

GULF COUNCIL

HABITAT PROTECTION AND RESTORATION COMMITTEE

Golden Nugget Hotel and Casino & Virtual Biloxi, Mississippi

November 3, 2025

**VOTING MEMBERS**

- 10 Johnny Marquez.....Mississippi
- 11 Mike Allen.....Florida
- 12 Brenda Ballard.....Texas
- 13 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
- 14 Anthony Overton.....Alabama
- 15 John Sanchez.....Florida
- 16 Joe Spraggins.....Mississippi
- 17 Ed Walker.....Florida

**NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

- 20 Kevin Anson.....Alabama
- 21 Kesley Banks.....Texas
- 22 Billy Broussard.....Louisiana
- 23 J.D. Dugas.....Louisiana
- 24 Troy Frady.....Alabama
- 25 Dakus Geeslin (designee for Robin Riechers).....Texas
- 26 Lt. Jackson Morton.....USCG
- 27 Jason Osborne.....Mississippi
- 28 Chris Schieble (designee for Ryan Montegut).....Louisiana
- 29 Andy Strelcheck.....NMFS
- 30 C.J. Sweetman (designee for Jessica McCawley).....Florida

**STAFF**

- 33 Assane Diagne.....Economist
- 34 Matt Freeman.....Economic Analyst
- 35 John Froeschke.....Deputy Director
- 36 Sarah Gardiner.....Fishery Biologist
- 37 Lisa Hollensead.....Fishery Biologist
- 38 Jessica Matos.....Administrative Document Editor & IT Coordinator
- 39 Emily Muehlstein.....Public Information Officer
- 40 Ryan Rindone.....Lead Fishery Biologist & SEDAR Liaison
- 41 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
- 42 Carrie Simmons.....Executive Director
- 43 Anabelle Suitor.....Social Scientist
- 44 Verena Wang.....Ecosystem Analyst

**OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

- 47 Trevor Moncrief.....SSC
- 48 Tom Roller.....SAFMC

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

- - -

1 The Habitat Protection and Restoration Committee of the Gulf  
2 Council convened at The Golden Nugget Hotel and Casino in Biloxi,  
3 Mississippi on Monday morning, November 3, 2025, and was called to  
4 order by Chairman Johnny Marquez.  
5

6 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**  
7 **APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 2024 MINUTES**  
8 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**  
9

10 **CHAIRMAN JOHNNY MARQUEZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The first item we  
11 have up is the Adoption of the Agenda. Everybody should have  
12 received that. Do I have a motion to adopt the agenda?  
13

14 **MR. JOHN SANCHEZ:** So moved.  
15

16 **CHAIRMAN MARQUEZ:** Is there a second? Any opposition? Sorry, and  
17 I failed to recognize the new members on the committee, since we  
18 have a new committee going forward for this year. The chair is  
19 Johnny Marquez, Vice Chair is Ms. Ballard, Mr. Allen, Mr.  
20 Donaldson, Mr. Overton, Mr. Sanchez, Director Spraggins, and Mr.  
21 Walker.  
22

23 I'm sorry that I was a little out of order, but I think we actually  
24 had a motion and second and a vote on the agenda that passed, and  
25 so we can move to approval of the minutes for the last -- For the  
26 2024 minutes. Do I have a motion to approve?  
27

28 **DR. ANTHONY OVERTON:** Motion to approve.  
29

30 **CHAIRMAN MARQUEZ:** Do I have a second? Any discussion? Any  
31 opposition? The motion passes. All right, and so, the first step,  
32 we have our action guide and the next steps from Ms. Gardiner.  
33

34 **UPDATE ON EFH GENERIC AMENDMENT 5**  
35

36 **MS. SARAH GARDINER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll just wait for  
37 Bernie to pull up the action guide. Thank you, Bernie, and so the  
38 council is developing Generic Amendment 5 for the Essential Fish  
39 Habitat, or EFH, as part of the 2025 EFH five-year review, as  
40 required under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Conservation Act.  
41

42 As part of the EFH five-year Review, staff revised the EFH text  
43 and map descriptions for managed finfish, spiny lobster, and shrimp  
44 species to include new EFH text and map identifications using  
45 spatial habitat information and literature through 2024.  
46

1 Staff will provide a presentation summarizing the methods and  
2 results produced for the EFH text and map descriptions. The  
3 committee should evaluate the information presented, ask  
4 questions, and make recommendations, and, at this time, the  
5 committee may recommend a preliminary preferred alternative to the  
6 council, if it is appropriate.

