

## GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

## REEF FISH MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Webinar

January 26-27, 2021

**VOTING MEMBERS**

Martha Guyas (designee for Jessica McCawley).....Florida  
 Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon).....Alabama  
 Susan Boggs.....Alabama  
 Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi  
 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi  
 Jonathan Dugas.....Louisiana  
 Phil Dyskow.....Florida  
 Tom Frazer.....Florida  
 Robin Riechers.....Texas  
 John Sanchez.....Florida  
 Chris Schieble (designee for Patrick Banks).....Louisiana  
 Bob Shipp.....Alabama  
 Joe Spraggins.....Mississippi  
 Andy Strelcheck.....NMFS  
 Greg Stunz.....Texas  
 Ed Swindell.....Louisiana  
 Troy Williamson.....Texas

**NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC  
 Lt. Adam Peterson.....USCG

**STAFF**

Assane Diagne.....Economist  
 John Froeschke.....Deputy Director  
 Lisa Hollensead.....Fishery Biologist  
 Mara Levy.....NOAA General Counsel  
 Jessica Matos.....Document Editor & Administrative Assistant  
 Emily Muehlstein.....Public Information Officer  
 Ryan Rindone.....Lead Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison  
 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager  
 Carrie Simmons.....Executive Director  
 Carly Somerset.....Fisheries Outreach Specialist

**OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

Richard Cody.....NOAA  
 Chris Conklin.....SAFMC  
 Peter Hood.....NMFS  
 Clay Porch.....SEFSC  
 Joe Powers.....SSC

1 Sam Rauch.....NOAA Fisheries  
2 Jessica Stephen.....NMFS  
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TABLE OF MOTIONS

PAGE 21: Motion to begin the process of using the snapshot that NMFS took on December 31, 2020 of the number of pounds of red snapper in individual IFQ accounts, in order to place those pounds back in those individual accounts in 2021 to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on that fishery. The motion failed on page 27.

PAGE 31: Motion in Action 1 to make Alternative 2 the preferred alternative. The motion carried on page 33.

PAGE 33: Motion to approve the Framework Action: Modification of Gray Triggerfish Catch Limits and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation, and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial license to make the necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to the codified text as necessary and appropriate. The motion carried on page 34.

PAGE 37: Motion to approve the Framework Action: Modification of the Gulf of Mexico Lane Snapper Catch Limits and Accountability Measures and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation, and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial license to make the necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to the codified text as necessary and appropriate. The motion carried on page 38.

PAGE 47: Motion to request the SEFSC add two additional analysis runs to the research track red snapper assessment that would replace federal recreational survey data with state recreational survey data with and without Great Red Snapper Count data. The motion carried on page 60.

PAGE 70: Motion in Action 1 to add a series of options under Alternative 2 that would incorporate an increase to the overfishing fishing limit (OFL) and acceptable biological catch (ABC) based on the results of the Interim Analysis as informed by the Great Red Snapper Count. If the results of the review by the SSC result in a minimum of zero percent or 25 percent increase in ABC, the state-specific ACLs would be calibrated based on Alternative 2 for the 2021 and 2022 recreational fishing seasons. Regardless of the results of the Interim Analysis, the state specific ACLs will be reviewed in 2022 or as soon as practicable. The motion carried on page 89.

1  
2 [PAGE 90](#): Motion in Action 1 to add a new Alternative 4. [The](#)  
3 [motion carried on page 94](#).

4  
5 [PAGE 94](#): Motion in Action 1, Alternative 3, apply 23 percent  
6 reduction and any quota increase across each of the states. [The](#)  
7 [motion carried on page 99](#).

8  
9 [PAGE 99](#): Motion in Action 1 to add a new Alternative 5 in the  
10 red snapper data calibrations and catch limits framework action  
11 and apply the 11.8 percent reduction in any quota increase  
12 across each of the states. [The motion failed on page 109](#).

13  
14 [PAGE 110](#): Motion to direct staff to initiate an amendment to  
15 adjust the OFL and ABC based on the results of the interim  
16 analysis for red snapper (as informed by the GRSC) and SSC  
17 recommendations. The private recreational ACLs should include,  
18 but not be limited to, a range of alternatives that consider  
19 reallocation based on state specific biomass estimates derived,  
20 in part, from the GRSC and NOAA's socioeconomic data. Allocation  
21 for the commercial and CFH sectors will also be considered in  
22 this amendment. [The motion carried on page 115](#).

23  
24 [PAGE 116](#): Motion in Action 1 to make Alternative 2 the  
25 preferred alternative. [The motion carried on page 125](#).

26  
27 [PAGE 140](#): Motion to direct staff to work on a plan amendment to  
28 update rebuilding plan for greater amberjack and revise catch  
29 limits and sector allocations based on the MRIP-FES data. [The](#)  
30 [motion carried on page 147](#).

31  
32 [PAGE 156](#): Motion to request a presentation on the process for  
33 arriving at yearly red grouper average weight via MRIP and  
34 include sample sizes per strata, PSEs, and other relevant data  
35 for each year. [The motion carried on page 159](#).

36  
37 [PAGE 161](#): Motion in Action 1 to make Alternative 3 the  
38 preferred alternative. [The motion carried on page 167](#).

39  
40 [PAGE 168](#): Motion in Action 2 to make Alternative 3 the  
41 preferred alternative. [The motion carried on page 168](#).

42  
43 [PAGE 168](#): Motion to take Amendment 53, Red Grouper Allocations  
44 and Annual Catch Levels and Catch Targets to public hearing.  
45 [The motion carried on page 171](#).

46  
47 - - -  
48

1 The Reef Fish Management Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery  
2 Management Council convened via webinar on Tuesday morning,  
3 January 26, 2021, and was called to order by Chairman Martha  
4 Guyas.

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

10 **CHAIRMAN MARTHA GUYAS:** Good morning, everybody. We've got a  
11 busy day ahead of us, and our first item of business is to  
12 approve our agenda for the morning, and so, before we do that,  
13 are there any additions to the agenda? I will just give folks a  
14 couple of minutes to raise their hands. All right. I think  
15 it's safe to say no hands at this point. Okay, and so is there  
16 any opposition to adopting the agenda as written? Hearing none,  
17 the agenda is adopted as written.

18  
19 Next, that takes us to Tab B, Number 2, the November 2020  
20 minutes. Are there any changes or additions to the minutes?  
21 Seeing none, is there any opposition to adopting the minutes as  
22 written? Hearing none, the minutes are adopted as written.

23  
24 We will go through the Action Guide and Next Steps as we go  
25 through each item, like we did yesterday, and so let's go ahead,  
26 and that will take us to Item IV, the Review of Reef Fish  
27 Landings and Presentations from SERO.

28  
29 **REVIEW OF REEF FISH LANDINGS AND PRESENTATIONS**  
30

31 **MR. PETER HOOD:** I'm here, and I'm ready to present that, as  
32 soon as they're up on the screen, and I can't remember if it's  
33 (a) or (b), but it's the figures in that. If you open up the  
34 other file, and there's one that has figures. That's it.  
35 Thanks.

36  
37 As I mentioned at the last meeting, I was going to try something  
38 new, and, rather than presenting the tables, I will present  
39 figures. Because we don't have the recreational data, I'm just  
40 going to be presenting commercial landings. If you're  
41 interested in what the actual landings are, either commercial or  
42 the little we have for recreational, you can go in -- I'm not  
43 sure what tab it is, and I think it's 4(a), that is the tables.

44  
45 In terms of what the figures will show, again, we're just  
46 providing commercial landings, and these landings are  
47 preliminary for 2020. It's cumulative landings by month, and  
48 then you'll see a series of lines. 2020 is in black, and 2019,

1 last year, is in blue, or two years ago, I guess, and we're in  
2 2021 now, and then we have an average of 2017 through 2019 data,  
3 and that is the red-dashed line. The 2019 is blue, and the 2020  
4 is in black, and then the ACL will be in yellow-orange. In some  
5 cases, where we have stock ACLs, since the recreational sector  
6 oftentimes lands most of the fish, the ACL would be -- We have  
7 to really change the scale, and so, basically, the ACL is just  
8 listed on the figure.

9  
10 This is gray triggerfish landings, and the black line is 2020,  
11 and you can see that landings were below 2019, and basically  
12 what we've seen for an average, and that's the trend that you're  
13 going to see for many of the species. I'm not sure why 2020  
14 landings are low, and it probably is a factor of effort, and  
15 market conditions may have been dictating what that effort is,  
16 but, in terms of why they're lower, I don't know.

17  
18 This is greater amberjack, and you can see greater amberjack  
19 landings were a lot lower in 2020 than they were in other years,  
20 and you can see that we never reached the ACL. This is gray  
21 snapper, and gray snapper is managed under a stock ACL, which  
22 that is 2.24 million pounds. You can see here that, for  
23 commercial landings, 2020 was lower than previous years.

24  
25 Here we have mutton snapper, and, again, it's a stock ACL. Then  
26 you can see that, for both 2019 and 2020, landings were below  
27 that 2017 through 2019 average, which basically means that  
28 probably, in 2017 and 2018, landings were much higher.

29  
30 Here we have vermilion snapper. Again, we see landings in 2020  
31 were less than previous years, and, as with many of these  
32 others, they have tended to fall off as the year progressed,  
33 with that gap between landings getting greater for each month.

34  
35 This will be for the IFQ species, and we have red snapper, gag,  
36 and red grouper. Red snapper, basically, this year seems  
37 basically about the same as it has been for previous years, and  
38 the black line lines up over both 2019 and that 2017 to 2019  
39 average.

40  
41 This is gag, and gag landings for 2020 are fairly close to what  
42 they have been, in terms of an average over 2017 through 2019,  
43 and they're below what was landed in 2019. Here we have red  
44 grouper, and, again, we see that 2020 landings were below the  
45 average, but they were fairly similar to what was harvested in  
46 2019, and I believe that's the last slide, unless you have  
47 questions, and I think that's it.

1 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thank you, Peter. I am checking  
2 here for hands, to see if there are any questions. It looks  
3 like Kevin's hand is up. Kevin.

4  
5 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Peter, for  
6 the information. You may not know the answer to this question,  
7 but what's your anticipation for having the recreational data  
8 from 2020 finalized? Usually it's the April-ish timeframe, but  
9 I know, due to COVID, things have slowed down a bit, and they're  
10 behind what they normally would be, as far as processing that  
11 data, and is there any -- Have you heard what the latest is on  
12 the expectation to have that data processed for 2020, the  
13 recreational data?

14  
15 **MR. HOOD:** No, I have not, and, in fact, I asked that very same  
16 question to some of our data folks, and they basically said  
17 that, yes, the landings data, the final landings data, is  
18 typically available in April or May, somewhere around there,  
19 but, again, this is -- You know, 2020 has been an atypical year,  
20 and it could be even later than that, and so I wish I had an  
21 update, and I don't know if anybody from the Center might have  
22 more information on that, but I have not heard anything.

23  
24 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Peter, I guess, along those lines -- Andy, go  
25 ahead.

26  
27 **MR. ANDY STRELCHECK:** Martha, I see Richard Cody is on, and I  
28 don't know if Richard could speak to this.

29  
30 **DR. RICHARD CODY:** We're on schedule for mid-April or so. Right  
31 now, John Foster and his team are working on the imputation  
32 methods, and we have data through Wave 5. We don't anticipate  
33 any delays for the Wave 6 data being available, and so we're  
34 working with an anticipated date of mid-April, which is the same  
35 as previous years. There will be a few things that we will hand  
36 out with the data to advise people of some of the caveats, since  
37 we are dealing with some fairly significant data gaps for some  
38 of the time periods, but mid-April is the date we are focusing  
39 on.

40  
41 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Richard. That's helpful. The question  
42 I was going to ask is I'm already getting asked about amberjack,  
43 since we have that split season in place, and what's the, I  
44 guess, potential for the May season to occur as scheduled, and I  
45 don't know if Andy or Richard -- If you want to respond to that.

46  
47 **DR. CODY:** Well, I mean, I don't have the full year of data at-  
48 hand right now, and so, I mean, we weren't planning to put out



1 any data before that April date, and so, I mean, that would  
2 definitely impact decisions for the 2021 season, and I don't  
3 know if Andy wants to add to that.

4  
5 **MR. STRELCHECK:** There's really not much to add. Certainly, the  
6 sooner we have the data, the better and faster we can turn it  
7 around for setting seasons for the 2021 season.

8  
9 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thank you. Any other questions for  
10 Peter, or Richard, for that matter, on this? I don't see any  
11 hands. We do have another presentation from SERO, and I think  
12 Dr. Stephen is going to give this presentation on the IFQ  
13 program. I think we can go ahead and move into that. I'm  
14 sorry, Susan. I see your hand. Go ahead.

15  
16 **MS. SUSAN BOGGS:** I was just going to tell Peter that I really  
17 like this format. It's much easier for me to digest. Thank  
18 you, Peter.

19  
20 **MR. HOOD:** You're welcome.

21  
22 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Yes, I agree. It's really great. Okay. Now I  
23 don't see any more hands, and so I think we can go now to Tab B,  
24 Number 4(c)

25  
26 **DR. JESSICA STEPHEN:** This is another presentation on kind of  
27 the pandemic effects for the IFQ fishery. I just wanted to let  
28 the council know that we did present some of this information to  
29 the SSC, and not everything that you're seeing we had ready at  
30 the time, since the SSC did meet the first week of January, and  
31 we were still gathering the data.

32  
33 Similar to what we've done in the past, I will have information  
34 about 2020, include some comparisons to 2019, and then  
35 individual years of 2017 to 2019, as well as the average by  
36 share category, and I just want to caution you that the IFQ data  
37 is still preliminary, and we still get some corrections in from  
38 last year in the year right now, and we're working through some  
39 of those corrections as we speak.

40  
41 I wanted to start off with the percentage of quota landed for  
42 each share category in comparison to 2017, and let's start with  
43 red snapper. We have landed 99 percent of the quota, just a  
44 little bit less than we've landed in past years, and so, as you  
45 can see, we're a little bit closer to 99.4 or 99.6 in some of  
46 the past years. Early in the IFQ program, we were closer to  
47 that 99 percent.

1 Looking at red grouper, and, again, a caution that red grouper's  
2 quota did change in 2019, and so some of the percentage  
3 comparisons may not be appropriate, and we landed about 79  
4 percent in 2020, compared to the 68 percent in 2019, and so,  
5 here, we landed more than we have in past years. In gag  
6 grouper, we landed slightly less than we've landed in past  
7 years, at around 51 percent, compared to 52 to 57 percent.

8  
9 As we jump into the three last categories, I have highlighted  
10 the 2020 values in red, because, in these three categories,  
11 we've actually landed significantly less than we have in past  
12 years. For deepwater grouper, we landed around 79 percent, and  
13 so that is lower than 2019, but not too much lower than 2017 and  
14 2018. Shallow-water grouper had around 31 percent.

