoping that won't break the webinar. So

1 we'll do Lisa first.

2 MS. NATANSON: While he's putting up my
3 slides, thank you for having us -- me back again.
4 You remember last year I talked about our
5 northeast survey. They actually asked me to talk
6 about the southeast survey this year since the
7 participants are at sea right now and can't do it
8 themselves, so you'll have to bear with me a
9 little bit because it's not my survey.

10 I'm going to start with that and then
11 I'm going to get into the depredation on the
12 southeast, northeast surveys, observer program,
13 and COASTSPAN.

14 So the southeast bottom longline survey
15 out Pascagoula is an annual bottom longline
16 survey. It's a 60-day survey and it started in
17 1995. You might remember last year we said we
18 changed all of our format and our gear in 1995 to
19 match this survey.

20 They have made changes, but since 2001
21 their changes have -- they stayed the same. They
22 used an NOAA vessel and they do the coast all the

1 way -- Gulf of Mexico all the way up to Hatteras.

2 So they do about two to 300 stations.
3 They have days to do it in and they go from July
4 through September, which is why they're of course
5 out now. They use a random stratified sampling
6 method with proportional allocations based on the
7 (inaudible) and you can see what those are. They
8 are most heavily fished in the Gulf of Mexico.

9 Their (inaudible) is different than
10 ours. They're one mile mainline and that's their
11 big criterion. They have 100 hooks that they put
12 between that. They have three weights, one in the
13 middle, two on the ends. They started out using
14 the J hooks like we use, but ultimately they
15 expanded this into a snapper-grouper survey as
16 well and the circle hooks fit their protocols
17 better, so they're using those now. They bait
18 their hooks with mackerel, half mackerels, and
19 pretty similar setting to most bottom longline.

20 So this kind of wordy slide basically
21 says that they have a really kind of neat method
22 to enter data by hook, and you'll see more of this

1 as it goes. So they have this computer on deck
2 and -- during all operations where they can track.
3 It's set to the GPS and you can see it -- you can
4 press a button when you deploy a weight, when you
5 apply a hook, that kind of thing.

6 So they collect environmental data at
7 every set they -- including temperature, salinity,
8 water clarity, dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll,
9 bottom type weather conditions, all the typical
10 stuff.

11 At haulback they collect biological
12 data. For the most part they tag or release their
13 fish. But of course if they die, they will
14 dissect them and get information on age, growth,
15 reproduction, food habits, DNA, anything else that
16 anybody else asks for. However, most fish are
17 tagged. They also obviously did a lot of teleost,
18 so this isn't solely sharks like ours.

19 So again at haulback they track by hook.
20 Every hook has a hook timer, so if there is a
21 shark, they have information that they can put in
22 on that. They track the bait whether it was

1 bitten, whether it was damaged. They track all
2 the fish. That's where they can put their
3 depredation events in as well. As you can see,
4 it's fairly detailed information. Then if they do
5 bring shark on board to sample, they can barcode
6 it and put all the data in there, kind of a neat
7 system.

8 So they're data as ours go into the
9 stock assessments. It also goes into the grouper,
10 snapper, and tilefish, because they catch a lot of
11 other fish, and their indices have shown a
12 decrease in sharpnose. It's like decrease in
13 blacknose and blacktip, and an increase in
14 sandbar.

15 If you have questions about that, you
16 can contact Trey. Afterwards you can ask me. I
17 can answer some questions probably.

18 So now on to what you're really
19 interested in this session. These are a few of
20 the sharks that we brought up on our survey.
21 Obviously we're seeing what you're seeing. This
22 is more shark on shark, but a variety of species

1 getting bitten up before they come on board.
2 These are some of the guys that are doing it.
3 We've seen tigers, duskys, sandbars, and sand
4 tigers all just going down the line biting
5 sharpnose that had bitten our bait. So starting
6 in about 2001 we started tracking it. As you can
7 see on the right, this is the sharpnose. Most of
8 the sharpnose we get are pretty much depredated in
9 some form or another. A lot of times we just get
10 heads.

11 The other species are a little more
12 variable, mostly because we don't get that many
13 bitten up. You can see in the bottom right, the
14 sandbar, we've only had 15 over the course of the
15 survey and the dusky 11. But as can you see, the
16 trend has been increasing particularly since 2012
17 and that is driven on our survey by the sharpnose.
18 You can't really go by the total.

19 So moving to Pascagoula survey -- and
20 these are percent of total. These are only the
21 fish who do have depredation events on them, only
22 those species. So their total has also gone up.

1 If you look at the blacknose and blacktip, they
2 kind of went up and then went back down. The
3 smoothhounds and sharpnose sharks are really
4 driving their increase in depredation events, and
5 the grouper and snapper, again they had that kind
6 of peak and then went back down.

7 This is the bottom longline observer
8 program. This is calculated a little differently.
9 He did proportion by sets. You can't really see
10 too much of a clear trend, although maybe since
11 about 2012 it went up and stabilized a little bit,
12 not that teleosts seem to be kind of all over the
13 place.

14 Then this is our COASTSPAN survey, which
15 is an inshore survey done in the base of estuary.
16 In the juveniles, you can see there's no clear
17 pattern. It really doesn't have anything in the
18 small hook juvenile survey. There's a little more
19 in the large hook survey that we've observed.

20 You'll notice kind of a peak in 2015 for
21 the smooth dogfish and that was a couple of sets
22 that one fish had just gone down the line and

1 eaten a bunch of smooth dogfish.

2 So you can see that we are seeing it.
3 We're seeing it by a lot of different species. In
4 some cases, by species it's increasing. That's
5 it.

6 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Thanks, Lisa.

7 MR. BROOKS: Stay close to the
8 microphone. I'm sure there will be questions
9 here.

10 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Enric, do you want
11 to start talking and see if that works.

12 MR. BROOKS: Go ahead.

13 MR. CORTES: So I was asked to give a
14 little overview on the status of the different
15 coastal sharks. We have (inaudible) also on
16 trends an abundance of fishing mortality from
17 (inaudible) perspective, so that's what I'm trying
18 to do here.

19 If you get an overview of (inaudible)
20 what is the status currently of the various
21 Atlantic coastal shark, how has the status changed
22 with respect to previous stock assessment, and

1 then examining the trends in biomass or different
2 measures we use abundance or (inaudible) and
3 fishing mortality in terms of MSY benchmarks
4 (inaudible) and see how those trends are going.
5 So I'm using the word large coastal shark and
6 small coastal sharks here in an ecological way,
7 not in a management way. So I'm including some
8 sharks that may not fall in that category from a
9 management standpoint.

10 But looking at what would be large
11 coastal sharks, I've summarize here the latest
12 assessment (inaudible) that were undertaken for
13 sandbar, dusky, (inaudible) blacktip and scalloped
14 hammerhead. So as you know the latest stock
15 assessment of sandbars still found that they were
16 overfished, but no overfishing.

17 However, we looked at the overall trend
18 (inaudible) compared to the previous assessment,
19 SEDAR21, 2011. That status has improved and so
20 have the overfishing status and that was reflected
21 also by an increase in TAC of about 10 percent as
22 a result of the latest stock assessment.

1 Dusky as we all know is still overfished
2 with overfishing. However, even though
3 (inaudible) overfishing, the status has improved,
4 so the biomass has increased and the degree of
5 overfishing has (inaudible) and that was also
6 reflected in (inaudible) by the projection
7 guideline, which is 2070.

8 The chart which has been healthy all
9 along. The status actually has also improved with
10 respect to the previous stock assessment in 2012.
11 In (inaudible) in the Atlantic, most in the south
12 Atlantic, was -- the previous assessment was not
13 expected back in 2006, 2007 by the reviewers.

14 We are currently reassessing with a
15 benchmark assessment this stock, so there is
16 nothing to compare to now to previous assessment.
17 Also scalloped hammerhead, which was assessed
18 externally years ago. We have not reassessed yet,
19 but we are planning on starting late next year and
20 well into 2021 and maybe beyond, and that's
21 (inaudible). So now taking a more individual look
22 at each of these assessments, first for the

1 sandbar shark, both (inaudible) indicates
2 (inaudible) we use for sharks and the bottom block
3 refers to the fishing mortality or harvest rate,
4 depending on the time of assessment.

5 Essentially for sandbar shark, we see a
6 percent increase in biomass since 2008 and
7 (inaudible) about 68 percent, so there is an
8 improvement. Was there a --

9 MR. BROOKS: No, push on.

10 MR. CORTES: May I continue?

11 MR. BROOKS: Yes, please, Enric,
12 continue. Enric, are you still there?

13 MR. CORTES: Yeah, I was hearing the
14 conversation.

15 MR. BROOKS: Yeah, we all were, we were
16 trying to make the conversation go away. You've
17 got the floor, go ahead.

18 MR. CORTES: Okay. So there's always
19 something new then. So for dusky sharks, the rate
20 of decline in (inaudible) has slowed down in
21 recent years, particularly since 2001. And that
22 decline, as you see the board graph, particularly

1 since 2000, and has further decreased by 9 percent
2 since 2010. So it's also improving.

3 For Gulf of Mexico the chart here
4 provide results from the base of prevocational
5 makeup of nature which were considered the stock
6 has always been in good shape and has even been
7 increasing since approximately 2000. And has been
8 decreasing since the early 1990s, and always been
9 low.

10 Now with hammerheads, this again was an
11 assessment that was done years ago. Even though
12 the stock was overfished, you can see that even
13 back then, since the mid- 90s, there was slightly
14 increasing trend in biomass. And the trend, you
15 can see in the bottom funnel, the trend in fishing
16 mortality was quite alternating between
17 overfishing and not overfishing. I was
18 overfishing in the terminal year that it says.

19 So the combined view for all these large
20 coastal sharks in terms of biomass is that even
21 though three of these are overfished, the trend in
22 biomass at the time of the latest assessments were

1 increasing, and the decrease had stopped for dusky
2 shark.

3 And in terms of fish mortality, I lost
4 my little sharks here, you can see that only dusky
5 shark here in the red was slightly in an
6 overfishing status as well, as I mentioned before,
7 as well as scalloped hammerhead.

8 Okay. So now moving on to small coastal
9 sharks, and here I include, as I said before, some
10 of the sharks which are not in that management
11 group that we have assessed recently. So I have
12 finetooth, blacknose, Atlantic sharpnose,
13 bonnethead, smooth dogfish and some other
14 smoothhound complex. Finetooth was like the first
15 years ago and there was no overfished or
16 overfishing status. Blacknose Shark in the South
17 Atlantic was reassessed in SEDAR21, and the status
18 was still overfished, with overfishing. The
19 overfished status had slightly improved, but the
20 overfishing status had actually decreased or
21 worsened.

22 For the Gulf of Mexico, again, this was

1 one was not accepted by the reviewers for a number
2 of technical issues.

3 Atlantic sharpnose shark and bonnethead
4 were both reassessed in 2013, and they were all,
5 both of them were not overfished with no
6 overfishing occurring. And both of their status
7 with respect to these two benchmarks, had improved
8 compared to the previous assessment back in 2007.

9 Smooth dogfish and smoothhound complex
10 were assessed a few years ago, 2015, and neither
11 of them are overfished, nor overfishing occurring
12 for these sharks.

13 Again, very quickly, for finetooth shark
14 where we show as stable in trajectory in a low ebb
15 throughout the time series of the assessment. For
16 the blacknose shark, which was, as I said, the
17 only one that was in a bad status, we had an
18 overfished condition here at the right axis, and
19 an overfishing condition here, looking at the left
20 axis. Atlantic sharpnose shark, not overfished,
21 no overfishing, with increasing biomass and
22 decreasing ebb. Same situation for the bonnethead

1 shark.

2 For the smooth dogfish, again,
3 increasing biomass in the late 90s and generally
4 decreasing ebb as well. And for the smoothhound
5 complex, we had an essentially overall increasing
6 trend and a slightly decreasing ebb trajectory
7 throughout the assessment.

8 Again, looking at the combined picture
9 for all these small coastal sharks, we see that
10 the only one that was in an overfished status was
11 the blacknose shark, Atlantic stock, and as well
12 showing very high level of overfishing for this
13 particular stock.

14 So again, now putting all the stocks
15 together, both large and small coastal, we see
16 again, just as a recap, that only the sandbar,
17 dusky, blacknose shark in the South Atlantic,
18 scalloped hammerheads, showed an overfished
19 status. But with the exception of the blacknose
20 shark in the Southern Atlantic, the general trend
21 was improving.

22 And in terms of relative fishing

1 mortality, the only ones that were in an
2 overfishing condition were dusky shark, not by
3 much. The indeterminable year scalloped
4 hammerheads and again the South Atlantic stock of
5 blacknose shark.

6 So just to reiterate, all our coastal
7 shark stocks which have been reassessed, so when
8 there was a previous assessment, have improved
9 fishing status from the previous assessment, even
10 if some of them continue to be in an overfished
11 status, like sandbar and dusky. And all small
12 coastal sharks we assess with the exception of the
13 blacknose shark in the Atlantic, Atlantic southern
14 blacknose shark, overfishing status, have
15 improved, both, like I said, in terms of biomass,
16 increased biomass and decreased volatile fish
17 mortality.

18 And this is the end of my presentation.

19 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thank you very
20 much, Enric. What I'd like to do is open it up
21 first just to some clarifying questions on the
22 three presentations and then hand it back to Karyl

1 to reintroduce her questions.

2 So for folks who have their cards up
3 again, just focus first on clarifying questions
4 from the presentations. And let's go, I've got
5 Anna, Marcus, Marty, David, and Mike. So Anna.

6 MS. BECKWITH: Mine is not clarifying.

7 MR. BROOKS: Okay. Clarifying
8 questions. Marcus. Not yet? Okay. Marty,
9 clarifying question? Nope? David, clarifying
10 question?

11 MR. SCHALOT: I believe so.

12 MR. BROOKS: I'll be the judge of that.

13 MR. SCHALOT: Dr. Brown mentioned that
14 there's a dearth of data on depredation. And we
15 all live and die by our data, so I'm wondering if
16 there's - I mean I'm assuming that there is a
17 problem with shark identification in that
18 particular context because sometimes the shark
19 will attack a species but in a way in which it is
20 impossible for the fishermen to identify the
21 actual shark species. In some cases yes, in other
22 cases no.

1 So I'm wondering if there's some
2 methodology that would extrapolate from the data
3 in which a sighting and a species was properly
4 identified, to encompass all such acts, you know,
5 that took place in the same area, approximately
6 the same time. Is that something that's viable,
7 from your point of view?

8 MR. BROOKS: Craig, can I recommend you
9 come up to the table, and probably Lisa too.

10 MR. BROWN: I'll start off with just a
11 brief answer and pass it along. But I think that
12 implies that there's some subset of the data that
13 actually has that information. Which I'm not sure
14 if that exists. If it were, I suppose it might be
15 in some observant data. But generally to identify
16 the sharp species I think you either have to see
17 the shark attacking a fish, or sometimes from a
18 bite, but I think that's rather imprecise. So
19 unless you actually have a tooth in the wound I'm
20 not sure you can identify it for sure to a shark
21 species, when a fish is hauled up already half
22 eaten. But I'll pass along and see if there's any

1 data that we might have.

2 MS. NATASON: No, I agree. Unless you
3 can see it or have something like a tooth, I don't
4 know how you would know, but.

5 MR. BROOKS: Mike, did you have a
6 qualifying question?

7 MR. PIERDINOCK: Well one thing I can
8 probably help you clarify here is one of the
9 issues is not in sharks as far as depredation is
10 in the pelagic coastal industry, the biggest
11 problem we have is on pilot whales. And that's
12 pretty easily identifiable in the pelagic coastal
13 industry because I don't know if anybody's aware,
14 is the whale doesn't go and take and bit the fish
15 piece by piece. I've actually seen the whale come
16 right up behind 140 pound bigeye and grab ahold of
17 the bigeye, the whole body in its mouth, and suck
18 that fish right out from its gill plates. And the
19 only thing that's left on the hook would be the
20 gill plates minus everything else, or the lips.
21 So it's pretty distinguishable that it was a pilot
22 whale. But I've actually seen that happen with my

1 own eyes where the whale came right up and sucked
2 him like a grape off a vine.

3 MR. BROOKS: Marcus, clarifying?

4 MR. DRYMAN: No, but just to speak to
5 David's specific question. We've developed a
6 technique where you can identify the species of
7 shark responsible for the depredation event. So
8 using, you know, dozens of instances of catch
9 documented or camera documented depredation we
10 were able to validate a genetic technique so just
11 like in forensics where you take a swab and you
12 swab the remains of that fish. If you're very,
13 very careful with the way you handle the tissues
14 and whatnot, you can identify it to species very
15 accurately. And our data show that in our region
16 it works really well.

17 So just to clarify that particular
18 question.

19 MR. BROOKS: And, Marcus, is that a
20 scalable technique or is it pretty labor
21 intensive?

22 MR. DRYMAN: Yes, right. So scalable

1 and labor intensive. So, yeah, it's just a matter
2 of, you know, storing the swabs and then having
3 them analyzed.

4 MR. BROOKS: I want to see if anyone on
5 the phone has a clarifying question, anyone of our
6 participants clarifying questions.

7 Thank you, operator. Any clarifying
8 questions? Sorry, say that again. Okay.
9 Operator, if you can re-mute the Webinar, please.
10 And Raimundo, I'll let you --

11 MR. ESPENOZA: Oh, hi, this is just a
12 clarifying question. None of this work has been
13 done in the US Caribbean, right?

14 MR. BROWN: I'm not aware of anything.

15 MR. BROOKS: All right. Alan,
16 clarifying?

17 MR. WEISS: Yes. Thanks. I think that
18 the greatest likelihood within the pelagic
19 fisheries for shark depredation would be from
20 pelagic sharks, but all the data that has been
21 presented this morning is pertaining to coastal
22 sharks. Why nothing about pelagic sharks?

1 MS. NATANSON: When we do our survey
2 it's a coastal survey, that's why we presented
3 that. I have been on commercial longline vessels
4 many times and you can definitely tell a mako
5 verses another species. But I don't have numbers
6 for that so I couldn't present that.

7 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Enric, would you
8 have any information, or if you wanted to talk
9 about the status of some of the pelagic sharks?

10 MR. CORTES: Pelagic sharks because
11 that's at issue, as you know, and so there is
12 management by other countries. But the stock
13 status is, if people don't know it, the blue
14 shark, the North Atlantic blue shark stock is not
15 overfished, and there's no overfishing. The
16 shark, mako latest assessment in 2017 found that
17 the stock was overfished with overfishing
18 occurring. And before, people know North Atlantic
19 stock back in 2009 would have said to be
20 overfished with no overfishing occurring.

21 MR. BROOKS: Enric, I have a question
22 for you too. Maybe this is an unfair question,

1 feel free to pass, but given what you are seeing
2 in the various abundance trends and what the
3 agency is hearing about sort of the increase in
4 depredation, is that not surprising to you, or do
5 you see enough movement in the abundance trends
6 that increase in depredation or the reporting of
7 depredation, you know, that that could be just
8 sort of that growth that you're seeing?

9 MR. CORTES: So if I understand
10 correctly you're saying if the increasing
11 depredation is reflected in the increase of
12 abundance?

13 MR. BROOKS: Yes. Is that at least
14 plausible to think that increase could be tied to
15 the types of increases you're seeing, or trends
16 you're seeing in abundance?

17 MR. CORTES: It's possible, but we would
18 have to tie the specific timing of the rates of
19 depredation trends with those in the assessment to
20 see if there was any correlation.

21 I would also be a little cautious about
22 using that as a direct indication because the

1 depredation, I mean sharks are attracted to bait,
2 obviously, and the vibration in the water and the
3 blood. And so this could also be viewed in a way
4 as a case of hyper stability in which you are
5 attracting, you know, the abundance I submit that
6 you are getting from a relative abundance index
7 may not be solely related to overall abundance.
8 But having said that, yeah, I think that what I
9 was trying to show in the presentation is that the
10 trends in shared abundance are generally
11 increasing, therefore that means there are more
12 sharks, so there is a correlation you would expect
13 depredation to go up I believe.

14 MR. BROOKS: Okay. Thanks. So, Karyl,
15 maybe you can sort of remind us of the questions
16 and then we'll open it up for just general
17 discussion.

18 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Sure. So the
19 questions are up on the screen. They focus on if
20 there are certain fishing techniques or strategies
21 you have noticed that might affect sharks. Sorry
22 about all the humming up here. Whether or not

1 there seems to be a seasonal issue in your area,
2 what the impacts are to profits or, in the case of
3 charters, to people booking. And if you have
4 suggestions on how we better quantify the extent
5 of the problem.

6 These are suggested questions. If you
7 have other thoughts, you know, you can certainly
8 go off book.

9 MR. BROOKS: Great, perfect. Thanks,
10 Karyl. Let's go to Anna first and then over to
11 Marcus.

12 MS. BECKWITH: Thanks. The South
13 Atlantic Council has certainly heard a lot of
14 comments recently on this issue, and we did
15 provide a letter to HMS. It seems like the
16 majority of our concerns are coming from North
17 Carolina and Florida, and it is taking up a
18 significant amount of our public comment time.

19 In general the concerns focus on
20 primarily large coastal sharks with some
21 additional concerns surrounding the hammerheads,
22 specifically for the snapper/grouper fisheries in

1 terms of fishing techniques. We're hearing
2 complaints across all our fisheries. I mean with
3 significant damage occurring to tail bags and our
4 shrimp trawlers, and mutilated fish concerns for
5 hook and line, bottom longline and spears.

6 We've of course heard some anecdotal
7 stories that folks are basically saying that these
8 sharks, you know, it might be an increase in
9 abundance, but they also might be learning the
10 behavior and being attracted to boats. So they're
11 becoming the equivalent of a marine version of a
12 trash panda.

13 So we don't know how to, you know, make
14 this better. We've certainly provided some
15 suggestions to work with the commercial industry
16 to fully achieve the quota for large coastal
17 sharks. It seems that people feel like
18 depredation is better when the commercial fishery
19 is occurring. You know, we would personally like
20 to see the retention limit stepped up during the
21 regionally important peak fishing times, which for
22 us in the summertime, for tourism in the South

1 Atlantic. And there have been some suggestions
2 that we'd like to see the opening of the silky
3 shark fishery, recognizing that there are some
4 identifying, you know, issues between silky sharks
5 and some of the other for the recreational
6 fishery.

7 In terms of specifically your questions,
8 you know, chumming, chunking, I mean we're sort of
9 seeing it across the board so. Impacts to fishing
10 profits and charter bookings, I don't get the feel
11 that it's necessarily impacting charter bookings,
12 but it's certainly impacting the satisfaction of
13 those trips and, you know, increasing angler
14 frustration. And of course the commercial guys
15 are seeing decreased profits due to less
16 marketable fish because they're coming up
17 mutilated. So not anything that's a surprise.

18 MR. DRYMAN: Okay. Thank you. Marcus
19 Dryman, Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant. So much
20 the same as what Anna just said. I think it
21 really boils down to two very broad categories,
22 characterization and then mitigation. And then

1 that those are of course things that need to be
2 addressed in tandem, but two separate things.

3 In terms of the characterization, I
4 mentioned briefly the genetic technique we
5 developed. And what that suggests is in our area
6 it is primarily sandbar sharks. But when we look
7 at our camera catch data from areas like Texas and
8 Florida, the dynamics of depredation change
9 wildly. In Texas it's just as easily barracudas
10 and amberjack that are depredating snapper/grouper
11 fisheries. And in Florida of course there's the
12 additional problem of goliath grouper.

13 So to me it speaks to the need for a
14 broad scale characterization of depredation across
15 fisheries. Like Anna says, especially in the
16 shrimp trawl fishery, they're experiencing
17 significant impacts right now. But suffice to
18 say, the species doing the depredating in Texas is
19 not going to be the same as the one in
20 Mississippi, Alabama, and that's not going to be
21 the same as the one in Florida.

22 So just as a starting point, we need

1 even just basic surveys of commercial fishermen to
2 understand what these dynamics are because they're
3 the ones that know.

4 Then in terms of the mitigation, we've
5 been trialing several techniques based on what we
6 hear from the fishermen in our area. And that's
7 largely the things like magnets, some chemical
8 deterrents, those both show promise in terms of
9 mitigation. So once we understand what the
10 dynamics of depredation look like and how that
11 varies across the Gulf, then we can better target
12 mitigation techniques towards specific species.
13 Because the literature shows that a mitigation
14 strategy for one species won't necessarily work
15 for another.

16 So I guess to that I would just urge
17 NOAA to prioritize funding through CRP, Morfen,
18 SK, BREP, whatever, for proposals that want to
19 characterize and/or mitigation depredation.

20 MR. SCANLON: Well we want to just make
21 a quick, you know, comment on, you know, the
22 devastating effects of depredation as far as

1 economic impact on our industry, you know, as well
2 as between the sharks and the pilot whales. You
3 know, we continually rebuild these stocks and, you
4 know, we continually hear that the stocks are
5 rebuilt, yet we see on the water they have this
6 depredation going on, which has a dramatic effect
7 on our overall income, you know. So I think
8 that's important to take into account here and a
9 reason to try to come up with a solution to this
10 problem.

11 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Marty. David.

12 MR. SCHALIT: Yeah, is there any value
13 in considering the collecting of depredation data
14 for the purpose, the express purpose of creating
15 an index that would indicate or potentially
16 support trends in abundance? That's something,
17 you know, we're always having to look for new
18 indices, and I wonder if that might be one of
19 them.

20 Then I have something for Marcus. You
21 were referencing genetic barcoding. Is that it?
22 Okay. That's very inexpensive now I understand

1 from Dr. Golet. Thank you.

2 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Anyone want to
3 jump in on any of those?

4 MR. BROWN: Well, again, I think to do
5 something like that, if you're talking about an
6 indices tracking the shark abundance, I think we
7 would have to rely on something like the genetic
8 techniques to identify the species for it to be of
9 any use. But if you were going to invest in that
10 with the labor and the cost, then it would serve
11 multiple purposes obviously, you know,
12 characterize your depredation by species as well.
13 But, yes, that could be another means, whether
14 it's better than the fishery dependent indices,
15 I'm not sure.

16 MR. BROOKS: All right. Let's get a
17 couple of folks who haven't been in. Let's go to
18 Walter and then over to Stephen and back across
19 the table.

20 MR. GOLET: All right. I'll give the
21 microphone a try here. I just thought of some
22 numbers really to put into context what Craig was

1 talking about before. So the trip he was
2 referencing was one that myself and Dr. Jeff
3 Kneebone, who is here in the audience, was on in
4 North Carolina this year. We're working with them
5 to just sort of start to collect information on
6 what the impacts of this might be.

7 But I'll just give you one example where
8 we surveyed the fleet. We were down there trying
9 to apply satellite tags. It was very difficult,
10 Jeff can attest to this. Four big guys on at one
11 time, six big guys on at one time, you don't get
12 any of them to the boat. The one day that we did
13 keep track of it we lost 177 yellowfins and 22
14 bigeyes in one day. And those yellowfins were
15 between 35 and 55 inches long, and the bigeyes up
16 to 65 inches long.

17 So just to kind of give you a context of
18 what this particular fleet is dealing with, you
19 know, their take to get to Anna's comments,
20 they're taking clients out there with the
21 expectation of not only catching fish, but, let's
22 face it, if you're paying for a charter, lot of

1 guys want meat. And so you'll get meat, but
2 you'll get what Marty's talking about, which is
3 just kind of the skull. So just to put that into
4 context.

5 And also I'll bring up some of the old
6 stuff that we did with Dewey and Jeff. Again,
7 this is just very basic numbers, I'm not saying
8 this as implications for abundance, etcetera, but,
9 you know, the two sets we made with Dewey, 673
10 hooks were set, 151 dusky's were caught, 175 bite
11 offs. Just on two sets off the point.

12 So anyway, just to give some context.
13 Thanks.

14 MR. GETTO: Just to give the group some
15 personal experience, I'm a bluefin fisherman in
16 the Northeast. I've had two white shark attacks
17 on bluefin. Both on rod and reel. You know, one
18 fish was bitten in half and was dumped. The other
19 one was salvageable, but, you know, there are
20 enough there that we're seeing attacks, frequent.
21 One was on Northern Jeffries, one was on
22 Stellwagon. So it's not like I'm fishing off Cape

1 Cod Bay or anywhere there, you know, where they're
2 really piled up where Greg sees them. So they're
3 there and they're doing it.

4 MR. SAMPSON: Yeah, Mark Sampson. I
5 fish out of Ocean City, Maryland, which a lot of
6 people may or may not know it's a very popular
7 resort town. Through most of the summer we're
8 fishing probably within five or 10 miles of the
9 beach. Every year after Labor Day, immediately
10 after Labor Day we start having trouble. Not with
11 sharks, we're trying to catch sharks, but with
12 seagulls. The seagulls suddenly start attacking
13 our bait. And we've always come to the conclusion
14 that's because less people on the beach feeding
15 the seagulls their French fries and Cheese
16 Doodles. Suddenly they're a hassle for us.

17 In recent years, probably within the
18 past eight to years, we have seen, and I have a
19 lot of logbook data that can verify this, a lot
20 more of the smaller sharks that we catch,
21 particularly the dusky and spinner sharks, that
22 have, they show signs of the predation scars from

1 sharks on them. I have a lot of photographic
2 record of this.

3 Also, Marcus, I don't know if this would
4 play into your thing, but it just seems that,
5 again, in the last decade anyway, we've been
6 seeing more and more of this. Now my thought on
7 the matter has always been, you know, perhaps this
8 is a sign that the natural prey of the sharks is
9 being depleted to some degree. So I just throw
10 that out as something to consider to throw into
11 the mix. In some cases, maybe not always a sign
12 of increase abundance of certain species, but
13 perhaps if their own prey, the French fries and
14 Cheese Doodles that they normally are eating, is
15 not as abundant, they might be looking for other
16 sources and going in other places, you know, to
17 get what they want. Which might be the tunas or
18 the snappers or whatever. Thank you.

19 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Greg.

20 MR. SKOMAL: Yeah, we've been working on
21 a depredation issue with hammerheads and tarpon
22 down in the Florida Keys, and we're certainly

1 aware of the issues that are developing with white
2 sharks up in New England.

3 And along these lines, my colleagues at
4 U Mass Amherst have been distributing online
5 survey to recreational anglers to try to get a
6 sense of the geographic scope of species involved
7 and such around the US. So I would encourage
8 folks to participate. It's only been out about a
9 month and we have about 600 participants already.
10 It's just a start. How well it will quantify it I
11 don't know, but it's to get a sense of angler
12 attitudes and what they're seeing out there. So I
13 just want to put it out to the group for those who
14 might be interested to, I'll let you know where to
15 go on line.

16 MR. BROOKS: Dewey.

17 MR. HEMILRIGHT: My memory might be off
18 a little bit, but I believe since about 1994,
19 prior to 1994 you could go fishing 365 days a
20 year, and you could catch all the sharks you want.
21 After that period of time there was a management
22 plan put into effect, trip limits, quotas cut in

1 half. It's kind of funny sitting here at the
2 table listening to everybody's comments. Could it
3 be a possibility that there's just more sharks?

4 You know what brings back my memory also
5 is that the spiny dogfish that was going to take
6 100 years to rebuild happened in about 18 years.
7 I used to travel shark fishing probably from
8 Jacksonville, Florida to Montauk, New York, and in
9 about 2006 or '07 had stopped when the trip limit
10 level got so low I couldn't, you know, it wasn't
11 profitable to go up and down the coast.

12 But our fisheries that would interact
13 with sharks commercially that I'm familiar with,
14 you know, there's a heck of a lot less fisherman
15 out there on the water. Pelagic longline, we're
16 using 300 pound mono and a circle hook where
17 there's bite offs. Usually in my experience it
18 takes HMS five to seven years to catch up with
19 reality. And that's just based on my experience
20 of sitting around the table of the science.

21 So this is going to continue to happen,
22 it's going to get worse. And people keep

1 hollering and, you know, is the answer to go kill
2 all the sharks or whatever? No. But I mean you
3 protected them, it's almost like a bank that you
4 been taking out of the bank and all of a sudden
5 you're putting your money back into an account and
6 you look 20 years later, 25 years later, you're
7 like dag gone, that account has grown some. Well
8 it's the same way with these sharks. And it's
9 going to get worse and, you know, there's more
10 sharks out there.

11 So our research fisheries that we have,
12 the observer shark program that we have, it's in
13 little areas that probably don't go very far off
14 shore. And different ones I know, particularly
15 North Carolina, so there's none north of that.
16 You look at the indices, I mean they're all going
17 up. So it's kind of the NMFS, you know, your
18 rebuilding plan and your management of sharks
19 since 1994, whatever the year is, it's worked.