7  
8 With that, I think I will give a brief presentation walking through  
9 the changes to the EFH text and map identifications, and then Mr.  
10 Moncrief will provide the SSC summary from when this was presented  
11 to the SSC.

12  
13 Okay, and so I have a brief presentation today, or I guess maybe  
14 not so brief, a couple slides, and there's quite a bit of  
15 information to get through. Alongside my presentation today,  
16 there's also the draft options document that is on the website, if  
17 you want to take a little closer look at that, but this  
18 presentation will provide a highlight of what's in that document.

19  
20 An overview of what I'm going to walk through today is kind of  
21 describing what EFH is, or essential fish habitat, and why we do  
22 it here at the council, and why it matters for you guys to be  
23 listening to this, the timeline of which this information has  
24 already been brought forward to the advisory bodies, and so our  
25 SSC as well as the council, and then a summary of the work that  
26 staff has completed on Component 1, which is the EFH text  
27 descriptions and maps, and then room for a committee discussion.

28  
29 Essential fish habitat is the aquatic waters and substrates  
30 necessary for federally-managed fish species to complete their  
31 life cycles, encompassing areas for spawning, breeding, feeding,  
32 or growing to maturity, and the Magnuson-Stevens Act requires  
33 councils to conduct an EFH five-year review, ideally every five  
34 years.

35  
36 The last one that this council did was in 2016, and so we're a bit  
37 delayed on that one, and so we're doing that now, but it's a  
38 mechanism to ensure that NOAA Fisheries and fisheries management  
39 councils incorporate the most recent and best science available  
40 into fishery management for essential fish habitat.

41  
42 The objective of the reviews is to review -- There's ten  
43 components, and I'll walk through those, but today I'm only  
44 presenting Component 1, because that's the larger analytical lift  
45 of the EFH five-year review, for the FMPs, and the five-year review  
46 is a mechanism to review that information and revise or amend the

1 information, as warranted, best on the best available science  
2 that's available.

3  
4 Mainly in the Gulf, EFH is used during our EFH consultation  
5 process, and so, you know, working with federal agency partner  
6 projects, looking for areas for regulatory permits, like the civil  
7 works of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, or BOEM wind, or oil  
8 and gas, or aquaculture development, and so, anytime anyone wants  
9 to get a permit for this process, they have to go through the EFH  
10 consultation process, and those EFH text and map descriptions are  
11 what are used to define EFH for federally-managed species in the  
12 Gulf, and the consultation process uses those definitions that are  
13 set here with the council and NOAA Fisheries.

14  
15 Using the most up-to-date information allows for a better  
16 characterization of habitat usage, which may ultimately benefit  
17 stock health and condition, and, you know, better stock health may  
18 provide better fishing opportunities, and more access, in the long  
19 run.

20  
21 I mentioned there are ten components of the EFH five-year review.  
22 These are the ten components, but the one that is bold and  
23 underlined in Component 1 is the EFH descriptions and  
24 identifications, and so those are those texts and maps that have  
25 been revised for this iteration of the review, and that's the  
26 larger analytical lift for the review, and that's what I'm  
27 presenting today.

28  
29 As a reminder of the work that has been done to-date, the SSC  
30 reviewed the spatial data that was compiled by Dr. Bridgette  
31 Froeschke back in July of 2024, and so that kind of looked at the  
32 metadata that was going to be incorporated to create the habitat  
33 maps, and so the spatial data component of the Component 1 for the  
34 text and map descriptions.

35  
36 During 2024 and 2025, staff has been working to use that spatial  
37 data to compile the maps for our federally-managed species. This  
38 was presented to the SSC in October, and they had a few  
39 recommendations that I was able to incorporate for this iteration  
40 of the document in the review, and then I'm bringing a draft  
41 options document to the council now, and, following the council  
42 review of this, the staff will complete the remaining nine  
43 components of the EFH five-year review to bring and incorporate  
44 into the entirety of the document.