15  
16 Now, that is lower than we've seen in the past years, and I will  
17 caution that shallow-water grouper has always been extremely  
18 variable in the percentage landed, and we have typically never  
19 gotten a high percentage of landings within this category. Then  
20 tilefish was around 60 percent, and that's considerably lower  
21 than we saw in some of the more recent past years.

22  
23 This is the same type of information, but, here, I wanted to  
24 give it to you in pounds, particularly so you can identify, in  
25 red grouper, where that quota change made the percentages a  
26 little bit hard to look at the data. Here, you can see the 2020  
27 quota, down towards the bottom, and the remaining 2020  
28 allocation that has been left in the accounts.

29  
30 I do want to caution you that, in this graph, there are  
31 corrections going on, and there was still a small amount of  
32 allocation that's being held by NMFS from the shares that were  
33 reclaimed back in Amendment 36A.

34  
35 You can see, in here, that red snapper by far has the smallest  
36 percentage of pounds, or the smallest number of pounds, left  
37 over, and we have some of the higher amounts of pounds left in  
38 red grouper and gag grouper.

39  
40 What this table shows you is we have looked at the OFL, the ABC,  
41 and I've also shown the IFQ quota for each share category and  
42 then what the buffer was between the OFL and the ABC, and so  
43 that buffer is the amount that potentially we could carry over.  
44 Now, keep in mind that that buffer also needs to consider  
45 recreational stocks, and so we might not want to carry over  
46 something completely at that buffer amount, to allow for any of  
47 the recreational stocks that may have gone over.

1 Then you see the carryover amount is the potential amount that  
2 you could carry over, based solely on the remaining allocation,  
3 and I have added an extra column that kind of tells you whether  
4 that number is over or under the buffer, and so, for red  
5 snapper, the 67,000 pounds that could be carried over is  
6 considerably lower than that buffer, and so that might be okay  
7 to carry over, but, when we get into red grouper, deepwater  
8 grouper, and tilefish, you can see that the full amount of  
9 carryover is in excess of the buffer, and so, if we want to  
10 carry over in those categories, we would need to reduce the  
11 amount that was carried over and figure out some kind of formula  
12 and how we would do that and how it would be distributed.

13  
14 Gag grouper was also underneath the buffer considerably, and so  
15 that could be another one easily carried over, and then I just  
16 want to point out that, for shallow-water grouper, we don't have  
17 a buffer, because there is no OFL. I believe, when I looked  
18 back into this, there was a problem with the black grouper stock  
19 that made it hard to create an OFL, and so, if we would want to  
20 carry over in that one, we would have to do some additional work  
21 to figure out what would be biologically safe to carry over.  
22 One thing I will ask you to remember, again, is that shallow-  
23 water grouper typically doesn't land the majority of their  
24 quota.

25  
26 What we wanted to do is dig into the accounts that were holding  
27 the allocation and look into, now that we know how much  
28 allocation is out there, where is it sitting, and so what you  
29 see here is a table that shows the total amounts of accounts  
30 with allocation in the second column, and then the accounts with  
31 remaining allocation is in the third column, and then the  
32 percentage of those accounts.

33  
34 For red snapper, 178 accounts were remaining with allocation,  
35 which was 128 percent of all of the accounts. Red snapper has  
36 the lowest percentage of accounts with allocation remaining.  
37 The rest all range around the 50 to 60 percent of the accounts  
38 with it.

39  
40 We also want to dig into just those accounts with remaining  
41 allocation and look at how much allocation was remaining within  
42 all of those accounts, and so, obviously, if you get a higher  
43 number of accounts, you might have small amounts of allocation  
44 remaining within them. One thing we did do is there were some  
45 accounts that had a fairly significant amount of allocation  
46 remaining within them, and we did do a little bit of  
47 investigation into some of them.

1 With the red snapper accounts that were in the higher  
2 categories, we did notice that there was a lot of trading going  
3 on, and so it wasn't necessarily a higher amount, due to their  
4 inability to land it after the -- For red grouper, which also  
5 had a high number of accounts with larger poundage, most of this  
6 was, again, obtained through shares, although there might be  
7 some instances where they might have bought it early in the year  
8 and were unable to land it. In tilefish, one of the other  
9 higher categories, and, again, most of this seemed to be  
10 obtained from shares and it just wasn't being landed.

11  
12 I also wanted to tease apart that remaining allocation within  
13 the accounts and figure out how it worked with accounts that  
14 either had shares or didn't have shares, as well as had permits  
15 or did not have permits. Here, the top tables are based on the  
16 number of accounts, and the bottom tables are based on the  
17 poundage within it.

18  
19 For red snapper, by far the highest number of accounts that had  
20 allocation remaining at the end of the year were those that did  
21 not have shares, but did have a permit, and so there is a likely  
22 chance that some of those accounts had to purchase it and were  
23 unable to land it as the pandemic went through. If we look at  
24 red snapper in the poundage though, the greatest number of  
25 pounds is really remaining in the accounts that had shares and  
26 did have a permit.

27  
28 If we move over to tilefish, we see that the accounts with  
29 shares and with a permit had the largest number of accounts with  
30 remaining allocation, as well as the largest amount of pounds,  
31 rather considerably larger than the other categories.

32  
33 This the same types of graphs for gag and red grouper, and so,  
34 for gag and red grouper, we see that the accounts with shares  
35 and with a permit have the highest number of accounts, and,  
36 likewise, also had the highest poundage.

37  
38 Digging into deepwater grouper and shallow-water grouper, we see  
39 a similar pattern to what we've seen in some of the other ones,  
40 with the highest number of accounts being in those that had  
41 shares and permits, as well as the highest poundage remaining in  
42 accounts with both shares and a permit.

43  
44 One of the other questions that came up, either at the SSC or  
45 during earlier council presentations, was what percentage of the  
46 allocation transfers were kind of occurring pre-pandemic. What  
47 we did here is we looked in the January through March timeframe  
48 for 2020, as well as 2017 through 2019, and we looked at how

1 much of the percentage of allocation transfers occurred within  
2 that time period.

3  
4 We want to caution you that remember that the majority of our  
5 allocation gets transferred multiple times, and so we typically  
6 have allocation transfers that exceed the total poundage of the  
7 quota, but, in this graph, this is based on the poundage, and so  
8 red snapper has about 45 percent of the quota transferred in the  
9 January to March of 2020, which was somewhat similar to what  
10 we've seen in past years, which was between 42 to 52 percent.

11  
12 In the other share categories, and I will just point that RGM is  
13 the red grouper multiuse, and the GGM is the gag grouper  
14 multiuse. Keep in mind that these are allocation-only  
15 categories, and they don't have shares. The allocation is  
16 derived from the primary category of red grouper or gag for  
17 those allocations.

18  
19 Here, we see that we have red grouper slightly less within the  
20 primary red grouper than in previous years, and a similar story  
21 can be seen in the gag grouper as well. When it comes to the  
22 multiuse, it's a little bit more of a convoluted story, and so  
23 I'm not going to spend a lot of time on it, because the multiuse  
24 cannot be transferred until all the primary category has been  
25 transferred out of an account, and so there are kind of blocks  
26 within the system that prohibit those transfers.

27  
28 For deepwater grouper, we were right kind of in the ballpark of  
29 the last few years, at 42 percent versus 40 and 41 percent.  
30 Shallow-water grouper also was a little bit lower than we've  
31 seen in the past, but still within the ballpark for the  
32 variability within shallow water, and tilefish was about 50  
33 percent, and so similar to what we've seen in past years.

34  
35 I also wanted to look at, overall, how much of the quota was  
36 transferred in 2020 compared to previous years, with the thought  
37 that the pandemic might have inhibited the transfer of  
38 allocation throughout the year, as it became harder to figure  
39 out a source for the seafood once it was landed. I have each  
40 year individually, and then I also did an average of 2017 to  
41 2019, and I did a little comparison to 2020 for that.

42  
43 For red snapper, we were about 28 percent higher for the total  
44 amount of allocation transferred, at 162 percent versus an  
45 average of around 134 percent. Likewise, red grouper and gag  
46 were also higher than we've seen in past years, up 38 and 41  
47 percent between those two.

1 Now, when we looked at the three categories that we saw, where  
2 we have overall percentage of quota landed, we also see a  
3 pattern that there was lower allocation transfers occurring for  
4 those three share categories of deepwater, shallow-water, and  
5 tilefish. Both deepwater and tilefish were down about 34  
6 percent of the typical amount of allocation transferred that we  
7 see within the year, and shallow-water grouper was only down 5  
8 percent.

9  
10 We were requested to show some data to kind of look at how the  
11 2020 landings look at different price rates, and so I'm going to  
12 spend a little time explaining these graphs. When you see the  
13 2019 and the 2020 value, all the landings were 2020 landings,  
14 and what we did is we applied a monthly ex-vessel value to them  
15 based on either 2020 dollars or the price that we've seen in  
16 2019.

17  
18 The blue line is 2019 price at the 2020 landings, and so, if the  
19 landings were the same in each year, based solely on the  
20 difference between the price, what you see in these graphs is  
21 that difference, and so you can see, and this is for red  
22 snapper, that, in 2019, the value was greater than it was in  
23 2020, and you can just see that, both cumulatively as well as  
24 within the monthly area, what kind of draws your eye is that,  
25 around April, we saw some of the biggest difference between the  
26 two, and that was really the height of the pandemic initially,  
27 when a lot of the states were closing, and so that seems to go  
28 along the lines of what we would expect to find. Overall, just  
29 probably around a million-dollar difference in cumulative value  
30 for red snapper, using those two different prices.

31  
32 We did similar work for gag as well, and now, here, the  
33 difference isn't as extreme as what you saw with red snapper.  
34 You do see that, here, the difference in the pricing came a  
35 little bit later in the pandemic, more in the summer months of  
36 May and June. Otherwise, the lines look pretty close to each  
37 other, and this value between the value between 2019 and 2020  
38 dollars is not that different.

39  
40 The same set of graphs for red grouper, and, again, here, you  
41 see that the price difference really was effective in April and  
42 May, and we also got a little bit more of a bump-up there in  
43 September and October, and, cumulatively, they showed that the  
44 2019 cumulative value dollars was slightly greater by the end of  
45 the year.

46  
47 I am going to stop here, and I do have the slides that I have  
48 typically shown at the other council meetings, and, if a council

1 member would like me to go over those, I can. If not, I will  
2 stop and take questions.

3  
4 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thank you, Dr. Stephen. I thought  
5 that was really interesting. I'm going to give folks a couple  
6 of minutes to put their hands up. Leann.

7  
8 **MS. LEANN BOSARGE:** I just wanted to thank Dr. Stephen. I think  
9 you did a great job of really teasing out who had those pounds  
10 at the end of the year, and I think it was that one slide that  
11 you had in there with shares versus no shares, and I think, on  
12 red snapper, it's like ninety-three of the accounts had no share  
13 ownership, and so I really appreciate that.

14  
15 That, to me, kind of lays out there that there were a lot of  
16 people that leased only, the next generation of fishermen that  
17 have to lease their fish, by and large at the beginning of the  
18 year, in order to fish for the year, and they ended up getting  
19 caught holding the bag, because of the pandemic, and they are  
20 the ones that -- If you can imagine anybody starting out in a  
21 business that's not the well-established and been there for  
22 forty years person, typically they have a lower margin that  
23 they're working on.

24  
25 They are more on the cusp than that well-established  
26 businessman, and so I'm hoping that we can have a discussion at  
27 some point about carrying forward that 67,000 pounds. Albeit,  
28 it's not a huge amount, and it still is 1 percent, and, if I  
29 remember correctly, we've been through a two or three-year  
30 allocation battle on red snapper, where one of the options was  
31 to be transferring 3 percent, and so 1 percent is significant.  
32 I think, to help those next generation of fishermen, I would  
33 like to carry those forward.

34  
35 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Leann. Other thoughts? I  
36 see a couple of hands going up. Kevin.

37  
38 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Thanks, Dr. Stephen, for  
39 the presentation. I had a couple of questions, and one pertains  
40 to Slide Number 12, if you can go to that, please. I listened  
41 to a little bit of the SSC meeting, but not this entire portion  
42 of the meeting, but, as it pertains to red snapper, the large  
43 difference there, did you see anything in the data that  
44 indicated that there might have been some change, or shift, in  
45 some of those transfers, due to weather patterns, like one side  
46 of the Gulf getting more storms than the other or time of the  
47 year that it could have happened, relative to storms?

1 **DR. STEPHEN:** No, we were not able to look at that yet in time  
2 for this presentation. Obviously, we can look at it. One of  
3 the concerns that we brought up to the SSC is that there were at  
4 least four major hurricanes that hit the area, particularly  
5 around Louisiana, that got hit numerous times, and we had  
6 actually done emergency catastrophic conditions two or three  
7 times throughout the year, and some of the people that we had  
8 out surveying the damage with the Science Center had told us  
9 that there was some infrastructure damage, and that would be a  
10 longer-term effect from that than just the pandemic. If  
11 infrastructure gets damaged, we tend to see that some of the  
12 communities suffer a little bit more.

13  
14 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you. The next question, or comment, that I  
15 had was the graphs that you provided on the final slides, Slides  
16 13, 14, and 15, and seeing that we had COVID during 2020 and the  
17 disruptions that it created, not only in the country, but also  
18 as it trickled down to other industries and such that are part  
19 of the broader economy.

20  
21 The price really didn't change much, and I don't know, and this  
22 might wake up Assane, but it just points to, I guess, there's  
23 not much elasticity for at least these species, as it relates to  
24 some effects, or negative effects, on the economy, and so that's  
25 just a comment. I'm a biologist, or at least I think am  
26 sometimes, and so, when I get into things of economics, it  
27 creates a problem, but anyways. Thank you.

28  
29 **DR. STEPHEN:** I also will point out that we typically do an  
30 inflation adjustment between years, and we don't have that yet  
31 for 2020, and so 2020 and 2019 are the actual years and not kind  
32 of on the same baseline. We're waiting to see what the deflator  
33 value would be for 2020.

34  
35 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Kevin. Andy.

36  
37 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I've got two questions. One is for Jessica.  
38 Building off of Leann's comments, we know that there are  
39 allocation holders that don't have shares. With the IFQ system,  
40 how well are we able to tease out how many of those individuals  
41 actually leased that allocation versus potentially like business  
42 arrangements, where allocation might have been transferred to  
43 them by a dealer or shareholder, in order to have those fish  
44 then delivered back to that dealer for sale? Are we able to  
45 tease that out in the system and discern truly who is leasing  
46 allocation versus those more business arrangements?