20 MR. BROOKS: Thank you. Let's go to
21 Mike, Raimundo, and then I want to see if we've
22 got folks on the Webinar.

1 MR. PIERDINOCK: Thank you. Mike
2 Pierdinock. Two species in New England that
3 continue to plague us with this problem. One is
4 porbeagle sharks. If you're fishing up in
5 Stellwagen Bank or the Western Gulf of Maine and
6 you're groundfishing, you know, kind of catching
7 cod, pollock, and haddock. As you bring them up
8 we constantly have interactions with porbeagles.
9 And that's been going on for many years, and
10 continues to be a problem.

11 Steve had mentioned great white sharks
12 is another issue that's all over the news daily up
13 in Massachusetts and Cape Cod, where I live within
14 minutes of Cape Cod, and it's either on the news
15 or the radio with great white shark interactions.
16 Karyl, I ask that you go on You Tube and you will
17 see plenty of photographs and video tapes of
18 interactions with great whites in 20, 30 feet of
19 water, eating our striped bass, cutting them in
20 half, whether it's striped bass or bluefish or
21 other species.

22 I'd like to thank NOAA and National

1 Marine Fishery Service for their conservation
2 measures for great whites and seals because it's a
3 conservation success story. Great whites have
4 come back, seals have gone from 1,500 to 50,000
5 plus throughout Cape Cod, North Shore, South Shore
6 and so on, but the seals are the dinner bell for
7 the great whites. But now that's for the adult
8 great whites.

9 Now what we've seen the past few years
10 is now we see the juveniles, through the good
11 conservation measures. And those juveniles are in
12 shallow waters. And I know Greg can, you know,
13 expand upon that more. But what's happened the
14 past two years, unfortunately, there's been two
15 deaths on Cape Cod beaches as a result of attacks,
16 and we hope we don't have one, it typically
17 happens around September.

18 So the dinner bell with the seals and
19 the increased population not only is causing a
20 problem from a fishery standpoint with bluefin and
21 other species and so on, but it's also a safety
22 issue. And as a result of those increased numbers

1 near shore, from what I understand the young ones
2 aren't sure with a human in the water, where the
3 old ones, the older adults, they're going after
4 seals and whales and turtles, and they have more
5 experience at that. But since there's more
6 younger ones near shore that we're having a safety
7 problem.

8 So that has had a detrimental impact on
9 tourism. Tourism's down, people aren't coming,
10 and we just hope that there's not another death
11 because it could be even worse. So with that, you
12 get the calls from everybody for a cull of the
13 seals, we gotta have a jaws like landings of great
14 whites. And I try to, you know, calm them down
15 and say look, we have to have science support
16 this.

17 So I don't know whether the time has
18 come to have a great white shark stock assessment,
19 which I believe Greg is doing that right now in
20 our state waters, but to have that. That then
21 could answer what we hear daily on the radio and
22 TV with the sightings and interactions to show

1 whether you can open it up to fishing again or you
2 can't. My sense is no, but I don't know. So I
3 throw it out there and hopefully that could be a
4 mechanism to address the concerns of the public
5 and the safety issues that we have right now.
6 Thanks.

7 MR. BROOKS: Raimundo, and then to
8 Webinar.

9 MR. RAIMUNDO: Thank you. My college,
10 Marcos Hanke, the South Atlantic Council, he asked
11 me to mention this. That on the east coast of
12 Puerto Rico for the recreational charter
13 fishermen, about 50 percent of the hooked fish are
14 taken by sharks. Specifically silkys and
15 Caribbean reef sharks.

16 And then they go very well from what you
17 hear about one of those most profitable fisheries
18 in Puerto Rico, which is deep watersnappers, queen
19 and silk snappers. You see that they have a
20 significant take as well from Caribbean reefs,
21 some silkys when they're on the surface as well.
22 But they are pulling up really large tigers from

1 about 1,000 feet deep.

2 So this is something, it is affecting a
3 lot of the fisheries as well. We do also have
4 another project that we do, try monitoring on dive
5 fishermen, so each fisherman carries and they
6 record they're diving, while they're fishing,
7 where they're spearing. And we have seen in the
8 past several months a lot more sharks have been
9 circling divers. And, you know, something that
10 this has not really been the norm in the US
11 Caribbean, and it's not necessarily, we don't have
12 a shark diving industry so that the learned
13 behavior isn't necessarily something that's there
14 because we just haven't had the time for the
15 sharks to learn this.

16 So we are seeing interactions increase
17 quite bit. We have been documenting it with
18 video. And the species are, you know, quite
19 diverse between sharks, like tiger sharks,
20 Caribbean reefs, lemons. And so it's something
21 that is very concerning from the fisheries point
22 of view, but as well from the tourism aspect as

1 well, you know. Puerto Rico, we do have, our
2 beaches, that's one of the main attraction for the
3 island.

4 So this is something we are trying to
5 manage to see how we work with it. But it is
6 something that we do see, we do need more support
7 on some of the research and the interactions with
8 the different fisheries. Specifically because
9 conch dive fishermen, conch is the second most
10 important economic fishery on land, and the other
11 one is conch lobster and deep water snapper. So
12 these sharks are affecting all of our important
13 fisheries as well as the rec site. Thank you.

14 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Raimundo.
15 Operator, if you can open up the phone lines again
16 we can see if there are any folks on line who want
17 to jump in on this. Thanks.

18 Webinar, AP members on the Webinar.
19 Anyone want to jump in on this conversation? Go
20 ahead, Rusty.

21 MR. HUDSON: Thank you. On reef status,
22 you know, there is other stock that could have

1 included if we talked about the complexes that
2 involve things like bull shark and lemon and such.
3 But we got to do individual species specific stock
4 assessments now. And so somehow it goes back to
5 what John Carmichael said in 2006 as the head of
6 SEDAR, that handles coastal sharks. We need to do
7 a couple of sharks per year. One way or another,
8 these species that have never been assessed
9 individually.

10 And also where the blacknose was up
11 there, our Atlantic blacknose, where we're allowed
12 to catch them, they're as big as they grow now.
13 And they're very, very thick. And yet our
14 blacktips are so thick but we haven't been to fish
15 in the same waters since 1992. And our first full
16 year of management was '94, we started in '93.
17 But all of that, and then we went to limited
18 access in '99.

19 You just look at all these changes and
20 reductions, like they said, 50 percent cut, there
21 95 and on and on. It has now got to where we have
22 a perfect storm of predator rich environment, and

1 it is affecting a lot of our other stocks we're
2 trying to rebuild on Council and HMS levels, and
3 that needs to be relative.

4 And as long as science has us so that we
5 have to have numbers. I mean the great
6 hammerheads come out and they start eating, you
7 know, our sandbars, eating our amberjacks and then
8 start doing a sandbar get hooked up and then a
9 great hammerhead will eat it. I mean it's just
10 amazing what they're seeing in the last several
11 years.

12 So you all need to find a way to get
13 better science that reflects reality inside the
14 boat going yesterday and not two to six years and
15 10 years from now. Thank you.

16 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Rusty. Anyone else
17 on line want to jump in? AP Members, anyone else?
18 Okay.

19 MR. HUDSON: Another thing I forgot.
20 This is Rusty again. The four main shark stock
21 assessment, when it came out out of Canada in
22 2009, from Anna Atoll, it had not known where the

1 pupping grounds were. And so they learned that
2 through sack tags on the females, and it turns out
3 to be down below the slope seas, Sargasso, Sandy,
4 all down there. And they have multiple returns
5 from there across several years.

6 So that stock assessment needs to be
7 updated with that actual critical information.
8 Thank you.

9 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Rusty.

10 MR. CORTES: If I may.

11 MR. BROOKS: Go ahead, Enric.

12 MR. CORTES: This is Enric. Yeah, we
13 are planning hopefully on conducting another stock
14 assessment for porbeagle, even though the results
15 of the assessments we did for the whole North
16 Atlantic has sort of coincided with the results
17 from Compana at the time. But, yeah, that's
18 another species that's overdue.

19 I just wanted to make a comment or a few
20 comments on previous interventions. I thought the
21 issue of the learning behavior that somebody
22 commented on the South Atlantic Council is a good

1 one as well.

2 And I mean if you think of it, shark
3 diving feeding industry is based on that learning
4 behavior, right, of attracting sharks and getting
5 habituated.

6 Also the comments by Marcus Drymon on
7 characterization and mitigation. I think they are
8 good because there's a lot of variability, and
9 there are probably techniques that can be used and
10 need to be investigated to mitigate shark
11 depredation.

12 In that sense too I just got some
13 information from Alaska, for example. There seems
14 to be several studies that have looked at the
15 issue of depredation and also effects on the place
16 assessment by marine mammals, by sperm whales and
17 other marine mammals. So there's some literature
18 that can be looked at as well to get some
19 potential ideas on these issues, of mitigation and
20 effects on assessments.

21 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Enric. Bob.

22 MR. HUETER: All right. Thank you. Bob

1 Hueter, Mote Marine Lab. I just want to remind
2 everyone how complicated this issue is. It's not
3 a matter of just a group of predators getting more
4 abundant.

5 First I would want to rule out that this
6 isn't a shifting baseline problem. Forget about
7 going back 25 years, let's go back 60 years and
8 ask the fishermen then did they have these kinds
9 of problems. And I haven't heard anything about
10 that.

11 But let's assume that they didn't. Yes,
12 we have more sharks now than we had 25 years ago.
13 And we don't have more sharks than we had 60 years
14 ago. And that's clear from the data that Enric
15 presented. So what is it that is causing the
16 imbalance?

17 And that's what we've got here, we've
18 got an ecosystem that's out of whack, it's out of
19 balance. It could be, and I'm going to ditto what
20 Mark said, what Mark Sampson said. It could be
21 the prey population being less than being in
22 proportion with the number of predators that are

1 coming back.

2 If we were managing wildlife on land,
3 for example, and we were protecting all the wolves
4 and the coyotes, but we were allowing hunters to
5 shoot every deer that's out there, so that the
6 deer population became sparse, then what would
7 that lead to? It would lead to conflicts between
8 deer hunters and wolves and coyotes. And that's
9 kind of what we have probably going on here.

10 So let's not just leap to the conclusion
11 that it's too many sharks or we have enough sharks
12 or the sharks are back. We have to look over
13 history back to the way things used to be and see
14 if there's a way to put the ecosystem back in
15 balance. And if there isn't, then look at these
16 things proportionately, not just in terms of
17 absolute numbers.

18 MR. BROOKS: You want to jump in, Pat?

19 MR. AUGUSTINE: Yeah, just a quick one.
20 Very responsive, Bob, comments.

21 I don't know what the linkage is between
22 shark population and the United States Marine

1 Fisheries Commission and the 23 species of fish
2 that they are managing on their shore. They're
3 managing very tight. The Mid Atlantic, South
4 Atlantic, New England Council, are all managing
5 tight their species of fish. So if you look at
6 all that, and look at the uncontrol of sharks, I
7 think it's simple to look at that overall picture
8 and say it's prey versus predator. And the
9 predators are not being managed very well. Well,
10 they are, they're being managed because we're not
11 allowed to fish on them, so I'm not sure that we
12 have to look back at 60 years to try to bring back
13 the population to what it was 60 years for sharks.

14 I think we have to look at the whole
15 picture and ask what are we allowing the shoreline
16 fish, shoreline out to the let's say out to the EZ
17 area or out 200 miles, the prey that are available
18 to those sharks are in basically total control.

19 So I think the answer is a hell of a lot
20 simpler than saying we protect this species, that
21 species, this species, for 25 or 30, 40, 50, 60
22 years. We now have along New York South Shore,

1 and our friend over there can tell you about where
2 he's finding the great whites along the South
3 Shore of Long Island. We've got more pupping area
4 along Long Island than we know what the hell to do
5 with in sharks. You don't have to go 25 miles off
6 shore anymore, you go toward Lock Island, five,
7 six miles out. You'll catch all the threshers you
8 want and all the duskys you want. You name it and
9 you're there.

10 Yet, we find our populations of inshore
11 fish are down. And I think the picture is so much
12 more simple than looking out as to how we balance
13 this and balance that. I think we have to have
14 maybe a group get together to look, with ASMSC,
15 all the councils, and sit around and look at those
16 species of fish and see how we've allowed those
17 populations of inshore fish to either grow in
18 terms of numbers versus what the population is off
19 shore. And I think very quickly you're going to
20 find, I'm watch Greg's program all the time, the
21 number of sharks those guys have encountered in
22 your videos and what Mike talks about his areas up

1 there, it's astronomical. Not only in size, but
2 numbers and variety. So why are we looking out
3 20, 40, 50, 60 years? So if there was a
4 suggestion to be made based on all the questions
5 we discussed, I think that's one that we need to
6 take some time at.

7 And we've all got suggestions as to how
8 to go ahead and protect the shark population,
9 protecting seals, protecting whales. But I think
10 we've got to get back to ground zero. What is the
11 prey relationship to what the predators are doing
12 out there? Not rocket science. So that would be
13 my suggestion, at least to take a look at it.

14 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Pat. I want to get
15 Kirby and then back to Bob, and then we should be
16 closing up here.

17 MR. ROOTES-MURDY: Thank you. Just in
18 follow up to our former Commissioner, Pat
19 Augustine, the Commission will be holding an
20 Advisory Panel Meeting on October 1st. So if
21 there is interest by NOAA/HMS to ask RAP Members
22 on this predation issue and get additional

1 feedback on what's going on in state waters, I'm
2 happy to do that, just let me know. Thank you.

3 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Kirby. Bob.

4 MR. HUETER: I just wanted to -- I know
5 we can't respond to, but follow up to what Pat
6 said. I think we actually are saying the same
7 thing, Pat. I'm not suggesting that we take
8 targets back to 60 years ago, I'm saying we look
9 at the situation 60 years ago and learn from that.

10 But I think what we're faced with here
11 is this is where a single species management
12 breaks down. That's the problem we have. It's
13 worked very well in terms of optimizing yield or
14 bringing back yield for individual fisheries. But
15 this is an ecosystem problem that we've got now
16 and it's just, I mean say what you will about
17 ecosystem-based management, this is where we have
18 to solve it with that kind of an approach instead
19 of just managing one stock at a time. It doesn't
20 work, it's too slow, and you can't get all the
21 pieces to line up together with each other.

22 So this is a complicated problem, and

1 I'm sorry to say that we're not going to fix this
2 easily. With the shark and seal problem it's
3 another example. It's, you know, we started with
4 seals as marine mammals, gave them a 20 year head
5 start, they came back, roaring back, and the
6 sharks are still trying to recover, you know, from
7 their declines.

8 And Tobey Curtis, I'm looking at Tobey
9 over there. Tobey's written the best paper about
10 this to show where the white sharks are now. Yes,
11 they're coming back, but they're not anywhere
12 close to where they were 50, 60 years ago. If you
13 had more white sharks they would keep the seals on
14 the beaches more, they would eat seals, but they'd
15 also keep the other ones on the beaches and the
16 seals would eat less stripers and cod and menhaden
17 and that sort of thing. So this is an ecosystem
18 challenge, not just a single species fix.

19 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Bob. Alan, you get
20 the last word and then we'll break.

21 MR. WEISS: Thanks. Yes, echoing what
22 Bob just said, it is an ecosystem management

1 problem. It's I guess a question how you can get
2 to where we may need to go because we can't manage
3 species by species and maximize everything
4 simultaneously. That's not the way ecosystems
5 work.

6 So we have to find a way to be able to
7 do that both in practical terms and also in the
8 context of the law, which would be another
9 impediment.

10 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. You got 30
11 seconds, Pat.

12 MR. AUGUSTINE: I can do it in 30
13 seconds. Okay, so the issue is if we can solve
14 the shark problem because we have 17 or so species
15 that you can't fish on, we've got protected, we
16 are not going to change the Magnuson-Stevens law,
17 we're not going to do it.

18 The councils are all sworn to if you
19 have overfishing occurring in any fishery, you
20 have one year to take action, to put together a
21 corrective action plan. And we are single
22 species, so there's no way in hell single species

1 is going to change overnight. Even though there
2 was an experiment conducted in the Chesapeake on
3 striped bass for ecosystem management to determine
4 what they ate. Well that's been going on for six
5 or eight years now at least, hasn't it, Kirby, the
6 striped -- maybe it's over now, I don't know. But
7 the fact is they found out that striped bass are
8 just like sharks. They'll take anything that's in
9 their way. They're hungry, they eat. If there's
10 blue crab they eat blue crab, if it's weakfish,
11 it'll eat them.

12 So we can solve this problem, from our
13 point of view of looking as an advisory panel,
14 look at what we can do with what sharks there are
15 an abundance of. And at least open up some of
16 those fisheries again. And maybe there'll be a
17 little more of a balance. But to think that we
18 are going to sit here, in my lifetime, and I've
19 only got about 15 more years, I figure I'll make
20 it to 100. And it's not going to happen. Single
21 species management is not going to go away, try to
22 go ecosystem. I did 37 seconds. Thank you.

1 MR. BROOKS: Thank you. I want your
2 watch. Just before we go, so Karyl, I know you
3 didn't expect to come away from this conversation
4 with the answer, and good news, you didn't. But I
5 do think you certainly heard what you've already
6 been hearing, you know, anecdotally, that there's
7 a lot of broad impacts, right, you're seeing this
8 all over, impacts on commercial value. Maybe not
9 so much on people not taking charters, but the
10 satisfaction may be going down. One can imagine
11 that could have ramification issues around
12 tourism, safety.

13 I think in terms of where might the
14 agency go, what could it do. A couple of things
15 that I heard are, one, around piloting or funding
16 mitigation efforts like Marcus is talking about.
17 Obviously a step back is just characterizing the
18 nature of the problem, that it's not the same
19 everywhere, and really getting a deeper
20 understanding of what that is and what that looks
21 like is important.

22 And then a number of comments circling

1 around assessments, whether that's, you know, HMS
2 trying to stay as current as it can with the
3 trends. Obviously that's a resource issue.
4 Interest in the great white shark assessment, and
5 just increasing the rates of assessment, that came
6 through loud and clear.

7 And then I think this last conversation
8 around it's a complex system out there, the need
9 to look at it from an ecosystem base perspective,
10 but at the same time we're living in a single
11 species world. And so managing those.

12 I don't know if there are any final
13 thoughts from you, Karyl, or where you think you
14 might head with this next.

15 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: So I do want to
16 thank everybody for your comments, and that you
17 were correct, I don't think we're walking away
18 with a silver bullet and the answer. I think
19 Dewey is also correct that it will take us a
20 number of years to figure out a solution and where
21 we actually are. I am confident we can come up
22 with some way of balancing our legal obligations

1 to continue to rebuild sharks along with balancing
2 the need for the fishermen to be able to catch
3 them. It's just finding that balance, which is
4 going to be difficult.

5 And as Bob Hueter said, it is a
6 complicated problem. And we're just talking about
7 one aspect right now of the depredation. We're
8 not talking about the fact that the commercial
9 quota has not been caught in a number of years.
10 For a number of species it's never been caught.
11 For some of the species, like Enric mentioned, the
12 tack for Gulf of Mexico blacktip can be increased.
13 It can be increased dramatically, but we're not
14 catching that quota now. So I think it's not just
15 the depredation, I think it's also how do we --
16 we've talked about all the shore fish, I'm going
17 to say it now -- how do we revitalize the shark
18 fishery? How do we bring it back?

19 And I knew Dewey wants to talk, but I'm
20 sorry, you are not allowed to talk off line.

21 But those are all things that we are
22 looking at and trying to get at. And you'll see

1 specific questions to all of you on how we're
2 going to do that in our next shark specs. And
3 we've had the shark fishery open year round for a
4 number of years now and we're still not catching
5 the quotas. And, yes, we're changing retention
6 limit up and down. They're pretty high now, we
7 can go up a little bit higher in the Atlantic, but
8 it's as high as it can go in the Gulf, and we're
9 nowhere near the quota. So that's commercially,
10 recreationally. I don't know what to say about
11 that one. So I'm just going to stop here. And,
12 Bennett, I do want to thank everybody for your
13 comments, I want to thank Enric, Craig, and Lisa
14 for your time.

15 MR. BROOKS: Yes, ditto from here.
16 Let's get you to lunch. We're a few minutes after
17 12:00 but you'll still have about an hour and 20.
18 We will reconvene at 1:30 sharp, where we'll have
19 feedback on a number of the different scope and
20 conversations HMS have been having on tuna,
21 sharks, and special management.

22 Thanks everybody.

1 (Recess)

2 MR. BROOKS: All right. Again, if I can
3 get the AP members who are standing up to find
4 their seats or in the hallway or in the breakroom,
5 please come to your seats as well.

6 All right. It looks like a couple
7 people maybe are late from lunch, but we still
8 have a full agenda so I think we need to jump in.
9 So, most importantly, Pat has mentioned that his
10 cookies are in the back so please go help yourself
11 and once again, thank you, Pat, for doing that.
12 It's really appreciated. We starved at the last
13 meeting when you weren't here so if you can't make
14 a meeting, you still have to send your cookies in
15 the future. Just so you know.

16 So, we're going to spend the next hour
17 hearing from agency staff who will be summarizing
18 comments from a number of different scoping
19 sessions that they've been holding over the last
20 couple of weeks and months. We are going to take
21 it actually in reverse order from what you see in
22 the agenda so we will first cover Spacial

1 Management of HMS Fisheries and we'll spend about
2 15 minutes on that total. We will then move to
3 sharks and spend about 15 minutes on that total
4 and then we will end up talking about bluefin tuna
5 Amendment 13 and we expect to spend about 30
6 minutes on that. So, that's the game plan. After
7 that, we will then again talk about the General
8 category Cost Earning Survey Summary, but we will
9 hold that to about 30 or 45 minutes so we have
10 time for Fish and Wildlife service folks come in
11 and talk about the CITES listing of shortfin Mako.
12 So, with that, I think Tobey your up on Special
13 Management.

14 MR. CURTIS: All right. Thank you.
15 Tobey Curtis. Also, here representing Steve
16 Durkee who has been -- we've been working together
17 on this project addressing research and data
18 collection to support Spatial HMS Fisheries
19 Management. So, I'm going to go over sort of the
20 current status and what we heard during scoping on
21 this issue.

22 Okay. So, the basic premise of this is

1 just ways to improve how we can data from areas
2 that have been closed to fishing for various
3 reasons. Areas that restrict fishing can be an
4 effective management tool, however, closed areas
5 can also proportionately reduce fishery dependent
6 data collection and research in those areas.
7 Fisher dependent data collection, you know,
8 logbooks and observer data, for example, are often
9 the most cost effective method and most applicable
10 to normal fishing activities and Fisheries
11 Management needs scientifically regressed and
12 up-to-date research from all areas including
13 closed areas. We want to ensure that the original
14 goals of these closures are still being met.
15 Closures affecting HMS are geographically
16 stationary and of course, we are dealing with the
17 changing ocean and highly migratory species.

18 So, regular monitoring of closed areas
19 can help ensure that the intended species are
20 being protected in the appropriate areas and times
21 while also maximizing U.S. fishery access to
22 targeted resources.

1 Okay. So, as far as scoping, we went
2 out this summer. We had several options here.
3 Briefly, option one was no action so we would
4 continue to authorize any proposed closed area
5 research through the current EFP program.

6 Option two would authorize would
7 authorize closed area research through a
8 streamlined EFP process where HMS would sort of
9 front load some analyses and hopefully, streamline
10 the permitting process for closed area type
11 research. We collect data on closed area catch
12 through an observed access program.

13 Option four was institute a closed area
14 research program from similar to the current shark
15 research fishery so it would be 100 percent
16 observer coverage and there would be some control
17 over the trips that occur.

18 Option five would be to conduct closed
19 area research through public and private
20 partnerships partially funded by NOAA fisheries
21 similar to the 2003 NED Research Program, which is
22 just one example sort of a public private closed

1 area research project.

2 Option six would be to conduct closed
3 area research through research program led by NOAA
4 fisheries using NOAA or contract vessels more of a
5 typical fishery independent survey design.

6 Option seven would be performance based
7 closed area access where we would set some
8 performance standards for certain fishing vessels
9 to sort of provide potential access based on their
10 fishery performance by catch reduction things like
11 that.

12 So, this hits on the major points that
13 we heard during the scoping. Here we go.
14 Hopefully, I'm not fighting this the whole time.
15 There is wide agreement that quality research and
16 data collection is important for management.
17 Okay. I'll just keep bouncing back and forth
18 here. Especially, hopefully everyone to some
19 Dramamine before the presentation here. Let me
20 see if we can -- I don't know if we can turn that
21 off. Oh, there it is. Thank you. We'll go back
22 to full presentation view. We'll give this a try.

1 So, anyway, there's an agreement that we
2 need to collect data from closed areas period.
3 That's good especially given changing ocean
4 conditions and shifting HMS distributions. Many
5 commenters said that research should be agency led
6 and 100 percent transparent so there's going to
7 have to be heavy agency buy in in any type of
8 closed area research.

9 Funding was an important consideration
10 when choosing amongst those options. Some require
11 more funding than others. Multiple comments
12 oppose pelagic longline fishing particularly in
13 the Florida East Coast closed area. It was a very
14 specific issue, but this project is meant to be
15 much broader in scope addressing all species in
16 all closed areas. And they made specific
17 suggestions for research activities including
18 (inaudible) conduct research since they know how
19 to target the fish, science centers should lead
20 study design, there should be 100 percent human
21 observer coverage, research should be funded by
22 the commercial sale of target catch on research

1 trips, and we should implement by catch
2 interaction limits that once hit would stop
3 further research so those are some of the specific
4 comments that we received.

5 Next steps are to review all the
6 comments we received on the issues and options
7 paper during scoping and we'll publish a proposed
8 rule sometime next year I believe. There's a link
9 to the issues and options paper there and you can
10 contact Steve or myself if you have further
11 questions on this issue, but it's going to be
12 ongoing and at some point, there will be a
13 proposed rule and I'm sure it will be a lot more
14 lively discussion at that stage. So, that's it
15 for the presentation. We have a few minutes for
16 questions.

17 MR. BROOKS: Great. And just for this
18 presentation and for all of them, obviously, we
19 had fairly in depth conversations on all three of
20 these topics at the last meeting and I don't think
21 we're looking to have a do over of that and we
22 don't have the time for that, but it really is a

1 chance for you all to hear what was said at the
2 scoping session and if there are questions about
3 what the agency heard or pieces that need a little
4 more amplification, that's what we'd like to do in
5 this time. David.

6 MR. SCHALIT: Would it be possible for
7 the agency to explore the funding alternatives
8 that might be available for this kind of work and
9 sometime let us know at the next AP meeting, for
10 example? Thanks.

11 MR. BROOKS: Any other comments are
12 questions from AP members either in the room or on
13 the phone? Was there an answer or reaction to
14 that up front here? Thumbs up was the answer.

15 MR. SCHALIT: Okay.

16 MR. BROOKS: Marty.

17 MR. SCANLON: Well, it says here
18 research should be funded by commercial sale of
19 targeted catch, which is, you know,
20 counterproductive to the fisherman. I mean, the
21 fisherman are already basically giving their time
22 and effort in the research then to make them pay

1 for it on top of that is counterproductive to what
2 you're trying to accomplish I think here. I think
3 that's definitely a no go there as far as making,
4 you know, the catch, you know, is offset part of
5 the research, but it's, you know, you can't expect
6 the commercial portion of it to be 100 percent
7 responsible in paying for the project.

8 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: So, I think that
9 was just one of the options where the catch could
10 be sold commercially. Other options could be
11 through our CRP program, Cooperative Research
12 Program with the fisherman. It could be the
13 Saltonstall-Kennedy, SK program. There are a lot
14 of different options to fund this.

15 MR. SCANLON: Right.

16 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: And sale of
17 commercial catch would just be one of them.

18 MR. SCANLON: Right. And the other
19 thing I want to take note here is multiple
20 comments opposing pelagic fishing in the Florida
21 East Coast area. We are getting back to the not
22 my back yard mentality of marine, you know,

1 regulatory process here when you exclude any
2 particular area from the research.

3 MR. BROOKS: Any AP on the phone want to
4 weigh in on this, questions or comments? Okay.
5 Tobey, I think you're good. Thanks. So, next up
6 I think we'll hear from Ian Miller who will catch
7 us up on the A14 scoping sessions on Shark Quota
8 Management.

9 MR. MILLER: Good afternoon. I am Ian
10 Miller. I think this is the first time I've been
11 able to sit up here in front of all you and talk
12 so I'm excited to do that. I think in the Spring
13 you heard from Guy on this topic and previously
14 you heard from Karyl, but I'll be chatting with
15 you all about Amendment 14 scoping Shark Quota
16 Management amendment. So, I'll go over our
17 summary of needs and objectives. Our goal is to
18 be consistent with the revised 2016 national
19 standard one and we aim to explore options for
20 modifying or establishing our reference points
21 such as ACL, Annual Catch limits, Acceptable
22 Biological Catch, Overfishing Limits, things of

1 that nature and we want to increase management
2 flexibility for Atlantic Shark Fisheries as we've
3 heard comments from the AP previously and other
4 meetings that there is a desire from the AP to
5 increase some of the management flexibility so
6 we're going to explore that through Amendment 14.

7 The scoping document presented the
8 following objectives. The first was to consider
9 revising the acceptable biological catch control
10 rule to ensure harvest does not exceed the
11 overfishing limit. We want to evaluate the
12 process of establishing the annual catch limit for
13 non-prohibited shark species, evaluate the process
14 for determining what are the acceptable levels of
15 rebuilding success so our risk policy, consider
16 our process for managing under or over harvest of
17 sharks in HMS Management Unit, and consider
18 increasing flexibility to adapt to changes in
19 harvest of sharks by sector over time or spatially
20 or however (inaudible). And then the scoping
21 document also presented 18 options for five
22 issues.

1 So, the comments that we received
2 through the scoping process, we're going to break
3 it down by those five issues and we'll start with
4 the Acceptable Biological Catch Control rule. We
5 got support for creating a tiered ABC control such
6 as via vulnerability or some measure of creating a
7 tiered process whether it's prohibited or
8 non-prohibited, various options there. And then
9 we received support for establishing some sort of
10 peer review process that will account for
11 uncertainty and we're looking at different options
12 for what that peer review process would look like.

13 The comments we received for the
14 Acceptable Biological Catch phase improvisation
15 was support and opposition to a three year phase
16 in Acceptable Biological Control Rule approach.
17 So, some people thought that it was a good idea to
18 phase in any changes to our ABC over time while
19 others thought it was would be best to just make
20 that whenever those changes need to occur. Make
21 it happen right away and various reasons for why
22 that would be. And there was concern about

1 slowing the response to negative stock information
2 if we were to use phase in Acceptable Biological
3 Catch Control rule process.

4 Moving on to our Annual Catch Limit
5 Development. We had support for establishing
6 specie specific annual catch limits with no
7 linkages. Grouping species into new management
8 units and we continue to get comments up about
9 that. Establishing an annual catch limit
10 framework that accounts for management uncertainty
11 and actively manages annual catch limits while
12 limiting directed fishing and by catch of shark
13 species. So, when we talk about the actively
14 managed catch limits, we are talking by sector
15 recreational discard and commercial sectors. And
16 then, finally, strengthening reporting and data
17 collecting mechanisms in all the sectors.

18 For carryover provisions, we have
19 support for implementing carryover and allowing
20 carryover from one year to another in some
21 fashion. However, there was support for limiting
22 the amount of carryover because some instances the

1 reason there would be fish available is conditions
2 outside of the sectors, which is weather and
3 market. We received comments establishing
4 accountability measures that will reduce the
5 annual catch limit if the Acceptable Biological
6 Catch is exceeded and the make sure we consider
7 all sources of mortality when we look at
8 potentially carrying over any underages.

9 And then, finally, for our multi-year
10 overfishing provisions, we had opposition to using
11 a multi-year overfishing approach as it made mass
12 changes in stock status without an assessment so
13 we may have that outlier year that may hide some
14 change in the stock status that we weren't
15 thinking was there. Support for using a
16 multi-year overfishing approach because it may be
17 more reflective of stock life history due to the
18 long life cycle of shark species. And then
19 support for multi-year overfishing approach to
20 evaluate the overfishing limit and the acceptable
21 biological catch and landings particularly for the
22 recreational sector.