45  
46 The purpose and need here is on the screen, but the purpose for

1 doing this generic amendment is to comply with the EFH provisions  
2 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The EFH final rule states that a  
3 review of the EFH components of the council's FMPs should be  
4 reviewed every five years, and the EFH provisions should be  
5 revised, or amended, as warranted, based on the best available  
6 science contributing new information. This amendment would  
7 incorporate all of the information that's required under 50 CFR  
8 section 600.815(a).

9  
10 The need is to consider new available spatial habitat information  
11 to revise the text and map descriptions for Gulf Shrimp, Reef Fish,  
12 Coastal Migratory Pelagics, Spiny Lobster, and Red Drum FMPs, and  
13 the updates to the EFH descriptions and identifications allow the  
14 best scientific information available to be utilized to provide  
15 enhanced conservation benefits to the stock and establish a better  
16 understanding of species habitat by life stage. This document  
17 will concurrently meet the requirements under the EFH five-year  
18 review.

19  
20 There is two alternatives, the first one being no action, and so  
21 not updating our EFH text and map descriptions. The second would  
22 be to update the EFH text and map descriptions to include primary  
23 research and technical literature sources through 2024. We can  
24 use this for all managed species, for every life stage, as data  
25 are available, and I think the key thing here is so, when we did  
26 the 2016 review, the council chose to not update the text and map  
27 descriptions in the FMPs, and NOAA Fisheries actually wrote a  
28 letter recommending that, for the next iteration, the council do  
29 incorporate those updates into our FMPs.

30  
31 I think it would be prudent to do that at this time, especially  
32 given the new information. The previous definitions are based off  
33 of the Generic Amendment 3, which was done in 2005, and so we're  
34 about twenty years out-of-date for that, and so I think there's a  
35 lot of new information that would be encapsulated in this review  
36 process to update these.

37  
38 For all federal Gulf-managed species, EFH is defined  
39 qualitatively, using known habitat, and so, to create these EFH  
40 text and map descriptions, we do a qualitative literature review  
41 of sorts.

42  
43 An example of the current reef fish definition is, for all Reef  
44 Fish and CMP FMPs, it's all estuaries from the U.S.-Mexico border  
45 to the boundaries between the areas covered by the Gulf and South  
46 Atlantic Councils from estuarine waters up to depths of a hundred

1 fathoms, and so essentially the entirety of the Gulf, right, and  
2 so there's not a lot of more fine-tuned habitat identification  
3 currently in our FMPs.

4  
5 What we did for this iteration was, you know, pull data from the  
6 literature to more qualitatively and fine-tune the habitat  
7 definitions for species by life stage, and so, to do this, staff  
8 compiled a literature review of sorts to look at associated habitat  
9 type, habitat zone, and ecoregion preference for species at  
10 different life stages, and that's what comprises what EFH is, and  
11 so then EFH is broken out across all of our federally-managed  
12 species, with seven different life stages, and so we have egg,  
13 larvae, post-larvae, early juvenile, late juvenile, adult, and  
14 spawning adult.

15  
16 These life stages were decided in the Generic Amendment 3 back in  
17 2005, and so, using this habitat information, we currently have  
18 eleven habitat types. We had twelve going into the SSC, but the  
19 SSC recommended to combine hardbottom and reef habitat, and I can  
20 walk through that, the distinction there, in just a little bit.

21  
22 There are three different habitat zones, estuarine, nearshore, and  
23 offshore, and five different habitat regions, or ecoregions, and  
24 so the first ecoregion being Florida Keys to Tarpon Springs, the  
25 second Tarpon Springs to Pensacola Bay, the third Pensacola Bay to  
26 the Mississippi Delta, four is the Mississippi Delta to Freeport,  
27 Texas, and five is Freeport, Texas to the Mexican border.

28  
29 This is a map that kind of visualizes those five ecoregions, and  
30 so, using the qualitative literature review, where we gained  
31 information on habitat type, habitat zone, and ecoregion, we  
32 updated the habitat attribute tables, which essentially are what  
33 defines where the associated habitat types are for species at  
34 different life stages.