47  
48 **DR. STEPHEN:** We have a couple of mechanisms that might be



1 available to us. When allocations are transferred, we do have  
2 what we call the related account transfer, which we realize is  
3 used not just for people who have related accounts, but also is  
4 being used for some business transfers. Now, that data is as  
5 good as the quality of the people who enter it, and so, if they  
6 don't tell us, we have a hard time looking at it.

7  
8 We could probably tease out a good percentage of it, but there  
9 would be some uncertainty, as we would be making some decisions  
10 based on the two accounts that are transferring. We can have  
11 mechanisms that we can dig into the related accounts, and it  
12 would take us a little bit longer, because I have to rewrite  
13 that code for the new system that we're in, but that is  
14 something that we could look into more.

15  
16 **MR. STRELCHECK:** All right, and I'm not, at this point, asking  
17 to look into it more, but I just wanted to raise it as a point  
18 for the council, that, just because we're seeing allocation  
19 that's going unused by non-shareholders, it doesn't necessarily  
20 mean that they actually lease that allocation. Certainly there  
21 is a portion of those that did lease the allocation.

22  
23 My second question is back to Leann, and so you commented about  
24 red snapper, in particular, and carrying that over, because of  
25 the fact that these individual fishermen, smaller fishermen in  
26 particular, had leased allocation, and why just red snapper?  
27 Why not other species at that point? Is it because of the  
28 allocation price, or what's the rationale that you're  
29 considering for just red snapper?

30  
31 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thanks, Andy. I'm sorry, Madam Chair. Do you  
32 want me to respond?

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Yes, please.

35  
36 **MS. BOSARGE:** Okay. So, for the grouper species, grouper,  
37 generally speaking, and we probably shouldn't generalize, but,  
38 generally speaking, it's really not in all that great shape  
39 right now, and we have an upcoming assessment on gag, and we  
40 just got one on red grouper.

41  
42 If you look at the landings, back in time even, we're not  
43 landing the allocation on a lot of those grouper species, and we  
44 have anecdotal data from fishermen that says they're not in  
45 great shape, and I really think, from a conservation standpoint,  
46 it would be better to let those fish and let them reproduce  
47 again and maybe get that stock in a little better shape.

1 That, combined with I've only had a couple of fishermen that  
2 kind of mentioned to me that, yes, we might could carry those  
3 grouper over, but, by and large, most of them have kind of said,  
4 well, grouper is not in good shape, which speaks highly of those  
5 fishermen.

6  
7 Now, on red snapper, it's a very different situation, and I have  
8 had fishermen calling me saying, hey, and these are fishermen  
9 that lease, and they don't own. They said, you know, I've tried  
10 like hell to catch these fish, and I have even leased some back  
11 out at a loss to somebody that I thought could fish them, and  
12 was able to fish them, but, you know, at least I cut my losses  
13 on a few of the pounds, but I'm stuck with a bunch of them that  
14 I just wasn't able to fish, or find somebody to fish them, at  
15 least, to cut my losses.

16  
17 Then, on tilefish -- Now, I only reached out to one person on  
18 tilefish. Of course, it's also a very small fishery, and  
19 there's not a whole lot of people in that fishery, but that  
20 gentleman said that I think it will be fine on tilefish, to let  
21 that ride, and so that's essentially where I'm at on that, Andy,  
22 and that's why I've been putting most of my energy into the red  
23 snapper discussion, because that's the one that I would propose  
24 that we carry forward, the 67,000 pounds.

25  
26 I appreciate the comments about trying to tease things out, but  
27 I remember, in the document that Ava was working on for us, 36B,  
28 I think it is, or maybe it was A, but, anyway, when you start  
29 trying to tease things out, even on share ownership, you can  
30 have somebody that owns a tiny, tiny, tiny fraction of shares,  
31 because they just started to actually move from leasing to  
32 owning, your next generation of fishermen, and that was just so  
33 hard to try and define those sorts of things.

34  
35 If we go forward with this, I would propose that you simply take  
36 the 67,000 pounds and change and use the snapshot that we had at  
37 the end of the year, on December 31. If you remember, at the  
38 last meeting, I asked NMFS to take a snapshot of the exact  
39 poundage that was in specific accounts on December 31 for red  
40 snapper.

41  
42 We would put those pounds back in those accounts, and that's the  
43 only way you can make sure that the man that leased those pounds  
44 and took the loss for them, because he couldn't catch them all,  
45 gets them back. If you just roll it into the overall quota,  
46 then you're going to send it out to shareholders, people that  
47 own the fishery, because that's how we allocate the pounds every  
48 year, and that's not going to benefit the man that leased them

1 and couldn't fish them, and so it's a long-winded answer, but  
2 that's what I would propose, for red snapper only.

3  
4 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Leann. I have heard similar comments  
5 for grouper, for what it's worth. Next, I have Tom.

6  
7 **DR. TOM FRAZER:** Thanks, Martha. This question is actually for  
8 Jessica, and so are we able to get a time series for the last --  
9 Over this last year that shows the price, the lease share price?

10  
11 **DR. STEPHEN:** I think I might have that in the supplemental, if  
12 you can bring up that other PowerPoint, which was our  
13 supplemental slides, and then, once we have that up, go ahead to  
14 Slide 8. Here, we have one of these for each of the share  
15 categories. In the bottom-lower corner, really, what we see is  
16 the kind of average weekly allocation price per pound, and so  
17 that would be the leased price.

18  
19 **DR. FRAZER:** So that's through Week 46, and I guess I'm  
20 interested to see what happened over the last month-and-a-half  
21 of the season.

22  
23 **DR. STEPHEN:** We can probably pull that for you guys as well. I  
24 don't think we have it ready yet.

25  
26 **DR. FRAZER:** Okay. I will see if I can get that from you a  
27 little bit later. Thank you.

28  
29 **DR. STEPHEN:** If we do it, we can do it and send it to you or to  
30 all the council members, if they want.

31  
32 **DR. FRAZER:** Okay. Thank you.

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. I am not seeing any more hands  
35 right now, and we've had a little bit of discussion about maybe  
36 how to move forward on this. Leann.

37  
38 **MS. BOSARGE:** Let me try and float a motion, which I haven't  
39 prepared, and so hopefully I won't muffle it up here. **To**  
40 **request that NMFS use the snapshot they took on December 31,**  
41 **2020 of the number of pounds of red snapper in individual IFQ**  
42 **accounts to place those pounds back in those accounts, back in**  
43 **those individual accounts.**

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. I think we've got that on the board. Is  
46 there a second to this motion? I can read it one more time,  
47 just so everybody knows what we're working with. The motion is  
48 to request that NMFS use the snapshot they took on December 31,

1 2020 of the number of pounds of red snapper in individual IFQ  
2 accounts to place those pounds back in those individual  
3 accounts. Is there a second?

4  
5 **MS. BOSARGE:** Can I add something?

6  
7 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Yes.

8  
9 **MS. BOSARGE:** Okay. At the very end of that, and erase the  
10 period, and then "to mitigate the impacts of COVID on that  
11 fishery".

12  
13 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Is there a second?

14  
15 **MR. JOHN SANCHEZ:** I will second it.

16  
17 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. It's seconded by John Sanchez. Mara.

18  
19 **MS. MARA LEVY:** Thank you. A couple of things. I guess the  
20 first thing, is this an emergency rule request? I mean, are you  
21 wanting to do some sort of document? I mean, I'm guessing  
22 emergency rule, since the way it's phrased, but, I mean, that  
23 would be a very specific request, and you would need to do that,  
24 and the council would need to vote on it, but then my second  
25 point is that, in order to do any type of carryover, because,  
26 for red snapper, the ACL equals the ABC, we would need the SSC  
27 to come in and somehow modify the ABC for this year to account  
28 for this carryover.

29  
30 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Leann, do you want to respond to that?

31  
32 **MS. BOSARGE:** So I'm confused, because I thought that Jessica  
33 told us that we had some wiggle room and that there was a buffer  
34 in there that wouldn't go over the ABC. When the SSC looked at  
35 it, that was their impression, I believe, too, and so I'm  
36 confused there. Mara, as far as the emergency rule, however we  
37 have to do this to push this out in a timely fashion, and I will  
38 follow your lead on that.

39  
40 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Mara, you go first and then Dr. Stephen.

41  
42 **MS. LEVY:** Jessica can answer, but I believe she was -- I feel  
43 like she was looking at the difference between maybe the ABC and  
44 the OFL, right, and so there's two different things. We can't  
45 exceed the overfishing limit, but we also can't put in place  
46 catch levels that exceed the ABC recommendation from the SSC.

47  
48 Then I'm not really telling you how to proceed with this, but

1 there has to be some sort of council direction or action, and  
2 you can't just ask NMFS to do something, and so the authority is  
3 if it's appropriate for an emergency rule, for the council to  
4 request an emergency rule. If it's not appropriate for an  
5 emergency rule, then to do some sort of council document, and so  
6 that's where I was going with that.

7  
8 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Dr. Stephen, do you want to add to that?

9  
10 **DR. STEPHEN:** I think Mara covered it. Just remember it's  
11 because that red snapper's quota is the ACL, which is also the  
12 ABC, which is different than grouper-tilefish.

13  
14 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. It sounds like, if we want to move  
15 forward with this, we need to do two things. First, we would  
16 need -- Well, I don't know about first, but we would need to  
17 send this to the SSC, so that they could potentially recommend a  
18 change to the ABC, so that we can make this happen, and we would  
19 also, if we wanted to request an emergency rule at this meeting,  
20 I guess, in this committee, we would need to modify this motion  
21 a little bit.

22  
23 I think all we would need to do, with the current motion, is  
24 just to say -- To recommend that the council request an  
25 emergency rule, and that would more or less get to Mara's point,  
26 but I guess I'm looking for feedback on the sequencing here, if  
27 this is something that we really want to do. Do we need to  
28 start with the SSC action before we moving on this motion?  
29 Mara, is your hand up again to help us with this?

30  
31 **MS. LEVY:** I mean, I would suggest that you go to the SSC and  
32 ask them to give you a new ABC recommendation for this year that  
33 accounts for this carryover that you want to do, and then, at  
34 the next meeting, you could potentially request an emergency  
35 rule to implement that ABC, as well as the carryover, for 2020.

36  
37 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Leann.

38  
39 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That sounds like a good  
40 path forward. **I will revise that motion just a little bit, so**  
41 **that it will carry out that way. We're going to say to begin**  
42 **the process of using -- Then delete "request that NMFS use", and**  
43 **so to begin the process of using the snapshot, and change "they"**  
44 **to "NMFS" on December 31, 2020 of the number of pounds of red**  
45 **snapper in individual IFQ accounts, in order to place those**  
46 **pounds back in those individual accounts, to mitigate the**  
47 **impacts of the COVID pandemic on the fishery. Okay. That looks**  
48 **good. Thank you.**

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Go ahead, Ryan.

3  
4 **MR. RYAN RINDONE:** Maybe we should put, just for clarity on that  
5 fishery, for the 2021 fishing year, if that's the intent, just  
6 so that it's clear where it's coming from and where it's going.

7  
8 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Leann, are you okay with that?

9  
10 **MS. BOSARGE:** I get your drift, Ryan, but I would rather than  
11 put that in there, if you don't mind. I can see the SSC getting  
12 hung up on that and trying to read too much into that. Sorry.

13  
14 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay.

15  
16 **MR. RINDONE:** Well, I guess, from a staff perspective, my  
17 question would be, so if it's being put back into those  
18 accounts, and for what year, and we would need to know what  
19 years catch limits the SSC is going to have to consider when  
20 this process is taking place and what they're going to have to  
21 look at, and so we would need to know where it's coming from,  
22 and I think, in this case, it's pretty clear that it's coming  
23 from 2020, but we would also need to know where it's going.

24  
25 **MS. BOSARGE:** Okay. **Then, after, "pounds back into those**  
26 **individual accounts in 2021"**. Is that helpful, Ryan?

27  
28 **MR. RINDONE:** Yes, and, again, it was just knowing where it's  
29 coming from and where it's going.

30  
31 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. John Sanchez, I'm going to assume that  
32 you're okay with all these little edits, but, if you're not, go  
33 ahead and jump in the queue, since you were the seconder.

34  
35 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I'm good.

36  
37 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** You're good? Okay. Leann, is your hand still  
38 up?

39  
40 **MS. BOSARGE:** No, I'm good. Thank you.

41  
42 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Mara.

43  
44 **MS. LEVY:** Thanks. Just one more point, and so remember that  
45 red snapper, as a whole, is tied to commercial and recreational  
46 and private angling and for-hire. We have an overfishing limit,  
47 and we have the state calibrations that we're looking at to try  
48 to address private angling overages that potentially could lead

1 to exceeding the overfishing limit, and so I think you need to  
2 be aware of that and really think about the stuff that we're  
3 going to talk about today, in terms of the calibration and  
4 addressing the other half of the puzzle, because that half may  
5 gum up the works for the other half. I would just encourage you  
6 to think hard about the calibration stuff.

7  
8 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Noted. Thank you, Mara. Andy.

9  
10 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thank you, Martha. I have a question for Mara  
11 first. Any emergency action that the council would propose in  
12 April, would that require notice on the council agenda for them  
13 to do so?

14  
15 **MS. LEVY:** Well, generally, emergency stuff -- I mean, it's an  
16 emergency, and so it comes up in the minutes and not necessarily  
17 on the agenda.

18  
19 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Okay.

20  
21 **MS. LEVY:** That doesn't mean that we can't put it on there,  
22 knowing that we're considering it, but we have to take these  
23 steps before we can address what we have identified as the  
24 emergency, which is potentially the underharvest of red snapper  
25 by the commercial sector in 2020.

26  
27 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I was just asking so we didn't have any  
28 administrative hurdles to trip over at the next meeting, if this  
29 is pursued. I guess my other comment is I'm certainly  
30 sympathetic to the industry members, especially those that  
31 leased allocation and were unable to use it. I'm struggling to  
32 fully appreciate the emergency nature of this, given that  
33 allocation is left on the table each and every year. We do have  
34 a small amount of allocation that was left on the table, and  
35 certainly it would benefit, obviously, those fishermen that  
36 could use it.

37  
38 My concern is timing, and even emergency rulemaking puts us into  
39 summer, possibly late summer plus we have a looming quota  
40 increase, which I know won't directly go to these allocation  
41 holders, but we have heard, obviously, concerns from the  
42 commercial industry over the past of these large quota  
43 increases, especially late in the year, and their inability to  
44 either use that quota or depressing prices, because of the  
45 availability of allocation. I would ask that the council also  
46 take that into consideration as they proceed forward with  
47 considering emergency rulemaking.

1 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thank you, Andy. Tom, is your hand up?  
2 Are you good?

3  
4 **DR. FRAZER:** I'm good. My question was answered. Thank you.

5  
6 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Any other discussion on this motion?  
7 Leann.