1 And then, for our general comments, we
2 had support for greater transparency in the
3 assessment and management process. Use additional
4 data, conduct more frequent assessments, and using
5 more life history data in the process, which we
6 heard earlier today and we heard it throughout the
7 scoping process. Reevaluate the allocation
8 process and analysis concerning those management
9 groups in geographical area. Again, we heard that
10 earlier today and all throughout the scoping
11 process. And then create some sort of SSC or
12 similar review process.

13 We had opposition to any changes in
14 management that would affect rebuilding plans or
15 timelines, affect in the negative sense of
16 increasing the rebuilding timeframe, and then we
17 had general concern with the number of entities
18 that were involved in shark management and who is
19 the primary lead for the shark management, such as
20 whether it's NOAA Fisheries or ICCAT or CITES or
21 whatever that is.

22 So, for our next steps, tentatively, we

1 are looking at a proposed rule in the Spring and
2 then looking to go final with Amendment 14 either
3 in Winter of 2020 or sometime in 2021 and, again,
4 if you want to see the comments, they are at
5 Regulations.Gov and if you have any other
6 questions or comments, you can contact myself,
7 Guy, or Karyl.

8 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Ian. I should have
9 asked this before the previous one, but did you a
10 lot of comments? We're the scoping sessions
11 well-attended?

12 MR. MILLER: No. We got a decent number
13 of comments, but not as many as we thought we were
14 going to get.

15 MR. BROOKS: Let's open up to the AP on
16 the phone or in the room for questions or comments
17 on this. Anything. Dave, apparently you have
18 been chosen to talk.

19 MR. SHALIT: I am suffering from
20 customer confusion a little bit. You know, when I
21 think about sharks and I'm sitting at this AP
22 meeting, I'm thinking about ICCAT managed the

1 sharks. Okay. But I'm certain that there are
2 sharks in this presentation that you've given that
3 are not managed by ICCAT. That is in fact the
4 case. Are there any ICCAT managed sharks within
5 this presentation?

6 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: So, right now ICCAT
7 does not technically manage sharks. Sharks are
8 not part of the convention of ICCAT. Sharks are
9 assessed and in more recent years, there have been
10 recommendations that we follow because we are a
11 member of ICCAT. So, all of our sharks, including
12 the ones that you would consider ICCAT like Mako
13 and Blue, are still managed under Magnuson and are
14 still required to have ACLs and all the Magnuson
15 requirements that some of our traditionally ICCAT
16 managed species, like bluefin, are not required to
17 have. So, in this case, this is all of the sharks
18 not just ICCAT ones.

19 MR. SCHALIT: And that bases the
20 question. So, we're going to assume just across
21 the board that there are no constraints from ICCAT
22 on any law that we want to create or regulation we

1 want to create for these species that are being
2 discussed. Correct? Like, for example, there is
3 no rollover provision in ICCAT.

4 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: So, ICCAT does not
5 yet have any quotas on sharks. What ICCAT has are
6 no landings of certain species of sharks or
7 prohibitions on certain species of sharks. What
8 we're looking that in this rule is once we have a
9 stock assessment, how do we determine the ABC as
10 opposed to the TAC and one we have the ABC, how do
11 we split that so we have annual catch limits for
12 each of the different sectors, recreational,
13 commercial, how much of the dead discards are
14 going to be from everybody, all of that. So,
15 that's what this rule is about and I would say
16 ICCAT (inaudible) manage sharks. It is part of
17 the convention talks, which I think is up for more
18 discussion in November so there is a strong
19 possibility that ICCAT will manage sharks in the
20 near future and at that point, those species it
21 manages probably this wouldn't apply to them, but
22 at the moment it does.

1 MR. AUGUSTINE: Just a quick one. In
2 this one we talked about the support for greater
3 transparency using initial data, conducting more
4 frequent assessments, and so on. Will there be
5 funding available to conduct those things assuming
6 that this goes out and is approved. Again, it's a
7 wish list and I'm wondering if you're going to
8 have money for the wish list.

9 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: So, for this one, I
10 would just say this would include coming up with
11 ways of setting the ABC when we do not have a
12 stock assessment and how does that work because
13 especially more towards all species specific
14 management. Right now we have them in management
15 groups, but if we split them all out and we
16 suddenly manage bull sharks, how do we set up that
17 quota. I don't see a bull shark assessment for a
18 number of years so we're not going to be able to
19 assess all the species we have in a short time
20 period.

21 MR. AUGUSTINE: So, in your lifetime,
22 Karyl, how much of this will get done? I'm not

1 being facetious. I mean, this, again, is another
2 wish list and we have 17 species of sharks that
3 are kind of protected now and there's a bunch of
4 them after we had this conversation earlier today
5 that we have to take a look at what we're going to
6 do. So, let's assume we scope it down to pick a
7 number. Could you do three into here, could we do
8 five in here and I'm just trying to get some side
9 bars on it other than we walk away with a wish
10 list again saying that maybe 12 years from now
11 we'll have an assessment on some things. I'm just
12 trying to get a point.

13 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: So, I know you gave
14 yourself 15 years. I'm hoping I'll make it a
15 little bit longer than 15. The way SEDAR is
16 moving is to help improve that throughput where
17 they're moving to research assessments and then
18 updates of individual species so those research
19 assessments could be groups of species like what
20 we're doing with hammerheads. If that works and
21 the throughput does increase, then, yes, I think
22 definitely within my lifetime possibly within

1 yours but it might be a little bit of a stretch
2 that could happen.

3 MR. AUGUSTINE: When are you going to
4 retire?

5 MR. BROOKS: Okay. I want to make a
6 habit around here with not predicting of each
7 other. Because, yeah, we can effect that.
8 Raimundo.

9 MR. ESPINOZA: No. I'm not ready to
10 deal with my mortality. So, I think a lot of
11 these things are very positive where these are
12 going and so, I'm of course thinking it from my
13 part of the U.S. Caribbean's point of view and
14 specifically, for the Caribbean small boat permits
15 that are down there. So, for example, right now
16 we don't have any of this information for the U.S.
17 Caribbean for any of these management actions and
18 so, you know, right now we're at zero bag limit
19 for sharks, which has really caused an issue
20 within the data that's being collected because, of
21 course, we do know that there is a shark fishery
22 in Puerto Rico, but nobody is reporting and if

1 they are reporting, it's because they are
2 confident that local agencies, the Department of
3 Natural Resources, either USVI or Puerto Rico, are
4 not going to do anything about it just because of
5 what local regulations actually state. So, I feel
6 that for us in the U.S. Caribbean these things are
7 really important just because it actually does
8 affect what data is going to be collected or could
9 be collected and actually just, you know, and I
10 see the timeline. I see Spring 2020 and then, you
11 know, or 2021 for the final amendment and so, that
12 means, you know, effectively, two more years
13 really of no data that's being reporting to HMS
14 about sharks that are being caught in the U.S.
15 Caribbean.

16 And, of course, it worries me because
17 this is something that, you know, that we -- it
18 worries me just because of the actions that could
19 be taken on either side. Either a full bands or
20 setting quotas that match, you know, similar to
21 the Gulf of Mexico, which we would never reach,
22 you know, 30 sharks in a day per fisherman ever.

1 So, what that could promote in U.S. Caribbean
2 waters either stateside vessels coming down to
3 fish sharks locally just because we have them and
4 you could actually get that. But it does worry me
5 about what this means for shark management and the
6 data that needs to be collected. So, anyway, just
7 a concern and question and see how maybe we could
8 some movement on the bag limit for Caribbean small
9 boat. Thank you.

10 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: So, we are
11 definitely aware of the issues of the Caribbean.
12 With Marcos, we have been talking about it. I
13 think you've seen some of the e-mails back and
14 forth. Caribbean is definitely on our mind in how
15 to address the issues not only with the small boat
16 permit bag limit, but also some of the species
17 that are currently on the permitted species list
18 and how do we address those issues and how do we
19 pull the Caribbean out so it's its own region and
20 does not rely on the Gulf of Mexico quota, which
21 is what it currently.

22 MR. ESPINOZA: So, yes, I'm sorry

1 interrupt, but and this is what I'm saying, even
2 if we were to rely on the Gulf of Mexico quotas,
3 are bag limits are zero so even if it wasn't zero,
4 we still wouldn't make a dent in them just because
5 the fishing industry isn't that big. We wouldn't
6 make a dent in the quota set for them. But even
7 if we would or could, we're at zero. So,
8 effectively, we're managed under their quotas in
9 the Gulf of Mexico, but not fisherman is going to
10 submit the data just because, you know, we have it
11 at zero and so, he would effectively be kind of,
12 you know, ratting himself out. And right now, you
13 know, there are issues with local regulations on
14 who needs HMS in state waters or not. So, there's
15 still a lot of, and I know Marcos has brought this
16 up and now we're (inaudible) effectively working
17 side-by-side. You know, this is really
18 interesting because I think we have a really great
19 opportunity because you've got to remember, I'm
20 from the environmental side and so, the
21 environmental side isn't the one that's asking me
22 to actually have more movement on clearing up

1 shark regulations and to see which is actually
2 banned or what our quotas could be. It's actually
3 the shark fisherman that are coming to us saying
4 like, "We want to know what's banned because we
5 want to actually begin reporting. We was to do
6 what's right." So, this is something that I feel
7 that we're on the right side of things to really
8 listen to fisherman when they're asking us to, you
9 know, clear things up on actually supporting
10 submitting data and actual management actions to
11 be put in place.

12 So, I think it's a really good time and
13 I really appreciate the work that you've done. I
14 know that it's something that you keep on hearing
15 about and, you know, so I'm glad to be on the
16 panel to make sure you don't forget about us
17 either.

18 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Raimundo.

19 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: So, I was just
20 going to say yes. It's a complicated issue, we
21 are working on it, and I would be happy to talk
22 with you more.

1 MR. BROOKS: We should be pushing ahead.
2 I do want to see if -- are there any AP members on
3 the webinar who want to jump in on this and
4 operator if you could open the lines just in case
5 anyone wants to fold in.

6 OPERATOR: All lines are open.

7 MR. BROOKS: AP members, anybody want to
8 jump in on this with a quick question or comment?
9 Okay. Thanks, operator, you can close it back up.

10 MR. AUGUSTINE: It's just a quick one.
11 In response to the last comment, there's no
12 question and maybe here's an opportunity. We
13 should create an experimental fishery and, Randy,
14 your in a new leadership position and Karyl will
15 follow-up this one I'm sure. But why don't we
16 create an experimental fishery for the Caribbean,
17 split it off from the Gulf, and assign them some
18 quotas and then give that assignment for two or
19 three years and see what the catch rate is and see
20 how they report. You've got to start somewhere.
21 I mean, right there's zero and they're going to
22 stay at zero forever until it's broken out from

1 the Gulf of Mexico. So, I mean, we're an advisory
2 panel so that's an advice. Allen, are you
3 agreeing on that? That's a good idea isn't it?
4 It's a good idea. Nod your head. Good. It's a
5 idea so I think we should consider it.

6 MR. BROOKS: Thanks Pat and Marty 30
7 seconds.

8 MR. SCANLON: Yeah, well, we strongly
9 suggest that you keep the ICCAT managed stocks out
10 of this rulemaking here and just focus on the
11 domestic issues here in this rulemaking.

12 MR. BROOKS: Okay. Thank you very much,
13 Ian, and I think next up is going to be Tom Warren
14 to share comments from the scoping session on the
15 A13 Bluefin Tuna Management.

16 MR. WARREN: Good afternoon. Tom Warren
17 here to talk about Amendment 13 scoping. We have
18 a successful scoping period. Scoping for
19 Amendment 13 and the regulatory process moving the
20 ball forward for Amendment 13. The catalyst for
21 this regulatory action is several fold principally
22 new information and changing conditions prompting

1 various questions. The draft 3-year review of the
2 individual Bluefin Quota Program poses the
3 questions fundamentally was the program
4 successful, should it be modified, and if so, how?

5 The Purse Seine Fishery, which has been
6 relatively inactive for years, the underlying
7 question is should this fishery be discontinued or
8 phased out? And then there's other management
9 options. Recent fisher trends have basically been
10 the catalyst for okay, how can we make changes to
11 optimize fishing opportunity keep this fishery
12 going at its best under changing conditions? So,
13 we published a Notice of Intent and made public
14 and issues and options paper on May 21. We had 11
15 total scoping meetings up and down the coast
16 including the Gulf of Mexico as well as a
17 presentation to the New England Fishery Management
18 Council and the end of the scoping comment period
19 was July 31.

20 So, here's just a nice photo. You've
21 your fill of cookies for now, but here's some eye
22 candy, some schooling bluefin tuna that helps

1 facilitate our harpoon fishery, which targets
2 these surface schooling bluefin.

3 Briefly, the Amendment 13 objectives,
4 which we've discussed in detail before, consider
5 changes to the IBQ program regulations, optimize
6 allocation of bluefin quota, facilitate harvest of
7 full bluefin allocations by all the quota
8 categories, enhance data quality in bluefin
9 reporting, as well as, of course, maintain
10 consistency with the relevant requirements. All
11 these objectives are a little more nuanced, but,
12 again, this is just a quick overview.

13 And so, both the topics involved in
14 Amendment 13 and the scoping comments align pretty
15 well with the topics. There are some outliers
16 that I won't touch on and, again, I'll just be
17 providing a brief overview of some of these
18 comments.

19 The comment period was very successful
20 in attracting all kinds of comments, some out of
21 the blue, but basically does a good job in putting
22 us HMS in a good mindset to consider A to Z and

1 make sure we consider A to Z, kick the tires of
2 all the ideas, and so, we'll end up hopefully in a
3 good place during the regulatory process.

4 So, these are the bins into which they
5 fall. The Purse Seine Fishery future, considering
6 the future of the fishery and relevant management
7 questions that are associated because, as you are
8 aware, the Purse Seine Fisher is an (inaudible)
9 link to the other fisheries because they are all
10 quota managed fisheries and if you pull one string
11 someplace, you feel a tug somewhere else.

12 The IBQ Program, there's the quota
13 allocation aspects, but then the other aspects of
14 the program and then the General category subquota
15 periods and percentages, the Harpoon fishery,
16 charter/headboat fishery, and the recreational
17 trophy fishery.

18 So, the principle themes to come out of
19 scoping for the purse seine fishery -- discontinue
20 immediately. The time is up on this fishery.
21 It's been inactive. Let's use the quota more
22 optimally for the other active portions of the

1 bluefin fishery.

2 Other aspects, other comments weren't so
3 much directed to the fishery per se, but the
4 relative interaction between this fishery and the
5 longline fishery such as we don't really care what
6 the Purse Seine Fishery does, but don't allow them
7 to lease because it's providing too much longline
8 quota. We should phase out the fishery rather
9 than discontinue immediately or no action. We
10 don't see a problem here. Do not discontinued.
11 These folks had a historic piece of the fishery,
12 which should be allowed to continue.

13 And then, various suggestions on how to
14 reallocate the Purse Seine quote proportionally
15 among categories utilizing the current percentage
16 pies, so to speak, pieces of the pie. Somebody
17 said, "Well, we don't have a (inaudible) approach,
18 but reallocate where it would be economically
19 stimulating." Reallocate all to the general
20 category, reallocate to all categories, except
21 longline, and then basically, anything you could
22 think of for the other iterations of all the

1 subquota categories or the quota categories within
2 the bluefin fishery. Different folks wanting
3 different schemes of reallocation.

4 And so, speaking of the Purse Seine
5 Fishery, I just thought I'd show a picture of some
6 Purse Seine catch of bluefin.

7 And then, to switch gears to the IBQ
8 program, of course, the quota allocation and
9 method of quota allocation is a principle theme.
10 As Marty mentioned this morning, this is of great
11 concern to him and others in the industry. No
12 changes are warranted. Don't increase the quota.
13 There's concern about bluefin catch increasing.
14 But then, there was also support for dynamic
15 allocation to active vessels and then various
16 ideas of how you define active vessels and how you
17 allocate to such vessels based on effort is the
18 common theme, but then, of course, the rubs in how
19 you define effort so you could allocate based on
20 landings or numbers of hooks or numbers of sets
21 each arguably being representative of effort or
22 analyst effort.

1 Base allocation on the prior three years
2 of activity. So, some suggestions with respect to
3 whether this is one year of data or more than
4 that. Count the Northeast Distant Area effort in
5 such a system or don't count the NED. And
6 although this is a small subset of the fishery,
7 there's folks concerned about impacts pro and con
8 and how this specific subset of the fishery
9 relates to the whole. And then, concern and
10 suggestion about providing IBQ allocation to new
11 entrance or those without allocation.

12 Other aspects of the IBQ program, the
13 Gulf of Mexico. There's currently a constraint on
14 the use of bluefin quota in the Gulf of Mexico via
15 a set allocation of Gulf of Mexico designated
16 quota. Folks are interested in more flexibility
17 to allow the Atlantic vessels to fish in the Gulf
18 while still maintaining some type of control over
19 an overall effort on the Gulf of Mexico. And
20 then, Gulf of Mexico dealers noted their interest
21 in continuing an increase in the catch of target
22 species because dealers are an integral part of

1 the fishery and so, more Atlantic based vessels
2 fishing in the Gulf of Mexico could help those
3 folks.

4 Don't allow permanent sale of IBQ
5 shares. Currently, IBQ is only allowed to be
6 leased on an annual basis and there is no
7 permanent sale allowed. Folks came out fairly
8 strongly with the sentiment that there should not
9 be a permanent sale allowed in the future either.
10 No need to set a cap on IBQ allocation use or
11 leasing. Set a cap on IBQ allocation use at, for
12 example, 20 percent of the longline quota.

13 Electronic monitoring. Their
14 suggestions ranged from no change needed. We need
15 to focus on improving the current to no, we should
16 improve EM. We need better viewing of bluefin
17 tuna and more accurate measurements needed.

18 Switching to the General category
19 fishery. Much of the suggestions around the
20 subquota quota periods and associated percentages
21 ranging from do not change. Businesses and the
22 fisheries are structured around the current system

1 and change, although well intended, would be
2 detrimental and cause uncertainty. A common theme
3 was extend to January subquota period until the
4 end of April and/or increase the January subquota
5 to about 14.8 percent. Likewise, a theme was
6 reduce the relative amount of quota to the June to
7 August period and provide that to the fall time
8 periods. And for each of the major themes, there
9 was, of course, many sub suggestions and very
10 specific suggestions, which, if you're interested,
11 you can follow-up with me or look online at the
12 exact precise comments.

13 Continuing. The rationales that were
14 associated with the desire for changes, whatever
15 they were, are listed here on the principle
16 rationales where environmental conditions have
17 been shifting, bluefin availability is shifting by
18 about a month. The dynamics of the fishery are
19 changes. There are pulses of fish showing up.
20 Technology is booming. Social media proximity to
21 fish technology have contributed to recent surges
22 in landings. International dynamics have been

1 affecting price more than fisher limits and
2 conditions in factors affecting the northern and
3 the southern fisheries are different.

4 The harpoon fishery continue to allow
5 the use of harpoons in the General category
6 because there is little impact on the quota. This
7 has been a concern by some. Restrict the use of
8 harpoon gear to the Harpoon category only so this
9 would constitute a change. Modify the starting
10 and end dates for the harpoon fishery. Either end
11 earlier or later or start earlier or later. Set
12 retention limits for the giants creating 81 inch
13 fish for which currently there are no specific
14 retention or trip limits. And then, change the
15 range of authorized retention limits of the large
16 medium to widen that range to provide HMS more
17 authority for in season management.

18 Charter/Headboat fishery examples.
19 Allow the use of harpoon gear in the
20 charter/headboat. Don't allow such use of harpoon
21 gear in the charter/headboat because it would
22 increase fishing effort. Require U.S. Coast Guard

1 safety stickers to obtain a permit. The
2 underlying concern is there are too many vessels
3 not meeting the current commercial vessel safety
4 restrictions imposed by the Coast Guard. And
5 then, eliminate flexibility for charter/headboat
6 category. Currently, the commercial/recreational
7 ability to fish under either sets or regs by trip
8 should be eliminated by splitting this effectively
9 into two categories. Those that would target the
10 recreational size range fish not for sale and then
11 those that would target the commercial ranged fish
12 that allow sale.

13 And then, lastly, the recreational
14 Trophy fishery. As we've discussed in the past
15 couple years, concerns about how this fishery is
16 operating. Trophy quotas need to be increased
17 everywhere. It's good for the recreational
18 fishery. Increase everywhere but the Gulf of
19 Mexico due to the ICCAT prohibition on targeting
20 there and underlying concerns about spawning
21 bluefin in the Gulf. Create a new northern trophy
22 area on quota. Currently, the quota is attained

1 in the northern area and the fisheries close
2 before the fish are even in northern waters and
3 there are very few fish less than 73 inches in the
4 north, therefore, the greater than 73 inch fish
5 are of relative high importance in the north in
6 contrast to the south. And then, a new line
7 suggested, for example, north of Nantucket and
8 Martha's Vineyard or Chatham such as the 42 degree
9 line.

10 And so, that's a very quick synopsis. I
11 know I blew through it pretty quickly and this
12 fish is representing another portion of the
13 directed fishery be it recreational or commercial.
14 So, the next steps in the regulatory this far will
15 be analyzing data, developing analyzing
16 alternatives and drafting regulations, developing
17 DEIS and proposed rule with the intent to publish
18 a proposed in DEIS during the first half of 2020.
19 The timing consideration, of course, is it would
20 be great if we could have the common period
21 coincide with the advisory panel meeting. Always
22 work best for obtaining your comment and

1 (inaudible) that with the proposed rule process.
2 During the 2nd to 3rd quarter of 2020, depending
3 on, of course, the timeline of the DEIS, would be
4 the completion of the comment period and
5 development of the FEIS and a final rule. Last
6 portion of 2020 publication of the FEIS and a
7 final with a delayed effectiveness and optimal
8 target date for implementation would be January
9 2021. The effective date for most if not all the
10 measures, of course -- because it is a challenging
11 timeline, it's possible that most of the measures
12 would be effective January 1 and some delayed
13 depending on implementation challenges.

14 So, for more details, please don't
15 hesitate to contact myself or members of the
16 Amendment 13 team listed here. We have the
17 relevant phone numbers and the federal rulemaking
18 portal [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) is a good spot for a very
19 detailed view of the regulations.

20 MR. BROOKS: Thanks very much, Tom. We
21 have about ten minutes for questions or comments.
22 Again, operator, if you wouldn't mind opening up

1 the lines so in case AP members who are on the
2 call have questions that will be great and let's
3 start with the table. I see a card at the end. I
4 can't tell. Is that -- whose card? George?
5 Yeah, please.

6 MR. PURMONT: Thank you. A couple of
7 things. First of all, I appreciate the scoping
8 meetings. I attended the one in Plymouth. I
9 thought it was a great presentation by Tom, Sarah,
10 and Brad. It wasn't very well attended, but
11 there's nothing you can do about that. It was
12 done and it was well done. In regard to Purse
13 Seine, which is something that I've been involved
14 in since about 1968, the boats have been sold.
15 One of the boats is in Maine, others in Monte,
16 Ecuador. The other three boats were sold to a
17 consortium in Fairhaven. Licenses were not
18 transferred or there's still some legal grey area
19 as to whether or not these boats can actually be
20 resurrected into the fishery, but it's never been
21 challenged by National Marine Fisheries and I
22 think it should have been. So, I think that the

1 United States National Marine Fisheries should
2 discontinue the ability to lease from the seiners
3 to the longliners. I think that that was a bad
4 idea. That's a 401K program for non-participation
5 and I don't think that was ever the intent to
6 reward somebody for not being there. If you have
7 a quota, you should have your uniform on, you
8 should be on the bench, you should be ready to
9 play. You should not be rewarded for
10 non-participation.

11 I think that we should discontinue the
12 fishery. It's done. It's over. The
13 redistribution of the quota, if I were the king of
14 the world, I would like to see a high percentage
15 of it go to the longliners because they can use
16 the quota to catch in a non-targeted method
17 longline fish such as swordfish and tunas and I
18 think it gives them a greater access to capture
19 their targeted species. Thank you.

20 MR. BROOKS: Thanks very much, George.
21 Marty and then Pat.

22 MR. SCANLON: Like is said previously

1 there, you know, a lot of these questions
2 pertaining to the Purse Seine and the, you know,
3 allocations of what to do with that Purse Seine
4 quota I think is premature here until we actually
5 get the quota into the active pelagic (inaudible)
6 industry so they actually understand what their
7 needs are and give them the flexibility to execute
8 the fishery. You know, if we're going to move
9 forward, I would be against any permanent
10 reallocation of the Purse Seine quota to any
11 category until we got to the A 13 review process
12 so we could take into account what the actual PLL
13 industry will need. You know, like I said, you
14 see some comments there we give it all to the
15 General category, well, we just had a situation
16 this past Summer here where I believe (inaudible)
17 actually sent out a notice to the General category
18 asking them not voluntarily not to go fishing
19 because of the collapse of the bluefin market.
20 So, I mean, that's a total waste of a resource.
21 So, I mean, that's, you know, to me the whole
22 thing mismanaged all along here with that. You

1 know, there's very little value in these fish. I
2 mean, so, the (inaudible) goal line is not
3 targeting these fish. You know, we do run into
4 these there where were targeting or out targeting
5 the species.

6 So, you know, A7 has greatly limited our
7 ability to catch our targeted catch and that needs
8 to be addressed in here somehow. You know, as far
9 as actions to the Gulf of Mexico, there's very
10 little quota in the (inaudible) Gulf of Mexico
11 because of the deep water horizon restoration
12 project and because of, you know, the limit of
13 these boats being able to get into the Gulf of
14 Mexico. So, I mean, we're not coming anywhere
15 near the 35 percent that's put aside for the Gulf
16 Mexico. So, you know, we do look to protect the
17 Gulf of Mexico boats that are in there. We
18 wouldn't want to give access to the Atlantic post
19 where it would jeopardize their continuation of
20 their fishery throughout the year, but, you know,
21 there's definitely room for access to the Atlantic
22 post to go over there and fish to some extent and

1 that needs to be seriously considered.

2 As far as, you know, efforts by hooks
3 and sets, I mean, under Amendment 7 we're
4 encouraged to not catch bluefins and (inaudible)
5 not to catch bluefins and Blue Water's position is
6 to do it by reallocating it by sets, single sets
7 per calendar day. You know, to do it by hooks,
8 you're encouraging people to fish irresponsibly to
9 be rewarded with bluefin tuna fish for the
10 irresponsibility. I mean, we are supposed to be
11 designing out sets and making our set activity to
12 avoid bluefin tuna. We shouldn't be reward for
13 just, you know, irresponsibly setting as many
14 hooks as we want as irresponsibly as we want and
15 be rewarded for fish that the amendment is
16 designed for us not to catch. So, that doesn't
17 make any sense to me to do it that way at all or
18 even to consider that so I say we just need to
19 reset it by allocation -- reset the allocation by
20 sets and we need to do that as quickly as possible
21 so we can try to possibly answer some of these
22 questions as it pertains to the Purse Seine

1 category.

2 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Marty. I'm going
3 Dewey and then up to Mike and if we have time, I'm
4 going to come back to you back.

5 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, thank you. I've
6 got a question, if you're a pelagic longline
7 fisherman and you're given a certain amount of
8 quota whether it be one of the three tiers and you
9 take your permits and you put them on a no vessel
10 I.D., are you still given that quota or where does
11 that quota that you're initially given, how is it
12 dispersed out among the other vessels that are
13 fishing or is it?

14 MR. WARREN: It's essentially in the
15 freezer. So, if that permit were associated with
16 a vessel during the year, we'd take the quota out
17 of the freezer. So, it's basically setting aside
18 the relative portion for the vessel, but not
19 actually allocating it.

20 MR. MCHALE: So, two quick points.
21 Dewey, to your point, a lot of it has to do with
22 the timing of when the permits are moved to no

1 vessel I.D. We distribute the IBQ allocation on
2 January 1 of each year so if the permits are
3 transferred after January 1, then the allocation
4 would reside with the permit holder could be
5 redistributed. If the permits are not associated
6 with the vessel on January 1, just as Tom had
7 mentioned, that quota is kind of held back until
8 that point in time the permits are associated with
9 the vessel. So, if all the sudden January 1 it's
10 no vessel I.D., June 1 you transfer them on to a
11 vessel, that is when that quota would be
12 redistributed. So, I think that kind of gets to
13 some of the nuances there and then just one
14 clarification on the comment Marty had said, the
15 agency actually didn't condone or condemn fishing
16 for bluefin tuna in the General category. What
17 the agency notice stated was check with those that
18 would be purchasing your fish to ensure that if
19 they were brought dockside, there was a place for
20 them to go versus just having a significant amount
21 of fishing effort, but not place to then market
22 those fish so I just wanted to clarify that for

1 the record that it wasn't an agency communication
2 pro or con fishing, it was more informing them of
3 the conditions that they were operating
4 underneath.

5 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Brad. I've got
6 four people who want to get into the cue and we
7 will push this about five minutes just to get
8 everybody in, but I ask you to be as focused as
9 you can so we'll go Mike, Pat, and Ellen.

10 MR. PIERDINOCK: Thank you. Mike
11 Pierdinock. There is one measure here to
12 eliminate to flexibility of the Charter/Headboat
13 category. By splitting into two categories,
14 either recreational or commercial, there was HMS
15 AP that used to sit around the table that put this
16 forward to not allow the flexibility specifically
17 for those Charter/Headboats fishermen from
18 Massachusetts on north. The trophy category
19 always closes early and we never get the
20 opportunity to keep that open and this provided us
21 a mechanism in order to still be provided the
22 ability to land giant bluefin tuna. That would be

1 a significant detrimental impact to the
2 Charter/Headboat fleet in those water because we
3 have bluefin, that's all we have, we have no other
4 options so I just want to point that out that I
5 believe it was Tom DePersia from Marshfield who
6 used to sit -- I'm sitting in his seat. He needed
7 this and we continue to need this, all of us from
8 Massachusetts on north. Thank you.

9 MR. AUGUSTINE: I promise -- quick one.
10 Tom, under recreational trophy fish we also it was
11 an example, was there data supported to the new
12 line north of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard as a
13 possible move or is that just an example that you
14 put in here?

15 MR. WARREN: That was example suggested
16 by a commenter. We haven't analyzed the data yet.

17 MR. AUGUSTINE: So, would the staff
18 develop some option or take any action on that?

19 MR. WARREN: We would certainly analyze
20 it. It's premature to say whether that would be
21 an option or proposed, but, again, everything is
22 in the mix at this point.

1 MR. AUGUSTINE: Well, if that's the
2 case, I would almost suggest that we take a look
3 at the 73.30 line, I think 72 or 73.30 line off of
4 Mauricius to see if there are any fish of
5 significant size as opposed to moving all the way
6 up to Nantucket because we do have long island
7 fisherman that do go all the way up there for the
8 giants. Thank you.

9 MS. BECKWITH: Thanks. On page 10 under
10 the General category of subquota periods and
11 percentages I really have two main comments.
12 Under the do not change, business is structure
13 around current systems. I'm fine with that
14 verbiage, but the last phrase change would be
15 detrimental, I find that a bit subjective. I
16 think for every that would find that change would
17 detrimental, I think there would be another subset
18 of constituents that would think that flexibility
19 would offer opportunity.

20 Under the second bullet point, extend
21 the January period until end of April and increase
22 January subquota to 14.8, I think those need to be

1 two bullet points when they're presented. It
2 makes it sound like those are sort of all or
3 nothing. That they're paired, but that's in fact
4 not the case and at least the counsel has been in
5 support of extending that January period until the
6 end of April and has not necessarily had feelings
7 on increasing the subquota. So, we would
8 certainly be fine with it, but, you know, those
9 two points need to be separate. If you guys are
10 going to, you know, leave in something as
11 subjective change would be detrimental under the
12 first point, I think under the second point you
13 probably need to add in extend January period
14 until the end of April, change would increase
15 opportunity. Make it equally subjective.

16 MR. WARREN: Again, these were meant to
17 be high level painting the picture and I agree
18 they don't capture the range or the precise
19 nuances of associated ideas that were submitted.
20 Folks submitted detailed well thought out letters
21 and comments and that's not lost on us. Thank
22 you.

1 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Alan.

2 MR. WEISS: I have a quick question and
3 then a comment. The question is getting back to
4 the IBQ that is sequestered in allocations where
5 there's no vessel I.D. or with vessels that are
6 not actively fishing, what portion of the total
7 allocation is sequestered in those areas?

8 MR. WARREN: If my memory serves me,
9 approximately 25-30 percent sequestered.

10 MR. WEISS: Okay. Thank you. Well, it
11 seems to me that's a rather substantial chunk of
12 quota and, first of all, I don't know how the
13 category can utilize the quantity of fish that's
14 been apportioned to it if that much of it is
15 sequestered and can't be touched. And, secondly,
16 if you have that much set aside under a mechanism
17 where's it's not being utilized, then how do you
18 obtain optimum yield required under National
19 Standard 1 and how do you satisfy the other legal
20 requirements to allow a reasonable opportunity to
21 harvest the international assigned quota?