35  
36 Using this literature review through 2024, and then here's a Google  
37 Drive link to the spatial data that was completed in the contract  
38 in 2023 and 2024, if folks are interested in kind of looking at  
39 what spatial data was compiled.

40  
41 The updates to the habitat attribute tables were updated with  
42 literature through 2024, and, of the forty species that are updated  
43 in this generic amendment, twenty-five of the forty species  
44 included updated literature, thirteen had updates to habitat type,  
45 habitat zone, or ecoregion, and remember those three things are  
46 what is going to influence what our EFH text and map descriptions

1 are.

2

3 The other updates to the habitat attribute tables for the remaining  
4 twelve species of the twenty-five included updates to life history,  
5 which tends to address other components of the EFH five-year  
6 review, and so, for example, information that may provide insight  
7 into mortality rates, growth rates, or prey species, which would  
8 address, you know, Component 7.

9

10 Broadly, the habitat attribute table was updated with information  
11 that is used to inform the entirety of the EFH five-year review,  
12 but thirteen of the forty species had updates that informed just  
13 specifically the EFH text and map identifications for this  
14 iteration, and so my apologies for the small text, but this is an  
15 example of the habitat attribute table for gag grouper, and I want  
16 folks to really focus on the first four columns.

17

18 We're looking at life stage, ecoregion, habitat zone, and habitat  
19 type here, and so this is what is going to be used to inform our  
20 text descriptions for EFH as well as our map descriptions for EFH.

21

22 Using this information from those four columns, we're able to kind  
23 of piece together what data we're going to use to compile the text  
24 description, as well as the spatial data that's provided and  
25 identifying different habitat types in different regions to create  
26 the habitat maps.

27

28 This is the gag grouper EFH, proposed EFH. text description, and  
29 so, for example, in adult gag grouper, we're seeing a Gulf-wide  
30 distribution in Ecoregions 1 through 5, in nearshore and offshore  
31 habitats, concentrated between thirteen and 100 meters, associated  
32 with hardbottom and reef habitat, and this is the map that visually  
33 depicts that.

34

35 One of the distinctions that I want to make here is that this map  
36 is displaying the associated habitat type. It's not necessarily  
37 a distribution map of where gag grouper will be, and so the  
38 literature has defined that gag grouper have known habitat  
39 associations throughout the Gulf in hardbottom and reef habitat,  
40 but it's not necessarily meaning that you will always find them if  
41 you go to these spots.

42

43 It's not a distribution map, and that's not really where we're at  
44 with our current EFH data that we have to use to inform some of  
45 these maps.

46

1 In order to take a look at these maps, I had a total of 280 maps,  
2 and so we have thirty-one reef fish species, four shrimp species,  
3 three coastal migratory pelagics, one red drum, and one spiny  
4 lobster, across seven different life stages, and so I was able to  
5 compile 280 maps, but you've got to visualize this, and, instead  
6 of just putting it all in the document, I created an R Shiny app  
7 for folks to look at. Hopefully this loads. Great. This is also  
8 linked in the presentation, and you guys can play around with it.

9  
10 This app essentially walks you through the different eleven habitat  
11 types, and so remember that's one thing that can be used to inform  
12 our EFH text and map identifications. The different habitat zones,  
13 you can kind of overlay those, and I'll walk through some examples.

14  
15 You can select one of the forty different species to take a look  
16 atm and it will all populate on this map here, and, if you're  
17 interested, you can also select the EFH descriptions, and so this  
18 will show you what the associated text description is as well, and  
19 whether the spatial data is being shown on the map, and I'll kind  
20 of walk through an example of that.

21  
22 Then, while the council does not currently consider artificial  
23 reef habitat as EFH, that's a frequently-asked question that we  
24 get from many of our stakeholders, and so I thought it would be  
25 prudent to include an artificial reef tab explaining what  
26 artificial reef is, and then linking the 2013 document, where the  
27 council considered it, but ultimately decided to not modify our  
28 habitat types to include artificial reef at that time.

29  
30 Let's walk through an example, and so you can select your species.  
31 You can select the different life stages that you want to display  
32 and overlay with each other. If you're interested in potentially  
33 looking at a species and thinking, you know, what other habitat  
34 might they utilize that is not displayed on the map, you can kind  
35 of select different habitat types.