8  
9 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you. I would just ask the council, before  
10 we vote on this, to think about what other people that can pass  
11 regulations have done in this country to try and get people over  
12 this hump, and through this hump, and we've given -- This  
13 country has given money to cruise lines, for crying out loud,  
14 and big publicly-traded companies, and the money that's supposed  
15 to go to fishermen that came through the CARES Act -- I guess  
16 we'll see it one day, but I have yet to see any around here, for  
17 sure, and I would venture to guess that it's the same in other  
18 states.

19  
20 Maybe it's starting to be parceled out, but, from what I hear  
21 anecdotally, even in my state, for a commercial fisherman, it's  
22 going to be a few thousand dollars, maybe \$4,000 or \$5,000,  
23 maybe, and you see the price of snapper. These guys took a hit  
24 on the dollar that they got, on the price per pound that they  
25 got, and they went from five-dollars-and-something a pound to  
26 four-dollars-and-something a pound.

27  
28 In my world, in the shrimp world, if you take a hit of a nickel  
29 or a dime per pound, that's big, and that's huge. If you looked  
30 at me and said you're going to take a dollar hit per pound, we  
31 would just have to throw our hands up and walk away. I have to  
32 commend these guys for even hanging in there this long.

33  
34 The optics, if we don't pass this, after all the different  
35 industries in this country that have tried to be helped, I don't  
36 think that will look very well on this council, if we say, no --  
37 You know, we've got all of these amendments going on to try and  
38 aid the next generation of fishermen and replacement fishermen,  
39 and we have a chance, in one fell swoop with this motion, to  
40 actually do some good for those men and women, and we decide  
41 that, nah, it's not worth it, I think the optics wouldn't be too  
42 good.

43  
44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Leann. Kevin.

45  
46 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Two things. The first is  
47 did John second -- Wasn't there an edit made, and did John  
48 second the motion after the edit?



1  
2 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I think he chimed in and said he didn't have a  
3 problem with the edit. John.

4  
5 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Yes.

6  
7 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Go ahead, Kevin.

8  
9 **MR. ANSON:** All right, and so, I mean, I understand the  
10 situation that these individuals are in, and I can't appreciate  
11 it fully, obviously, but I can understand some concerns and  
12 problems that they have associated with COVID and not being able  
13 to utilize all those pounds, but, you know, I am not going to  
14 support the motion.

15  
16 I mean, a little bit of -- The business model for everybody is  
17 there is things that occur and situations that arise that are  
18 out of your control, and, yes, you try to do the best and make  
19 the best decisions to mitigate those, and, I mean, what about  
20 other fisheries?

21  
22 We talked about the other IFQ programs and their losses, and,  
23 yes, they don't have as many fish, and so it's a little bit more  
24 of a problem for them, to try to come with this sort of request,  
25 but what about other fisheries that have impacts? This is a bad  
26 precedent, and I think it's almost another poke in the eye to  
27 some folks, if this were to go through, and it would help that  
28 segment of this particular fishery, and so thank you.

29  
30 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Kevin. One more scan for  
31 hands. If I don't see any, and I do not, and I guess let's go  
32 ahead and put this up for a vote. I guess I will first ask for  
33 opposition, and then we might need to go to a roll call vote.  
34 Let me read the motion one more time.

35  
36 **The motion is to begin the process of using the snapshot that**  
37 **NMFS took on December 31, 2020 of the number of pounds of red**  
38 **snapper in individual IFQ accounts, in order to place those**  
39 **pounds back in those individual accounts in 2021 to mitigate the**  
40 **impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on that fishery. Is there any**  
41 **opposition to this motion?**

42  
43 **MR. TROY WILLIAMSON:** Yes.

44  
45 **MR. ANSON:** Yes.

46  
47 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Yes.

1 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Let's do a roll call vote, because  
2 I am hearing enough to make that seem like the best course of  
3 action. Dr. Simmons.  
4  
5 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE SIMMONS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr.  
6 Anson.  
7  
8 **MR. ANSON:** No.  
9  
10 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Ms. Bosarge.  
11  
12 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes.  
13  
14 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Williamson.  
15  
16 **MR. WILLIAMSON:** I am going to vote no on this, because it  
17 appears to me that what we have here is anecdotal evidence to  
18 show an impact on the fishery by the COVID impact, by the COVID  
19 virus, and for that reason.  
20  
21 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you. Dr. Stunz.  
22  
23 **DR. GREG STUNZ:** No.  
24  
25 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Riechers.  
26  
27 **MR. ROBIN RIECHERS:** No.  
28  
29 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Schieble.  
30  
31 **MR. CHRIS SCHIEBLE:** Based on what Mara said, I think I'm going  
32 to vote no on this for now, until we can further analyze this.  
33  
34 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Ms. Guyas.  
35  
36 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I reserve, since I'm the Chair.  
37  
38 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Okay. Ms. Boggs.  
39  
40 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes.  
41  
42 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Strelcheck.  
43  
44 **MR. STRELCHECK:** No.  
45  
46 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Diaz.  
47  
48 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** Yes.

1  
2 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Dyskow.

3  
4 **MR. PHIL DYSKOW:** No.

5  
6 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Swindell.

7  
8 **MR. ED SWINDELL:** I am still not satisfied that this is not  
9 going to cause more problems in the future, and so I'm going to  
10 say no.

11  
12 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** General Spraggins.

13  
14 **GENERAL JOE SPRAGGINS:** I am going to abstain from this one.

15  
16 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Sanchez.

17  
18 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Yes.

19  
20 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Dr. Shipp.

21  
22 **DR. BOB SHIPP:** No.

23  
24 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Mr. Dugas.

25  
26 **MR. J.D. DUGAS:** No.

27  
28 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** The motion fails four to ten with  
29 three abstentions.

30  
31 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thanks, Dr. Simmons. If we don't have  
32 anything else left on this item, let's move on to Item Number V  
33 on our agenda. That is going to be the final action discussion  
34 on the framework to modify gray triggerfish catch limits.

35  
36 While staff is preparing, or I guess wrapping up this and  
37 preparing that item, what we'll do for these final action items,  
38 partly I think so that I don't forget, is we'll cover the public  
39 comment before we go into the document and codified text, and so  
40 we've got a couple of these all in a row, but this is our first  
41 one, and so I'm going to turn it over to Emily first.

42  
43 **FINAL ACTION: FRAMEWORK ACTION: MODIFICATION OF GRAY TRIGGERFISH**  
44 **CATCH LIMITS**

45  
46 **MS. EMILY MUEHLSTEIN:** Bernie, if you can go ahead and bring up  
47 Tab B, Number 6(b). Because this is a framework action, we  
48 produced the public hearing video, like we typically do, and

1 pushed that out, and we had sixty-four people watch the public  
2 hearing video, and this is all as of last Tuesday, and we  
3 received twenty comments on this amendment, and so we did hear a  
4 lot of comments that were not necessarily specific to the action  
5 in the document.

6  
7 The one comment that was kind of relevant to the document itself  
8 was that we heard that 150,000 pounds is not enough to add to  
9 the catch limit and that the increase needs to be large enough  
10 to allow for a longer season, and I presume that this was in  
11 reference to a recreational season.

12  
13 We did get a lot of comments that were specific to triggerfish,  
14 but not necessarily the actions in the document. We did hear  
15 some concern about the number of discards during red snapper  
16 season and the suggestion that anglers should be allowed to keep  
17 triggerfish when red snapper is open. We heard that triggerfish  
18 used to be a trash fish, but is now popular, because of the  
19 depleted stock and season closures. It's sort of one of those,  
20 when supply decreases, demand increase issues.

21  
22 We heard that the recreational data collection programs are not  
23 tracking triggerfish harvest and informing quota closures well  
24 enough. We also heard that the pandemic impacted fishing effort  
25 and that there is no way that the quota was harvested for  
26 triggerfish in 2020.

27  
28 Then we did get a number of emails, and I think maybe what  
29 happened is some of the captains were somehow misinformed about  
30 this document and whether it considered the seasons, and we got  
31 a couple of emails from the snowbirds asking for that  
32 January/February opening that they have been asking for for a  
33 number of years, but then we did get a bit of an email campaign  
34 asking for the triggerfish season to remain as status quo and  
35 not be moved to January and February, and that concludes my  
36 summary.

37  
38 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Emily. Since those season comments I  
39 think are going to go -- I guess they apply to another document  
40 that we'll be looking at relative to triggerfish later, and can  
41 we roll those -- Hang on to these comments, I guess, for when we  
42 discuss that at a future meeting?

43  
44 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Yes, we absolutely can. We'll go ahead and put  
45 them in that comment form, because I did anticipate the same.

46  
47 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Cool. Very good. Thank you very much.  
48 Are there questions for Emily before we move into this document?

1 Okay. I don't see any, and so let's go ahead. Carly, are you  
2 going to take us through our document today?

3  
4 **MS. CARLY SOMERSET:** I will. Thank you, Madam Chair. First, I  
5 will just go through a bit of background, and so we -- The  
6 previous iteration included catch limits and modifications for  
7 vermilion, and so the council saw that combined vermilion  
8 snapper and gray triggerfish draft framework action at the last  
9 meeting in November. Based on discussion, that document was  
10 split into additional documents, and, as Emily discussed with  
11 the comments, there will be one in the future for seasonal  
12 closures, but this document specifically addresses only  
13 modifications to gray triggerfish catch limits.

14  
15 There is one action with two alternatives, and it is up for  
16 final action, and it does not currently have a preferred, and so  
17 I will go through just some of the changes that were made since  
18 you saw this document previously, for the one that included  
19 vermilion, and then we can discuss some of the rationale behind  
20 the alternatives.

21  
22 For Chapters 1 and 2, they are very similar to what the council  
23 saw at the last meeting, and there's been some minor changes.  
24 If we go to Table 1.1.1, Table 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 have been  
25 modified slightly to include the ACT and the adjusted ACT for  
26 the commercial and recreational sectors, and so I just wanted to  
27 point that out. That includes the adjusted ACTs and adjusted  
28 ACLs. For those years that the ACL was exceeded, and, for the  
29 recreational sector, that also is payback -- An overage  
30 adjustment is when the ACL was exceeded and the stock is  
31 considered overfished.

32  
33 I just want to note that the percent ACL landed, that's the  
34 second-to-the-right column, and that shows the percent of the  
35 original ACL and not the adjusted.

36  
37 Then the other addition was language that was added to clarify  
38 that the gray triggerfish stock is still in a nine-year  
39 rebuilding plan from Amendment 46. However, the recent interim  
40 analysis does not directly address how that increase in the ABC  
41 would affect the progress towards rebuilding, but the index of  
42 abundance trends do suggest that it is likely that gray  
43 triggerfish biomass has increased in recent years and that this  
44 biomass should support additional removals, and so this is  
45 important for when we discuss the two alternatives.

46  
47 Since this document has changed, I just want to go over the  
48 purpose and need again really quickly. The purpose of the

1 proposed action is to increase the ABC, ACLs, and ACTs  
2 consistent with the gray triggerfish interim analysis and SEFSC,  
3 SSC, and Reef Fish Advisory Panel recommendations. The need for  
4 the proposed action is to establish catch limits that achieve  
5 optimum yield, consistent with the requirements of the Magnuson-  
6 Stevens Act, while preventing overfishing.

7  
8 Now we'll go back to the one action with the two alternatives.  
9 Alternative 1 is the no action alternative that retains the  
10 acceptable biological catch, annual catch limits, and annual  
11 catch targets for gray triggerfish, as implemented in 2018 by  
12 Reef Fish Amendment 46.

13  
14 Alternative 1 retains these catch limits as well as the buffers,  
15 and so the 10 percent reduction from the ACL to ACT for the  
16 recreational sector and a 5 percent for the commercial.  
17 Alternative 1 does not reflect the SEFSC and council SSC's  
18 recent ABC recommendations, and that was the recommendation to  
19 increase it from 305,300 pounds to -- You can see that, in  
20 Alternative 2, the ABC would be 456,900 pounds, and that was  
21 based on the 2020 gray triggerfish interim analysis.

22  
23 Additionally, the Reef Fish Advisory Panel requested to set the  
24 total ACL equal to the ABC, based on the interim analysis, and  
25 so Alternative 1 does not reflect either of those  
26 recommendations.

27  
28 Alternative 2, under the current sector allocations, would  
29 increase the recreational ACL to -- Well, it would increase the  
30 recreational ACL and the commercial ACL, and it also applies the  
31 council's ACL/ACT control rules to calculate a new buffer of 24  
32 percent between the recreational ACL and the ACT and an 8  
33 percent buffer between the commercial ACL and ACT. These  
34 buffers were determined by comparing the sector-specific  
35 landings and ACLs for the years 2016 through 2019, and that's  
36 been included in the appendix, or one of the appendices, in the  
37 document.

38  
39 Alternative 2 does reflect the SSC's recommendation to increase  
40 the ABC, and the change in the buffers may help constrain  
41 landings, and so, lastly, before discussion or any questions, I  
42 just wanted to point out that, in Alternative 1 and Alternative  
43 2, the OFL remains the same, at 1.22 million, and both of these  
44 -- I know there's been discussion with some of our other reef  
45 fish documents that they are both in MRIP-CHTS, these catch  
46 limits, and so there's no change from one currency to another  
47 between the alternatives. Madam Chair, I will pause to see if  
48 there are any questions or discussion.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thank you, Carly. Okay, and so are  
3 there questions for Carly, or does anybody want to offer up a  
4 motion? We are scheduled to take final action on this at this  
5 meeting, and so we will need to choose a preferred, and there's  
6 only two choices.

7  
8 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Martha, I will make a motion.

9  
10 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Let me get Robin. I don't know if it was a  
11 question or -- I see his hand up first.

12  
13 **MR. RIECHERS:** Well, I was going to do the same thing that John  
14 was going to do, and, John, I will step in, just since I have  
15 the mic then, but I will look forward to your second. **I move**  
16 **that we make Alternative 2 the preferred alternative.**

17  
18 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I will second that.

19  
20 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, John.

21  
22 **MR. SANCHEZ:** That may never happen again, by the way.

23  
24 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** We'll take note of it. Okay. Now we've got  
25 that motion up on the board, and I've got a couple other hands  
26 here. J.D.

27  
28 **MR. DUGAS:** Yes, ma'am. I have a question on this Alternative  
29 2. Why is the OFL and the ABC so far apart? I asked this  
30 question yesterday on cobia, and it was answered as a  
31 recommendation, and so I just want some clarification on that.  
32 Why can't those numbers be squeezed a little closer together?

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Who would like to take that one? I think I see  
35 Ryan. Ryan, go ahead.

36  
37 **MR. RINDONE:** When we had our last completed stock assessment on  
38 gray triggerfish, the SSC was asked to examine three different  
39 recruitment scenarios, a high, a medium, and a low-projection  
40 scenario, for recruitment, and, given that recruitment has been  
41 pretty low in the recent time series, the SSC thought it more  
42 appropriate to go with the low-recruitment scenario when looking  
43 at the projections for future yields or future catch limits for  
44 gray triggerfish, following that assessment.