22 MR. WARREN: If you characterize the

1 catalyst for Amendment 13, what are the catalysts.

2 MR. WEISS: Then, I'm sorry, then the
3 point is that that, as Marty said, this needs to
4 get resolved so that the other things that relate
5 to quota allocation that surround that, are going
6 to be dependent on how this gets resolved and how
7 this dormant or latent quota gets freed up and
8 distributed.

9 MR. MCHALE: Yes, I'd like to chime in
10 here a little bit because I've heard a few things
11 around the table right now. So, let's not lose
12 sight of what our role here is. We are the
13 National Marine Fishery Service and how things get
14 resolved are typically done through regulatory
15 actions and so, obviously Amendment 7 was a big
16 one. Implemented a number of different changes
17 that were new to the fishery. I think we went
18 into that all eyes wide open and now we're looking
19 to the subsequent Fishery Management Plan
20 amendment to address, as Tom had stated, what has
21 worked, what hasn't, what needs to be eliminated,
22 kept, reintroduced, what have you. And so, as

1 folks are thinking through what the agency, what
2 the fishery, what we collectively need to do and
3 hearing something needs to be addressed. That
4 needs to also then be framed to the context of
5 what tools do we as a regulatory agency, whether
6 it be frame workable actions, whether it be in
7 season actions, or FMP actions that we're actually
8 able to operate underneath because those are going
9 to be the constraints. As we're fielding the
10 inquiries and we know the inquires are diverse,
11 but those are going to be the constraints we're
12 going to be operating underneath of how
13 expeditiously we're able to follow through with
14 either requests or to properly analyze them.

15 So, I just want folks to keep that in
16 mind that, you know, I'm speaking to the choir
17 here, but we're a federal regulatory agency so
18 there are the processes that we need to go through
19 and it's not lost on us. Some of them have longer
20 timelines than others, but it's also not lost on
21 us that we don't necessarily have free reign with
22 the (inaudible).

1 MR. BROOKS: Okay. I've three got three
2 people who want one last bite at the conversation.
3 I'll give you 30 seconds each and then we must
4 push to the Cost Earnings Survey Summary. Mike.

5 MR. PIERDINOCK: This really addresses
6 what you said, Pat. If you think about it, the
7 northern recreational line is from Egg Harbor on
8 north so this would then go from Egg Harbor to
9 that 42 line so that would be a new independent
10 zone and then from there on north so maybe doing
11 the same thing that you're looking for. Thanks.

12 MR. SCANLON: I think Tom Warren's guess
13 in the percentage of that is way off. I think 25
14 percent of the boats -- the research that I did in
15 preparing our comments, or hopefully prepare our
16 comments I really should say, indicates that
17 there's 25 boats that are in no vessel I.D., which
18 is roughly 20 percent of the category, and there's
19 another 25 percent over the 3, the various 23, 26,
20 25, of vessels that either didn't lease their
21 quota or didn't utilize. So, if you combine those
22 two numbers, you're at 43 percent of the pelagic

1 longline category is either not found, not been
2 able to be accessed, or is inaccessible at all.
3 So, you're talking 43 percent of the overall
4 pelagic longline category, the PLL industry at
5 this point has not been able to access. So,
6 that's the significance of how quota is being left
7 on the table that these active vessels needs to
8 get their hands on so we can move forward to find
9 out what else we can do here.

10 MR. BROOKS: Nicely done. Okay. Great.
11 Last chance phone, webinar, anybody wanting to
12 weigh in there?

13 MR. WARREN: With respect to the nuts
14 and bolts and referencing the facts and whether my
15 memory is perfect or Marty's, I recommend
16 consulting the three year review, which is again
17 is going to be finalized about the end of
18 September that has a lot of the reference data
19 we'll be using as we go forward in addition to new
20 data analyzed in the DEIS. Thank you.

21 MR. BROOKS: Good. Thanks, Tom. Okay.
22 Thank you very much. At this point, I want to ask

1 Cliff and George. One last check on the phone.
2 Operator, are the phones open?

3 OPERATOR: They are open.

4 MR. BROOKS: Okay. And didn't hear
5 anyone seek in to chime in on that last
6 conversation. Is that right?

7 OPERATOR: Correct.

8 MR. BROOKS: Okay. I'll let you close
9 them back up again for a little bit. All right.
10 So, as I mentioned earlier, we want to spend a
11 little bit of time here handing this off for
12 discussion sort of a preliminary look at the
13 General category Cost Earning Survey Summary.
14 Emphasize that this is preliminary, but it would
15 be helpful to get your some sort of initial
16 reaction feedback to what you're hearing. It will
17 be useful to the team up here as they're drafting
18 a report as well. And just a reminder to folks
19 that we need to end this conversation, despite
20 what the agenda says, not later than 3:15 because
21 we have to save 15 minutes Fish and Wildlife
22 service folks to come in and talk about shortfin

1 mako CITES listing. And if we can get more than
2 15 minutes, we will take that too. Go.

3 MR. HUTT: Thank you. My name is
4 Clifford Hutt and this is George Silva. We've
5 been working on this study for the last couple of
6 years and we're going to tag team this
7 presentation. I'll cover about the first half and
8 then George will jump in to discuss the analysis.
9 I'm going to cover some background on the purpose
10 of the logbook study, general trends that we've
11 been seeing over the last several years in the
12 General category, how we executed it and basic
13 trip catch statistics, and then George will speak
14 about the trip, the economics of these General
15 category trips, and some annual expenditures data
16 we collected.

17 The purpose of this study was to
18 estimate economic activity of the HMS fishing
19 under the Atlantic unas General category quota
20 annually and by subquota period. This includes
21 General category permit holders and
22 Charter/Headboat permit holders who have the

1 commercial for sale endorsements. We've never
2 previously really collected data on this fishery
3 aside from the figures on how much the dealers
4 paid for the bluefin tuna and other fish that were
5 caught under this category and given various
6 greater activity seen in the General category in
7 recent years, we thought it was time that we start
8 collecting some of this information.

9 We did it in the form of a cost earnings
10 logbook study where they were to report data on
11 their cost associated with each trip. It was
12 conducted from January to December of 2018. In
13 addition to economic data, we also collected basic
14 data on effort, catch, harvest, and the cost and
15 earnings and also their annualized expenditures
16 involving things like boat, equipment, insurance
17 at the end of the year. And that included both
18 basically whatever they were using for this
19 fishery even if it wasn't the only fishery they
20 were using it for.

21 Basic trends of the Bluefin Tuna
22 Fishery, our current TAC for the entire Western

1 Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Fishery is 2,350 metric
2 tons. The U.S. quota is a little under 1,250
3 metric tons as of 2018 and we've seen a lot of
4 fluctuation over the last 20 years over U.S.
5 Landings of bluefin tuna, but in recent years
6 they've been slightly on the upswing and
7 stabilizing and most of these landings have been
8 accounted for in the last five years by the
9 General category fishery.

10 In the last five years alone, while the
11 number of permit holders under both the General
12 category permit and the HMS Charter/Headboat
13 permits, remained roughly constant and consistent.
14 We have seen the number of bluefin tuna landed by
15 these vessels roughly double and the number of
16 vessels landing them roughly double as well
17 suggesting these increase in landings are being
18 distributed across the fleet and not just
19 concentrated on a handful of vessels.

20 So, we selected just under 682 vessels
21 that had a history of bluefin tuna landings in
22 2016 and 2017 for reporting. In 2018, 587 of

1 those vessels renewed their permits or in the case
2 of the Charter/Headboat permit holders, got the
3 commercial sale endorsement. So, just under 100
4 of them were dropped out of the study because they
5 weren't eligible to fish commercially for bluefin
6 tuna.

7 All these vessels, just before the
8 beginning of 2018, were mailed a packet that
9 included copies of all the relevant forms from the
10 survey for their reference, but they were
11 primarily encouraged to complete the survey online
12 and were provided a weblink and PIN number to
13 complete the forms.

14 Of the 587 permit holders that were
15 selected, 457 of them returned either trip or no
16 fishing reports throughout the year so roughly 78
17 percent of them. 334 vessels provided trip
18 reports, 123 provided no HMS fishing reports.
19 They were not required to report on non-HMS
20 fishing trips and 184 completed the annual
21 expenditure form.

22 This line we kind of look at the

1 distribution of bluefin tuna landed per month
2 along next to the distribution of trip reports we
3 received by month. You can see from the graph
4 that they roughly match up suggesting the data we
5 collected at least temporally throughout the year
6 was roughly representative of the fishery.

7 Out of a little over 4,200 bluefin tuna
8 that were landed by the general category, under
9 the quota in 2018, just over 2,900 of those were
10 landed by vessels that were selected for reporting
11 and we received trip reports that accounted for
12 just over 1,700 of them or 58 percent of those
13 fish.

14 In addition to receiving reports on
15 trips that were landing HMS or commercially
16 targeting HMS, we received 61 trip reports that
17 were associated with tournaments, which half of
18 those actually reported selling HMS. 237 trips
19 reported being for hire trips. They were
20 instructed not to report on for hire trips, but 83
21 of those trips actually sold fish. So, basically,
22 any trips that were for hire that did not report

1 selling fish were excluded from further analysis
2 and the vast majority of trips reported were
3 reported by owner operated vessels.

4 In this graph, you can kind of see
5 distribution of latitude and longitude of reported
6 trips. We asked them to report their lat long by
7 degree and minute. The larger the hexagon the
8 more trips reported in a given area. The darker
9 the shade of the blue, the more bluefin tuna
10 landed in that area. So, you can see off of kind
11 of the northern Massachusetts coast we had lots of
12 trips taken, but not as many fish landed as say as
13 off of Cape Cod where you had fewer trips taken,
14 but a lot more bluefin tuna landed.

15 You can see that the trips were really
16 concentrated in the area of kind of the Gulf of
17 Maine north of Cape Cod and then a good number of
18 trips down off of North Carolina, which were
19 primarily into winter.

20 Here we have the distribution of
21 reported bluefin tuna landings by state and sub
22 quota and light blue is Maine, darker blue is New

1 Hampshire, orange is Massachusetts, purple is
2 Rhode Island and New York, and red is North
3 Carolina. We had a little over 150 bluefin tuna
4 landings reported for the Winter fishery and North
5 Carolina and then, like around four or five
6 reported in the Fall in North Carolina.
7 Throughout the rest of the year, the fishery was
8 primarily occurring in Massachusetts followed by
9 Maine and New Hampshire.

10 We also data on non-bluefin tuna
11 landings and catches. Over half of these were
12 accounted for mackerel, which were not being
13 landed for sale, but primarily for bait. Other
14 fish we saw a number landed of were yellowfin tuna
15 and haddock and a variety of other species.
16 Discards reported, about 36 percent of reported
17 discards were mackerel, 14 percent were bluefin
18 tuna, which we assumed were primary regulatory
19 discards of undersized fish for the General
20 category followed by pollock, haddock, cod, squid,
21 and other species. And now we'll get into the
22 economic portions and George Silva will take over.

1 at these expenses, we noticed that the average
2 costs of trips changed depending on whether the
3 trip was successful in landing a bluefin tuna or
4 not successful so there's a little bit of a, you
5 know, two different kind of bins of types of
6 anglers and probably more casual anglers and more
7 those that are General category fisherman I mean.

8 Based on 1,337 trips that reported
9 bluefin tuna landings with full data, we broke
10 down the revenue costs and returns. Here you
11 could see fuel made up a quarter of the expenses
12 on a trip. Captain and crew 42 percent, tackle 13
13 percent, and then there's various other expenses
14 in different categories. In these trips, 92
15 percent of the trips only landed one bluefin tuna,
16 which is interesting to note. We have a lot of
17 talk about bag limits and all that, but, you know,
18 one bluefin is the most common outcome of
19 successful trips. The average price per bluefin
20 was \$2,306 or \$6.86 per pound. Data suggests that
21 on average one bluefin for every three trips will
22 cover costs so bluefin tuna revenue on a given

1 trip is about almost \$2,500. Net trip costs were
2 \$823 and net return of \$1,662 for these successful
3 trips.

4 Let me jump to the next slide. On this
5 slide, we're just kind of characterizing some of
6 the bluefin tuna landings and their associated
7 prices. As you can see here, on the left side of
8 this graph is the average weight of the bluefin
9 and on the right side that represents the line, is
10 the price per pound. Fish price and weight were
11 pretty correlated here. In the Summer and Fall
12 where higher prices and average weights were a bit
13 higher than the Winter and Spring subquota
14 periods, yeah and September.

15 On this next chart, we kind of break it
16 down in the same sub quota category periods, but
17 here we break out revenue costs, net revenue per
18 trip, and also show the price in relationship.
19 The highest net trip returns were in the Summer
20 and the highest cost per trip in the Winter
21 fishery. Those impacted net returns.

22 Now, kind of looking at overall total

1 bluefin tuna revenue versus trip costs, we took
2 the averages and then also obtained total bluefin
3 tuna revenue based on the dealer reports that we
4 obtained and the General category costs were then
5 extrapolated from average costs reported in the
6 logbook and the estimate of the number of total
7 General category trips. We estimated those trips
8 for June through October based on LPS estimates
9 and private trips taken on Charter/Headboat permit
10 holders in Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts
11 for those time periods. For the months of January
12 through March, November, December, the ratio of
13 non- catch to catch trips in the logbook was used
14 to extrapolate the estimates from the number of
15 trips to land bluefin tuna based on dealer reports
16 during those months because in those time periods
17 the LPS is not as helpful for that type of
18 estimation.

19 So, here we have total bluefin tuna
20 revenue based on those dealer reports of 9.8
21 million dollars, estimated total trip costs of 7
22 million 333,000 thousand dollars giving us a net

1 trip revenue of approximately 2.5 million.

2 And that kind of takes us to the next
3 category, which is our annual expenditure form.
4 This was one form that was given to each of the
5 participants to fill out at the end of the year.
6 We received 184 annual expenditure forms, which is
7 about a 31 percent response. As Cliff mentioned
8 before, we encouraged folks to use the web, but
9 there was also paper option. For this particular
10 form, we had 72 percent response rate on the web,
11 which is really high, and 28 percent via paper.

12 So, let's take a look at the results for
13 annual expenditures. Some of the big categories
14 that we found were, as you would expect, repair
15 and maintenance, purchase of capital, vessel boat
16 loan payments, dockage and rental utilities. That
17 made up more than half of all the annual
18 expenditures, but this chart here kind of breaks
19 down all the different categories we asked folks
20 about.

21 This next page we kind of provide some
22 detail statistics on those expenditures and also

1 broke out the percent reporting. So, you could
2 see a lot of the categories are not for everyone.
3 But as expected, everyone pays for fishing permits
4 and licenses. It's 100 percent. And the second
5 category that most people spend on is repair and
6 maintenance. That's pretty critical for General
7 category fishing and fishing supplies. So, those
8 are kind of the top three. Really in terms of
9 cost, repair and maintenance, purchase of capital,
10 and dockage were the top three. And we also had
11 some smaller categories, not to overwhelm, these
12 were categories with less than half reporting
13 their expenses, but some of these expenses are
14 still significant. So for those that don't own
15 their boats outright, that's a loan. Boat loan
16 payments are a pretty substantial amount, and
17 that's more than \$3,000 a year on those payments.

18 Other annual one-time expenditures and
19 business taxes paid were also pretty important.

20 So kind of to get us to the endpoint
21 here, the average annual expenditures for General
22 category vessel that was reported in the survey

1 was \$29,000 median annual expenditures. We're at
2 15,746. It's a bit lower because there's
3 definitely a skew in the data. A lot of folks,
4 you know -- there are large distribution, then
5 some really more -- larger boats, more exotic
6 boats, higher expenditures kind of pulling the
7 outlier to the right.

8 But if you take the median, which is
9 kind of the midpoint, of reported expenditures and
10 you multiply them by the 932 General category and
11 Charter/Headboat vessels that landed bluefin in
12 2018, we estimate that total annual expenditures
13 on these kind of fixed annual expenses was
14 approximately 14.6 million.

15 So on this last slide here I'm going to
16 try to pull it all together with the revenue and
17 expenditures that we've talked about so far with,
18 as I mentioned, before total bluefin revenue
19 approximately 9.8 million; estimated total trip
20 costs 7.3 million; annual expenditures 14.7
21 million; bringing the total General category costs
22 or expenditures basically in the economy of just

1 about \$22 million.

2 And then we noted that the net revenue
3 just from -- but this is net bluefin tuna revenue
4 minus costs is actually a net loss of 12 million.
5 But we wanted to note here that revenue here only
6 really includes bluefin tuna, but, as Cliff noted
7 in this slide, there are other species being
8 caught. There are other fishing activities
9 actually going on in terms of charter fishing. I
10 did know some folks mentioned they do lobster in
11 the offseason. So all those other fishery
12 activities offset that fixed cost that they
13 reported on their annual expenditure form.

14 So some of the next steps, first will be
15 getting your feedback on these preliminary results
16 at this meeting and incorporating that. We also
17 want to estimate the economic impact of these
18 expenditures on local economies. We use an
19 input-output model to estimate local -- the income
20 effects of these expenditures, how many potential
21 jobs in the local economies are generated by these
22 expenditures.

1 We also hope to discover further
2 insights from this data and publish our findings
3 in the near future.

4 So with that, I think we have some time
5 to take a few comments.

6 MR. BROOKS: Yep. I'd like to see if we
7 can keep this to 10 minutes because we definitely
8 have Fish and Wildlife Service here. I want to
9 make sure we give them enough time to give us
10 their update and take a question or two.

11 So questions or comments on this? And
12 again, Operator, if you could open the phone lines
13 for webinar folks. I'm going to start with the
14 webinar, see if there's anybody there who wants to
15 weigh in.

16 OPERATOR: Lines are open.

17 MR. BROOKS: Thank you. Any webinar AP
18 members want to weigh in with a question on the
19 survey?

20 Okay, thanks, Operator. Dewey.

21 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yeah, I was wondering
22 if there's a breakdown of General category permits

1 by state.

2 MR. HUTT: Yeah, I mean, we have that in
3 the SAFE report and it would definitely be
4 included in the final report. I know, I mean, big
5 hotbeds for that permit are primarily in New
6 England, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine.
7 But, also, you know, seeing more down in North
8 Carolina, although a lot of the guys participating
9 down there are more the Charter/Headboat permit
10 holders.

11 MR. HEMILRIGHT: And one other thing.
12 When you had your price for your ice, is there any
13 such thing as how many pounds of ice it was?
14 Because it wasn't very much money for ice. It
15 didn't look like -- maybe everybody got free ice
16 or something, I mean, cheap ice. I was just
17 curious.

18 MR. SILVA: I was trying to see if I
19 could see the --

20 MR. BROOKS: George, I'm going to let
21 you look and while you're looking, I'll take
22 another question. Mike.

1 MR. HUTT: We actually did not include a
2 data field for pounds of ice, unfortunately.

3 MR. SILVA: Yeah, with that, I'd say go
4 to Slide 14.

5 MR. BROOKS: Hang on. I think Walt has
6 got something to fill in on that point.

7 MR. GOLET: Yeah, just to the point for
8 Dewey. Massachusetts, 972; Maine, 658; the rest
9 are minor, North Carolina's 308, and the rest are
10 minor players.

11 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Walt. Okay, Mike.

12 MR. PIERDINOCK: Yeah, thank you. You
13 know, as I look at these numbers, they seem to
14 make some sense. Slide 14, as you noted, with the
15 ice, there's some other things that have some
16 inconsistencies that I'm not sure why.

17 But I wonder with that whether it would
18 be prudent to break out the General category into
19 hook and line, harpoon, and Charter/Headboat, and
20 maybe provide more insight. Because if a
21 harpooner needs a plane and all the other expenses
22 they need, that's a lot different than the other

1 categories. So that could change substantially
2 your numbers here depending upon which approach
3 you do take.

4 So, you know, I was just curious out of
5 that 1,337 trips whether you had any sense of how
6 many were Charter/Headboat, how many were harpoon,
7 or so on. And then maybe if you broke that down
8 in the future, it could provide more or better
9 data. Thanks.

10 MR. HUTT: Yeah, we want to look at the
11 data from a lot of different breakdowns. I want
12 to compare the Charter/Headboat versus General
13 category permit holders. I also want to look at,
14 yeah, how successful, you know, group by them
15 levels of success because roughly half the vessels
16 that land and sell these fish every year, the only
17 land and sell one or two. And then you've got a
18 handful of guys, maybe about along 100 or so, that
19 will land as many as 10 or more.

20 So I want to break down the numbers, but
21 to look at the guys who are really clearly in it
22 as a big operation versus the guys who are just,

1 you know, the weekend warriors supplementing a
2 little bit of their cost for the occasional fist.

3 MR. PIERDINOCK: And one other thing to
4 add to the difficulty, I mean, we're experiencing
5 the fact that you can go a mile off of Chatham and
6 catch these monsters. So back in the past you'd
7 have to go to the Hague Line or George's Bank or
8 so on. So that's also going to be difference in
9 numbers with fuel and expenses and so on, which
10 right now this seems to be taken into
11 consideration and near-shore, real near- short,
12 close shore type of fishery with minimal expense.

13 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Mike. Let's go to
14 Steve, then Steve, then Marty, and then we'll
15 shift. Steve.

16 MR. IWICKI: Okay. So none of the
17 recreational permit holders were counted in this,
18 right? Okay, how many recreational permit holders
19 do you think you issue a year?

20 MR. HUTT: I mean, we issue roughly
21 around 20,000. I mean, this was really focused on
22 the commercial bluefin tuna fishery, so we include

1 the permits that were authorized to land them
2 under the General category.

3 MR. IWICKI: Yeah, but here's my
4 argument. So, say it's a guy like me, runs out to
5 the canyons probably five times a year at about a
6 thousand a trip, 5,000. Say there's only 2,000 of
7 us who do that. That's 10 million without going
8 beyond fuel, bait, and ice, and all your other
9 costs are there. So, I mean, yeah, 20,000 don't
10 do it, but even if you use 2,000, when you add in
11 insurance, slips, all that stuff, you're beyond 14
12 million right there, and there's no revenue
13 associated with it. So it dramatically changes
14 your outcome.

15 MR. HUTT: So we actually did the last
16 HMS trip expenditure survey of the angling
17 category guys in 2016. That report is going to be
18 coming out in the -- finally finished, coming out
19 in the fall. And we are currently redoing the
20 durable goods angling survey, which is including
21 an HMS portion right now. They're just kind of
22 wrapping up that data collection in the next

1 couple of weeks.

2 So, I mean, we definitely have collected
3 -- we've collected a lot more data on the angling
4 category than we have on this one in the past.

5 MR. IWICKI: Did you send it out to all
6 the permit holders? Because I didn't get anything
7 like that.

8 MR. HUTT: We sent it out to a random
9 sample. We can't send it to everybody.

10 MR. IWICKI: Yeah. I mean, I've never
11 received -- I get the call every two weeks all
12 summer about what did you catch, but I've never
13 gotten anything related to costs, so okay.

14 MR. GETTO: How did you resolve the
15 price issue in the reporting? I mean, the
16 fisherman fills out the daily log, but he doesn't
17 know his return for maybe two or three weeks. How
18 did you resolve that in the study?

19 MR. HUTT: So to deal with that in the
20 study we actually didn't require them to report it
21 if they didn't know it. And we primarily relied
22 on the dealer data for the revenue because they

1 were required to go in there and update it once
2 they got it, so we felt that would be the most
3 complete and accurate data on that.

4 MR. BROOKS: Marty.

5 MR. SCANLON: Yeah, I have a few
6 questions here. The General category annual
7 expenditure report form there, is that a mandatory
8 reporting or is that voluntary?

9 MR. HUTT: I mean, technically, there's
10 a law that they are mandatory or according to our
11 regulations that are required, mandatory. This
12 was a one-year study and as the agency normally
13 does with logbooks that are new, there's like a
14 general rollout. So we definitely let people know
15 about, you know, if they were noncompliant and we
16 took records of it, but it's not the same level
17 of, you know, oversight that an ongoing logbook
18 study would do. But we've got that.

19 MR. SILVA: And one other thing to note
20 that, unfortunately, the government shutdown
21 coincided with the annual expenditure form
22 timeline, though we had a contractor working on

1 it. But kind of a response to questions and, you
2 know, dealing with follow-up was a little bit
3 impeded by that.

4 MR. SCANLON: What is the mandatory --
5 you know, they've been averaging basically 50
6 percent noncompliant in their reporting. What's
7 that rate? Is that number available? And that
8 number that you just gave us means that they are
9 69 percent noncompliant with this.

10 You know, in the Pelagic Longline
11 category, we don't want to hear about the excuses.
12 We don't get any excuses. If I have a log book
13 that I don't have every single check checked
14 properly, I don't get my permit. My boat's tied
15 to the dock, so I got no sympathy at 69 percent
16 noncompliant here.

17 Twelve million dollar deficit? You
18 know, there's something going on that's wrong
19 right there.

20 The other thing, too, is I see all these
21 cost analysis here, but did you do a cost analysis
22 in regards to the retention limit? And how did

1 the retention limit, the daily retention limit,
2 affect the price throughout the year? I think
3 that's important to look at, especially since
4 you're losing \$12 million on this fishery in the
5 General category is what you just presented to us.

6 So, I mean, I think those are important
7 issues. You know, we're talking about giving more
8 quota and I see these public comments there in the
9 General category about resolving the Purse Seine
10 category and giving it all to the General
11 category. They need \$12 million, you know,
12 they're 69 percent compliant with the rules and
13 regulations, I mean, how does that particularly
14 work? What do I tell the people in my industry?
15 Don't comply? You get rewarded for noncompliance?

16 MR. SILVA: Well, one thing to note that
17 the trips on average, just the trip expenses
18 versus trip revenues, is actually positive. The
19 thing that makes it negative overall are fixed
20 costs. But many General category participants,
21 and just like longliners, participate in a wide
22 range of other fisheries. And we did not -- we're

1 not able to connect all those other fishery
2 activities to match those revenues in with their
3 fixed costs for the year.

4 So if they pay a dock fee, that dock fee
5 is for the year or by the month, they're
6 participating in lobster, New England groundfish,
7 and in the General category seasonally. You know,
8 those costs are spread out over those categories.
9 So it's actually kind of typical with the
10 longliners. A lot of their fixed costs actually
11 -- a lot of them, when you add in their fixed
12 costs, kind of push them into negative with just
13 HMS landings. When they participate in other
14 fisheries, you know, and incorporate some of their
15 other activities, then they usually break even or
16 net positive.

17 MR. SCANLON: But we're not in this room
18 making -- we're not regulating those other
19 fisheries. I mean, well, whatever you got here,
20 this doesn't pertain to non-HMS fisheries here
21 you're talking about here. You know, you're
22 talking about -- in this particular figure, you've

1 done all this analysis on bluefin tuna
2 interactions, and the bottom line is the
3 category's losing \$12 million a year (inaudible,
4 overtalking) management.

5 MR. BROOKS: I want to let Alan jump in.
6 I'm going to let Alan jump in.

7 MR. WEISS: Well, just a quick
8 observation that if you're including fixed costs
9 on an annual basis, but revenues only for the
10 portion of the year that they're bluefin fishing,
11 then maybe it would make more sense to
12 characterize it as apportioning the fixed costs
13 with the percentage of the year that they spend
14 bluefin fishing.

15 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Alan. All right.
16 I want to bring the conversation on this survey to
17 a close at this point and invite folks to follow
18 up if there are additional points that you want to
19 talk with Cliff or George about. We've got a
20 break coming up in about 20 minutes and that'll be
21 another opportunity to keep pushing at these
22 questions.

1 So at this point, I'd like to invite the
2 Fish and Wildlife Service folks that are here, so
3 Rosemary Gnam and Mary Cogliano, to come on up and
4 give us an update on the shortfin mako CITES
5 listing. And we'll have till 3:30 for this, for
6 both your presentation and a conversation.

7 And again, if there's more that people
8 want to talk about, I invite you to use the break
9 if Rosemary and Mary can stay.

10 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: So while we get the
11 Fish and Wildlife Service people set up, I just
12 wanted to go back to Dave Schalit's question this
13 morning regarding National Standard 1 briefings.
14 So we have placed those two previous presentations
15 on the web page with our current agenda, so you
16 should be able to find both the presentation that
17 Sara and I presented along with the presentation
18 overall on National Standard 1.

19 SPEAKER: So they are on there?

20 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Correct.

21 MS. COGLIANO: Hello. Thank you for
22 having us here. I'm Mary Cogliano with the U.S.

1 Fish and Wildlife Service, chief of the Permitting
2 Office for CITES. And this is Rosemary Gnam,
3 who's the chief of the Division of Scientific
4 Authority for CITES in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
5 Service. And we're here to give you a little
6 update on the recent conference of the parties and
7 the outcome of that, one of which is the shortfin
8 mako listing.

9 So, in addition to giving you the update
10 on the listing decisions, I'll also go through the
11 permitting process. Because those who wish to
12 trade in makos now will need permits,
13 international trade will need permits; or those
14 who wish to introduce them from the sea will also
15 need permits.

16 So just really quickly, I know we don't
17 have a lot of time, but I want to give you a
18 really quick review of CITES. The purpose of
19 CITES is to ensure that international trade in
20 wild fauna and flora is legal and sustainable.
21 It's not a ban on trade. It's meant to ensure
22 that trade is sustainable.

1 There are 182 member countries, plus the
2 EU. And these are referred to as "parties." The
3 convention establishes a legal framework together
4 with common procedural mechanisms for regulating
5 international trade in species with the strictest
6 regulation being on those species that are
7 threatened with extinction.

8 So the permitting system is the backbone
9 of CITES, and this is how trade is monitored.
10 These CITES permits can only be issued if certain
11 conditions are met and they must be presented when
12 leaving or entering a country.

13 Very quickly, Appendix 1 is the listing
14 in CITES that has the highest regulation because
15 those species are threatened with extinction.
16 Appendix 2, under which the mako was listed, those
17 species are vulnerable to over-exploitation, and
18 commercial trade is allowed with a permit.

19 So just one thing, one point I want to
20 make is that at the Conference of the Party, the
21 United States is one vote. Any listing decision
22 requires a two-thirds majority vote of the

1 parties. And at this Conference of the Parties
2 there were 150 countries.

3 So these are the species that were
4 listed. All of these were listed in Appendix 2.
5 That means commercial trade is authorized with
6 permits.

7 So as you see, the mako sharks, shortfin
8 and longfin, but I understand you're most
9 interested in the shortfin, were listed inside
10 this Appendix 2. And the United States opposed
11 this proposal. We voted against it. But because
12 the majority of the parties, the two-thirds
13 majority, voted for it, we're required now to
14 implement this listing. In addition to the makos,
15 the guitarfish, wedgefish, and sea cucumbers were
16 listed in CITES.

17 Previously listed, sharks and rays.
18 This is just a reminder from previous COPs the
19 thresher sharks and silky sharks, devil rays,
20 oceanic whitetip shark, scalloped hammerhead,
21 great hammerhead, smooth hammerhead, porbeagle
22 shark, and manta rays, whale sharks, great white

1 sharks, and basking sharks are all listed in
2 CITES.

3 So, like I said, commercial trade is
4 allowed if it's determined to be not detrimental
5 to the survival of the species, and assuming it is
6 legally acquired, those specimens were legally
7 acquired.

8 So how do I trade in these Appendix 2
9 species? What do I need to do? Well, you'll need
10 to apply for a permit from our office. And then
11 in order for us to issue a permit, we have to find
12 -- we have to make two findings. My office, the
13 Division of Management Authority, must find that
14 the specimens were legally acquired. And then the
15 Division of Scientific Authority, Rose's office,
16 has to make a finding that the specimens, that the
17 export, if it's an export application, that they
18 were not detrimental to the survival of the
19 species. And similarly, for introduction from the
20 sea, that introduction needs a non-detriment
21 finding.

22 So, as I mentioned, introduction from

1 the sea, as I understand it a lot of specimens
2 will be entering into the United States from the
3 high seas and then landed in the United States, so
4 we're going to talk a little bit about that. Like
5 I said, the CITES scientific authority also makes
6 a non-detriment finding on these and these
7 certificates have to be issued before the
8 specimens are landed.

9 We have, back at COP-16, when the
10 hammerheads were listed, we put some guidance up
11 on our website and it provides a lot of really
12 good information on introduction from the sea, so
13 I would, you know, recommend that you look at that
14 website. We will be updating the website because
15 right now it talks about hammerheads, pretty much
16 only hammerheads, and we'll need to update it for
17 makos. But for now, at least it does provide you
18 with some good information on introduction from
19 the sea.

20 So one thing I want to mention is, and
21 many of you probably already have, you know,
22 specimens that you've already taken from the wild,

1 so there is a provision under CITES where
2 specimens that were acquired before the provisions
3 of the convention applied to it or before the
4 listing went into effect are considered
5 pre-convention. Those specimens still need a
6 CITES document to be exported, but the document --
7 basically they need to be -- you need
8 documentation showing that those specimens were
9 acquired before the listing went into effect. And
10 a non-detriment finding is not done on those.

11 And as a reminder, the listings go into
12 effect in 90 days.

13 MS. GNAM: It's August 20.

14 MS. COGLIANO: It's August 20?

15 MS. GNAM: Well, the parties ended on
16 August 28th, so it's 90 days from August 28th.

17 MS. COGLIANO: Ninety days from August
18 28th, so we don't have that exact date pinned down
19 right now, but just if you could look at your
20 calendars and it will be 90 days from August 28th.

21 So, now I want to give you a little bit
22 of information on our general permit processing

1 procedures because I'm sure you will be coming in
2 for permits. Our application process takes at
3 least 30 to 60 days, depending on the complexity
4 of the application. And as I mentioned before,
5 that export permit or that introduction from the
6 sea certificate must be issued prior to entering
7 the U.S. port with those specimens.

8 Applications we receive on a first-come,
9 first-served basis. Unfortunately, we don't have
10 any mechanism in place to allow for an expedited
11 review.

12 Submission of an incomplete application
13 will delay the process, so it's very important to
14 do the best you can in filling out the
15 application. And if you need assistance, please
16 give us a call. We're happy to help you with your
17 application.

18 And then the other thing is the
19 processing fee, the fee that's required is a
20 processing fee, and it doesn't -- it's not like
21 you're paying for a permit. It's a processing
22 fee, so just because you turn in an application

1 doesn't mean that if you're denied you're going to
2 get your money back. It's, unfortunately, some
3 applications are denied. Not many, but a very
4 small proportion of them are because the
5 documentation's not in place or the findings can't
6 be made.

7 So you can find our application forms on
8 www.fws.gov/international and there is a button
9 there. You can just click on the "Permits"
10 button. And then there's another button that says
11 "Applications by Form," and you click on that and
12 you go down the list of applications. And you'll
13 see that if you need an export permit, it's Permit
14 Number 3-200-27. If you need an introduction from
15 the sea certificate, it's 3-200-31. And a
16 pre-convention certificate for those specimens
17 that you may already have is 3-200-23.

18 So when you do get there and pull up
19 that application what will you need to provide,
20 what documents, to support that application?
21 Well, it really is depending on which application
22 you're filling in. But generally, you'll need

1 copies of your permits, any permits that you were
2 required to have in order to obtain those
3 specimens; licenses and other documents
4 authorizing removal of the specimen from the wild.
5 If you're obtaining -- if you're a dealer and
6 you're obtaining specimens from a fisher, then a
7 copy of that invoice showing that transfer of the
8 specimens legally will be required.

9 I'm going to go through a little
10 example. When the hammerhead listings did go into
11 effect, we put out a guidance to give people a
12 better idea of the types of information they would
13 need to provide to obtain an expert permit. So
14 I'm just going to go through.

15 For hammerheads we determined that for
16 sharks taken in U.S. Atlantic waters we needed the
17 Atlantic highly migratory species, shark dealers
18 needed to provide the NOAA International Fisheries
19 Trade Permit for shark fins; the dealer, Federal
20 Dealer Shark Permit and printouts of federal
21 dealer reports and trip tickets. We need a
22 recording of shark fins by species and they need

1 -- they should not be lumped in with the
2 unclassified shark fins because we need to know
3 that the specimens that we're permitting are the
4 specimens that are actually going to be exported.

5 And then from the exporter we needed an
6 itemized invoice indicating the original dealer
7 and dealer report number; where each product was
8 originally reported by the HMS shark dealer for
9 species harvested in the Atlantic; and we needed
10 this information listed by species with an
11 associated weight in pounds. We need a copy of
12 the state license and receipts or invoices
13 documenting the sale of those specimens.

14 So, again, that was for hammerheads.
15 And we're going to be working to implement the
16 mako shark listing. And we're hoping to put out
17 similar guidance that will be more specific to the
18 shark, the mako sharks.

19 So after you submit your application,
20 you will receive an acknowledgement letter
21 indicating that your application's been received.
22 If you don't receive that acknowledgement letter,

1 please call our office because we want to make
2 sure that your application has been received by
3 us.

4 The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
5 reviews your application and we consult with NOAA
6 NMFS because NOAA is our technical experts and
7 have many of the records that we need. If we need
8 additional information from you, we'll contact
9 you.

10 At that point, once we have the
11 information and we do the analysis, the permit is
12 either issued or denied. Most of them that are
13 issued. If denied, there is a reconsideration
14 process in our regulations, so you can -- if your
15 application is denied, you can come back and apply
16 for reconsideration and we'll -- that will be
17 elevated to a higher level.

18 Okay, then we mail the permit once it's
19 issued. After you receive your permit you need to
20 look at it and make sure it's correct. We do
21 sometimes make mistakes, so it is important to
22 look to make sure it's correct.

1 And another very, very important thing
2 is that all exports of CITES listed sharks and
3 shark products must be through a U.S. Fish and
4 Wildlife Service designated port and specimens
5 introduced from the sea and landed in the United
6 States must also land in a U.S. Fish and Wildlife
7 Service designated port.

8 Okay, so, in addition, you will need --
9 if you are a commercial -- if you're exporting or
10 trading in these specimens commercially, you'll
11 need a commercial export license. And you can
12 obtain these from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
13 Service Office of Law Enforcement.

14 So here's some useful links. We're here
15 --

16 MR. BROOKS: I'm assuming we'll post
17 this up on the web, obviously.

18 MS. COGLIANO: Sure, certainly. We're
19 here to answer any questions you might have.

20 MR. BROOKS: So thanks very much.

21 MS. COGLIANO: Sure.

22 MR. BROOKS: That was very helpful. My

1 thinking is that we probably spend about 10
2 minutes on this and we'll go into a little bit of
3 overtime because I know there's a few questions.
4 We'll start with you, Rick.

5 MR. WEBER: Thank you. Rick Weber. I
6 know you've done CITES 101 for us a number of
7 times, but I still have to ask a 101 level
8 question. Are you talking about only for export
9 or for every mako landed from ocean? Because you
10 keep saying a mako arriving from the sea.

11 MS. GNAM: If you intend to export that
12 mako at any point in time.

13 MR. WEBER: Okay, I'm out.

14 MS. GNAM: Okay. If you intend to
15 export any product of that mako, then you do need
16 that certificate for intro of the sea or when you
17 exported that permit.

18 MR. WEBER: You answered that question
19 correctly.

20 MS. GNAM: But if you are selling it
21 domestically, we, Fish and Wildlife, CITES has no
22 nexus to that. It's purpose is to regulate

1 international trade.

2 MR. BROOKS: Good. Bob?

3 MR. HUETER: Thanks. Thanks for the
4 presentation. Bob Hueter, Mote Marine Lab.
5 Without getting too deep into it, can you
6 summarize for us the justification that the basis
7 for which the U.S. voted against the mako listing?
8 And also clarify for me, or maybe others have
9 heard various things about Canada, that Canada was
10 going to vote against it and then they changed
11 their vote to voting for it. Can you answer those
12 two questions, please?

13 MS. GNAM: Yeah, because that falls
14 under my authority. Essentially, the U.S.
15 Position going into the CITES Conference, we post
16 those in our Federal Register. It is up on our
17 website. It is still up on our website. We
18 opposed the listing, the inclusion of mako in
19 Appendix 2 of CITES because there are CITES
20 criteria that need to be met. And we also looked
21 at the FAO panel of experts that reviews mako,
22 reviewed the mako proposal.

1 And we found for the North Atlantic that
2 populations there did not meet the CITES criteria
3 and, therefore, in consultation with NOAA and our
4 leadership who made the final decision, our
5 position was opposed. And we went into that
6 conference with that position. We held to that
7 position and we voted no.

8 As to Canada, you'll have to ask Canada
9 how they voted. The U.S. announces how it votes
10 because this was -- all the marine proposals were
11 done by a secret ballot. That option is available
12 in CITES and a number of -- it only takes 10
13 parties to approve a secret ballot, and they had
14 those 10 parties. And so I know the U.S., for the
15 record, announced its vote of no. Canada, yeah,
16 I've heard those rumors, too. I can't confirm it
17 because, as I said, we did not see a vote tally.
18 So I know initially in discussions in consultation
19 with Canada they were following the same type of
20 science as we were and looking at CITES.

21 But, again, decisions are made, so.

22 MR. HUETER: Thank you.

1 MS. GNAM: And the vote, just so
2 everybody knows, it was a secret ballot, but, as
3 Mary said, it's a two-thirds majority. The vote
4 was 102 yes and 40 nos and 5 abstentions that
5 don't count. So it was really 142 parties voting.

6 MR. BROOKS: So fairly narrowly passed.

7 MS. GNAM: Seventy percent they had.
8 They needed 66 percent, they had 70 percent.

9 MR. BROOKS: Right. Okay, Dewey.

10 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Wow, it's amazing how
11 we learn such secrecy in our ballots, just 10. I
12 was curious if Oregon Inlet, North Carolina, or
13 the Port of Wanchese is a U.S. Fish and Wildlife
14 Service landing port.

15 MS. GNAM: I'd have to go look at the
16 Federal Register with them, but I don't believe
17 so. Most of our Wildlife ports are major cities
18 where export happens, so I don't know what the
19 closest one. I know Atlanta is a port, a
20 designated Wildlife port. So this is something
21 that we will have to start to discuss.

22 And in terms of secrecy on the ballots,

1 the U.S. Tried very hard to change that you would
2 need at least a one-third majority for secret
3 ballots, but we were totally beaten down on that
4 one at the last COP, so we didn't raise it again.

5 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yeah, I appreciate you
6 all opposing the listing on CITES for shortfin
7 mako. It'd just be interesting to see the other
8 countries that did that, also, that might be at
9 ICCAT who don't even report mako sharks.

10 And I was just curious, so it's my
11 understanding that if I'm in the ocean and I want
12 to bring a mako shark in to export somewhere, I
13 got to come into one of your -- of the ports. And
14 you mentioned Atlanta. I don't know of any
15 waterways in Atlanta. But I'm just -- so is that
16 the avenue? You come from the EEZ and you got to
17 go to one of these other major ports to -- if I
18 want to export a mako shark. Is that correct?

19 MS. COGLIANO: It's outside of U.S.
20 Waters. It's only if it's outside of U.S. waters.

21 MS. GNAM: It's high seas.

22 MS. COGLIANO: High seas outside of the

1 EEZ. And you are bringing that in and then you
2 need to land it at a U.S. port and you need an
3 introduction from the sea permit. If you're
4 harvesting in U.S. waters or state waters, then,
5 no, you don't need a permit to land those
6 specimens.

7 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. David, you get the
8 last word here.

9 MR. SCHALIT: Getting back to the COP,
10 would you be in a position to share any secrets in
11 connection with how the European Union voted? And
12 the other question I have is, maybe I'm missing
13 something here, the shortfin mako listing was
14 elevated from Appendix 2 to Appendix 1 or it
15 received an Appendix 2 listing? Okay. All right,
16 thank you.

17 MS. GNAM: But to answer your question
18 on the European Union, if you look at when the
19 mako shark proposal was proposed in January, it
20 had 55 co-sponsors. On that co-sponsor list was
21 the European Union, which carries 28 votes in
22 CITES. I assume as a co-sponsor they voted yes

1 for the proposal. They definitely in their
2 intervention expressed extreme support for the
3 proposal.

4 You know, there's a debate on these
5 proposals and you hear from both sides. And the
6 European Union expressed support. But, as I said,
7 it's a secret ballot, so that you don't know
8 unless you ask the country. The United States was
9 one of the few countries that records its vote in
10 a secret ballot. We really understand and
11 probably in the spirit of transparency have never
12 asked for a secret ballot nor would we support
13 one. But I assume that's how the EU voted and
14 they carry 28 votes.

15 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Karyl, you had a
16 question.

17 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Yes, thank you. I
18 had a question, we've talked about what the
19 commercial fishermen and the commercial dealers
20 need to do. I'm just wondering what about
21 researchers who want to share fin parts or
22 whatever?

1 MS. COGLIANO: Yes, they also need
2 permits. All permits -- permits are needed no
3 matter who's doing the trade. Yeah.

4 MS. GNAM: Also, I wanted to mention
5 that I do have -- I did bring some handouts.
6 These are on our web page, but I thought I'd be
7 helpful to print some out for you. It's more
8 information on intro from the sea and when an
9 intro from the sea certificate is required, so
10 I'll just leave these here for whoever would like.

11 MS. COGLIANO: And I may add on the
12 intro of the sea, when CITES defines that as the
13 high seas, that's not in a country's EEZ, so --
14 but basically, our understanding from the proposal
15 is there are several nations who fish for mako
16 sharks in the Pacific Ocean, in particular, that
17 take them on the high seas, what is known as the
18 high seas. So I don't know if that's -- we'd be
19 interested to know if that happens in the U.S., if
20 anybody is fishing on the high seas because this
21 is only applicable to high seas.

22 MR. BROOKS: Thank you. Thank you both

1 for coming. Obviously, this is timely and
2 important and we appreciate you coming here.

3 So let's go to a break. We're a couple
4 of minutes late, but not bad, but we will
5 reconvene on time at 3:45. Thanks.

6 (Recess)

7 (Recess)

8 MR. BROOKS: All right if our folks
9 could come back to the table please, we need to
10 get going again. And operator, if you would
11 please take folks off the mute button that'd be
12 helpful. And if I take that off mute, you'll hear
13 me. Operator, if you'd be able to take webinar
14 participants and remove them from mute so they can
15 speak please, thanks. All right again, AP members
16 who are still standing up, if you'd find your seat
17 at the table please.

18 So, before we dive into the conversation
19 on the Rec roundtable, I unfortunately neglected
20 to open up the last conversation after the CITES
21 discussion to webinar participants. I know at
22 least one person, Rusty, you wanted to weigh in.

1 The Fish and Wildlife Service folks are not here
2 anymore but at least if you have a comment or
3 something that we could pass on or track down for
4 you that'd be helpful. So, Rusty and, of course,
5 anyone else who has a question please weigh in.
6 Rusty.

7 MR. HUDSON: Can you hear me fine now?

8 MR. BROOKS: Perfectly, thanks Rusty and
9 apologies.

10 MR. HUDSON: Well, I've been going
11 through this with 2013 dealing with the hammers
12 and everything else on CITES. The big deal is is
13 that went to electronic reporting for our shark
14 dealers. And even when I was a shark fin dealer
15 and buying directly from, you know, boats and
16 stuff like that up and until September of '97, I
17 wound up having to just total all my shark fins
18 together and that's what people got in the habit
19 of doing.

20 When the electronic reporting started,
21 they did not wind up mandating that the set of
22 fins that came off an individual shark, let's say

1 a shortfin mako and then you had to wind up being
2 able to track that all the way through. But
3 normally, our shark fin buyers are second
4 receivers so they don't have to fall into that
5 category. So, there's a gray area there as to
6 tracking that's been really cumbersome for us for
7 several years now.

8 Last thing is the longfin mako is a
9 prohibited species since 1999. And it is every
10 once in a while, I saw a show up in the Gulf of
11 Mexico landings and I don't understand it. But
12 the point is, is that these are all kinds of
13 things that need to be considered. I'm glad the
14 U.S. did not embrace this feel good measure. But
15 I think it's a little excessive on the part of the
16 U.S. to have to, you know, deal with (inaudible)
17 but that means that we just report. So, somehow
18 between the international trade permit or whatever
19 it's been replaced by and/or MPS with regards to
20 the HMS shark dealers that are in open access
21 versus limited access for our permitted fishermen,
22 we need to clean this up. So, that's my comment,

1 no questions. Thank you.

2 MR. BROOKS: Thanks very much, Rusty.
3 Anybody else on the webinar AP members want to
4 weigh in on this? And Jackie, it looks like
5 Jackie wants to say something.

6 MS. WILSON: I just want to clarify on
7 the shark fins. The dealers are allowed to report
8 them species specific and they can also report
9 unclassified shark fins. It's the only thing they
10 can report as an unclassified because the dealers
11 do tend to lump them together. But there is a way
12 they can report by species those shark fins. So,
13 they can be track so that is something that we
14 already have a solution in place.

15 MR. BROOKS: Did you hear that, Rusty?

16 MR. HUDSON: Yeah, I did.

17 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Jackie. Okay, if
18 nothing else then and Bob, thank you for letting
19 me know that. So, in past meetings, we've sort of
20 carved out a time to just kind of pick up a topic
21 and it gives the Agency a chance to sort of raise
22 issues, concerns, that have been sort of coming

1 across their desk. It gives you all a chance to
2 raise issues that you've been thinking about and
3 then we just kind of open it up and have a
4 conversation. And by the end of it, I think it
5 gives the Agency a good sense of maybe some future
6 directions or issues they may want to take up as
7 they move forward.

8 So, we're going to do that this
9 afternoon with a focus on HMS Recreational
10 Roundtable discussion. So, in a minute, I'll hand
11 it off to Brad and the team to my left to sort of
12 walk through the issues that they are hearing
13 about and that have come up over, I don't know,
14 the last numbers of months or years, whatever that
15 is. And kind of reflect back things that they
16 think would be good to have a conversation on and
17 hear your thoughts on.

18 But by no means is that list intended to
19 constrain the conversation so we will also want to
20 ask you and are there other things that we should
21 be talking about. So, and then we'll just open it
22 and we'll sort of take them issue by issue so we

1 can have a somewhat focused conversation. So,
2 with that Brad, I think I'll let you just swing us
3 through.

4 MR. MCHALE: Great, thank you for that,
5 Bennett. So, for those of you around the room
6 that may be involved in council managed species,
7 this roundtable format may be somewhat familiar.
8 Something that was kind of initiated a number of
9 years back.

10 If you all recall, Russ Dunn as well as
11 Tim Sartwell who is joining us in the back of the
12 room have really kind of taken on the challenge of
13 trying to institutionalize the management of our
14 U.S. recreational fisheries. You know, not just
15 in the HMS context but across the councils.

16 And I think one thing that we've also
17 acknowledged over the years. As given the
18 construct of the HMS fisheries and the advisory
19 panel that that already is inherently in our
20 nature that we're talking about the recreational
21 aspects of these fisheries just as much as we are
22 in the commercial.

1 So, at a national level, what is taking
2 place in all those regions including in the HMS
3 are these roundtables as Bennett had just
4 mentioned. Essentially, it's to provide us all a
5 collective opportunity to kind of discuss either
6 issues that we're hearing about in the
7 recreational context or issues that we need to
8 hear about in that context. The depredation is
9 one that kind of fits this bill that we've already
10 touched on.

11 So, I'll run through this and again, I'd
12 like to go through the entire presentation,
13 obviously correct me if I make any errors, Cliff,
14 Jenn, Randy. I'm sure there will be plenty. At
15 that point, we'll kind of really turn the
16 microphones over to have more a dialogue context.

17 So, I think I'm already ahead of the
18 game. I just touched on most of these goals.
19 It's again, to maintain that dialogue and exchange
20 what's on your mind to share back with you what
21 we're hearing just to make sure that we're not
22 miscouching any of that and then ultimately see

1 where these thoughts, ideas or suggestions could
2 evolve to.

3 So, first and foremost, looking at one
4 of our data collection programs for our
5 recreational fisheries, the Large Pelagic Survey.
6 I think you all are well aware at this point of
7 some of the redesign efforts that are taking place
8 as a result of the recommendations from the
9 national academies. A number of these
10 recommendations are already rolling out in the
11 MRIP process for other council species.

12 What is now taking place is looking at
13 the Large Pelagic Survey itself trying to assess
14 where there are areas for improvement. Either to
15 reduce or eliminate areas where biases could be
16 introduced. Prime example are for in our context,
17 are tournaments over sampled or how to handle
18 offering non-HMS trips, for example, if vessels
19 are say going after black fin or little tunny and
20 how do they kind of factor into our survey.

21 And then ultimately, trying to work
22 through those kinds of findings and discoveries

1 into different design concepts. And trying to
2 figure out how ultimately, this particular survey
3 would need to evolve with a potential plan to test
4 some of this in two states. I believe
5 Massachusetts and North Carolina. But well draw
6 straws to figure out who becomes the guinea pigs
7 in 2020.

8 Staying on the theme of reporting, I
9 know that the HMS management division has spent
10 considerable time and effort in trying to
11 collaborate with either pre-existing reporting
12 requirements as well as evolving to those that are
13 already in the electronic arena versus paper
14 based.

15 And so, to fit that bill for our for
16 hire fishery, we've looked or continue to look
17 towards the implementation of pre-existing,
18 whether it be the South Atlantic or the Gulf of
19 Mexico management council reporting requirements
20 and trying to stay step in step. Knowing that a
21 lot of our customers are one in the same and that
22 applies up to the Northeast as well.

1 And as part of just the vehicles or the
2 tools that are collecting those reports whether
3 it's an app or a tablet, what have you. It's also
4 making sure that the proper authorities are in
5 place, you know, to deal with the bureaucratic we
6 world of do our regulations say that we have the
7 authority to collect information through
8 electronic means. And that, like I mentioned in
9 one of the previous discussions, requires
10 rulemaking. And so, that's also under
11 consideration within specifically the HMS context
12 even though we may be able to piggy back on
13 pre-existing systems to reduce redundancy.

14 And reducing that redundancy is one of
15 our key objectives. It's not lost on anybody in
16 the HMS management division that a lot of our
17 constituents, whether they be for hire or
18 commercial and recreational for that matter, are
19 overlapping with council mandates. And it's not
20 lost on us that having to report one trip through
21 three or four different means just makes
22 absolutely no sense in this day in age.

1 And so, we'll be continuing to
2 collaborate with our partners, whether it be the
3 ACCSP and trying to piggy back to make sure
4 whatever the development process is that they're
5 aware of what the HMS requirements are. Hopefully
6 that at some point in the not too distant future
7 it will be up to the captain to select what tool
8 they want to report. But at that point, the
9 information will be getting to the proper folks
10 inside the Agency.

11 Regarding HMS tournaments. If you all
12 recall that we actually expanded the reporting
13 selection to include all tournaments this year
14 actually. And so, it was no longer just a
15 billfish centric. We are collecting information
16 on all shark tournaments, tuna tournaments as well
17 as those billfish tournaments to get a more
18 comprehensive assessment of what's transpiring.
19 And that ultimately reflects back on the some of
20 the work that George and Cliff had just mentioned
21 were some of the economic drivers just to make
22 sure that we're properly assessing those events.

1 And in addition to those efforts, some
2 of the staff actually made it a point to actually
3 get out and physically attend some of the
4 tournaments that were taking place up and down the
5 coast. I had the opportunity of joining the folks
6 up in South Portland, Maine to be part of their
7 captains meeting at the Casco Bay Bluefin Bonanza.
8 We also attended the White Marlin Open.
9 Obviously, I think that's a rather significant,
10 you know, very diverse tournaments right there in
11 and of itself. One was essentially commercial
12 fisherman, one not so much. The Pirates Cove
13 Billfish tournament in North Carolina and then the
14 International Billfish in Puerto Rico.

15 And so, being there, being able to be
16 accessible to captains if they had, you know,
17 questions, concerns that even transcended just the
18 tournament operation itself. Whether it be rules
19 or regulations or where the Agency may be going.
20 We found that it was a worthwhile endeavor to be
21 there where folks may not have the same access to
22 us that you all have twice a year, good, bad or

1 ugly.

2 And we continue to collaborate with the
3 Office of Law Enforcement, you know, continuing to
4 work and point out areas where we provide
5 compliance assistance. I don't know if this will
6 be an aspect of tomorrow's presentation by OLE.

7 But where we made the registration
8 online, we've received positive feedback that that
9 minimizes a lot of the burdens on those tournament
10 organizers. But yet, we still come across some
11 relatively high profile tournaments that even
12 though we've documented conversations of literally
13 looking them in the eye and saying, just as a
14 reminder, you have to register this tournament,
15 they aren't doing so. And trying to break down
16 those barriers of what is that impediment.

17 Is it getting lost in the shuffle of
18 just the logistics of running these organizations
19 and getting sponsors and that's not lost on us.
20 But it's also a little frustrating when you've had
21 that conversation, shaken their hand they've said
22 they've understood and yet all of the sudden it

1 still doesn't happen. Because is that is when we
2 do need to ultimately refer things to enforcement
3 which is not our preferred course of action unless
4 warranted.

5 One big challenge here. Improving
6 communication of the regulations, especially to a
7 broad user group that is our recreational
8 community. Thankfully, we have some expertise
9 that's rarely available to the HMS management
10 division, sitting behind me to my right, that will
11 help us try to translate a lot of our rules and
12 regulations into more layman's terms. How to
13 really boil it down to the nuggets that those
14 individuals that are in the recreational fishery
15 need to know.

16 Obviously, we have obligations to meet
17 our legal requirements and hence, there are
18 federal registers. Hence, why we do notices and
19 rulemakings. But there also needs to be a middle
20 ground of how do you instill very complex
21 regulations into succinct soundbites that then can
22 then resonate with those folks that are held to

1 comply with those. And so, that's an on working
2 or shall I say, never evolving endeavor where
3 we're working on websites that ultimately can meet
4 that need as well as collaborating with
5 pre-existing applications.

6 FishRule app seems to have a lot of
7 traction these days that a lot of folks are going
8 to. But making sure that the HMS rules and
9 regulations as they evolve are being reflected in
10 those applications. So, we don't have fisherman
11 getting jammed up where all the sudden they're
12 under one impression of what the rules are but the
13 information they're getting may not be fully up to
14 date. As well as working on, you know, outreach
15 plan to coordinate all of our various outreach
16 efforts. Again, know that Agency resources are
17 what they are, how do we get the biggest bang for
18 our time and effort.

19 Extending onto some just more specific
20 species specific information. So, for Atlantic
21 tuna issues, again, some of these, I think, we've
22 already touched on of concerns as they pertain to

1 bluefin tuna is access to trophy fish. One item
2 that we hear almost annually at this point are
3 concerns regarding post release mortality. Either
4 when we have a trophy fishery closure or even when
5 our commercial bluefin tuna hand gear fisheries
6 close. We still see a large amount of effort in
7 that catch and release fishery. And then
8 ultimately, how do you then mitigate any
9 post-release mortality that may be associated with
10 those fishing operations knowing there could be a
11 wide diversity in the gears that are being used to
12 target different size classes of fish. And then
13 the implications of that.

14 As well as some items that we're hearing
15 in regards to the operations of our for-hire
16 fleet, the Charter/Headboat category permit and
17 sales of fish. I think we've heard even at this
18 spring, some concerns that it's not necessarily as
19 prevalent in other for-hire fisheries that
20 captains are allowed to sell their catch from
21 those trips where there are paying passengers on
22 board. We've kind of spoken to some of the

1 uniqueness within the HMS context but that's an
2 issue that we continue to hear about of how do we
3 manage the unique circumstances that apply to some
4 of these fisheries. And then ultimately, how do
5 we evolve if it's warranted.

6 We touched on this morning, some of the
7 depredation concerns whether it be sharks, whether
8 it be pilot whales or seals in that case. And
9 that's something that, I think, will be an ever
10 evolving dialogue. And then as we look to some of
11 the larger scale items and looking at stock
12 assessments, currently we do not have a
13 recreational retention limit for bigeye tuna. Is
14 that something we want to start to entertain and
15 then engage in that dialogue to really vet
16 pros/cons of not only just our domestic context
17 but then ultimately what that means in the
18 international arena.

19 When it comes to billfish, I think we're
20 all aware that we have a 250 limit on Marlin.
21 This table here as you kind of look across the
22 last number of years whether it be Blue Marlin,

1 White Marlin or the Roundscale Spear fish. That
2 we're starting to see some trends in upwards
3 utilization of 250 limit. And then just wanting
4 to be eyes wide open as far as what that may mean.

5 Ultimately, as it plays out, if we hit
6 the limit it turns into a catch and release
7 fishery. Our acknowledging that culturally,
8 that's already very prevalent for these species to
9 be caught and released. But just needing to have
10 full transparency as we're collecting these
11 reports whether they be tournament centric or
12 non-tournament centric.

13 Just having the dialogue that this train
14 could be on the tracks or we're having the
15 conversation of mandating catch and release where
16 already that's self-imposed and culturally
17 embedded into the fishery. So, needing to make
18 sure that that is on our thoughts again, how we
19 manage here domestically but also as that ripples
20 into some of our ICCAT advisory community context
21 as well.

22 And then, I guess stemming from

1 conversations of what management measures might we
2 want to entertain. For example, do we explore
3 slowing down actually landing rates not catch
4 rates by adjusting minimum sizes and, you know,
5 executing some of that authority that pre-exists.
6 Or are there authorities that the Agency should
7 look at intending on proposing that may not
8 currently be on the books. And, I think, I've
9 already kind of touched on some of these others.

10 You know, there are carry over and
11 under, carry forward and under, carry under
12 harvest revisions, I guess. But currently, we
13 haven't had to bump up against those thresholds or
14 haven't had a dramatic need for them. But again,
15 that's something that may be evolving over time.
16 And then ultimately, doing what we do is
17 exercising our regulatory authority and then
18 exploring with obviously your input and members of
19 the regulated community's input, what that
20 evolution could and should look like.

21 And just as Bennett had mentioned, these
22 are kind of just some of the major themes that

1 we've heard on. This is not intended to be fully
2 inclusive of every nuance. But what we really
3 want to do is capitalize on our time now again, is
4 to have more of the dialogue. A, to make sure if
5 there are new issues that we're hearing about them
6 or if we've misheard or miscouched something that
7 we get that corrected. But really more engage of
8 the dialogue aspect versus, you know, us here at
9 the top of the table then, you know, preaching and
10 talking to you all. Because there's plenty enough
11 of that in the meeting and I think with that,
12 share us your thoughts. Thank you.

13 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Yeah, so I'll just
14 jump in and clarify just a little bit. On the
15 previous slide, actually not the previous to that
16 one but the one about the billfish 250 regulatory
17 authorities. So, this slide just to give you a
18 little bit more information, was intended to show
19 you what we currently have available to us in the
20 way of tools to manage Marlin landings in
21 consideration of the Marlin 250 limit.

22 And so, as we look at that trend that

1 has happened over the last several years where we
2 are catching more fish, more Marlin and Roundscale
3 spear fish, that this is just to let you know and
4 put on your radar screen what we have available to
5 us currently. And we're not in the situation
6 where we have to exercise these rights this second
7 but we just wanted to make sure that you're aware
8 that we do have tools available to us and that
9 include these things right here. Thanks.

10 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. So, the first
11 thing I want to do is just in a minute, I'm going
12 to ask Brad to go back up to the top of the list
13 of issues and we'll take them one by one. But I
14 want to just first see from the AP are there other
15 issues that you would like us to try to set some
16 time aside this afternoon to talk about. So, are
17 there other issues to throw into the mix?
18 Anybody? David, you have one you want to throw
19 into the mix?

20 MR. SCHALIT: Yes.

21 MR. BROOKS: What would that be?

22 MR. SCHALIT: More discussion in

1 connection with outreach regarding regulations.

2 MR. BROOKS: That certainly comes up
3 pretty much every meeting. Any other issues folks
4 want to talk about? Steve?

5 MR. IWICKI: Yes, I'd kind of like to
6 circle back on recreational reporting and the app
7 and see how that's going. And then what have you
8 guys done related to implementation of the
9 national rec policy that was put out a few years
10 ago and how you feel that's going would be another
11 good topic.

12 MR. BROOKS: Anybody, yeah please,
13 Raymond and then Greg.

14 MR. KANE: Yeah, can we get an update on
15 the position of HMS and Coast Guard in
16 relationship to safety decals? I mean, we've
17 spoken about it at a number of meetings and in
18 know there's been an issue with cross referencing
19 HMS webpages with the Coast Guard. But I'd like
20 to hear an update because according to the
21 fishermen, it's still ongoing. And I know Dewey,
22 a couple of meetings ago asked that the permit

1 application if you want a general category permit,
2 you put your decal number on it. I'd like to be
3 updated on that, please.