45  
46 That is why the -- That's the reason for the large buffer  
47 between the OFL and the ABC, and so one way that the council  
48 could look at the results of this interim analysis, with respect

1 to what the ABC was and what the ABC is being proposed to become  
2 in Alternative 2, is that the stock is recovering from its  
3 previous overfished and undergoing overfishing condition, and so  
4 it's growing, and it's getting more healthy, and so it's  
5 definitely a good thing, and hopefully that trend continues,  
6 and, when we have our next assessment of gray triggerfish down  
7 the line, hopefully that trend has continued to that point as  
8 well.

9  
10 **MR. DUGAS:** Madam Chair, I have another question.

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sure. Go ahead.

13  
14 **MR. DUGAS:** So, Ryan, at what point -- When can we review this  
15 again to adjust the ABC? Do we have to wait until the next  
16 stock assessment, or can we do it in a year, or what's our  
17 options going forward?

18  
19 **MR. RINDONE:** J.D., you have the option of conducting interim  
20 analyses like the one that the SSC just reviewed, and, Bernie,  
21 is it possible to bring up that interim analysis schedule that I  
22 had sent in yesterday? It was Tab E, Number 5(b), I think.

23  
24 You can see on here that I have put gray triggerfish back on the  
25 -- I put it on the interim analysis schedule for 2023, in  
26 Position 2, and I have tried to provide some sort of priority to  
27 how these things are numbered, but that's up to you guys to  
28 fiddle with.

29  
30 This would presume the council requesting the Science Center  
31 conduct an interim analysis of gray triggerfish in 2023 using  
32 the combined video index, which uses the video surveys from the  
33 NMFS Pascagoula Lab, the NMFS Panama City Lab, and the Florida  
34 Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, and that the SSC would get  
35 that interim analysis in 2023.

36  
37 Again, this schedule is just a draft, but it's just showing that  
38 we do have consideration for this on the calendar, and so we'll  
39 work with the Science Center to try and finetune this through  
40 time and keep bringing it back to you guys for additional input.  
41 Madam Chair.

42  
43 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Ryan. Clay.

44  
45 **DR. CLAY PORCH:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to let you know  
46 that we could do the gray trigger interim analysis as early as  
47 2022. We can't do it this year, simply because we didn't  
48 conduct a survey in 2020, due to COVID-19. Thanks.



1  
2 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks for that. Okay. I don't see any other  
3 hands. Could we get the motion back on the board? Ryan, do you  
4 have something else?  
5

6 **MR. RINDONE:** Just directly to what Clay had said, and just  
7 another consideration for the council, and also the SSC, and  
8 remember the SSC has actually discussed this already, is that  
9 2020 will be a unique year, obviously, for a lot of our fishery-  
10 independent indices of abundance, due to COVID, because some of  
11 those surveys were either not conducted or were only partially  
12 conducted, compared to how they typically have been performed in  
13 previous years, and so the Science Center brought this up during  
14 our last SSC meeting, and I'm certain that they will consider  
15 this when presenting this information to the SSC, which, again,  
16 is also aware of this, but that's just something for the council  
17 to remember as well. That's all.  
18

19 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Ryan. Okay. So we've got our motion  
20 back on the board. I don't see any other hands at this time. I  
21 will read it one more time, and then we'll see if there's any  
22 opposition to this motion. **The motion is, in Action 1, to make**  
23 **Alternative 2 the preferred alternative. Is there any**  
24 **opposition to this motion? Hearing none, the motion carries.**  
25

26 We also have some codified text with this document that I think  
27 we're going to want to look at before we entertain a motion to  
28 send this to the council for final action, if we could go  
29 through that next. I think that's Tab B, Number 6(b). I've got  
30 SERO staff as the presenter on this, and I'm not sure who that  
31 will be.  
32

33 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Peter, are you on and able to go through this?  
34

35 **MR. HOOD:** I'm on. Basically, the text has been -- The quotas  
36 and ACLs have just been updated to reflect Alternative 2, and  
37 you can see those denoted.  
38

39 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Peter. Any questions as we're  
40 scrolling through here? All right. In an effort to keep us  
41 like to the minute on time, I'm going to ask if there's a motion  
42 to recommend that the council take final action on this, just so  
43 that we're teed-up for Thursday when we go through our motions  
44 report.  
45

46 **DR. SHIPP:** I would so move.  
47

48 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Dr. Shipp. Let's see if we

1 can get that motion on the board.

2  
3 **MR. DIAZ:** I will second, Martha.

4  
5 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Dale. While they're typing, I am going  
6 to see if I can read this motion for us. **I think it to approve**  
7 **the Framework Action Modification of Gray Triggerfish Catch**  
8 **Limits and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for**  
9 **review and implementation and deem the codified text as**  
10 **necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial license to**  
11 **make the necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair**  
12 **is given authority to deem any changes to the codified text as**  
13 **necessary and appropriate. Is there any opposition to this**  
14 **motion? Hearing none, the motion carries. All right. We are**  
15 now scheduled for a break.

16  
17 **DR. FRAZER:** Excellent, Martha, and so I appreciate everybody  
18 working through this in a very focused manner, and so we will  
19 take a fifteen-minute break, and we will reconvene to deal also  
20 with another final action item having to do with lane snapper,  
21 and so we'll see everybody at 10:45.

22  
23 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

24  
25 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Next on our agenda is final action  
26 on lane snapper. Let's do the same thing that we did with gray  
27 triggerfish and start with the public comment. I will turn it  
28 over to Emily.

29  
30 **FINAL ACTION: FRAMEWORK ACTION: MODIFICATION OF THE GULF OF**  
31 **MEXICO LANE SNAPPER CATCH LIMITS AND ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES**  
32

33 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair. For lane  
34 snapper, we had fifty-one people view the public hearing video,  
35 and we only received one comment before last Tuesday, which is  
36 when we summarized our comments.

37  
38 We heard that catch levels for lane snapper should be increased  
39 as soon as possible, especially because we've experienced in-  
40 season closures in a healthy fishery. We also heard that quota  
41 overages and closures due to management should not occur in  
42 healthy fisheries, and that's it.

43  
44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Emily. It looks like Dr.  
45 Hollensead is going to walk us through the main document, and  
46 so, Dr. Hollensead, whenever you're ready.

47  
48 **DR. LISA HOLLENSEAD:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** The action guide or the document, whichever one  
3 you want to start with.  
4

5 **DR. HOLLENSEAD:** I think we'll go through the document, if  
6 that's all right. Okay. Bernie, would you mind taking us  
7 quickly to the purpose and need? If you recall, at our last  
8 council meeting, we reviewed Chapters 1 and 2 of this document,  
9 and this revision of the draft has Chapters 3 and 4, along with  
10 the associated analyses, and the preferreds were picked, and so  
11 this document is ready for final action, should the committee  
12 want to take that route.  
13

14 First, I wanted to just touch on the purpose and need for this  
15 document, and so the purpose is to modify the OFL, ABC, and ACL  
16 for lane snapper. In this case, this is going to be referred to  
17 as catch limits, based on recently updated yield projections,  
18 and to consider updating the current accountability measures,  
19 and so that's going to be the ACT and the fishing season  
20 closure, to account for management uncertainty.  
21

22 The need for this is to update the existing lane snapper catch  
23 limits and AMS based on the best scientific information  
24 available to achieve optimum yield consistent with the  
25 requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act while preventing  
26 overfishing. If there's no questions about the purpose and  
27 need, I was going to move on to Action 1.  
28

29 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** I am not seeing any hands, and so I think  
30 you're good to move on.  
31

32 **DR. HOLLENSEAD:** Okay. Great. In Action 1, just a quick review  
33 of this, and Action 1 would update the OFL, ABC, ACL, and  
34 potentially the ACT, depending on what alternative is selected.  
35 If you will recall, currently what's on the books for catch  
36 limits for lane snapper is calculated using the Marine  
37 Recreational Fisheries Statistical Survey, or MRFSS, and so  
38 Alternatives 2 and 3 allow for the updating of these catch  
39 limits, specifically for what will happen as a result of the  
40 stock assessment update, which incorporates the MRIP-FES  
41 recreational data.  
42

43 That's what Alternatives 2 and 3 do. The difference between  
44 Alternative 2 is Alternative 2 does not set an ACT, while  
45 Alternative 3 would allow a 16 percent buffer to calculate an  
46 ACT. At the last meeting, the committee selected Alternative 2  
47 as the preferred.  
48

1 One thing I just want the council to note is the second row for  
2 each one of those tables presented in Alternative 2 and  
3 Alternative 3 are in MRFSS, and those are just for reference  
4 only. When we go through the codified text, you will see, in  
5 the codified text, when it talks about updating these catch  
6 limits, for example, if you want to use the OFL, that value,  
7 that 1,053,834, is what's going to be in the codified text, and  
8 that would be in MRIP-FES. Preferred Alternative 2, what is  
9 selected, that is currently what's in the codified text that's  
10 in the briefing book, if that makes sense, and I would be happy  
11 to take any questions that anybody has on Action 1 and the  
12 alternatives.

13  
14 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Let's just scan here for questions.  
15 We do have a preferred for this one, and so we're in good shape  
16 in that regard, if we wanted to take final action today, or  
17 recommend the council take final action. Okay. I don't see any  
18 hands, and so I think we can move on.

19  
20 **DR. HOLLENSSEAD:** Okay. Great. So Action 2, this would modify  
21 the fishing season closure for lane snapper, and, currently, the  
22 fishery is allowed to proceed in a single year. If the ACL is  
23 exceeded in that given fishing year, the next year, harvest will  
24 be monitored and then closed, potentially, if the ACL is met or  
25 expected to be met.

26  
27 Alternative 2 would change that, and, instead of monitoring to  
28 the ACL, it would monitor to the ACT, but Preferred Alternative  
29 3, which was selected the last time the committee saw this  
30 document, would act very similarly to like what we have for  
31 recreational greater amberjack, for example, where there would  
32 be an in-season fishing closure should one of the prescribed  
33 triggers be met or be projected to be met, and, in this case,  
34 the committee, last time, selected that prescribed trigger to be  
35 the ACL. Therefore, we have the Preferred Alternative 3 and the  
36 Preferred Option 3a. I will be happy to take any questions on  
37 Action 2.

38  
39 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. I do not see any questions at this  
40 point. That is our last action, correct?

41  
42 **DR. HOLLENSSEAD:** Yes, ma'am.

43  
44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. If there is no further questions, I  
45 guess we could take a peek at the codified text again, and, if  
46 everybody is good with that, we could put forward a motion for  
47 the council to consider.

1 **MS. LEVY:** Do you want me to go over it real quick?

2  
3 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sure.

4  
5 **MS. LEVY:** Okay. I mean, it's pretty self-explanatory, and it's  
6 just implementing the preferred, and so it is putting the new  
7 catch level in there, and it's modifying the AM to be linked to  
8 the ACL each year, and the agency will monitor and close if the  
9 ACL is reached or projected to be reached.

10  
11 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thank you, Mara. Susan.

12  
13 **MS. BOGGS:** I apologize, but did we actually pick a preferred on  
14 Action 2 already?

15  
16 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Yes. Our preferred is --

17  
18 **MS. BOGGS:** Okay. I didn't know that we actually --

19  
20 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** It looks like it's Alternative 3, Option 3a.

21  
22 **MS. BOGGS:** We moved the screen. I was looking at my notes, and  
23 I was, like, wait a minute, I'm confused. Thank you.

24  
25 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** It's all good. Okay. If we're good to go on  
26 this document, I would be happy to accept a motion similar to  
27 what we did with triggerfish to recommend the council take final  
28 action on this. Dale.

29  
30 **MR. DIAZ:** Madam Chair, I would be willing to make that motion.  
31 If the staff would put the standard language up on the board,  
32 and then insert the title of the document, that would be my  
33 motion.

34  
35 **DR. SHIPP:** I would second the motion.

36  
37 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Dale, and thank you, Dr.  
38 Shipp. We will get that on the board here. I think we've got  
39 it now, and so let me read it. Then I see your hand, Leann.

40  
41 **The motion is to approve the Framework Action Modification of**  
42 **the Gulf of Mexico Lane Snapper Catch Limits and Accountability**  
43 **Measures and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce**  
44 **for review and implementation and deem the codified text as**  
45 **necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial license to**  
46 **make the necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair**  
47 **is given the authority to deem any changes to the codified text**  
48 **as necessary and appropriate. Leann.**

1  
2 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to vote in  
3 favor of the motion, but I would be remiss if I didn't note one  
4 thing here, and so we're going to change the ACL to just over a  
5 million pounds, and, in this document, on paper page 7, it  
6 actually gives us what our landings have been, in FES now,  
7 commercial and recreational combined, what our total landings  
8 have been over the past about twenty years, I guess, and I only  
9 see one year where we got closed, and I see a big number in  
10 2017, but, in eyeballing it, I'm guessing the average would be  
11 somewhere around 500,000, or 400,000, pounds, even in FES-  
12 adjusted numbers, plus commercial, that we're landing, and we're  
13 putting in a quota of a million, and so it's double what we have  
14 traditionally landed, even in FES-adjusted terms, and everybody  
15 says it's fine, and hopefully it is, and I just want to throw  
16 that out there, that we're building a lot more capacity for  
17 landings into this fishery.

18  
19 Now, it's data-poor, and so I'm going to roll with the punches,  
20 but there's a lot of risk here that we could be coming back to  
21 this sucker in about ten years to try and figure out how to  
22 rebuild something.

23  
24 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Leann. Is there any other comments on  
25 the motion? Let's get that motion back up on the board. **Is**  
26 **there any opposition to this motion? Hearing none, the motion**  
27 **carries.** All right. Thanks, Dr. Hollensead. John, I see your  
28 hand.

29  
30 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I just wanted to note that very good job, Madam  
31 Chair. That's two final actions in thirty minutes, with a  
32 fifteen-minute break.

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Damn. I know, right? I don't think the rest  
35 of our day is going to go like this, and so I guess drink it in  
36 while you can. On that note, let's start red snapper, another  
37 final action in front of us. We've got a whole bunch of stuff  
38 to talk about here, and I think I'm going to go to Dr. Powers  
39 first, but, before that, can we just pull up the action guide,  
40 so that we can all be oriented on what's in front of us for this  
41 item today?

42  
43 **DR. JOE POWERS:** Can you hear me?

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** We can, but I don't know if someone from staff,  
46 maybe Ryan or Dr. Froeschke, wants to cover the action guide  
47 really quick.

1 **MR. RINDONE:** I will do it.

2  
3 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thanks, Ryan.