4 MR. BROOKS: And Greg, I saw your card.

5 MR. SKOMAL: Yeah, an issue that seems
6 to be surfacing quite a bit in the states is
7 fishermen, recreational fisherman targeting
8 prohibiting species. So, I'd like to maybe get
9 some clarification on that, targeting prohibited
10 species in federal waters and see how we can
11 translate that perhaps to state waters.

12 MR. BROOKS: And sorry, the update would
13 be sort of how that's managed or what's our
14 understanding of the extent to which that's going
15 on.

16 MR. SKOMAL: Yeah and technically can
17 recreational fishermen target prohibited species
18 in federal waters. Is it explicitly referenced in
19 any way that they cannot? Because in states, each
20 state is handling it a little bit differently and
21 I don't think there's consistency.

22 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Greg. Any other

1 issues folks want to throw into the mix? Okay so
2 we've got, I think, the Agency put six to start
3 and I think I've heard five more so we've got
4 about 11 issues. We'll push through them as best
5 as we can. We've got about 75, 80 minutes and
6 again, if we want to go longer after 6 o'clock, we
7 can certainly do that.

8 Let me just do a quick check. How many
9 members of the public who are here might want to
10 make comments? One, two, three, okay. Okay
11 great, we'll go to that at 5:30 for sure but I
12 think we'll maybe be able to come back at like say
13 quarter of or so if we have more.

14 All right, so I'd say let's swing back
15 to the top of it and just sort of take it one by
16 one and see what kind of comments, thoughts you
17 have for the Agency. So, the first is on the
18 Large Pelagic Survey redesign. And are all the
19 cards up for that one? Put your card down if
20 you're not. Okay so let's just work our way down.
21 Mike and Rick and Rick.

22 MR. PIERDINOCK: I'm just kind of

1 surprised you're coming to the conclusion that the
2 tournament oversampling and there's a bias
3 associated with tournament oversampling. We
4 continue to hear that there's lack of recreational
5 data. We know there is lack of such and
6 tournaments provide a mechanism in order to get
7 some data associated with what we target and what
8 we land and provide the science behind it.

9 So, I'm disappointed to see your coming
10 to that conclusion where what's the alternative.
11 Your department and NOAA and so on, isn't coming
12 up with funding to do the research you need in
13 order to help these things. So, to state that and
14 then want to not use that as a mechanism to
15 continue to get good data, I'm just surprised to
16 see that's a conclusion.

17 MR. BROOKS: So, just to say that a
18 different way. Maybe there are some bias in there
19 but it's getting us good data and we need that.

20 MR. PIERDINOCK: Yes.

21 MR. HUTT: So, one thing I'd like to add
22 is we didn't include that to say tournaments are

1 creating bias. It's one thing they're looking at.
2 Are there potential sources of bias associated
3 with oversampling tournaments? The whole point of
4 the LPS is to get effort and catch estimates. And
5 the concern is if we're not properly weighing the
6 data and we're treating that just like another
7 regular day of fishing.

8 We might over estimate total effort
9 within a region for a given month or total catch
10 just because so many more people are out there at
11 that dock associated with a tournament. So, they
12 just want to make sure they're doing the sampling
13 as statistically a valid a way as possible to get
14 the most accurate estimates possible.

15 MR. BROOKS: And sorry, just to be
16 clear, is the concept of moving forward with a
17 novel design, that's something that is going to
18 happen and there will be pilots or is that
19 something you're seeking feedback on from folks
20 around the table as to whether that is something
21 to pursue?

22 MR. HUTT: That is something that is

1 actively moving forward. We have a contractor who
2 is looking at this novel design basically for
3 background. One of the big things that was noted
4 in the National Academy's assessment of all the
5 MRIP surveys was one of the biggest problems with
6 the Intercept surveys was they didn't use strict
7 probabilistic sampling of interview sites.

8 The interviewers had flexibility to go
9 from one access sight to another just to make
10 their quota of how many interviews they wanted to
11 get to maximize them. Whereas in strict
12 probabilistic sampling, you would say you are
13 going to be at this site for this period of time
14 on this day. So, we know exactly what the
15 probability was that site was sampled.

16 And so, they kind of took that
17 flexibility out of the APHAIS survey. And we
18 realized if we did that entirely for the LPS, it
19 would really undermine its ability to target these
20 offshore trips and be as effective as it is. So,
21 they're working on building up a novel design that
22 includes a strict probability portion to the

1 Intercept samples as well as another side portion
2 where they're allowed for more flexibility and
3 going from site to site. So, that we can create
4 more statistically valid estimates but at the same
5 time, still allow them to have the effectiveness
6 of getting enough samples on these rare event
7 species to still get decent estimates.

8 MR. WEBER: Before we leave that, Cliff,
9 I want to strongly agree with that. It was wrong
10 on the old MRFSS survey because, you know, the
11 fish counters almost feel like it is their job to
12 find the fish not count the fish. So, given the
13 opportunity of sitting once place and doing
14 nothing and sitting at the nearby marina where
15 they know they can get plenty of Intercepts, they
16 almost feel like they're biologic samplers rather
17 than Pelagic Interceptors. And they feel very
18 happy when they have found fish because, as I say,
19 it almost feels like a biologic sampling for them.

20 Along those lines, I'm looking at these
21 MRIP references and I'm wondering if it's not time
22 for this group to move away from MRIP in general

1 if there's a way to do LPS, LPIS coast wide.
2 Because when I'm looking at the SAFE report, the
3 MRIP estimates complete with FES are still all
4 over the place in the number of fish and I don't
5 believe it.

6 Because when you go to the next page and
7 you look at the stability, where there is LPIS,
8 where there is LPIS, there is very little
9 variation year to year. There is a noticeable
10 trend. People are starting to catch this. You
11 can see it curve up, you can see it curve down.

12 When you look at MRIP, you'll go from
13 200 fish to 5 fish to 2600 Sandbars. You know,
14 all of the sudden, we went from 5 individuals to
15 2600 individuals. I don't believe it, no one in
16 this room believes it, I don't believe you believe
17 it. It is an extrapolation of the data and we
18 need to get it away and get to the data that we
19 like. And the sooner we can leave MRIP and get to
20 an LPS, LPIS concept, I think the better. Do we
21 have a section coming up on reporting or is this
22 the time to be talking about reporting as well?

1 MR. HUTT: It's coming up.

2 MR. BROOKS: It's coming up.

3 MR. WEBER: Okay.

4 MR. BROOKS: One moment. Computer shut
5 down. Yeah, that's it for LPS. Rick.

6 MR. BELLAVANCE: Thank you. So, I was
7 hoping to be efficient that I could kind of
8 combine my LPS comments with the electronic
9 reporting comments if that's okay because they
10 kind of relate to each other. So, my comments
11 are, I'm encouraged by the moving towards
12 electronic reporting. I've been an advocate for
13 that type of work on the for-hire side for a long
14 time now and it's slowly starting to get there.

15 And so, when I see a bullet point in the
16 for-hire electronic reporting that says HMS
17 considering its own rule, I would recommend that
18 that for-hire fleet move away from the survey
19 design all together and move towards a census
20 through the electronic reporting. So, anything in
21 that rule that needs to be considered, I feel like
22 that would be the time to think about that.

1 And it would, I think, make it a lot
2 better for us in that world. The survey is what
3 we have right now but I have issues with it as
4 well. And I think that a census of the entire
5 fleet would be a better way to go about that.
6 Those are my comments on those two things.

7 MR. ROOTES-MURDY: Thanks. Can you
8 remind me what we use the LPS for?

9 MR. HUTT: We use the LPS to get
10 recreational estimates of HMS species. It was
11 primarily originally designed to deal with the
12 tunas from Maine to Virginia to the month of June
13 through October which is primarily when the
14 fisheries are going on up there at that time of
15 year.

16 For our rulemaking analysis purposes for
17 that region, Maine to Virginia, we use the LPS
18 estimates instead of MRIP. We use the MRIP
19 estimates primarily for North Carolina through
20 well now Mississippi because that's what we have.
21 And we get extra data reported to us from
22 Louisiana, from LA Creel and Texas Parks and

1 Wildlife from their survey.

2 MR. ROOTES-MURDY: But for sharks, they
3 don't inform, you know, recreational catch limits,
4 right?

5 MR. HUTT: It depends on the shark
6 species. For the Pelagics that are primarily
7 caught in the Mid-Atlantic and the Northeast like
8 makos and threshers and porbeagles and blue
9 sharks. Yes, the LPS data is a primary data
10 source and was the primary data source for
11 amendment 11 on mako sharks. But, you know, for
12 the large and small coastals which are primarily
13 caught in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico,
14 we're primarily limited to MRIP data.

15 MR. BROOKS: Dave.

16 MR. SCHALIT: Question regarding LPS.
17 Just the protocol is a dockside survey? And you
18 are still calling a random sampling of 10 percent
19 of the permit holders as well, is that right?

20 MR. HUTT: Yes. We're using dockside
21 surveys for the catch data and telephone calls,
22 the Large Pelagic Telephone Survey for the effort

1 data. I personally am not exactly sure what the
2 exact percentage is of permit holders they call
3 every month but that sounds about right. I don't
4 know if that has changed and might even change
5 with the redesign.

6 MR. BROOKS: Anymore you want to hear on
7 this topic? No, okay. Go ahead.

8 MR. PIERDINOCK: I bring this up because
9 the State of Massachusetts, the DMS, they have
10 many, many dockside interview locations and commit
11 a lot of money from the state recreational permits
12 that go to have the people at the dock. But from
13 state to state, is that the -- I know it's not the
14 same so do you get masked DMS data when they do a
15 dockside interview or are you just doing specific
16 for the Pelagics from their interviews?

17 And it seems like there's a disconnect
18 there that they're getting whatever that
19 individual landed at the dockside so you're
20 missing a data set that they've being provided
21 whether it was bluefin or yellowfin or bigeye or
22 so on. If you're never getting it, then it seems

1 like an easy fix to do that. Get it from
2 Massachusetts or other states that provide that.
3 I think Louisiana is another example that has a
4 great program.

5 MR. HUTT: Yeah, in the case of
6 Louisiana, that's the only data program we have
7 now. As far as the like the LPS estimates go,
8 they just use the data that's collected by the
9 Quantech interviewers. Even through they do get
10 some, you know, HMS in the APAIS surveys that
11 Massachusetts does, we still get far more samples
12 in our design. And currently right now, mixing in
13 the MRIP ones would just complicate the statistics
14 and wouldn't really improve the estimates.

15 It's funny. I mean, that's something
16 with like probability statistical sampling. You
17 can't just grab extra data, throw it in there and
18 expect that it's just going to fix things, you
19 know, improve things if it's coming out of a
20 separate design and all. Because there's
21 different ways you got to figure out, okay how do
22 we weight that and all so it's tricky.

1 But right now, we still get, even if you
2 compare the MRIP estimates that are generated for
3 different tuna species in the Northeast to our
4 estimates, the PSEs, you know, those measures of
5 the variability are far tighter for our estimates
6 than what MRIP is getting in that region. I mean,
7 by several factors of magnitude. So, there's a
8 reason we're doing the LPS and spending all the
9 money to do a separate survey.

10 MR. BROOKS: All right, I'm going to
11 push us on because I know there's a bunch of
12 topics we want to get through. The next one is
13 the for-hire electronic reporting and you've sort
14 of stepped out where HMS is thinking about going
15 with this. I want to open this one up for
16 conversation as well, feedback, thoughts, other
17 approaches or yeah, looks good, stay the course.
18 Mike.

19 MR. PIERDINOCK: Yeah, Rick Bellavance
20 already mentioned some of this. I mean, we need
21 to eliminate the redundancy and push the button
22 and all get notified. I have a Northeast federal

1 ground fish permit and I've had it for years. I
2 have to report everything that I catch. And then
3 I have to report to HMS, then I have to report
4 Southeast if I get a Mahi or so on. There's all
5 these different, you know, phone calls I have to
6 make and reports that I have to make. So, if we
7 could eliminate that redundancy, that would be
8 great.

9 One thing that I've been saying for a
10 number of years because I used to fill out paper
11 of VTR's Vessel Trip Reports. Now we have
12 electronic Vessel Trip Reports that I'm required
13 to do and I do it. But they're only used to
14 assess effort. You're not going to get buy-in
15 from the Charter Head boat community and those
16 that are constantly reporting unless you use it
17 more than just effort.

18 And that is a continued level of
19 frustration by many. We filled out paper ones, it
20 went on a shelf, nothing was ever done with hit.
21 Now we're filling out electronic ones and we're
22 being told the same other than it's providing

1 effort details. You need to take it to that next
2 step so you can take that data and use it so we
3 can then manage the fishery and keep us fishing
4 and keep us on the water to have access.

5 So, anyway that could be expedited. I
6 hope I'm not 5, 10 years from now and we're in the
7 same situation. You're just looking at effort,
8 not everything else that that data provides.
9 Because I think you're going to have issues with
10 participation and cooperation to fill them out if
11 it doesn't get put to good use.

12 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Anyone else want
13 to weigh in on this one? Rick.

14 MR. BELLAVANCE: Thank you. Curious if
15 there is a timeline for when the HMS reporting
16 might be incorporated into the eVTR world. Any
17 updates on that.

18 MR. HUTT: Okay, so on the idea of us
19 requiring for-hire logbook for HMS there isn't a
20 specific timeline on that. For the reducing the
21 reporting and redundancy which is, I think, is
22 what you're really asking about. That hopefully

1 the way it looks right now by next year if you're
2 reporting via eVTR or eTRIPS, you shouldn't need
3 to report separately through our system. If
4 everything, you know, what ACCSP has been telling
5 us about their timeline because they're kind of
6 who's kind of controlling that right now, that
7 should be in effect by then.

8 Right now, we've identified all the
9 additional HMS data elements that we need
10 collected. They've already kind of incorporated
11 that and eVTR at GARFO, although they haven't
12 flipped the switch, rolled it out yet, they're
13 waiting for ACCSP to catch up. ACCSP has been
14 working on that. They're building it into the
15 next version of eTRIPS mobile which we're told
16 should start testing this month.

17 And hopefully should roll out later this
18 year basically in time for next year. And we've
19 already kind of worked out an initial data sharing
20 protocol that will get us data downloaded for HMS
21 reports every 24 hours. So, hopefully by, you
22 know, next fishing season, if you're reporting an

1 eVTR or eTRIPS, you won't have to report your
2 bluefin tuna, billfish, swordfish separately
3 through our system.

4 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Thank you. I was
5 curious, and I thought I new this answer but I
6 didn't. Do you currently have to report catch and
7 release of marlins in any way besides like at a
8 tournament where the tournament has restoration
9 just by, you know. I happened to be reading the
10 White Marlin paper from ICCAT and I was just
11 reading over that. And I was just curious that if
12 do we report any catch and release of White Marlin
13 non-tournament?

14 MS. CUDNEY: We do not require the
15 reporting of fish that are caught and released
16 through our billfish reporting line or through the
17 online app. It is something that we do collect
18 data on. So, if somebody has a fish of legal
19 size, they have to go in and report it, there's a
20 spot where they can report the number of say, Blue
21 Marlin that they have caught and released alive or
22 dead. But at this point, that requirement is not

1 in place.

2 MR. BLANKINSHIP: And I'll add to that,
3 that what Jen's talking about there is the
4 non-tournament situation. In tournaments, all
5 tournaments are required to report their activity.
6 They're in the data form. There are not only data
7 fields for landed fish but also for release fish
8 and the disposition of that release fish. And so,
9 in the tournament setting, that information is
10 collected.

11 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Well, I was just
12 curious, you know, would it help if the U.S.
13 Recorded its catch and release non- tournament?
14 You know, there's probably three or four thousand
15 White Marlin a year. Would that help in like the
16 stock assessment at ICCAT?

17 MR. BROWN: Well, yes. It could
18 potentially could be helpful in that ideally for a
19 stock assessment, you want to account for total
20 removals. And we've -- so the best way to do that
21 if we have the data to do it is to not only
22 account for the kept fish but also the fish that

1 are discarded dead. And ideally to include some
2 rate of mortality for the fish that are released
3 alive. And so, we've been identifying that as
4 important.

5 And so, if we want to be able to apply
6 that to, for example, commercially, caught fish
7 that are released alive and account for the total
8 mortalities, then we should be doing that for
9 recreational as well. Now generally, those post-
10 release mortalities for recreation caught fish are
11 relatively low and we do have some data on what
12 those might be.

13 So, in an ideal world, we would be able
14 to report the total catch including kept, released
15 dead and released alive. And that would give us
16 the best data for accounting for total removals
17 and assessment. And if we want to, and if we
18 think there are fisheries where that's happening a
19 lot and there's low survival, if we're going to
20 press for getting a better accounting from those
21 fleets, we need to be able to say we're doing that
22 for ours. So, you know, just for future

1 consideration it could be useful.

2 MR. BROOKS: Thanks.

3 MR. HUTT: And I would add, you know, if
4 we go to mandatory log book reporting for HMS, it
5 would include releases. In the meantime, at least
6 in the Mid-Atlantic region, we have fairly robust
7 precise estimates of releases for White Marlin in
8 that region because they do get them reported
9 fairly frequently in the LPIS. So, we have fairly
10 good LPS estimates for those in that region.
11 Obviously, because we only have a 250 total limit
12 for harvests their actual harvests are actually a
13 very rare event in the LPIS. So, that's why we
14 really need the extra mandatory reporting to get a
15 good handle on how many of those are being brought
16 in.

17 MR. BROOKS: Good. If you could make it
18 quick.

19 MR. HEMILRIGHT: I will. So, we do in
20 the surveys your LPS or LPIS, you do have numbers
21 of White Marlin releases for the U.S. right now,
22 non-tournament.

1 MR. HUTT: Yeah, for the LPS region, you
2 know, from Maine to Virginia, we've got White
3 Marlin estimates of releases. We have Blue Marlin
4 estimates of releases but you see them maybe a bit
5 more in the South Atlantic than the mid- Atlantic.
6 And, you know, from year to year if they're
7 intercepted or if trips that reporting releases of
8 those are intercepted at MRIP, we've got, you
9 know, those estimates as well. But they're not
10 going to be as precise as the LPS estimates.

11 MR. HEMIRIGHT: Yeah, we can't go by
12 using MRIPS. I mean, it's got its problems all up
13 and down the coast. And like Rick said, you know,
14 nobody believes and so we can't use that. But
15 I'll follow up with you because I'd just like to
16 see what the numbers are. Thank you.

17 MR. BROOKS: Okay, thanks Dewey. Okay,
18 Kirby is your card still up there or is it left
19 over? Okay, next topic, HMS tournament issues.
20 What, in particular, would be helpful for you all
21 to hear on this one?

22 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Well, I think that

1 we've been in one year now or not a full year of
2 selecting all HMS tournaments for reporting.
3 Previously, it was all billfish and swordfish
4 tournaments that were selected for reporting. So,
5 to the extent that there would be any input on
6 experiences with that, we'd love to hear that and
7 anything else, I think, related to tournament
8 settings.

9 MR. BROOKS: Okay any feedback on this
10 question? I've got, we'll go to David and then up
11 to Rick.

12 MR. SCHALIT: Just in general, we see
13 that tournaments are, because they're a locust for
14 fisherman, obviously is that a singular
15 opportunity to do outreach functions. You know,
16 to go through the regulations, to educate on some
17 level. And that is perhaps the easiest point of
18 contact with recreational sector.

19 So, it seems to me that if we could take
20 the view perhaps that if we would exploit this
21 further in the coming years, I think it would
22 definitely pay off. I would, you know, be very

1 supportive of that, thanks.

2 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Thanks, that's a very
3 good suggestion. It's one that we would love to
4 capitalize on more and we already strive to
5 capitalize on to the extent that we can, given our
6 resources and manpower and all of that. So, one
7 thing that we do is we have a requirement that all
8 HMS tournaments register with the Agency. And
9 when they do, then we ask them the question if
10 they would like to have outreach material and how
11 many participants do they have in their
12 tournaments so we'll know how much of the material
13 to send. And we get a lot of feedback on that.

14 And then we have a system internally
15 where we produce, you know, the print material,
16 regulation booklets, a lot of the shark ID guides.
17 A lot of that material is then packaged up,
18 shipped to the tournament operator and then they
19 most of the time put those in the captain's
20 packets for distribution at captains' meetings and
21 oftentimes put them out for other use. Yeah, so
22 that has been a very good program for us.

1 In addition to, like we just were
2 talking about, that Brad was mentioning, had an
3 opportunity this year where we did get some folks
4 out to some tournaments. We did a similar thing a
5 couple of years ago where we really did a kind of
6 a push to get some people out to some tournaments
7 around the area. And those are great too, we
8 really appreciate the opportunities that those
9 tournaments afford us to be able to talk to them
10 at the captain's meetings and would love to be
11 able to do more of that.

12 Unfortunately, there's only so many of
13 us and we're also doing other things and so that
14 gets to be a challenge too. But yeah, getting the
15 materials out there to them has been a real
16 success.

17 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Randy. And by the
18 way, operator, if you would just take the folks
19 off mute. Thanks.

20 MR. MCHALE: So, also just to follow up
21 on what Randy had mentioned. We do a lot of
22 collaboration with other partners with inside the

1 Agency. For instance, the APEX Pirate Program is
2 attending a lot of the shark tournaments and
3 biologically sampling a lot of those fish that are
4 coming to the scales and has been for quite some
5 time.

6 We also then collaborate with the Port
7 Agent Group, say out of the Northeast where we
8 have a lot of port agents up and down the coast
9 that are really kind of liaisons between the
10 Agency and the industry that may attend these
11 meetings. Again, in an outreach effort sharing
12 their, you know, expertise on the rules and
13 regulations. They may even transcend just the HMS
14 fisheries because they tend to be Jack's or Jill's
15 of all trades.

16 And then lastly, sometimes we'll
17 collaborate with the office of law enforcement
18 where they may send down, say a uniformed officer,
19 again, in that outreach effort for all the reasons
20 you mentioned there David. It is a time and place
21 where you have a captive audience, especially
22 where a lot of these tournaments require the

1 vessel captains and crews to attend the captains'
2 meetings. So, it does provide an opportunity to
3 get word out and make ourselves whether it's HMS,
4 OLE, science center folks or port agents to
5 communicate, you know, what the Agency has to
6 share.

7 MR. WEBER: What they said. That really
8 was where I was going to start was because you
9 guys are very responsive with the materials and
10 all of those things. Two technical pieces. You
11 don't always ask when those materials should
12 arrive and sometimes my packets are made prior to.

13 And in the future, if we could ask when
14 those materials should arrive, that would be
15 helpful because we actually went and printed our
16 own compliance guides this year the day before
17 your box arrived. And then found out that they
18 were the March version instead of the April
19 version so we threw away everything that we had
20 printed and went with yours. So, I was happy to
21 have yours but it would have been better if we had
22 talked about that in advance.

1 On a technical piece with the website,
2 there needs to be either an upload option or an
3 import option because typing all of the weights
4 and lengths into your screen when we already have
5 them in Excel is maddening, for a good tournament.
6 For a bad tournament, it's relatively easy. But
7 for somebody that's got 150 boat tournament, it
8 would be far better if.

9 Now, is Marty here, I want to see Marty
10 hang onto his seat because I'm going to agree
11 strongly with Marty. It is time as a professional
12 tournament operator for you to tighten up on those
13 people that are not complying. You wouldn't let
14 me get away with it. You should not let these
15 other people get away with it. If they want in my
16 game, they need to do what I'm doing and there
17 needs to be some measure of responsibility there.

18 I say that very differently so we're
19 clear. You know, I'm still in a rec seat. I
20 don't expect the recreational fisherman to be able
21 to follow everything. I appreciate when you offer
22 some leniency to an everyday recreational

1 fisherman because they are not in it
2 professionally. But most of these tournaments
3 have crossed the line to being a business and need
4 to be held to the standard that's been
5 established.

6 Along those lines, maybe a scientific
7 observer program needs to be developed for every
8 tournament. Observe us, bring it on. Put it
9 underneath Craig. You know, now if you have a
10 scientist who is already coming, and you're having
11 sampling done, it may not need to be NMFS staff.
12 Because I've had three of the scientists around
13 this room sample at my events.

14 This year I had a Rutgers medicine
15 scientist who is studying eye lense tissue never
16 gets cancer, came and showed up and he was taking
17 lenses. There are things but if we wanted some
18 consistent piece from every tournament landed
19 fish, it's available, you know. As I say, I
20 already have scientists on sight. Scientific
21 observing is slightly different than OLE observing
22 but it still means that NMFS is on site in some

1 format. And I think maybe that should be explored
2 because it's a really good opportunity and it's
3 going to become relevant here in a couple of
4 slides when we're talking about Marlin caps and
5 those type things.

6 MR. BLAKINSHIP: I'll just point out
7 real quickly that we do have an ICCAT requirement
8 for observer coverage that we do abide by. And
9 actually, Craig shot those, execute that and
10 coordinate it.

11 MR. BROOKS: Is there anyone on the
12 webinar that would like to weigh in on this, or
13 for that matter, any of the other issues that came
14 up so far? Okay. Let's move to the next topic
15 which is improving communication of recreational
16 regulations, and I'd like to fold into their, I
17 think maybe it was David you put into the table
18 sort of the whole regulatory outreach and getting
19 that improved. I think that fits in there. So,
20 comments, you can start that off if you want,
21 David.

22 MR. SCHALIT: Okay, from a commercial

1 fishing perspective, and specifically a connection
2 with bluefin but also the tropical tunas. Bluefin
3 receives its very own -- each individual bluefin
4 receives its very own Social Security number.
5 That's how tightly we are controlled. There's no
6 other country in the world that can claim this,
7 okay.

8 And it not only receives a Social
9 Security number but it also receives a passport
10 number in case it needs to go somewhere, you know,
11 the ABCD, right, okay. And we are reporting as
12 individuals, we're reporting to the Agency. And
13 our fish dealer, our federally licensed fish
14 dealer is also reporting to the Agency. And then
15 we are also reporting this landing, this one fish
16 that we landed, in the multi-species log book,
17 right?

18 So, and I don't even want to get into
19 what happens if accidentally catch a dolphin fish.
20 But what I'm saying is that it would be foolish
21 for us to measure the effort that we are involved
22 in in terms of our reporting with what's going in

1 the recreational sector, okay. Because as was
2 pointed out, these guys are not doing this for a
3 living.

4 But there is a tremendous emphasis at
5 the ICCAT level for accurate reporting that we're
6 not necessarily -- our guys are not necessarily
7 all that cognizant of. And I think this is very
8 worrisome for me. It actually goes back to about
9 8 years ago at one of these meetings, I think it
10 was 8 years ago. In which Margo said at the very
11 beginning of the meeting, I've got an ugly
12 surprise for you people. And then she ultimately
13 revealed that in that given season, in that given
14 year, the recreational sector had exceeded its
15 bluefin quota.

16 So, what it means is that we are
17 fearful. As commercial fisherman, we are fearful
18 that we could wake up one day and look at some
19 numbers that will negatively affect us, you know,
20 affect our catch. And what we're always trying to
21 do is to influence some change that may take place
22 on a regulatory level that would lessen the

1 probability of that happening, okay.

2 I mean, I can reference you right now
3 this issue of bigeye tuna, okay. Bigeye tuna has
4 been -- the standing committee has recommended to
5 the Commission, ICCAT, that we reduce the TAC on
6 bigeye Atlantic wide by 40 percent, 40 percent.
7 Okay so we are now grappling with what it is that
8 we're going to wind up with in terms of quota
9 because it's inevitable that we will go from an
10 Atlantic wide TAC which is what we have now with
11 certain exceptions, certain countries have a
12 quota, other countries don't right.

13 It's not a hard quota system, to a
14 system in which every single individual CPC, you
15 know, contract party will have its specific quota
16 just as we had with bluefin tuna. And then what
17 will be the endgame in that scenario when we look
18 at what our landings are here in the U.S. And
19 when we take account of the recreational component
20 in those landings, this is extremely worrisome to
21 me.

22 MR. BROOKS: Okay, I want to jump in and

1 push you a little bit. So, what do you want these
2 guys to hear or be thinking about going forward?

3 MR. SCHALIT: This dialogue is more of
4 the same. It's actually leading along the same
5 lines that we've been speaking all the while.
6 There seems to be an urgent need to come up with a
7 new mousetrap or a new way to quantify the
8 recreational landings. Okay, this is where I'm
9 headed.

10 It's you know, when it comes to bluefin
11 tuna, we're bullet proof in the commercial sector.
12 When it comes to tropicals, bigeye and yellow fin
13 in the commercial sector, any fish that's turned
14 over to a federally licensed dealer is then
15 reported to NOAA. So, NOAA should have accurate
16 numbers on those landings.

17 But I know for a fact, I mean, I'm
18 sitting in Shinnecock Bay and I can see what's
19 going on and it's so obvious to me that there's a
20 whole lot of data that just falls between the
21 cracks. We never even know about these fish being
22 landed. And so, I have a sense of urgency about

1 this and I think my main thrust here is to convey
2 that urgency to you guys. Thanks.

3 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, David. Mike and
4 then back to Rick.

5 MR. PIERDINOCK: You know, from an ICCAT
6 standpoint, just so everyone around the table
7 knows, the rest of the world does not report
8 recreational landings, only here in the United
9 States. So, you know, I have my same concerns but
10 they're not even recognized in what's landed
11 recreationally whether it's bluefin, bigeye or any
12 other species.

13 We record it, we manage it, we do the
14 best we can with it. I think that what needs to
15 be recognized here is that people like me and
16 others around this table, we're emphatic about
17 fishing, we love to fish. We're reporting, we
18 catch, we go, we report. That's probably only
19 about 10 percent of the fisherman who are catching
20 90 percent of the fish. It's no different when
21 you are deer hunting if you look at the same
22 statistics.

1 So, those other 90 percent, they're not
2 interested in filling out reports and doing those
3 things. They're maybe going out one, two, three,
4 four times a year. So, that's going to be a
5 difficulty to get them to do it and whether they
6 catch anything or not but it's a difficult thing
7 to do.

8 And how we make that leap because we've
9 been discussing this same thing for many, many
10 years, I don't know how you do that. Where your
11 typical, you know, other 90 percent that's just
12 going out a few times a year and they don't want
13 to report. They just want to go out and fish and
14 have fun. Why should I do this? So, that's
15 something that has to be considered.

16 I got FishRule, I got fish apps, I'm
17 putting it all out there. But is that going to be
18 the same was as our eVTR's and nothing is done
19 with it, just providing effort. And I know that
20 nothing can be done with fish apps because it has
21 to go through a whole process of scientifically
22 how that can be valid and I have concerns about

1 that. About how these apps for the recreational
2 anglers are scientifically valid information and
3 truly representative of what's out there.

4 So, this is going to take some time. I
5 wish I could snap my fingers and you could to to
6 fix it. But the rest of the world, there's no
7 recreational landings, nothing. They don't
8 recognize it, only here in the United States.

9 MR. BROOKS: Thanks Mike. Rick.

10 MR. WEBER: Starting with --

11 MR. BROOKS: Hang on one second.

12 MR. WEBER: Starting with the website
13 because it's there and I know you're aware of
14 this, Brad, but I will strongly reinforce. The
15 website's awful, God awful. As somebody who is
16 here when I get asked a question and I need an
17 authoritative answer because I'm viewed as an
18 expert, I don't know where to turn. I go, I
19 search, oh no that's 2017. I search again, okay
20 now this is 2019 but this is January. As I say, I
21 know you know and I know that there is a project
22 in place to fix it but tomorrow would be fine.

1 It's bad and you know it.

2 Now, going back to the other questions.
3 Because Dave brought it up, I have no choice but
4 to at least repeat. Mike, we have the best
5 recreational reporting system in the world. It is
6 deeply flawed and it is the best in the world.
7 Should we improve it, yes, but we could just
8 switch to the ICCAT standard which is nothing.

9 As far as other reporting, I'm going to
10 call out Angel here and perhaps Randy. Because
11 when you're asking, Mike, how do you do this, both
12 Maryland and North Carolina. Now, Maryland has an
13 advantage that they have 10 miles of coastline.
14 They have a ton of boats but they have 10 miles of
15 coastline.

16 But as somebody who runs a tournament in
17 Maryland, they are all well-trained. You know,
18 they show up, they've got their paperwork out,
19 they're greeted by DNR. There's an exchange,
20 there's a tag, it works spectacularly. I believe
21 Randy is on the line and Randy has a ton of
22 coastline and I don't know what that system is

1 like.

2 But at least for Marlin and those type
3 things, I'm continuing to think we need to look at
4 some type of tag program. But we've all gone back
5 on this before. I don't just want to issue the
6 250 tags. There needs to be a way that you
7 distribute a bunch of tags and only activate them
8 before the fish leaves the boat or something.

9 And as probably the only state not
10 represented here, I nominate New Jersey for being
11 one of your two. You always nominate the person
12 that's not in the room, right? So, maybe New
13 Jersey will send a rep.

14 MR. BROOKS: Lisa.

15 MS. NATANSON: Hi, Lisa Natanson, APEX
16 Predators. I just wanted to mention when you're
17 talking about kind of in a way back to the
18 tournaments and the captive audience of the
19 meetings, we also have a captive audience with our
20 tagging program. And as someone who mans the
21 hotline, both the website hotline and the phone
22 hotline, I talk to recreational and commercial but

1 mostly recreational fisherman every day and
2 clarify the rules and regulations.

3 When we sign up any tagger, we inundate
4 them with all the same information from the
5 packets. We also bring those to the tournaments
6 so they end up with a lot of information and a
7 resource to come to if they have questions later.
8 I've been on the phone today answering
9 recreational fisherman all day. So, we have a
10 very close relationship with the recreational
11 sector and can also be a help to this kind of a
12 project.

13 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Lisa. I want to
14 see if Angel or Randy want to weigh in at all on
15 what Randy just said.

16 MS. WILLEY: I'm being put on the spot.
17 We've been running the Catch program I think since
18 1999 and it does work really well in Maryland. We
19 have pretty good compliance. That was the whole
20 reason it was started was to improve compliance in
21 Maryland. So, but again like Rick already pointed
22 out, we have a very small coastline so to expand

1 that out you would need to talk to somebody like
2 Randy that has a lot more ports.

3 MR. BROOKS: Randy. Operator, are folks
4 off mute?

5 MR. COOPER: He no longer shows on the
6 webinar.

7 MR. BROOKS: Okay, we think he's not on
8 anymore.

9 MR. BLANKINSHIP: And in his defense,
10 the hurricane is getting closer that direction.
11 He might be paying attention to other things.

12 MR. McHale: You know, so we hear you
13 loud and clear. For those say P members that
14 maybe a little longer in the tooth than others,
15 you may recall that the HMS management division
16 did an extensive dive into looking at a whole
17 variety of different recreational kind of tagging
18 programs. Whether it was deer tags, turkey tags,
19 gator tags, I mean, the list goes on and on.

20 The year escapes me but we also ran a
21 pilot program in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
22 where we distributed tags and tried to get at when

1 you have a very different coastline and the number
2 of access points, say from Maryland and even
3 different from North Carolina. How do you then do
4 that verification program? How do you manage just
5 the tags so you know which ones are actually used,
6 which ones are lost in the shuffle, which ones are
7 you getting back?

8 And there was some promise there. You
9 know, again, I got a little rust build up from
10 that but I think ultimately funding probably was a
11 big driver how we didn't necessarily pursue it.
12 But there has been some exploration of those sort
13 of programs. But it's not lost in us that this
14 whole debate of census versus survey methodologies
15 and the accuracy and, you know, what's the better
16 number to represent our recreational fisheries.
17 As well as the importance those resources are to
18 our recreational community. How do you then
19 ascertain that information and quantify it?

20 MR. BROOKS: All right, I want to move
21 us shortly to the next topic but I've got four
22 people who want to hop in. So, let's go to Steve

1 then Dewey then Kirby then Anna.

2 MR. IWICKI: Yeah, real quick. I mean,
3 this may overlap with your FishRules but that app
4 is becoming very popular in the rec community for
5 really two reasons. One, it's a relatively up to
6 date in book for the changing in shore species,
7 fluke, seabass and all that, and two it's got
8 pictures of just about every species. Problem is
9 it doesn't list every species. If you look at
10 different states like New Jersey doesn't have tile
11 fish listed there. Or, you know, there's not
12 species that are not regulated at the state level
13 but will be different between New Jersey, Delaware
14 and Maryland just because of the accuracy of their
15 information.

16 But I'll tell you, that app is becoming
17 popular because it's an online rule book and an
18 online identification guide. So, if you keep
19 working with them, I think you're going in the
20 right direction.

21 MR. ROOTES-MURDY: Yeah, thanks. So,
22 obviously on the state side at the Commission, we

1 try to wherever we can, outline what the state
2 regulations are on our website. And given that
3 the Commission's plan is complimentary to NOAA's
4 HMS plan for all these species, there generally is
5 pretty good overlap.

6 But I think what I would encourage is as
7 you guys are looking to update your website, you
8 know, just keep the Commission in mind. In trying
9 to make sure we have linkages on making sure our
10 websites are directing each other or people to
11 each other when needed.

12 MS. BECKWITH: Yeah, so I sent Randy a
13 text message shaming him but he hasn't answered
14 so. The Catch Card program in North Carolina has
15 worked relatively well but I would venture to say
16 that it isn't something that we could scale up
17 very easily because of enforcement on some of the
18 other issues. That's been our experience. It's
19 worked really well on pockets of North Carolina on
20 the Outer Banks for various reasons.

21 And then, in terms of your idea for
22 tags, I can tell you that the South Atlantic

1 Council has beaten the tag idea to death. And we
2 found a lot of problems with it scaling up for
3 reasons that any species that are under Magnuson
4 Stevens, we can't really issue more tags than the
5 ACL. So, the idea of issuing tags out and then
6 activating them before the fish sort of leaves the
7 boat was not viable, National Marine Fisheries
8 told us. So, we have sort of thought through some
9 of those and have found it to be a relatively
10 non-starter for large.

11 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Anna. Dewey you
12 remembered?

13 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes. I happened to
14 watch one of the unload tournaments in Ocean City
15 and it was pretty impressive how the weigh-in of
16 the -- getting the measurements of the fish, the
17 fish are tagged. I mean, you get a lot of
18 information there. And definitely, you know, the
19 tournaments are probably one of the best ways to
20 reach out to get the compliance assistance or
21 stuff like that and get the information out there.

22 You know, I guess until it gets bad

1 enough with MRIP or these other methodologies,
2 it's going to continue on. But it just seems
3 like, you know, the day of technology and I don't
4 know why I wasn't a big fan of it, you know,
5 texting and all that other stuff the crowd does
6 nowadays. But that phone, there ain't many folks
7 that's running outboard or better boat, they got
8 that phone. And nine times out of ten they're
9 coming up channel on the phone texting or
10 something like that.

11 So, the key to all this stuff is going
12 to be somehow through phone apps. Suppose you get
13 50 percent compliance. No, I'll take that back,
14 30 percent compliance the first year. Then you
15 get 50 percent. You know, it's almost like the
16 general category fisherman reporting their catch.
17 I mean, we're in three years now, there ain't but
18 so many and we might be at 55 percent or something
19 for the major part of the harvest. But it hasn't
20 got bad enough to fix it.

21 We see it, you know, I know at the
22 council level, we've had to do even though blue

1 line tile fish is considered a rare event species,
2 we had to do some DELPHI analysis to come up with
3 these numbers where a captain looked that way, a
4 captain looked that way and they seen boats and
5 then they come up with the numbers. And we still
6 three years later of an amendment still can't do
7 because we don't have reporting and nobody
8 believes MRIP, it's always zeros.

9 The same in the South Atlantic. They've
10 sent letters, the South Atlantic states sent
11 letters to NMFS, I believe, about how some of the
12 wildness of the Intercept surveys and the MRIP in
13 general and hopefully we'll hear back from that.
14 But, I mean, you know, HMS is -- I wonder when
15 this is actually going to take place, you know.
16 It will probably be another five years from now
17 before something happens like that. But it hasn't
18 got bad enough because when it gets bad enough,
19 then it will get fixed.

20 And, you know, there's somebody out
21 there that's got the technology and Mike's point
22 about the recreational crowd don't want to report,

1 that's tough. They want to go fishing, you got to
2 report, plain and simple.

3 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Dewey. Let' go to
4 the next slide on Atlantic tunas.

5 MR. MCHALE: How about items here that
6 we haven't given air time too already.

7 MR. BROOKS: Let's go over to Alan.

8 MR. WEISS: Thank you. My attention was
9 drawn to the last line on this slide and I have no
10 idea who came up with this idea. But it's not --
11 I'll try to put this diplomatically, it's not a
12 very good idea. We know that the adverse
13 condition of the bigeye stock in the Atlantic is
14 entirely driven by the catch of juvenile fish in
15 the Eastern Atlantic and the purse seine and bait
16 boat fisheries there.

17 There is no reason to even be thinking
18 about retention limits on bigeye tuna for the
19 United States recreational fishery. First of all,
20 before ICCAT requires anything like that and
21 second of all, if you band all retention of bigeye
22 tuna in the U.S. recreational fishery you would

1 not be able to detect any benefit from that in the
2 fishing mortality rate for the stock. So, it
3 boggles my mind to even ask the question, should
4 we consider this.

5 MR. BROOKS: Thanks Alan. Let's go to
6 Rick then Anna then David then back Rick. Rick
7 Bellavance.

8 MR. BELLAVANCE: Thank you. Just a
9 couple of comments on the bluefin tuna bullets.
10 The trophy bluefin for the angling sector, I think
11 that would benefit from a slight increase. We've
12 talked a little bit about the purse sein fisher
13 closing down and maybe there's an opportunity
14 there to shift some fish into that sector.
15 There's a pretty good economic benefit there.
16 People spend a lot of money going fishing and
17 don't catch much. So, that's probably a good
18 place to put some of those fish, in my opinion.

19 Post-release mortality after fishing has
20 closed, I think that's also something that's an
21 important issue in the Northeast. We're catching
22 these big fish on spinner rods and they're all

1 proud that they let them go but they're probably
2 mud darts. So, I think that should be looked into
3 a little bit more and maybe there's an opportunity
4 there to educate the public.

5 Right now, we're looking at stripped
6 bass cuts and percent of the mortality if the
7 striped bass fishery is due to recreational
8 release of fish. So, we play with our fish a lot
9 but we kill them doing it. So, we might want to
10 think about maybe raising awareness on catch and
11 release is not all it's made up to be.

12 And then the last bullet with the
13 Charter/Headboat commercial sale of fish. The for
14 hire sector is the primary way that the non-boat
15 owning public access the resources, and in
16 particular, HMS because they're far off shore. If
17 you don't have a boat, you're probably not going
18 to get them. So, I think it's important to
19 preserve that fishery and their business is out
20 there to make a living and a key to a successful
21 business is diversity.

22 Our fleet is getting older. There's not

1 a lot of incentive for new kids to get into our
2 fishery. So, we're kind of pigeon holing them
3 into specific fisheries I don't think is good
4 business model. Anything that we can do to expand
5 opportunity to earn an income will preserve that
6 fleet a little bit longer and give the non-boat
7 owning public more access or at least continued
8 access to the resource as it is now. So, I would
9 suggest any opportunity to make a dollar in the
10 for-hire fleet is something we should preserve.

11 MS. BECKWITH: Yeah, I mean, I guess in
12 my viewpoint I feel like we've dealt with the
13 Charter/Headboat commercial sale with the recent
14 discussion on Coast Guard and requiring the permit
15 for sale and making sure that those guys had all
16 the appropriate commercial gear and safety gear on
17 board. So, to me it's no longer an issue and, I
18 think, the guys have responded to that well and
19 are abiding by it.

20 In terms of the second bullet point, the
21 post- release mortality, I mean, I agree that some
22 of the catch and releases is not great but it

1 would be difficult to reinforce a restriction.
2 So, certainly discouraging or educating would be
3 an appropriate way forward but restrictions would
4 be almost impossible to enforce.

5 MR. BROOKS: David.

6 MR. SCHALIT: Has the Agency ever
7 considered using the same protocol for catch and
8 release of tuna's as they do with the Pelagic
9 Longline Fishery and turtles? In other words,
10 each captain is required to take a class in which
11 he learns how to safely release those turtles.
12 Maybe that's something worth looking at.

13 Because, you know, I think that there's
14 a general lack of knowledge of the biological
15 events that take place around catching bluefin or
16 bigeye or yellowfin for that matter. I know that
17 the Agency has a card on this, okay. There's a
18 document that they have which basically gives very
19 sort of rudimentary information that's essential
20 but not detailed, nowhere near detailed enough. I
21 think a video, like a YouTube video would be even
22 more effective to show what we're talking about.

1 We see every single day, fish being
2 tortured out there and, you know, extremely long
3 fight times. It's impossible. I can't see how
4 it's possible that these fish, even if they, when
5 they arrive to the boat should still be wiggling
6 in the water and be released will actually survive
7 some predation. We're talking about wasting a
8 highly valuable resource. So, my take on this one
9 is that we need to find a better way to educate
10 those people who are doing catch and release and
11 require them to learn how that's done. Just as we
12 do with the longline captains. Okay, that's one
13 point.

14 Then regarding bigeye retention limits,
15 I'll just make a simple statement on that.
16 There's absolutely no reason on earth that anyone
17 could invent in this room why we shouldn't have
18 bigeye retention limits. There's no reason. It
19 has less to do with the sustainability or a
20 rebuilding the stock or whatever or more to do
21 with accountability, okay. When you see the
22 wholesale slaughter of bigeye that I have seen in

1 the Canyons region where vessels are coming back
2 with 20, 30, 40 bigeye and these are huge fish
3 with a tremendous amount of meat on them. You
4 know that it's absolutely a foregone conclusion
5 that those fish are not going into somebody's
6 freezer, they're being sold. So, when I say
7 accountability, I'm talking about illegal sales of
8 bigeye. Okay, bigeye happens to be --

9 MR. BROOKS: David, I need you to wind
10 it up if you could.

11 MR. SCHALIT: Sorry?

12 MR. BROOKS: If you could just wind up
13 because I need to get other people.

14 MR. SCHALIT: I am winding it up.
15 Bigeye is the most valuable -- it is more valuable
16 than bluefin tuna by the pound. All right, thank
17 you.

18 MR. BROOKS: Thank you. Randy, you
19 wanted to jump in?

20 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Yeah just a little
21 bit. Because you were touching on the idea of
22 requiring a class for safe handling and release

1 for sea turtles for recreational fisherman. I
2 just wanted to just mention that the Agency does
3 have some work that they're doing to collect some
4 information about sea turtle interactions around
5 fishing piers and where those types of
6 interactions are kind of concentrated some times.
7 And some of this is trying to get more information
8 about the frequency of that occurrence and then
9 what could be done that would be effective. And
10 so, it's looking at those instances where there
11 might be a higher likelihood of the interaction in
12 trying to address that in PEERS is what has come
13 up.

14 And then the other thing I'll mention
15 because it's related to post-release mortality
16 reduction is to remind folks that we do have some
17 things that we've put in place and that's
18 particularly related to improving post-release
19 mortality of billfishes. And that's the circle
20 hook requirement in billfish tournaments which has
21 been in place for some time and I just wanted to
22 remind folks of that.

1 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. So, I want to get
2 in Rick Weber then over to Steve and then back
3 over to Mike.

4 MR. WEBER: I will never not be in favor
5 of education. So, if we want to talk about catch
6 and release mortality, education is good. Beyond
7 that, all gear types, all nations at the same time
8 for reporting. When we're ready to talk about all
9 gear types catch and release and all nations are
10 prepared to bring it to the table, that is when
11 the U.S. Should bring it forward.

12 It's once again and Dave, you shock me
13 with your comments only because we preach don't
14 get ahead of ICCAT. Never get ahead of ICCAT
15 because you never get it back, never. There is
16 no, oh, we did this so now you can do it too. We
17 preach never get ahead of ICCAT to this group
18 because we watch what goes on and you go but we do
19 that and they go that's nice, now do more.

20 So, you kind of blow my mind suggesting
21 we do anything ahead of ICCAT. Because I'm
22 strongly opposed to it just because we'll never

1 get credit for it. It might be a great idea.
2 Let's see if we can sell it to the rest of the
3 world and join in but other than that, follow
4 ICCAT's lead man, you know. Did I have anything
5 else on this point?

6 However, I did have another note which
7 was you do need to be thinking internally about
8 what you're going to do with bigeye if we come
9 back. Do you need to be implementing if not, no,
10 but I think there's a strong possibility it's
11 there. Do I think it's a good conversation for
12 you guys between now and November so that the
13 Agency is prepared for whatever comes forward when
14 somebody says, we'll give you this amount? Yeah,
15 I think that would be a brilliant conversation for
16 you guys to have so that you are prepared so we
17 are not doing this off the back of an envelope,
18 you know, in that room. You guys are always
19 prepared but I feel like I should throw it out
20 there that way anyway. Randy is looking at me
21 like when have I not been prepared. I will be
22 prepared.

1 MR. BROOKS: So again, your main
2 takeaway is get ahead of ICCAT as much as
3 possible?

4 MR. WEBER: Yes.

5 MR. BROOKS: Okay, just checking. I
6 just wanted to make sure I got that right. Steve.

7 MR. GETTO: On the topic of the trophy
8 category and more trophy fish for the anglers, is
9 there a biological reason why they can't convert
10 some of their quota to larger fish? I mean,
11 they've got 232 metric tons or something. Could
12 more of that be converted?

13 MR. MCHALE: Yes, we could explore that.
14 You know, obviously as our data feeds into the
15 stock assessments, there are assumptions of
16 different levels of mortality at different age
17 classes. But I think the quantities that we're
18 talking about minimal in the grand scheme of
19 things that that's worth entertaining.

20 MR. BROOKS: Thanks Steve. Anything
21 else you wanted to say? Rick you want to jump in
22 on that one?

1 MR. WEBER: I do because I don't -- as
2 we're talking about trophy, Brad, you'd be going
3 over 73 and most of the angling category is done
4 by the tolerances is it not? We don't have the
5 ability to move tolerance into over 73, I don't
6 think.

7 MR. MCHALE: Well, I mean, the angling
8 category is a percentage of the U.S. quota that is
9 then further broken down into those size
10 categories. But there isn't anything necessarily
11 driving that those fish that are dedicated for the
12 trophy fishery couldn't necessarily be moved
13 within the angling category or from one of the
14 other categories or from one of the other
15 categories or the reserve. So, I think it's all
16 potential for discussion, I think, is more of my
17 point.

18 MR. WEBER: We misunderstood the
19 question because I thought the question was
20 couldn't we give up small to take large and I
21 don't believe we can give up small to take large.

22 MR. MCHALE: I would refine that. You

1 probably couldn't convert school size category
2 fish to giants but you would have to properly
3 assess what the individual count is and, you know,
4 there's more that goes into it. It's not a quick
5 swap but it's entertainable.

6 MR. GETTO: Can I make a comment?

7 MR. BROOKS: Yeah, go ahead.

8 MR. GETTO: I mean, we talked about this
9 when we went through this whole talk in the
10 general about taking 65 inch fish and you'd have
11 reduce the, you know. If you took a ton of giants
12 and you wanted 65 inch fish, you would have to
13 take like a ton and a half to get a ton of 65 inch
14 fish. So, I would assume that the reverse would
15 be the same if you were taking 30 inch fish and
16 converting them to 73 inch fish. You know, they'd
17 be so many heads in a ton of 30 inch fish, so many
18 heads in a ton of larger fish. I mean, there has
19 to be a biological ratio there that scientists
20 would figure out the right number.

21 MR. BROOKS: So, let us note this. It
22 sounds like something that the Agency is

1 interested in looking at. I want to take one more
2 comment on this. Mike or Steve. Mike, okay. And
3 then I want to turn to the Marlin 250 limit.

4 MR. PIERDINOCK: Thank you. In the
5 interest of time, Allen, Weiss, I agree with you
6 100 percent with the bigeye. What Rick Bellavance
7 said, agree with him 100 percent and what you
8 said, Rick Weber about bigeye, I agree
9 wholeheartedly. If a recreational angler is
10 allowed to catch as many bigeye tuna as he wants,
11 legally he can do that and whatever he wants to do
12 with it, he or she can do. I have no control over
13 that. I'm responsible -- well, you're going to
14 get poachers. So, you're familiar with Carlos
15 Raphael in New Bedford. Okay. There are
16 poachers, I'm not going to go down that road.
17 There are poachers commercially and
18 recreationally, so. What I would like to say --

19 MR. BROOKS: Hang on let's just move on
20 here.

21 MR. PIERDINOCK: One last thing is that
22 there is a historic bluefin tuna fishery for the

1 recreational -- it started with the -- bluefin
2 tuna historically started with the recreational
3 fisherman in the Gulf of Maine. It started back
4 in the 1920s with guys wearing suits and ties
5 catching monster bluefin tuna. We historically
6 were able to catch them and sell them. We sold
7 them for years. Recreationally as a charter boat
8 or recreationally we could sell them.

9 And then when the '70s came along or
10 before that, the commercial fleet would laugh at
11 us because we got pennies to the dollar and it
12 would dog food and cat food. When the price when
13 up and now Japan all of the sudden wanted a few
14 dollars a pound, the commercial fleet was born.

15 So, I want to make sure that the
16 historical recreational fishing from a
17 Charter/Headboat standpoint, we continue to have
18 access to that. And for those that want to
19 eliminate our ability from a Charter/Headboat with
20 a commercial endorsement standpoint to catch and
21 sell fish is inconsistent with our historic
22 bluefin tuna fishery going back to the early

1 1900s.

2 In addition, and as I said earlier,
3 we're in a different and a unique situation from
4 Marshfield, from the Cape and Marshfield on up.
5 We have nothing but bluefin. We need that with
6 our Charter/Headboats. We need the ability to get
7 that fish. And as I said, Tom D'Persia from
8 Marshfield was one of the persons that brought
9 that forward and nothing has changed. We still
10 need to be able to continue to do that. So, those
11 that no longer want to do that, it's inconsistent
12 with our history and inconsistent with the need
13 for us to survive.

14 Lastly, we did have a tag program.
15 Steve James implemented it in Marshfield and he
16 sat here before me. There seems to be a history
17 of leading the way with Tom D'Persia and Steve
18 James with the tag program. You're right, the
19 money wasn't there, that's a problem, there's not
20 the money to implement it.

21 Now, I'll use New Hampshire as an
22 example. Last one, New Hampshire is an example.

1 Let's look at their PSEs, they're ridiculously
2 high because they don't have the money in order to
3 do an appropriate number of surveys on fish. So,
4 the problem that we have here is that the states
5 need to step up, they need to get more people at
6 the plate. And whether that's at the federal
7 level to give them more level or at the state
8 level to do more dockside intercepts to get better
9 data. Commonwealth of Massachusetts does it, New
10 Hampshire doesn't. PSEs are sky high, they're
11 data is worthless. And that's with a shoreline
12 similar to Maryland that there are not many miles
13 there.

14 So, we need the money to do it. So, we
15 can talk until we're blue in the face and nothing
16 is going to happen and we're going to be talking
17 about this years later. But unless the money is
18 brought forward to come up with something, it's
19 not going to change.

20 MR. BROOKS: Okay. Guys, can I ask for
21 no crosstalk. David, it's really hard to hear.
22 Thanks.

1 MR. HUTT: And one thing I just want to
2 clarify. When it comes to the high PSEs in New
3 Hampshire, I mean, that' MRIP, that's not the LPS.
4 Massachusetts puts in more money to do more APAIS
5 sampling. We're the ones forking out all the
6 money for all the LPS stuff. And, I mean, those
7 PSEs are still fairly good in New Hampshire as
8 they are in Massachusetts.

9 MR. PIERDINOCK: If the PSEs are
10 appropriate, then why are there concerns around
11 the table that you can't manage the stock
12 appropriately. Because the department feels that
13 the PSEs are appropriate for bigeye and these
14 other species, right, there needs to be no
15 changes, correct?

16 MR. HUTT: I mean, all I can speak to is
17 our LPS data which has fairly decent PSEs for most
18 of these species. MRIP is another thing entirely
19 but we're not even using that for these species up
20 in your neck of the woods.

21 MR. BROOKS: So, let me just note, I'm
22 going to move us on here. I mean, clearly there

1 are a range of opinions on bigeye tuna and how
2 that should be handled. But I think we heard very
3 clear signals around on post-release mortality.
4 Education is supported and good and smart.
5 Probably not getting ahead of ICCAT is also
6 supported around the table and some interesting
7 ideas for at least exploring whether or not one
8 could increase the trophy bluefin allocation. But
9 I'll put that as just in the explorer and see if
10 there's something to be done there.

11 With that, I want to turn to the Marlin
12 250 limit. Let's get some comments on this and I
13 think the question and the issue is here is that
14 the landings are increasing. You know, just sort
15 of stay the course or is there something that the
16 Agency should be thinking about, is there
17 communication that needs to be happening with
18 folks who are fishing and understanding that there
19 is a limit and what might happen or what might be
20 options. Rick.

21 MR. WEBER: Much like we were talking
22 about sharks earlier, we may be victims of our own

1 success. You know, we've been tracking the
2 mid-Atlantic CPUE for for 28 years. And although
3 there are vacillations, it's constantly going up,
4 you know. The white we're catching, more white
5 Marlin per day per boat on a consistent basis.
6 So, moving towards 250 doesn't surprise me at all
7 really.

8 And I've sat here for a long time and
9 never really tried to protect myself or my
10 industry but I think it may well be time. And
11 that is, we've talked about what good economic
12 engines tournaments are. What good scientific
13 engines are. What good PR engines tournaments
14 are. If we have to do something and you do not
15 presently have it in your rules, we need to do
16 something to protect the tournaments. They need
17 to be a priority as that scale down occurs.

18 Because much like we're heard with
19 charter boats and others, we're planned a year
20 out. And it was a very compelling argument when
21 the charter boats said, how am I supposed to book
22 somebody when I don't know if I'll be able to take

1 that charter. If we are staring down the barrel
2 of a zero bag limit these events are over. And,
3 you know, the two big ones locally are in August.
4 You know, so I can't tell you what else is going
5 to happen through the year. But I think it's
6 something you all need to be concerned about right
7 with me.

8 Happy to engage, happy to come with
9 ideas, any number of things. Maybe it's done with
10 a carryover, I don't know. Where we get through
11 one year and pay it back the next year, I don't
12 know what it needs to be but it can't be that we
13 hit the second week of August and close white
14 Marlin. That we can't do.

15 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Rick. Pat, do you
16 want to weigh in on this one?

17 MR. AUGUSTINE: Yeah. I fell asleep
18 earlier because you ignored me and so now, you're
19 going to ask me the question and I'm not sure I
20 have a question but I'll try. What is the actual
21 status of the billfish we're talking about here?
22 Dr. John might be able to tell us that. We're

1 talking about a concern of going over the 250.
2 But in your opening statement, you say current
3 regulation provide options for in season
4 management. So, why is there an issue.

5 So, what's your projection for when
6 we're going to go over 250? We increased by what,
7 18 to 20 percent this past year? I'm looking at
8 your chart and your chart tells me that we still
9 have a long way to go. So, can you give any
10 projections as to when it's likely to go over with
11 the constraints of release we have right now? Or
12 maybe Dr. John could give us a clue as to where we
13 stand with white Marlin, blue Marlin rounds goes
14 as to whether we need to really address this at
15 this point in time.

16 MR. BROOKS: I think the question is how
17 immediate is this an issue.

18 MR. AUGUSTINE: Yeah.

19 MR. BROOKS: John.

20 DR. GRAVES: Well, you get what you paid
21 for, it's \$50,000. No. So, those -- the data
22 that are up there are probably what, second

1 quarter data?

2 SPEAKER: Through June 30th.

3 DR. GRAVES: Okay second quarter data.
4 So, since that time, you're getting your major
5 white Marlin tournaments. So, you had the White
6 Marlin Open which had 67 or something. I mean,
7 they had a lot of boated fish, much more so than
8 normal. And the mid-Atlantic had about 30 whites,
9 round scales, blues combined, something like that.
10 So, you add, you know, 100 fish to what's up there
11 and plus yeah. Some of the other tournaments
12 don't really land too many Marlin and I don't know
13 what the rest of the season is. But it's that big
14 pulse in August where a lot of the fish that go up
15 there are. So, I don't think we're going to go
16 over it but I think we're coming up to it.

17 MR. AUGUSTINE: A follow on question,
18 thank you Dr. John. But a follow on question
19 would be if that's true then let's go back to your
20 first follow on statement that says that your
21 current regulation is to provide options for
22 management and you could adjust from the size of

1 the 117 to 138 down to 70 to 79. So, what is the
2 major concern to create another tool for your box
3 that you already have the ability to deal with?

4 MR. BROOKS: I think I'll turn to Agency
5 folks. But I think what they're looking for is
6 yeah, there are some tools. Are some of those
7 tools more appealing than others or should they be
8 thinking about other tools as well.

9 MR. AUGUSTINE: That's the question.

10 MR. BROOKS: That's the question they
11 are putting out to you all.

12 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Yeah, I'll just speak
13 to this once again by putting this thought out.
14 These are the tools we have available to us. As
15 you can see, they could be quite effective at
16 managing the situation by increasing the minimum
17 size limit as we progress through the season.
18 That could be an option, fully recognizing that
19 there would need to be discussion about all that
20 probably as we get ready to do it. And how that
21 plays in with some tournaments that have their own
22 minimize size limits that are already higher and

1 so they're already working to try to reduce the
2 amount of landings that they might have.

3 But then, I think, that there's also
4 open for discussion is the role that the anglers
5 actually play in this as well in that catch and
6 release ethic and that may occur in some
7 tournaments. And so, you know, is there a role, I
8 would ask the question, is there a role to be
9 played within the recreational community that
10 wouldn't be regulatory which is to look at
11 reducing the number that brought to the dock.
12 Even in a kill tournament, we're not talking about
13 actually eliminating that but potentially looking
14 at reducing the number that are brought to the
15 dock. That could be a piece of it too. We're
16 talking about a difference in just a few fish
17 here.

18 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. I want to let --

19 SPEAKER: John wants to respond to that.

20 MR. BROOKS: Yeah, I was going to let
21 John and then Rick and then we need to get to
22 public comment and then we can come back.

1 DR. GRAVES: I'll be brief. I think if
2 you look at the tournaments that the release
3 percentage is still upward of 97, 98 percent even
4 when there are millions of dollars on the line.
5 So, I commend the recreational anglers. The catch
6 and release ethic they've embrace heavily. Circle
7 hooks when they realized there was a big
8 difference in post-release mortality, they've done
9 it. Taking the fish out of the water, not as good
10 as compliance as some of the other ones. And that
11 certainly impacts post-release mortality. But,
12 you know, my credit to the industry for really
13 promoting those things. But you do have the means
14 just to increase the minimum sizes and as was
15 noted, tournaments, some tournaments are already
16 doing that.

17 MR. WEBER: We're talking raw numbers
18 here and we're probably not being fair to the
19 White Marlin Open because it sounds like they were
20 so high. They had 404 boats in that tournament
21 this year. These fleets are getting larger as
22 well. And as John said, when I'm talking about my

1 CPUE going up it is the release CPUE that is going
2 up right with it, possibly even higher. So, that
3 is a fact. I think I've gone and distracted
4 myself by those points. I really did.

5 Oh, the rules. My recollection of the
6 rules is that there is some hard code in there
7 that doesn't kick in until 80 percent. And then
8 there is a hard code in there that says if it is
9 fully caught, that you are pretty much compelled
10 to drop to zero. I don't remember the discretion
11 in there that I wish is there but that may be my
12 memory of it going through a long time ago.

13 Along those lines, because you have also
14 hardcoded the size of blue Marlin, at 117 that is
15 a really big blue Marlin for this region. I wish
16 that you had -- I don't know why you didn't give
17 yourself the flexibility to step it up all the way
18 from 99. I don't know what happened to those
19 other 18 inches. Like if we're going to jump,
20 we've predetermined that we're going to jump to
21 117. I don't understand that. And so, if you're
22 going to give yourself flexibility, give yourself

1 plenty.

2 MS. CUDNEY: Can I?

3 MR. BROOKS: Yeah, please go ahead,
4 Jenn.

5 MS. CUDNEY: Okay just to on the one
6 point about the hardcoded threshold. We actually
7 don't have a hardcoded threshold at 80 percent or
8 whatever. That's more for some of the other
9 species that we manage.

10 MR. BROOKS: Great. I want to hit pause
11 on this conversation. We'll come back to, we have
12 maybe four other topics that we could potentially
13 hit that you put on the table before. But I do
14 want to pause for public comment. Again, I think
15 I saw three, how many people for public comment?
16 All right, so let's take them one by one. Anyone
17 who wants to make a public comment just if you
18 would come up to the table by a mic. Greg, we can
19 start with you.

20 MR. DiDOMENICO: I'll pass.

21 MR. BROOKS: You'll pass, okay. Next
22 public comment come up and just start with your

1 name and affiliation, thanks.