4  
5 **FINAL ACTION: FRAMEWORK ACTION: GULF OF MEXICO RED SNAPPER**  
6 **RECREATIONAL DATA CALIBRATION AND RECREATIONAL CATCH LIMITS**  
7

8 **MR. RINDONE:** All right. So, you guys are going to review the  
9 actions and alternatives in the document, which you have seen at  
10 the last couple of meetings, and recommend any modifications to  
11 the proposed management measures, as appropriate.  
12

13 Dr. Powers will review the details of how the Science Center  
14 plans to integrate data from the Great Red Snapper Count into  
15 the council's requested interim analysis, and the Science Center  
16 is on-hand to help with that part of the discussion as well, and  
17 then Dr. Powers will also tell you about the SSC's thoughts on  
18 that proposed approach.  
19

20 You guys will hear from Emily a summary of written public  
21 comment received so far, and you will review the codified text,  
22 which right now is kind of blank, because we don't have a  
23 preferred alternative. If prepared to do so, you guys can  
24 select a preferred alternative, and so I think we should  
25 probably try to get to that point before we talk about sending  
26 it to the Secretary, if necessary and appropriate. Madam Chair.  
27

28 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Ryan. Okay, Dr. Powers. I think we're  
29 ready for you now.  
30

31 **SEFSC INTEGRATION OF GREAT RED SNAPPER COUNT INTO RED SNAPPER**  
32 **INTERIM ANALYSIS PROCESS AND SSC RECOMMENDATIONS**  
33

34 **DR. POWERS:** Thank you. I don't have a presentation, and,  
35 basically, what we are discussing here is the information that  
36 was supplied to the SSC about the Great Red Snapper Count and  
37 the SSC's response to it and how we might proceed through this  
38 whole process.  
39

40 Dr. Stunz presented the results of the Great Red Snapper Count  
41 to the SSC, and this was the first presentation of the results,  
42 and this is just a summary of the results, and there were a  
43 number of responses to that from the SSC, and, first off, that  
44 it's an amazingly comprehensive study, going over a wide range  
45 of habitats and areas and different kinds of samples, including  
46 video acoustics, depletion studies, tagging, and so on. I think  
47 the SSC was very congratulatory about that.  
48

1 There were a number of questions about details of the analysis  
2 that are going to be forthcoming to the SSC, and, therefore,  
3 part of this process of adjusting the ABC, but let me go  
4 through, quickly, some of the questions and comments about the  
5 results of the Great Red Snapper Count.

6  
7 First off, one of the questions that came up was not really a  
8 question, but a comment that, if you have an absolute abundance,  
9 that really opens the door for estimating other kinds of  
10 parameters, and possibly even estimating natural mortality rates  
11 more fully, but it also changes your perception of annual  
12 productivity, and that's essentially what a stock assessment is  
13 doing, is trying to estimate the annual productivity, and so  
14 having an annual abundance estimate really does open the door to  
15 allow you to investigate a number of different things.

16  
17 Another question that the SSC had was about the precision of the  
18 estimates, and the number given was the coefficient of variation  
19 of 11 percent, and what this basically means is that the  
20 estimate is plus or minus 11 percent, and there are some  
21 questions about that, and it's hard to evaluate that without  
22 knowing all the details of the analysis and the sample size, and  
23 the SSC has not, at this point, received those details.

24  
25 That was one of, I think, the take-home messages, is that the  
26 SSC and the larger community of scientists needs to have the  
27 details of analysis looked at by a variety of people as we go  
28 through this process.

29  
30 We were also informed, at this point, that the interim analysis  
31 is being scheduled now for late March or early April, or the SSC  
32 review of it will be in late March or early April, and this is a  
33 different sort of approach than we had considered as interim  
34 analysis before, where you were updating indices and individual  
35 catches and the ensuing time for an existing assessment.

36  
37 This is actually -- If you're integrating an absolute abundance  
38 estimate, ideally what you want to do is to actually integrate  
39 that through a complete stock assessment, so you can take  
40 advantage of all the other things you know about the stock, in  
41 terms of indices of abundance and so on, and so adjusting the  
42 ABC based on this new estimate of abundance is not a trivial  
43 matter, because you have to decide what you mean by the fishing  
44 mortality rate at MSY and is that still -- What you have  
45 estimated before with the assessment, is that still an estimate  
46 that you can use under this context?

47  
48 The Center, Dr. Shannon Cass-Calay, presented a couple of



1 options about how that might proceed using the new abundance  
2 estimate, but the details of that are still kind of vague, and  
3 not so much in terms of -- Well, it's vague in terms of it  
4 really depends on what kind of stratification the actual  
5 abundance estimates come in, what sizes and what kind of size  
6 frequencies by area and so on, and we really haven't gotten that  
7 information there.

8  
9 Essentially, what the SSC recommended at this stage, through a  
10 motion, and I will just read you the motion, and it's in the  
11 summary. The SSC moves to request an expedited review of the  
12 Great Red Snapper Count results by an independent panel,  
13 including SSC representatives and CIE or other independent  
14 reviewers with expertise in the methodologies used.

15  
16 Subsequent to our SSC meeting, the council has gone ahead and  
17 organized a review, and Dr. Simmons can comment on that, and so  
18 the upshot is that the SSC, in the late March meeting, will be  
19 required to address the ABC of red snapper for, as of yet, some  
20 unspecified time period and base that on the recommendations  
21 about the status of the Great Red Snapper Count.

22  
23 In other words, what is the abundance estimate that comes out of  
24 that and what is the variance associated with this, but I remind  
25 everybody as well that this also implies revisiting the other  
26 side of the question, and not necessarily just the abundance,  
27 but the actual estimates of productivity, the fishing mortality  
28 rates at MSY, what sort of estimates can we get there, and so,  
29 by the fact that this is an interim sort of temporary  
30 adjustment, you are necessarily going to introduce some  
31 uncertainty that might have been alleviated if you had gone  
32 through a normal stock assessment process.

33  
34 There is a concern about that, and exactly how the Center and  
35 the assessment process provides those sorts of estimates, and  
36 that's the important part of that meeting, and Dr. Porch may  
37 want to comment on that approaches for that as well.

38  
39 One thing that I think is adamant for the SSC members is that  
40 we, collectively, have not received the actual analysis results  
41 that provide some of the details that we wish to look at.  
42 Through this motion, and through the council's actions, they  
43 have established a review process for this, and that's quite  
44 good, but I would also ask that, when the results are presented  
45 to the independent reviewers and to the Center, that the SSC  
46 also be provided access to whatever documents come out, because  
47 there is not much time to respond to this, and, basically, the  
48 projected plan now, as I understand it, is mid-March, you would

1 have some recommendations about what sort of assessment process  
2 could go on, given that you have a particular abundance  
3 estimate.

4  
5 Then that abundance estimate itself has to be reviewed, or is  
6 going to be reviewed, and the SSC will respond accordingly,  
7 based on that review and other input, and so, again, I think  
8 it's adamant, from the SSC's standpoint, that as much  
9 information as possible be provided to all concerned, and not  
10 just the SSC, and that those documents, in essence, be made  
11 available as soon as possible. That's kind of where we stand,  
12 and I will leave it at that.

13  
14 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Dr. Powers. I'm going to  
15 give folks a couple of minutes to raise their hands. John, is  
16 your hand raised, or is that from before?

17  
18 **MR. SANCHEZ:** It was from before.

19  
20 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Leann.

21  
22 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Dr. Powers, you said you  
23 reviewed the Great Red Snapper Count, which is a stock  
24 assessment of sorts, and it's different than the stock  
25 assessments we're used to, but it's a huge undertaking, and I  
26 compare it on the level of a stock assessment, if not more.

27  
28 Normally, when you say you reviewed a stock assessment, you  
29 actually go through all the data streams and the analysis and  
30 the variance and the uncertainties and what was driving the  
31 outputs, and is that the sort of review that you all had in the  
32 SSC? We haven't had that yet at the council, but is that what  
33 you all went through?

34  
35 **DR. POWERS:** No, and, basically, it was a presentation of the  
36 results by Dr. Stunz. It's that kind of review that we  
37 recognize needs to get done not only by the SSC, but by  
38 independent reviewers, and that was why we made our  
39 recommendation that we did, because the details of the sample  
40 sizes and how they're weighted and so on and so forth needs to  
41 be illuminated and discussed. In other words, issues like how  
42 many red snapper are actually counted by the Great Red Snapper  
43 Count, and sample sizes, weighting of the sample sizes, and so  
44 on.

45  
46 One of the real positive things about the Snapper Count is  
47 there's a breadth of methodologies being used, and that provides  
48 some information, I think, and it's those kind of details that

1 we would wish to look at as we come to our conclusions.

2  
3 **MS. BOSARGE:** A follow-up, Madam Chair, if I may.

4  
5 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Go ahead.

6  
7 **MS. BOSARGE:** You must not have had the final report, which  
8 obviously not, because we don't have it in our briefing book  
9 either, and I see where it was marked through. Dr. Stunz, I'm  
10 going to put you on the spot. You know, we thought we were  
11 going to have this back in October of last year, and Dr. Powers  
12 just said March, and I don't see how that timeline is going to  
13 alleviate what recreational fishermen might experience in June,  
14 and so where are we at on that final report?

15  
16 **DR. STUNZ:** Madam Chair, do you want me to --

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Yes. Go ahead.

19  
20 **DR. STUNZ:** Well, first off, Leann, it's not a stock assessment,  
21 and it's very different than a stock assessment, what our team  
22 has performed, and, you know, it's an estimate of absolute  
23 abundance, and that's what the report will entail.

24  
25 To be clear to everyone, contractually, this report is not due  
26 for several months, and so our team is working really hard,  
27 because we understand the management need and the need for this  
28 information to produce it as fast as we can. Because there is a  
29 lot of involvement with SSC members, at the SSC meeting, when I  
30 gave a general overview presentation a few weeks ago, and I  
31 completely agree that they suggested that there needed to be  
32 this independent review, and our team is perfectly fine with  
33 that, and so we agreed that we would provide a report as soon as  
34 we could, hopefully by March 1, that would leave time for the  
35 SSC to do their external evaluation, as well as the internal  
36 evaluation, and be ready for this meeting that would occur at  
37 the end of March or, really, the first of April.

38  
39 That's where we are with it. I can tell you, Leann, to the  
40 magnitude of what we've done and the amount of work that was  
41 requested, it is quite monumental, and so this isn't something  
42 that we can just turn around and produce a quick white paper in  
43 a couple of weeks or something like that, and our team is  
44 working as fast as we can.

45  
46 We have worked closely with Clay Porch and his team at the  
47 Science Center to provide them the preliminary data, so they can  
48 at least begin looking at it and see what it looks like. Of

1 course, that would certainly need blessing, but at least they  
2 can see what we're up against and that sort of thing, to help  
3 see where they might go and directions they could take, and, of  
4 course, Clay would be the person to comment on that.

5  
6 The short answer to that question is we should have a report  
7 coming along very shortly here, in about a month or so, that,  
8 according to Carrie and the other Gulf Council staff, and with  
9 the SSC timeline, should be adequate time to do what they need  
10 to do to move it through our usual processes.

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Greg. I think we all can appreciate  
13 that you have a lot on your plate right now. Leann, did you  
14 have a follow-up?

15  
16 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, and thank you for that, Greg. I appreciate  
17 it, and I think it was maybe just a management -- I mean, a  
18 managing of my expectations, that I went wrong somewhere. Had I  
19 known that you had a deadline of I guess March for this, I would  
20 have looked at this completely differently.

21  
22 I think I've been kind of counting on this coming through in two  
23 weeks and two weeks and two weeks, and thinking that this was  
24 going to alleviate the calibration issue, which affects the  
25 season for the recreational anglers. Had I known that there was  
26 actually a March deadline that was probably more realistic for  
27 seeing this, I don't think I would have gotten my hopes up that  
28 we could have gotten all of this done in time, and so, if the  
29 final report comes out in March, that will be reviewed to come  
30 up with some interim -- How to go about the interim analysis,  
31 but then you have to --

32  
33 Because they need that to even -- I listened to Shannon's  
34 presentation at the SSC, and it was just five PowerPoint slides  
35 on options for maybe how to possibly integrate this, but they  
36 couldn't do anything, because they don't have the data, and it's  
37 really hard to flesh out which way to go, and so I think, once  
38 we get this final report reviewed and blessed, that's just going  
39 to get us to the point where we can start to figure out what's  
40 the best method to actually integrate it.

41  
42 That will be another meeting behind, and we'll be at the June  
43 meeting before we actually get interim results that have been  
44 blessed, and I don't see how we can bless the final report or  
45 assessment or whatever you want to call it, the Great Red  
46 Snapper Count, at the SSC meeting in March, getting that to the  
47 Science Center in March, and expecting them to have, before the  
48 SSC meeting in March, a path to integrate it for the data they

1 just got and have it integrated and present that. That is a big  
2 ask, and I think we're going to be June before we get that, if  
3 then.

4  
5 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Leann. Greg, is it to that point? I  
6 saw your hand fly up.

7  
8 **DR. STUNZ:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To that point, also, the  
9 March deadline, Leann, so you know, is a deadline that we tried  
10 to agree on from just a collegial standpoint, and not  
11 necessarily a contractual agreement, to try and meet some of  
12 these management needs, but I would caution, and I know our  
13 scientific team feels the same way, that there is really two  
14 things going on here.

15  
16 There is management needs, which we're obviously all aware of  
17 and what we're talking about today right here, certainly, but  
18 there is also science needs, and those two things don't  
19 necessarily progress at the same timelines.

20  
21 We want to get the science right, so we have it appropriate, and  
22 there's lot of certainty, and we feel good about what we've done  
23 and that sort of thing, which we do, but we want to get it  
24 right, and we want to make sure it's a solid study that is well  
25 received and that kind of thing.

26  
27 Those timelines, while we understand there is pressing  
28 management needs, and we're right in the middle of that,  
29 certainly, we don't want that to guide and rush the science to  
30 something that we might regret or not have done our adequate due  
31 diligence, and that's what our team is concerned with, and so  
32 we've felt like we can meet this March deadline, and that's not  
33 our contractual deadline, from this independent study that's  
34 outside of the council, and that's a much later date.

35  
36 We're essentially trying to work to solve a serious problem that  
37 we have, and I'm confident that we can make that, but it just  
38 takes time for the science to progress to a point where it's  
39 ready for management.

40  
41 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Greg. Kevin.

42  
43 **MR. ANSON:** I actually was going to offer a motion, but Clay had  
44 raised his hand, and so, if he has something, a comment, to this  
45 discussion, he can go first.

46  
47 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Thank you, Kevin. Clay.

1 **DR. PORCH:** Sure. Thank you. First of all, thank you, Dr.  
2 Powers, for that excellent summary of the SSC meeting. I think  
3 it was very clear. I did want to comment to the point about the  
4 review.