2 MR. SPARKS: Yeah, so Brett Sparks on
3 behalf of Blue Harvest Fisheries. I wish I'd had
4 the opportunity to talk about this when we were
5 discussing Amendment 13 specifically related to
6 the purse seine allocations. Essentially, Blue
7 Harvest would hold that getting rid of the purse
8 seine allocation at this point in time would be
9 premature. It's essentially been based on a lack
10 of participation from that industry.

11 But since 2016, Blue Harvest has been
12 attempting to acquire three of the five permits in
13 that category. Due to some regulatory impediments
14 with actually transferring vessels and permits,
15 they've been unable to fill that quota but we are
16 working with NMFS at this time to rectify that to
17 actually acquire the permits. So, again that'd be
18 three of the five traditional permits.

19 Blue Harvest is ready and willing to
20 participate. I know I heard comments on, you
21 know, being ready to wear the uniform and be on
22 the bench and get into the game. That's what Blue

1 Harvest is trying to do with the purse seine
2 quota.

3 So, at this time with Amendment 13
4 looking at potentially phasing that industry out,
5 that's just premature. And really once Blue
6 Harvest has those permits and are cleared to go,
7 at this point, it would really just be an economic
8 allocation which we know cuts against National
9 Standard V. So, we just feel like, you know,
10 taking that off the table, no action at this time
11 on the purse seine fishery would be best.

12 MR. BROOKS: Thanks very much,
13 appreciate it. I think there was another
14 commenter. Again, if you could come to the table
15 and name and affiliation, thanks.

16 MR. KNEEBONE: Sure, hello everyone. My
17 name is Jeff Kneebone. I work at the New England
18 Aquarium in Boston. I have a bunch of things that
19 I'd love to grab anyone of your ears to talk about
20 but I'll pick two of my favorite topics here. So,
21 one of them will kind of jump off of what Greg
22 introduced with the idea of targeting prohibited

1 shark species.

2 So, I just recently began a BREP funded
3 study looking at post-release mortality of sandbar
4 sharks that are targeted in Massachusetts by shore
5 based fisherman. And I've been able to do a lot
6 of outreach. Like Rick was saying, we've had a
7 lot of great buy-in from the fisherman. They want
8 to fish responsibly but they have a lot of
9 questions about regulations. And I know this
10 transcends the federal state barrier, maybe people
11 can weigh in here. But there's a lot of confusion
12 among the anglers about regulations both at the
13 state and federal level. So, can they target
14 prohibited species, sandbars, sand tigers,
15 specifically. And to go along with that, there's
16 a lot of question about permitting.

17 So, I've had people ask me, okay do I
18 need an HMS permit to fish from shore for sharks.
19 And I actually clarified this with Craig a couple
20 of weeks ago and realized and just confirmed what
21 I knew in that you do not since you do not have a
22 vessel. But I just wanted to bring that point to

1 the attention of the group here because, you know,
2 these fishermen are targeting species that
3 otherwise require people to have an HMS permit to
4 target.

5 We're talking about getting outreach
6 into the hands of these fisherman, you know, with
7 their permit applications. Bringing them into the
8 mix where you may be losing a sector here where if
9 people are fishing in state waters don't need an
10 HMS permit, they may not be getting that outreach
11 that they need. Especially in a fishery that
12 others have shown is, you know, kind of finicky
13 when it comes to post-release mortality in terms
14 of the way that the fish are being handled. So, I
15 just wanted to kind of bring up that point of
16 maybe reconsider trying to figure out a way to
17 realize if a permit is needed for land based shark
18 fishing which is increasing in popularity along
19 the coast.

20 And then the second one I might be naïve
21 to this and I'd love to just ask some questions
22 about it. I'm very interested in the idea of

1 recreational reporting for like the angling
2 category for HMS. Someone brought up the idea of,
3 you know, the power of social media, I think it
4 was Dewey before with the texts. A lot of
5 fishermen take photos of their catch. I've heard
6 that it's been used by enforcement to kind of pick
7 out on non-compliance issues.

8 So, I'm wondering if there's been
9 consideration of harnessing that same power for
10 reporting. So, if HMS permitted anglers instead
11 of having to go through all this tedious reporting
12 if you could snap a photo that they're already
13 doing perhaps anyway of their catch. And then use
14 some type of photo recognition software algorithm
15 to try to parse out the data for species
16 specificity. So, that's more of a question and
17 doesn't have to be answered now but I just would
18 love to talk to anyone about it to learn more.
19 Thank you very much.

20 MR. BROOKS: Great, thank you very much,
21 appreciate it. Anyone else in the room wishing to
22 make any other comments? Okay if not, let's go

1 back to our rec conversation. So, I think we've
2 got four different items still that were raised
3 around the table.

4 One was around, if we could talk about
5 recreational reporting in the use of an app and I
6 don't know if we've sort of glanced against that.
7 I don't know if there's more to cover there.
8 Interest in an update on the safety decal. On
9 this last point around wanting to better
10 understand whether it's possible to target
11 prohibited species, is that allowable and how does
12 that play out. And then any implementation on the
13 MRIP policy progress. So, I don't know which ones
14 you want to take up.

15 MR. HUTT: Let's do the apps.

16 MR. BROOKS: Let's do the apps. So,
17 let's start with the apps.

18 MR. IWICKI: Okay so, you know, Brad,
19 you and I have been talking for years about the
20 catch report app. I will tell you that I have yet
21 to find a person walking the docks when I'm out on
22 different boats, different marinas that has any

1 resistance to using it, okay. Now most of them
2 don't know about it so that's part of the
3 challenge there too. Part of it too is we should
4 have every reportable fish in the menu to pull
5 down rather than just the five that are in there
6 right now.

7 So, I will tell you a radicle idea that
8 I think will work. Treat it like a credit card.
9 When you get your permit, your credit card comes
10 in the mail. What do you have to do, you've got
11 to activate it. Activate it by setting up your
12 account on the app for the reporting so your
13 permit number is in the system. If they don't do
14 it the next year, you can hold that against them
15 if you wanted to issue another permit.

16 But what I have found is people I have
17 no problem -- everybody has got probably ten
18 fishing apps on their phone in this room, you
19 know, weather, everything else. They have no
20 problem doing the reporting on the rec side that
21 I've been around and I've talked to at least 100
22 people this year alone. The problem is, they

1 don't know about and then how do they use it if we
2 don't have all the categories there. With the
3 shark endorsements, maybe sharks should be added
4 too, you know, those kinds of things.

5 But if you use the app as a second way
6 to activate your permit, by the permit number,
7 then you would probably potentially have 20,000
8 users. And best I can tell, the app was done once
9 and kind of hasn't been updated. I can't tell for
10 sure because when I go in my settings, it doesn't
11 show up at all to tell me what the name of it is
12 and when the last time it was updated. But I
13 generally watch the updates so a couple little
14 tweaks are all that's needed to the app. It's
15 very cheap for them to fix, add a couple more menu
16 choices.

17 But I would say, consider tying the
18 permit to the app, at least to create the account.
19 You can't force them to do their report but that
20 way they've created the account, they have
21 knowledge of it, you've educated them and it's
22 fairly easy to use.

1 MR. BROOKS: Interesting thoughts Steve,
2 thanks. Let's go over to Fly and then over to
3 Marcus.

4 MR. NAVARRO: There's a couple things I
5 want to talk about and thank you Rick, for kicking
6 me under the table. It's the overall recreational
7 fishery that I'd like to talk about and the
8 outreach on it. First of all, this gentleman in
9 the back that spoke up for public comment, he had
10 a great question. There's a lot of people that
11 don't even know what HMS is. I know as I travel,
12 not just here in this country but around the
13 world, most people don't know we have a managing
14 body.

15 So, I think there's a lot to be said for
16 HMS. You guys were saying that you had been to
17 four different tournaments this year. That's a
18 great start but there's so much more we can do.
19 Not just you guys as a board but all of us that
20 are apart of it.

21 Communication. I know earlier today
22 when we were talking about sharks and how they eat

1 our catches on the way in. I posted two sentences
2 on social media. I have since reached, I don't
3 know, maybe 200 photos sent to me and about a
4 dozen videos which I've already forwarded on and
5 that's just in a few hours. I was able to do that
6 without sending people up and down the docks. It
7 cost me no money, it cost the AP no money other
8 than me being here. There are ways, there is
9 technology now to reach every single fisherman.

10 There is something you said about
11 requiring fishermen. I understand as a commercial
12 guy, you are required to do a lot of things. You
13 can't require people to do a lot but I would say
14 most fishermen want to know. I was fortunate
15 enough to be allowed to use two scientists from
16 National Marine Fisheries and I produced 18 or 19
17 videos on all the billfish and all the tunas in
18 the Atlantic.

19 I haven't put them out yet but when I
20 put out these videos, the fishermen, never mind
21 gravitate toward them, they want to know. They
22 want to know about our fishery. They want to know

1 everything about it. It's not uncommon for me to
2 put a video out and get 100, 150,000 people in 24
3 hours. That's a lot more than the booklets you
4 guys are putting out. And you can reach back out
5 to them with social media.

6 Once you put out a booklet and it gets
7 put in a captain's bag, and I'm not trying to
8 throw you under the bus, Rick, but how many people
9 read that book. Can you give that back to the
10 board? Can you say, well I gave out 200 books and
11 56 percent were read. But if you put it out on
12 the tools that are out there in social media, you
13 can actually go back and you can see how many
14 watched it, how many people liked it, how many
15 people commented on it.

16 Give them more information. Give them
17 more information of what HMS is really about. And
18 it offers up transparency. In some of the
19 comments, and you guys are more than welcome to
20 look at the comments, some of them were very
21 negative about HMS. Don't give them your
22 information because they're going to use it

1 against you.

2 You know what, if you're talking to them
3 on an everyday basis, it's very, very easy for
4 them to suddenly feel a connection with you. And
5 when they have that connection, they don't feel
6 like you're trying to use it against them, you're
7 just trying to assess a stock and find out what is
8 best for our fishery. So, I think that is very,
9 very important.

10 And then also, continuing education.
11 Somebody brought up about the fish being pulled
12 out of the water. And I see it on a daily basis.
13 And I'm working with the Billfish Foundation right
14 now to do proper videos on handling these fish.
15 But it would be so easy for you guys as either HMS
16 or law enforcement just really easily comment.

17 Hey guys, I don't know if you know this
18 but it is against federal law to pull that fish
19 out of the water. We're not hitting you up with a
20 fine, we're just educating you and letting you
21 know. Use the tools that we already have that
22 everybody uses on an every day basis to reach out

1 to people. That's pretty much what I've got to
2 say.

3 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Fly. Marcus.

4 MR. DRYMAN: Thanks. Yeah, I just want
5 to say, I think Steven's comment about the credit
6 card. Using the analogy of the credit card is
7 probably the most clever thing I've heard all day.
8 That's a great idea, just for the record. Also,
9 what Fly is saying too kind of resonates. I know
10 it's not HMS but we've been putting out satellite
11 tags on tarpon and we put out these maps showing
12 the tracks. And I was, I'm not a big social media
13 guy but my grad students are. I was shocked the
14 first time we posted a map we had 50,000 views in
15 one day.

16 And these anglers, they hold each other
17 accountable. You know, if there was ever an image
18 of a guy holding a tarpon up out of the water, I
19 wouldn't have to say anything. No one from NMFS
20 or the state government would say anything. All
21 these other anglers, you know, they are incredible
22 advocates for some of the species they fish for,

1 not all of them, of course. But mostly just
2 wanted to say I thought that idea was really good.
3 The activation thing, it was awesome.

4 MR. BROOKS: Good. Rick.

5 MR. WEBER: I also like Steve's idea.
6 I'm going to give you three more ideas on top of
7 it. Can they get a digital version of their
8 permit that it would be acceptable to OLE?
9 Because if that digital version of their permit
10 lived in the app, they would all have the app
11 because who is going to risk not having their
12 paperwork if a digital version of their permit
13 lives in their app.

14 Next is location services. When they
15 pick their inlet, send them a push notification
16 when they come through that inlet that says report
17 your catch. Location services are easy, you'll
18 know right where they are, hit the GPS, you've
19 come back in. Every time they pass through that
20 inlet, you know, send them a thing that says, you
21 know, if you're on your way back in, please
22 report.

1 And finally, we were sitting here
2 saying, you have done a lot with enforcement. But
3 once again, once you get the app on their phone,
4 push notification just as means of communication.
5 Skipping text, skipping email, send it straight to
6 the phone. We all look, you know, whether it's
7 text or push notification. So, there is three
8 more to make this thing more valuable to them and
9 more valuable to you.

10 And all in all, given I think what we're
11 all collectively saying is if you can afford and
12 find a way, an outreach office that focuses
13 primarily on a -- I was wondering about that,
14 Brad, I was wondering. But yes, it's a good
15 investment, it's a very good investment. Because
16 having someone that's actually spending full time
17 in communication rather than management is huge.

18 MR. BROOKS: Thanks Rick. Let's take
19 one more comment on this one. Mike, is that your
20 card up?

21 MR. PIERDINOCK: Steve's idea is a great
22 idea. I'm curious from a timing and a logistics

1 standpoint, I apologize being the private sector
2 because I think that things can happen like that.
3 So, that you first have to identify the app that
4 you're going to use. Then you've got to go out
5 and procure it and see who is going to bid on it
6 to get it. Then somebody has to maintain it.
7 Then I'm assuming the initial purpose of this app
8 is, is that it's just for informational purposes.
9 This is the species, this is where you can land it
10 and it and so on. That has to be correct. And
11 then the next step would be to use it for stock
12 assessment.

13 The fact that we can't get a U.S. Coast
14 Guard the sticker designation online to do the
15 same thing for the commercial. You know, charter
16 boat, vessels with commercial endorsements, it
17 concerns me that we have this discussion and
18 therefore, we can't do that. What would be the
19 estimated timeline for this great idea?

20 MR. WEBER: That app right there?

21 MR. PIERDINOCK: Right. To implement
22 this.

1 MR. WEBER: That exists.

2 MR. PIERDINOCK: And maybe Randy, you
3 can help because I believe that there is a species
4 in Florida that the State of Florida reports the
5 specific species on an app. But it's not used for
6 stock assessment purposes, it's used more for
7 information purposes and initially for effort
8 because of the problem with using with stock
9 assessment. So, timeline standpoint, I'd be
10 curious. Because these are great ideas, once
11 again, we need to take it to the next step and the
12 recreational community needs to be put a little
13 higher on the pecking scale of implementation.

14 MR. BROOKS: So, I'll hand it to these
15 guys. I don't know if they're going to have a
16 timeline for an idea that was just put on the
17 table seven minutes ago. But if you want to weigh
18 in at least on any thoughts on this, I invite you
19 to do so.

20 MR. BLANKINSHIP: So, I think you were
21 referring to iSnapper or one of those reporting
22 apps for snapper in the Gulf of Mexico. In that

1 regard which is a limited, you know, use
2 application although it has had some, I think some
3 good results. We do have our own example within
4 the Agency of developing a reporting app and I
5 want to let Brad speak to this about timeline.
6 Because we've gone through this already although
7 it's still open for discussion about improvements
8 and all that.

9 MR. MCHALE: All right, put me between
10 you and beer, your call. So, a couple thoughts
11 from what I'm hearing around the room. Rick, to
12 your point of where Agency funds are invested to
13 make progress in capitalizing on the strength of
14 technology. I believe the Agency and the Office
15 of Sustainable Fisheries has done that. And we're
16 gravitating but I think you all can recognize, we
17 are a federal Agency. We are way behind the curve
18 and in all likelihood, we'll continue to be behind
19 the curve.

20 I know Cliff and I just had the
21 opportunity the National Recreational Coordinators
22 Meeting out in Honolulu, Hawaii where

1 representatives of all the different geographic
2 regions of the Agency met. And we actually had a
3 few individuals from the private sector come in
4 and want comments on their application
5 development. And, I think, across the nation in
6 the Agency, there is this ongoing debate of who is
7 the developer.

8 Do you really want the National Marine
9 Fishery Service developing and maintaining the app
10 know all the bureaucratic hoops and inconsistency
11 and funding and behind the curve that we already
12 are? That we're not on YouTube, we're not putting
13 together that. Like I may not be able to get even
14 the proper approval to then even comment on posts
15 like that.

16 Because we are a federal agency, it's
17 not Brad McHale's voice, it's the National Marine
18 Fishery's voice. All right, there's a
19 communications department. So, there are hoops
20 that we jump through versus those in the private
21 sector don't necessarily have to run up against
22 those same things. Doesn't diminish the value. I

1 think we're just behind the curve and I think
2 we're on the curve but we still have a ways to go.

3 As far as the application that we do
4 have in play, you know, I think Steve that's the
5 one you were just referring to. Yeah, we have it
6 developed. Is it the most user friendly, no. Is
7 it version 1.0, yes. Do I know when 1.2 is coming
8 out or 2.0, I don't. Because then that's funding,
9 that's contracting, that's bidding. You know,
10 there's the whole internal mechanisms that need to
11 push that forward. I think the credit card idea,
12 like everyone around the room, I think that's a
13 phenomenal idea and I think something that will
14 garner a lot of attention.

15 I wouldn't have a timeline on like to
16 take your point, Steve, of like, you know, it
17 doesn't have all the species that I may catch.
18 Well yeah, we're the HMS management division. Our
19 mandate is tunas, sharks, swordfish, billfish.
20 So, all of the sudden, if I'm going to then direct
21 a contractor to develop an app for the HMS
22 management division, that's really the

1 constraints. What are our obligations. Were they
2 from ICCAT, were they in regards to the FMP versus
3 flip the script, I am now a recreational
4 fisherman. I want to be able to report in one
5 place and this gets to Rick's thing. Whether it's
6 commercial or recreational, one place.

7 That is actually even a higher bar for
8 we as an Agency to try to capitalize on of meeting
9 that need of all constituents in one application
10 and then keeping it live and relevant. We just
11 cannot, in my almost 20 years' experience, respond
12 and react as much as the private industry can when
13 it comes to those sorts of developments. I don't
14 know if I'm answering the question but just kind
15 of sharing kind of what some of my experiences and
16 challenges are in trying to meet those
17 obligations.

18 I mean, case in point. Trying to get
19 even in our commercial fisheries as Mike had
20 mentioned is so he doesn't have to report his
21 ground fish trip and maybe the bluefish he caught
22 as well as that tuna, you know, in multiple

1 places. Even on the commercial side, we haven't
2 been able to get the Southeast, the Northeast or
3 should I say GARFO and HMS all in the same place
4 to have that consolidated.

5 So, that's a pretty strong indicator of
6 the glacial pace sometimes we as a federal agency
7 are moving at. Doesn't mean we're not aware of
8 it, doesn't mean that we don't have the same
9 desire to gravitate in that direction. But
10 sometimes just the challenges of being the federal
11 government and an organization that has multiple
12 needs can bog us down. I think I'll stop there.

13 MR. BROOKS: Good. I think we had one
14 or two more comments on this. We've got David and
15 then over to Rick. And we have, if you all have
16 the perseverance to stick through two more issues,
17 we've got two more quick ones to run through.
18 David.

19 MR. SCHALIT: We are reporting in the
20 General category and the Harpoon category, we are
21 reporting our catch right now on this app and it
22 works just fine. Really just fine, it does its

1 job but it's specific to that species we're
2 referring to.

3 Okay so my opinion, the federal
4 government it's not their strong suit to develop
5 software. And whenever they develop anything,
6 they have to use private sector developers, right,
7 who have to meet all these regulations. I have no
8 idea what that's going to be like and they're
9 definitely not getting the lowest prices.

10 So, if the recreational community is
11 interested in a robust app that does it all, you
12 know, for HMS species. The easy way to do this, I
13 mean, the much easier and quicker and faster and
14 more accurate and more well-designed way to do
15 this is to do this work in the private sector and
16 license it to NOAA. Very simple, right.

17 So, you'll get your costs back
18 eventually and it's not even that expense to
19 develop apps, by the way, it really isn't. So, if
20 you want something that you're going to be happy,
21 you, you the fishermen are going to be happy with,
22 that's the way to do it. Don't wait on NOAA to do

1 it for you.

2 MR. BROOKS: Thank you. Rick.

3 MR. BELLAVANCE: Thanks. Just a quick
4 response to Brad. I appreciate your comments. I
5 think you're spot on. I don't necessarily think
6 it's the National Marine Fishery Service
7 obligation to build an application. I think the
8 private sector is much further ahead in
9 technology, they can do a faster job and they can
10 do it a lot cheaper.

11 But I do think it's incumbent upon the
12 Agency to create standards that these companies
13 build to so that those apps are all doing the same
14 thing. And it doesn't matter whether you use
15 vendor A or B or C, they're all speaking in the
16 same way so that all that data gets used for
17 whatever purpose it needed to be used for.
18 Whether it's an assessment or whether it's catch
19 accounting or whatever it might be.

20 I think that's where the Agency's role
21 is, is letting the developers know the information
22 they want, how they want to get it and all on a

1 standardized platform so that they can all talk to
2 each other. Right now, I think it's scattered all
3 over the place and that would be, in my opinion,
4 the best way to spend your resources.

5 MR. BROOKS: So, Turbo Tax has figured
6 this out for taxes, for example.

7 MR. HUTT: So, ACCSPs API behind eTRIPS,
8 SAFIS eTRIPS is public. They will share that with
9 any private company that wants to develop their
10 own app and add their own bells and whistles. But
11 as you set up where data where automatically
12 downloaded in ACCSPs system.

13 And there are several apps that have
14 been developed by different groups. The, you
15 know, the for-hire captains that are reporting
16 through eTRIPS have the option of using. So, I
17 know, that's out there and now that we're building
18 in the HMS data elements that we need for our
19 reporting to do that, I would say if you're
20 thinking of doing this in the private sector and
21 adding extra, you know, functionality to it, go
22 that route with ACCSP and you'll have everything

1 you need to make sure we're getting the data we
2 need.

3 MR. MCHALE: So, we're going in that
4 direction already of getting out of the app --
5 providing those specs and then letting folks build
6 off of that and capitalize whatever strengths they
7 have versus, you know, the Agency trying to do it
8 all. So, we're going in that direction.

9 MR. BROOKS: Dewey, last brief word on
10 this one.

11 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yeah, does the Agency
12 right now have something that a private industry
13 can come to you? You said you pass them a piece
14 of paper, here's the specs we got to have as this.
15 And if you had a premium one, we'd like this, if
16 you had a gold standard, we like this and if you
17 had the all-around, best all-around standard, you
18 have this. So, it's like a template for private
19 industry to develop something right now.

20 But for this, quite obvious that, you
21 know, it's going to be a challenge of how large or
22 small or expensive or not is probably going to be

1 done best by private industry and probably the
2 fastest, you know, in less than five years. So,
3 my question is, do you have a template right now
4 that you could give a private industry person
5 tomorrow that says this is what I've got to have
6 to satisfy the Agency.

7 MR. BROOKS: Understood.

8 MR. HUTT: I mean, that's basically what
9 I was talking about with what ACCSP has. It's not
10 on a piece of paper because that's not how these
11 app people, you know, exchange information. It's
12 all, you know, electronic but yeah, they basically
13 got it laid out, here's all the data elements that
14 we need to be able to collect. You know, here's
15 the different codes we use, all that stuff. And
16 any app developer can get it.

17 Now, despite that, the vast majority of
18 fishermen are still reporting either through
19 GARFOs eVTR app or the majority of them are really
20 reporting through ACCSPs eTRIPS app. Because
21 people want to make sure that the one they're
22 using is the one and has got everything and so

1 they go to the source.

2 MR. MCHALE: The bottom line is we've
3 shared that information with ACCSP. A private,
4 you know, entity could go and capture that and the
5 requirements to meet our needs are laid out right
6 there. And however, they design it and whatever
7 bells and whistles, yeah, we're there.

8 MR. BROOKS: I just want to say, clearly
9 this idea has a lot of interest around the table.
10 It also needs a lot of thoughtful conversation on
11 how do you move forward. So, I just would sort of
12 recommend we leave it at that right now and give
13 the Agency a chance to sort of think about, you
14 know, is there some group around the table or
15 others that you bring together and kind of
16 brainstorm. How can we take what we all think is
17 a really smart idea and make it viable in this
18 world. I'm sure people are getting restless.
19 Safety decal updates, anything there?

20 MR. MCHALE: Sure. So, although not a
21 recreational centric issue because there is no
22 Coast Guard safety inspection of recreational

1 vessels per se. On the commercial side, as we've
2 discussed around this table, the HMS management
3 division is collaborating with the Coast Guard on
4 trying to figure out how we could potentially link
5 the commercial fishing vessel safety inspections
6 to the application process. I don't really have
7 any more details than that but the conversations
8 are ongoing.

9 There is progress being made which is
10 kind of taking the feedback you've all received
11 whether it's the decal number or just keying off
12 all of the vessel identifier that were in ongoing
13 collaborations on how to make that happen. So,
14 that's really kind of the update I have there that
15 that is not or has not fallen on deaf ears.

16 MR. BROOKS: David.

17 MR. SCHALIT: I just wanted to add one
18 thing that's sort of parallel to something Brad
19 just mentioned. I input a fictitious
20 documentation number into the permit application
21 online and it took the number.

22 MR. BLAKINSHIP: Falsification of data

1 is --

2 MR. BROOKS: Katie, did you hear that?

3 MR. SCHALIT: I wanted to see if it
4 would do it.

5 MR. BROOKS: We'll just let Katie handle
6 it. Mike, I saw your card go up a second ago.
7 All right, last topic was interested in better
8 understanding of targeting a prohibited species.
9 And Randy, I think you wanted to touch on that?

10 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Sure. So, related to
11 prohibited species and fishing for targeting. So,
12 in our regulations, we specifically have
13 authorized catch and release programs for white
14 sharks, for bluefin tuna in a catch and release
15 program and for billfish tuna in a catch and
16 release program. There are other regs that talk
17 about prohibited species and those regulations
18 talk about the prohibition on retaining and
19 possessing.

20 Those regulations and the wording does
21 not, they do not use the phrasing, "fishing for"
22 like they do in other places where we require

1 permit for "fishing for" a species. And so, in
2 that context, with the absence of the wording of
3 "fishing for", I think there are some allowances
4 for some of that activity to take place as long as
5 retaining and possessing don't occur.

6 And I will also reference the
7 requirements that if a fish is to be released,
8 that it is to be released with a maximum chance of
9 survival without removing it from the water. And
10 so, those are key phrases, I think, that are all
11 part of this picture of answering this question.

12 In addition, I will say that for sharks,
13 federal management for sharks is not to the shore.
14 And so, the state has a role to play with their
15 interpretation of how they might come -- how they
16 might interpret their own regulations associated
17 with possession of prohibited species or fishing
18 for prohibited species. While the federal water
19 jurisdiction regulations might be different than
20 that.

21 So, I hope that provides some clarity to
22 the situation. And I certainly am open to any

1 further clarification that my colleagues within
2 the division might want to provide to this.

3 MR. HUTT: I will say in the last couple
4 of years, we have tried to have discussions with
5 the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
6 about coming up with standardized recommendations
7 for shore fishing. And because of disagreements
8 between the different states, depending on how
9 many of the species you're likely to catch from
10 shore there, prohibited sharks versus not
11 prohibited sharks, there's been some difficulty
12 there.

13 And we were interested and they were
14 kind of interested and waiting to see how what
15 Florida was doing, which was implemented this
16 year, kind of played out. And it's something we
17 expect there to be additional discussions about in
18 the next year or so but we're kind of looking for
19 them to take more of the lead on it.

20 One thing I do want to clarify about
21 sandbar sharks is they are technically not on the
22 prohibited species list. Their retention is

1 prohibited because of their stock status outside
2 of the shark research fishery but that doesn't
3 mean that will remain the case in the future as
4 they recover.

5 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Anybody have any
6 other issues on the rec roundtable front that we
7 need to talk about? Mark, God bless you, go for
8 it.

9 MR. SAMPSON: Okay just a quick
10 clarification because I thought I had this down
11 and Randy, you just confused me. As far as
12 fishing for prohibited species, let's just say a
13 dusky shark swims up to a recreational fishing
14 boat. He has no intention to retain that shark,
15 he would like to catch and release it. May he
16 drop a bait to that fish, catch it and release it
17 in the water?

18 MR. BLANKINSHIP: The regulations don't
19 prohibit that.

20 MR. SAMPSON: Okay good. And then for
21 white sharks, we said, you know, there has always
22 been a catch and release fishery. But could you

1 just clarify what the parameters for that are that
2 would allow somebody to do that.

3 MR. BLANKINSHIP: So, because I haven't
4 looked at those regs recently, I'm going to let
5 Karyl speak to them.

6 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: So, there are
7 recreational fishermen using rod and reel are
8 allowed to go out and target chum for specifically
9 trying to get white sharks. And so, we do have
10 charter captains off of South Carolina who
11 regularly do that and take out customers to go
12 fish for white sharks and advertise fishing for
13 white sharks. The only parameter is that you're
14 using rod and reel and that you do not retain the
15 shark, you do not remove it from the water, that
16 you release it unharmed.

17 MR. SAMPSON: I thought early on when
18 they first became a prohibited species that you
19 had to be enrolled in approved tagging program or
20 something in order to engage with white sharks.
21 Is that not the case?

22 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: I don't remember

1 what the regs were back then but that is not the
2 case right now.

3 MR. MCHALE: Yeah, so at one point,
4 Mark, your recollection is right on. That at one
5 point, there were requirements that permit holders
6 be part of a tag and release program. I don't
7 recall the year off hand but there is some
8 discussion regarding whether or not an uninformed
9 individual on a vessel that's just tagging the
10 fish for the first time is going to do more harm
11 to the fish than not.

12 And so, it was that cost benefit
13 analysis of the tagging process versus the
14 information derived from the tag and then a
15 recapture. So, the Agency actually moved away
16 from requirements of being in a tagging program to
17 just the catch and release and then encouraged
18 tagging. So, that has evolved over time.

19 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. And Kristin, it
20 was just suggested to me that you might be able to
21 just quickly share something on Florida shore
22 based shark program.

1 MS. FOSS: Yeah. So, we (inaudible)
2 sharks from shore. That includes like piers,
3 bridges or jetties. They must take this online
4 course which just kind of educates them about best
5 handling and safety practices as well as
6 clarifying that, you know, it requires all
7 prohibited species to remain in the water and try
8 to delay any sort of release, I mean, prohibit
9 delay of release if they are fishing for those
10 species. So, just kind of clarifying that, happy
11 to provide more information on this educational
12 program that we've created if anyone is
13 interested.

14 MR. BROOKS: Great, thanks very much,
15 Kristin. If there are no other comments, I am not
16 going to attempt to summarize two and a half hours
17 of conversation and all the different ideas that
18 were put on the table. But I will say just a
19 couple of really quick things.

20 One, I think there was a comment several
21 times around the table around hey, maybe what we
22 don't have is perfect but it's good and it is way

1 better than anyone else has going. So, first of
2 all, I acknowledge that. Two, a pretty broad
3 yeah, but what we have really isn't working for
4 us. We don't trust the data, we've got to have
5 something better in place.

6 And then I think a number of different
7 themes around really redoubling efforts to
8 coordinate, to piggyback on programs that exist.
9 Really taking advantage of the emerging
10 technologies whether that's, you know, videos,
11 whether those are apps, using social media. The
12 theme that you can never do too much outreach,
13 there's tons to be done there. And if people know
14 what they're supposed to be doing and how to do
15 it, there's a better chance that they'll actually
16 follow it. Obviously, eliminating redundancies
17 and making use of the data that you actually
18 collect.

19 So, I'll just leave it at that and thank
20 you all for being so focused over a long day. And
21 remind folks that we reconvene tomorrow at 8:30 in
22 the morning. And Randy, I think I'll just turn it

1 to you for any final things you need to say.

2 MR. BLANKINSHIP: I don't think I have
3 anything final that I need to say except thank you
4 for bearing with us for a very long session here.
5 We knew that this might go a little long and
6 thanks for being here.

7 MR. BROOKS: And just a reminder, no
8 host social down at the bar. Thanks everybody.

9 (Whereupon, at 6:16 p.m., the
10 PROCEEDINGS were adjourned.)

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STATE OF MARYLAND

I, Mark Mahoney, notary public in and for the State of Maryland, do hereby certify that the forgoing PROCEEDING was duly recorded and thereafter reduced to print under my direction; that the witnesses were sworn to tell the truth under penalty of perjury; that said transcript is a true record of the testimony given by witnesses; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this proceeding was called; and, furthermore, that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

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