5  
6 Best available scientific information does require the  
7 information to be fully available, and that's part of the title.  
8 I think that the review that Dr. Powers mentioned should answer  
9 that.

10  
11 To Leann's point regarding the timing, that's why the Science  
12 Center is working with the Great Red Snapper Count folks to use  
13 the data that they provided to go ahead with whatever we want to  
14 call this interim analysis, and so we're actually working with  
15 it now.

16  
17 There are some gaps in the information. For instance, we don't  
18 have, from the Great Red Snapper Count, much in the way of the  
19 size composition of the fish in the uncharacterized bottom,  
20 which is where most of the fish are, and so, fortunately, we  
21 have some longline surveys out there, and we'll use that  
22 information to substitute.

23  
24 I think we have a way forward, and there's a couple of ways  
25 forward that the SSC got a glimpse of, but, of course, since we  
26 didn't have the data very long prior to when the SSC meeting  
27 was, we didn't have things fully fleshed out regarding the  
28 possibilities, but the bottom line is we are forging ahead with  
29 the interim analysis approach.

30  
31 We'll give a couple of different options and some sensitivity  
32 runs, and our intention is to have that done in time for the  
33 review, so that we can include it as part of that review, and  
34 then just the last point that I wanted to be clear on, and Dr.  
35 Powers alluded to it, and Dr. Frazer mentioned it, I think, at  
36 one of the previous council meetings, but what the Great Red  
37 Snapper Count showed us is that, instead of this smaller,  
38 highly-resilient red snapper population that was estimated by  
39 the assessment, what it appears to be is that we have a much  
40 larger population, where most of the fish are outside of the  
41 areas fished, and outside of the area where we get the data for  
42 the assessment, and so what you really have is a much larger  
43 population that is less resilient.

44  
45 So you have this big relatively unfished area that is seeding  
46 the highly-fished area, and so what that means, in practical  
47 terms for management, is that the MSY proxy that we're currently  
48 using, 26 SPR, is probably too aggressive, and it's too low,

1 and, most likely, something that's more consistent with what  
2 most of the other councils are using for species like this is  
3 more appropriate, something like an SPR of 40 or 45 percent.

4  
5 Now, I don't expect that the council can change the FMP that  
6 quickly, but the SSC, and I think Dr. Powers alluded to this,  
7 certainly will need to consider these sorts of things when they  
8 decide what the ABC should be, and so, even though the  
9 population appears to be about three-times what the assessment  
10 says, that doesn't mean that the catch advice will be three-  
11 times, because there's a lot of other things that will change  
12 our perception about red snapper, including how productive they  
13 are. Thanks.

14  
15 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thank you, Clay. Kevin, I think you're up.

16  
17 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. **I had sent a motion in to**  
18 **staff.** If I can get a second, I will provide some discussion,  
19 or rationale, for it.

20  
21 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** If you need a second, I will do that. Just  
22 tell me when you want it.

23  
24 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thank you, General Spraggins. Kevin, we have  
25 your motion on the board, if you want to read it.

26  
27 **MR. ANSON:** Okay. **To request the Southeast Fisheries Science**  
28 **Center add two additional analysis runs to the interim red**  
29 **snapper assessment that would replace federal recreational**  
30 **survey data with state recreational survey data, with and**  
31 **without the Great Red Snapper Count data, and have results from**  
32 **both runs available in time for review by the SSC at the March**  
33 **2021 SSC meeting.**

34  
35 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** I would second that motion, and I will have  
36 discussion about the Science Center using state data to see what  
37 the quota would look like.

38  
39 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thank you.

40  
41 **MR. ANSON:** Madam Chair, do you want me to provide some  
42 rationale?

43  
44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sure. Thanks, Kevin.

45  
46 **MR. ANSON:** We have heard here, at this meeting, and it was  
47 discussed at the SSC meeting, this issue about productivity, and  
48 productivity is driven a lot by how much fishing mortality

1 occurs, and that's kind of why we're at this juncture right now,  
2 is there is still a lot of uncertainty and disparity amongst the  
3 state survey data, at least in a couple of states, versus the  
4 federal survey data.

5  
6 Doing this motion, we'll have that additional information, that  
7 we just heard Dr. Powers and Dr. Porch describe, to help resolve  
8 and reconcile the discussion of how to treat or how the impacts  
9 of the Great Red Snapper Count data is going to have on the  
10 assessment, and so that's what I think this -- Having this data  
11 -- I'm not saying make any management decisions from it, but  
12 just running this data alongside will help when they look at the  
13 analysis, the interim analysis, for just using the updated  
14 information for the interim assessment without the Great Snapper  
15 Count as well as an update with the Great Red Snapper Count  
16 data.

17  
18 We're trying to get to how many fish are out there, and, short  
19 of draining the Gulf of Mexico and going around and picking up  
20 all the fish, we've got either an assessment or we've got the  
21 Great Red Snapper Count, and, from our point of view in Alabama,  
22 we've been conducting a habitat-based survey since 2011, or  
23 2011, actually, and those numbers are close to what came out  
24 when you look at the proportions that were provided for the  
25 Alabama/Mississippi region, and they're very close.

26  
27 That's what we set up our state survey, was on an amount of fish  
28 that we felt that the resource could tolerate, and that was in  
29 Snapper Check units, and, if you look at the data for both  
30 Snapper Check and the federal data for Alabama, whether it's in  
31 CHTS units or FES units, and you compare it against the Great  
32 Red Snapper Count data, you're going to have to question what  
33 your belief of productivity is, and it will be a lot more  
34 productive if you want to look at it in those terms.

35  
36 Anyways, that's my -- That's most of what I wanted to say, but  
37 one last point is that, you know, when the issue came up of  
38 using state data for analysis purposes at a couple of SSC  
39 meetings ago, there was lots of support for using state data,  
40 and the motion failed, because it was a tie vote, and so, again,  
41 I think running this analysis with that data will help, again,  
42 to make folks feel a little more comfortable, and it could  
43 provide some more vision, as we move into the research track for  
44 the next assessment, and it could help answer a lot of these  
45 questions and try to get us back on track with having data and  
46 the timing of science and the timing of management, because  
47 we're having to use this data for management. Thank you.



1 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Kevin. I've got a couple of names on  
2 the list, and so I'm just going to work my way through. Clay.

3  
4 **DR. PORCH:** Thank you. I just wanted to make it clear that the  
5 interim red snapper assessment is not a full stock assessment,  
6 and the research track stock assessment could better answer  
7 these sorts of questions, and that doesn't happen until towards  
8 the end of this year.

9  
10 The interim analysis simply multiplies the current benchmark  
11 reference point or something similar to that, like F 40 percent,  
12 and right now it's F 26 percent, and so we would just multiply  
13 that by the abundance estimate, essentially, and so the source  
14 of catch estimates doesn't really figure into this. It's really  
15 as simple as we have an independent estimate of abundance, and  
16 we have the current fishing mortality rate that corresponds to  
17 the 26 percent SPR proxy from the previous assessment, and we  
18 can look at some alternative proxies and multiply the two.

19  
20 We will do some sensitivity runs with the past stock assessment,  
21 tuning it to the Great Red Snapper Count, but there's no  
22 guarantee that would be completed in this timeframe, but I just  
23 wanted to be clear that, really, this motion would apply more to  
24 the upcoming full stock assessment, and it doesn't really affect  
25 the interim analysis, because the source of catches are not  
26 incorporated directly.

27  
28 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Clay. That was helpful. Robin.

29  
30 **MR. RIECHERS:** In light of that discussion by Clay and Kevin,  
31 I'm really thinking I will support the motion, because, whether  
32 it's for this or whether it is for, as we get to the bigger  
33 assessment model, and I think doing these sorts of sensitivity  
34 analyses will be important as we think about these shifting data  
35 parameters that we have.

36  
37 I guess I will go on the record here, and while it's speaking to  
38 red snapper, but I really believe it's speaking to a lot of the  
39 changes that we're going to see between these data series, and I  
40 would hope that, as we go into new assessments, and while I  
41 understand our SEDAR process and how we go about that, and we  
42 kind of go forward with a new assessment and methodology, and I  
43 say new, and it's not new, but it's a -- We look to new data  
44 sources that may make changes in the model for us, much like the  
45 discussions going on between SPR of F 26 percent or whether it  
46 should be 40 percent.

47  
48 I hope we do try to make sure we do runs where the model was as

1 it was before, meaning the last time a full model had been done,  
2 before we start making any of those changes, because that really  
3 gives us a benchmark of where we're at now as compared to where  
4 we were then, because I will -- Certainly some of the people  
5 around this table hearken back to the discussions about moving  
6 that SPR number down, and we had many discussions about that and  
7 what the stock was doing and the resiliency and could we  
8 possibly lower that number or not.

9  
10 So, while I understand the current hypothesis about a less-  
11 resilient stock, I also want to, as much as we can, make sure  
12 we're comparing the old modeling runs to the new modeling runs  
13 without changing many knobs, and then, of course, if the knobs  
14 need to be changed, because of new science, we then make those  
15 decisions, but we at least get some flavor, or some approach, to  
16 look at what it was before and what it is now, as opposed to  
17 kind of doing all that knob-switching behind the scenes.

18  
19 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Robin. General Spraggins.

20  
21 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Obviously, I support the motion the way it  
22 is, and I understand that we are going to bring this up more in  
23 depth in the future, in this meeting this week, but, obviously,  
24 we look at this, and the state data needs to be looked at in a  
25 lot better angle than it is right now, because at no time were  
26 we ever told that the state data had to match up to what the  
27 federal data was. We were told that it would be maybe measured  
28 with it, but not whether or state data was being measured the  
29 same way or not.

30  
31 Just to give you a little idea, and I don't want to belabor this  
32 too much, but, according to what they're using to come up with  
33 their assessments and the way that they're doing it, it's  
34 showing that Mississippi would have to have 106,000 people that  
35 had effort to catch. We don't even have that many fishermen,  
36 number one, and, number two, according to what we normally would  
37 see, we might see a fifth of that in a year, and nowhere near  
38 it.

39  
40 To say that we would be higher than Louisiana, which I love  
41 Louisiana, and they're great people, but they're like about  
42 twice as big as Mississippi, and their area of fishing is a lot  
43 bigger than Mississippi, and so I'm sorry, and, to me, the way  
44 that this has been worked, it's not really -- I am not a  
45 scientist, and I'm just an old, retired general, and I just  
46 happen to be in a position to be doing this job, but, looking at  
47 the scientists that I see on this panel, I can't see how in the  
48 world we would ever want to take something that is that far

1 skewed and think that we would want to vote on it. That, to me,  
2 is -- I mean, that, to me, does not show any way in the world  
3 that we could do that, and, once again, I'm not a scientist, but  
4 I'm just looking from the outside, and the commonsense makes a  
5 lot of things to me, in my life, and I appreciate your time.

6  
7 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thank you, General. Next, I have Andy.

8  
9 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks, Martha. Two things. First, in  
10 response to Mr. Spraggins, I am going to respectfully disagree  
11 with his statement that you hadn't been informed about needing  
12 to have the calibrations, and I think the agency has made it  
13 very clear, starting with the certification process of all the  
14 state surveys and the letters that each of the states received,  
15 that the data would need to be calibrated for future use in  
16 stock assessments.

17  
18 Then we laid, obviously, that groundwork to then inform what  
19 occurred in Amendment 50 and the rulemaking that proceeded, and  
20 it specifically indicated, in the Amendment 50 rulemaking, the  
21 need for calibration, and so this has been a topic of  
22 discussion, and I realize that there's a lot of angst about the  
23 differences in the survey estimates, and that is certainly  
24 something that needs to be looked at further, and I do not  
25 disagree with you about that.

26  
27 In terms of Kevin's motion, I am not willing to support the  
28 motion, primarily because of what Clay indicated with regard to  
29 the appropriateness of conducting such an analysis as part of an  
30 interim analysis. It does seem to be most appropriate for a  
31 research track, for a full-blown assessment, and I would support  
32 the motion, if modified, to incorporate it into a research  
33 track, or a full assessment, going forward.

34  
35 The bottom line is my expectations, and certainly Clay or others  
36 can correct me, is that, if you're going to incorporate the  
37 state survey data, we're going to get lower estimated annual  
38 catch limits resulting from that, because of lower yield levels  
39 that are being input into the stock assessment over a long time  
40 series, and that's been the case when we've made adjustments up  
41 or down to landings based on prior adjustments, and it then,  
42 obviously, affects the catch limits, and so I think we know the  
43 directionality of the change, and I certainly understand Kevin's  
44 interest in kind of understanding the magnitude of that change  
45 going forward, but I don't see this as appropriate to address in  
46 an interim analysis at this point.

47  
48 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Andy. Next, I have Greg Stunz.

1  
2 **DR. STUNZ:** Thank you, Martha, and, in short, I support the  
3 motion. I mean, I understand whether it's appropriate for this  
4 interim analysis or the full research track, and I would hope  
5 that maybe we could try to do it for both, and I could envision  
6 that it could be done for this March as well as the other, but I  
7 don't know, and that's for Clay, I guess, to really input on,  
8 but I wanted to comment to the General, and maybe Kevin's point,  
9 about the MRIP versus the state survey data.

10  
11 We have had this discussion a little bit, about the  
12 inappropriateness of MRIP for these shortened seasons, and it's  
13 good for the whole Gulf, but maybe not necessarily for  
14 individual states, and, I mean, certainly I think we're seeing  
15 that with all the new data coming to light, but, at some point,  
16 I think we've really got to consider -- While I like this motion  
17 that's leading to these side-by-side comparisons, the drawback  
18 with MRIP, of course, is that we don't have the long time series  
19 that we would like.

20  
21 At some point, I feel like we really just need to pull the band-  
22 aid off and go with it. Run MRIP side-by-side with these state  
23 surveys, to really see -- Get a more accurate picture of what's  
24 going on, and we can begin to look at trying to figure out what  
25 other regions are -- Other regions meaning other councils  
26 outside of the Gulf region, and many of those -- I haven't done  
27 my complete due diligence about how they handle MRIP, and some  
28 don't use MRIP at all, and some go with their individual  
29 separate state programs at face value without even any  
30 calibrations.

31  
32 I am trying to figure out exactly -- We're back to the same  
33 point that we always make, and you've got MRIP as a tool, and we  
34 just keep trying to force it and force it into a situation which  
35 may not be working, and, with Kevin's motion here, we start  
36 seeing them side-by-side and what they're doing, and, at some  
37 point, I think we've just got to really decide is MRIP  
38 appropriate for the management that we're trying to do here and  
39 begin to develop those time series that can be built better into  
40 stock assessments and that sort of thing.

41  
42 Then, finally, Martha, my last comment I just want to say --  
43 Because the Great Red Snapper Count is certainly related to  
44 this, and Clay made a point about some of the data gaps that are  
45 in the study, and, I mean, certainly no study is perfect, and  
46 they always lead to more studies and that sort of thing, and  
47 hindsight is 20/20, but some of the data gaps he was referring  
48 to weren't necessarily supposed to be accomplished with the time

1 and money and resources that we had.

2  
3 Certainly, if we had known there were that many fish on the  
4 uncharacterized bottom, we would have spent a lot more time out  
5 there getting age composition and different size structure and  
6 that sort of thing, but that just wasn't part of the scope of  
7 work that we were requested to do, and, while we recognize those  
8 are data gaps, those are just things that are going to have to  
9 be filled by like the bottom longline survey or other surveys in  
10 the future, and I just wanted to make it clear that it wasn't  
11 some flawed component that we didn't do, and that's just  
12 something that study could not answer.

13  
14 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thank you, Greg. Kevin.

15  
16 **MR. ANSON:** Two points. The response that Dr. Porch provided  
17 regarding how this would be inappropriate, or not relevant, not  
18 valuable, I don't know. I am trying to go back on memory and  
19 such, but I always thought that, when you performed an interim  
20 analysis, you actually took all the data that was used in the  
21 first assessment and just input the new data and added the --  
22 Didn't change any of the data, and I'm asking for a change here,  
23 but I'm not asking for it to be used for management, and I'm  
24 just asking for it to be helpful or provide additional  
25 information to folks, since this is new information, and it's a  
26 lot of information.

27  
28 We are on a short timeline, and so I'm just trying to utilize  
29 the opportunity of just replacing one data stream, because,  
30 again, I thought that's what you did in your interim analysis,  
31 is you took all the data stream and just updated the years that  
32 had transpired since the last time the assessment was performed.

33  
34 Then the second point is I just want to go back to the issue of  
35 this disparity issue with the data, and, granted, we were told,  
36 or we were given indications, that the state data wouldn't  
37 necessarily be used, or it wouldn't be -- The federal data  
38 wouldn't be calibrated to the state data, and that's fine, but,  
39 again, when you look at the Great Red Snapper Count data, and  
40 then you look at the assessment and the outputs from the  
41 assessment from the last time it was run, and you compare it  
42 against Alabama, we're just getting it on both ends.

43  
44 We're getting it on the front end and the back end here, and we  
45 show all this effort and catch, and, yet, when it comes time to  
46 run through the assessment and it gets doled out, we don't have  
47 what we believe to be an appropriate or an equal share or access  
48 to the resource, and, again, I went and looked up some data, and

1 I've got some back-of-the-napkin calculations here, but, as far  
2 as exploitation rates here in Alabama, using 2017 data, and that  
3 seemed to be the most I could find, all the data available to  
4 piece all this stuff together, was back in 2017.

5  
6 If you look at the Great Red Snapper Count data, and then the  
7 Snapper Check landings, in addition to the commercial landings  
8 for Alabama that's by the federal, we're at 0.049 is the  
9 exploitation rate for Snapper Check. With MRIP-CHTS, we're at  
10 0.083, and, if you use FES for that year, exploitation, if you  
11 compared it to the Great Red Snapper Count estimate, was 0.179.

12  
13 Again, there is some issues with the assessment and how it  
14 matches up and what proportion Alabama makes of that, and that's  
15 -- I am just trying to get there, to where we can start using  
16 this data little bit quicker, because the process is very slow,  
17 and I'm just trying to do that. Thank you.

18  
19 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Kevin. Clay, I see you're next, and do  
20 you want to respond to some of those points that Kevin brought  
21 up?

22  
23 **DR. PORCH:** Yes. Thank you. I think we have a couple of points  
24 of misunderstanding here. First of all, I didn't say that the  
25 points made in this motion are not valuable, and I said they are  
26 not relevant to an interim red snapper assessment, and that's  
27 where I think there's a misunderstanding.

28  
29 Again, the interim red snapper assessment does not use the catch  
30 information. It uses the abundance estimates, and it multiplies  
31 it -- The abundance estimates from the Great Red Snapper Count  
32 and multiplies it by a fishing mortality rate to get an estimate  
33 of what the catch should be, and then we can monitor against  
34 that, and so there is no catch information going into it.

35  
36 What I think Mr. Anson is thinking about is what we call update  
37 stock assessments, which are full stock assessments where you  
38 add the most recent and relevant data, but, in this case, you  
39 are adding the Great Red Snapper Count as an index of absolute  
40 abundance, and a number of other new pieces of information, and  
41 that will happen, but it's going to happen during the upcoming  
42 what we call research track assessment, where we look at all the  
43 details.

44  
45 There is no way that we could actually perform that kind of  
46 assessment between now and March. I mean, we just got the data  
47 from the Great Red Snapper Count, and there's no way that you  
48 could run it through those models in time.

1  
2 We are going to try and look at some sensitivity analyses, using  
3 the old stock assessment model tuned to the Great Red Snapper  
4 Count information, but, again, I can't promise that we'll get  
5 all that done. That's quite a bit of work, and there's a lot of  
6 nuances in there, and so it's more like a sensitivity run, if we  
7 can get it.

8  
9 What we committed to was the interim assessment, where, again,  
10 we take directly the Great Red Snapper Count estimates of  
11 abundance and multiply it by a fishing mortality rate, and that  
12 gets us a catch to monitor against. It doesn't use FES, and it  
13 doesn't use state estimates, and it's completely independent,  
14 which I think was the point of the survey to begin with, to make  
15 it as independent of the assessment as possible.

16  
17 Then we'll move into using all that information in a full stock  
18 assessment, where we'll also do the things that are suggested in  
19 this motion, and so the motion, again, would not make sense to  
20 us in the context of an interim analysis, but, if you replace  
21 "interim red snapper assessment" with "the upcoming red snapper  
22 stock assessment", then it would make perfect sense. Thank you.

23  
24 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thank you, Clay. Let me just rephrase I think  
25 what Clay is trying to say here, that this interim analysis does  
26 not use catch information from federal or state programs, and  
27 so, should the committee pass this motion, it doesn't really  
28 mean a whole lot.

29  
30 We can edit it to have it make sense, or I guess, Kevin, you  
31 could edit it to have it make sense by replacing "interim" with  
32 "research track", or even "full assessment", and I think we more  
33 or less all know what that means, but it's pretty clear, I  
34 think, from the discussion from Dr. Porch, that that's not this  
35 interim assessment that's coming up, and that will be the  
36 assessment scheduled for, I guess, a couple of years from now.  
37 Kevin, I saw you put your hand up. I'm going to bounce to you,  
38 so that we can figure out what's happening with this motion.  
39 Kevin, do you want to edit your motion?

40  
41 **MR. ANSON:** I'm still thinking about it, and I might come back  
42 with an additional question for Dr. Porch.

43  
44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Dr. Cody has his hand up.

45  
46 **DR. RICHARD CODY:** Thanks, Martha. I just wanted to reiterate  
47 Andy's point, that the need for calibration shouldn't have been  
48 a surprise, and he did mention the certification process, and

1 then also the Amendment 50.

2  
3 I think that another think to bring to your attention is that  
4 we've had a series of workshops throughout, where we've  
5 discussed how the state surveys would be improved and developed,  
6 and then also transitioned, and, in 2018, we had a workshop that  
7 specifically addressed the calibration options that were  
8 available to us, and so that information is available through a  
9 report, and it was also discussed prior to the 2020 workshop,  
10 where the calibrations were presented. Thank you.

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Richard. All right. Dr. Frazer.

13  
14 **DR. FRAZER:** I'm just going to try to help you out here a little  
15 bit, Martha, and I think, given where we are in the discussion,  
16 if we can let Kevin go ahead and decide what he wants to do with  
17 this motion, and we will dispense with it before lunch, and then  
18 we'll come back and we'll work through the document, if that's  
19 okay with you.

20  
21 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sounds like a plan. Leann, is it to this  
22 motion?

23  
24 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, ma'am.

25  
26 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Go ahead, and then hopefully, by that  
27 time, Kevin will have a decision about what he wants to do here.

28  
29 **MS. BOSARGE:** Kevin, I am very supportive of this idea that you  
30 have, and I don't think it's functional for the interim  
31 analysis, for the reasons that Clay provided, and not to mention  
32 timing. I don't want to delay that interim analysis if it can  
33 be helpful for recreational seasons in June, but I definitely  
34 would support it if you would change it to lean more towards the  
35 next assessment, or whatever the next analysis is that we have  
36 coming on red snapper, because you're right that it is affecting  
37 management, and it's not -- It's not the assessment, and you  
38 said there's something screwy with the assessment, but it's not  
39 the assessment.

40  
41 It's the landings streams. It's the difference between FES and  
42 other methodologies, different state programs, et cetera, and  
43 that's affecting management in all our species and not just  
44 species that we actually have ACL monitoring in state  
45 currencies.

46  
47 I made the point earlier with lane snapper, and we're taking  
48 lane snapper, that's been bumping up against its ACL. Even in



1 the same currencies it's been bumping up against its ACL, CHTS  
2 to CHTS, and, when we switch it over to FES, and we plug that  
3 into an assessment, that FES is driving things, and now we're  
4 going to have a quota where, even in FES landings numbers, we're  
5 only hitting about half of it, and what ramifications is that  
6 going to have, from a conservation standpoint, and management?

7  
8 It's the same thing in red grouper. Just because we're not  
9 managing ACL, monitoring ACL, in GRFS, which is where almost all  
10 the rec landings come from, you should be doing the same thing  
11 with the assessment for red grouper. We should go back and plug  
12 in the GRFS numbers and rip the band-aid off, as you all said,  
13 and look at it and see what's really driving it, because, there  
14 again, you got a big quota out of that assessment that got  
15 ratcheted down with some more qualitative functions to get us to  
16 the lower quota that we're at.

17  
18 It's time to do it for all the species, and I'm tired of it only  
19 being for red snapper, but, if you'll change your motion, to  
20 make it geared towards the stock assessment, I will definitely  
21 support that.

22  
23 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** All right. Thanks, Leann. Kevin.

24  
25 **MR. ANSON:** Thanks for the comments, Leann. I too am concerned,  
26 or have concerns, about other species as well, and there is  
27 something -- There is something in the model that we, we being  
28 the management as well as the scientists, have come to an  
29 agreement over the years and have established as either fact or  
30 best available science to answer a particular question, and, in  
31 reality, those things might not be the case, and so we'll need  
32 to try to reconcile, again, these differences, and the Great Red  
33 Snapper Count provides a little bit more clarity.

34  
35 On Clay's comments, I guess -- I am wondering, Dr. Porch, is it  
36 -- I think I know the answer, but I will ask it. What about the  
37 possibility of running an update assessment, if you want to call  
38 it that, but you had alluded to trying to input the Great Red  
39 Snapper Count data into the model and that that would cause a  
40 tight timeline. Seeing that it would be very simple to just  
41 input the recreational data stream into the series for the state  
42 data, is that a possibility?

43  
44 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Clay.

45  
46 **DR. PORCH:** It's a bit more complicated than it sounds, because,  
47 I mean, you could just substitute the recreational catches, but  
48 remember that the various surveys don't all get the entire

1 picture. Some of them only give you landings during the open  
2 season and don't give you discards, and so exactly how you put  
3 all of that together hasn't actually been determined yet.

4  
5 I am not at all confident that we could turn that around by  
6 March, and, in fact, I think it would be pretty near impossible.  
7 What we could do, and what we're planning to do, is look at the  
8 old assessment and work in the Great Red Snapper Count, to see  
9 how things might change, but, again there's a lot of moving  
10 pieces here, and it's a very complicated affair, and so we can't  
11 even guarantee we can get that done by March.

12  
13 Again, to do this properly, we really need the time to do it  
14 right, and that research track assessment starts towards the end  
15 of this year, and I think it really needs to be pushed off into  
16 that, instead of just doing something half-baked.

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Clay. I'm going to go to Phil. He's  
19 on the list, and then, Kevin, I'm going to go back to you one  
20 more time, to see if you want to do something with this motion,  
21 if you want to edit it, based on all the discussion that we've  
22 had, and then we're going to dispense with this motion, in  
23 whatever form it's in at that point. Phil.

24  
25 **MR. DYSKOW:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the effort  
26 and the insight that Kevin has put into this motion, and I  
27 believe that I want to support it, and I realize that it's a  
28 challenge, and I realize it's difficult, and I realize that we  
29 may need to make some further edits, but, that said, relevant to  
30 this motion, I want to confirm that there are other councils, or  
31 council, that are not using MRIP data and in fact do use state  
32 data, and is that correct?

33  
34 **DR. CODY:** Martha, if you wouldn't mind, I can probably address  
35 that question.

36  
37 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** If it's very brief, because it's sort of off-  
38 track.

39  
40 **DR. CODY:** Yes. On the west coast, the Pacific coast, there are  
41 state surveys, and MRIP doesn't operate the APAIS or the FES,  
42 and so state surveys are used over there, and so Oregon,  
43 Washington, and California.

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thank you. Okay. Kevin.

46  
47 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. **Based on comments, I will**  
48 **go ahead and modify the motion to change, or remove, the**

1 reference to the interim red snapper assessment to the research  
2 track assessment.

3  
4 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Joe Spraggins, are you okay with this  
5 change, since you were the seconder?

6  
7 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Yes, I'm okay.

8  
9 **MR. ANSON:** Madam Chair, if I can make one more -- Madam Chair,  
10 can I have one more comment?

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Sure.

13  
14 **MR. ANSON:** So then, looking forward to the research track  
15 assessment, I certainly would be receptive to Science Center  
16 staff, or Regional Office staff, getting in touch with the  
17 states to -- After review of the respective programs, to  
18 identify those gaps and start discussing ways that we could kind  
19 of frame the data or do calibrations on the data for issues like  
20 closed seasons or where some programs don't survey the entire  
21 year, and so I've got some thoughts on that, but certainly,  
22 again, we would look forward to the agency reaching out to the  
23 states to do so. Thank you.

24  
25 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Thanks, Kevin. Okay. I'm cutting it off after  
26 Andy.

27  
28 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Madam Chair, do we still need to leave that  
29 last sentence in there, Madam Chair, I mean, if we're saying  
30 that we can't get it done by the 2021 SSC meeting? I'm not  
31 sure.

32  
33 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** You're right. Kevin, I think we probably need  
34 to end that sentence after "Great Red Snapper Count data".

35  
36 **MR. ANSON:** I would agree with you on that, yes.

37  
38 **CHAIRMAN GUYAS:** Okay. Good catch. Thank you. Now the motion  
39 reads: To request the Southeast Fisheries Science Center add two  
40 additional analysis runs to the research track red snapper  
41 assessment that would replace federal recreational survey data  
42 with state recreational survey data with and without Great Red  
43 Snapper Count data. Then just axe the rest. Very good. I am  
44 going to go to these three hands, or maybe we just have two