36  
37 You can select the different eco or habitat zone boundaries, if  
38 you're interested to overlay a little bit of that, but, also, you  
39 can take a look at the full EFH text descriptions as well, and so  
40 this kind of walks through what is in the document as the proposed  
41 EFH textual descriptions, and as well as the what is being  
42 displayed on the map.

43  
44 One of the things we talked about at the SSC, and ultimately ended  
45 up being a recommendation from the SSC, is those species at  
46 different life stages that tend to have water column associations

1 as a habitat association, right, and so like think a lot of our  
2 egg, larval, and post-larval life stages are water-column  
3 associated, but the water-column associated, when depicted on the  
4 map, encompasses broadly the entirety of the Gulf, and so you're  
5 not able to get that kind of more higher-resolution display of the  
6 spatial data that we compiled for our different habitat types,  
7 because the water column association kind of dominates the map.

8  
9 You can see here, for example, on our egg life stage, the gag  
10 grouper, at egg life stage, are associated with Ecoregions 1 and  
11 2, and they're associated with water-column-associated habitat,  
12 but, in italics, I have "WCA", or water-column-associated habitat,  
13 is not displayed on the map, because that just kind of encompasses  
14 too much of the map to really get more of that fine-scale  
15 resolution that we're looking for.

16  
17 This is a really fun tool. I think you can kind of play around  
18 with it, and look at different species, and you can look at  
19 different life stages. We think it's a really interesting way to  
20 look at the proposed EFH text and map descriptions without having  
21 to scroll through hundreds of pages of the document, so you can  
22 kind of highlight the species that you're interested in taking a  
23 look at.

24  
25 I've just got a couple more slides here, and so I mentioned the  
26 recommendation from the SSC to remove the water-column-associated  
27 spatial data from the maps, given the spatial dominance, and so  
28 that's kind of what I walked through, and we already saw that.

29  
30 The SSC also recommended combining hardbottom and reef habitat  
31 type, given that the literature doesn't often distinguish between  
32 the two, and they can be used interchangeably, and I think we were  
33 missing some components, when we were looking at habitat  
34 associations, just for reef associations and excluding hardbottom  
35 habitat, and so, ultimately, the SSC recommended to combine those  
36 two habitat types.

37  
38 Then, based on some just like, you know, local knowledge, or  
39 additional papers that were sent to me from SSC members, there  
40 were updates to the species distribution for wenchman, Spanish  
41 mackerel, and scamp.

42  
43 Kind of next steps for this document, and this was the larger  
44 analytical lift for the EFH five-year review. That's Component 1,  
45 and that's the only component in which the council, or the  
46 committee, would need to identify a preferred alternative for, and

1 so that's kind of why it's being brought to the committee and the  
2 council separate as a standalone, versus having it combined with  
3 the totality of the EFH five-year review.

4  
5 This is the opportunity for the council to provide feedback and  
6 recommendations, and staff, you know, can make changes as  
7 warranted, based on council recommendations and committee  
8 recommendations. Following this time period, you know, staff will  
9 go back and develop the remaining components of the EFH five-year  
10 review, and that's Components 2 through 10, and so that will occur  
11 in probably 2026.

12  
13 Then we'll work on Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 development for Action  
14 1, and then combining that with the final document, in totality of  
15 the EFH five-year review, to bring back and kind of put a bow on  
16 it and take final action.

17  
18 I have the document outline here, because this is a pretty large  
19 document, if folks are interested in how it would be structured.  
20 It's a bit unique from how we do other documents here at the  
21 council. It's kind of a different process, and so it's not -- It  
22 doesn't always follow the typical process and engagement that we  
23 do for many of our other documents, and so I summarized our  
24 timeline again, but hopefully the majority of this work will be  
25 completed in 2026, and I'll take any questions.

26  
27 **CHAIRMAN MARQUEZ:** This map is your work, and the staff's work,  
28 this interactive map, because it's great.

29  
30 **MS. GARDINER:** Thank you. Yes.

31  
32 **CHAIRMAN MARQUEZ:** Dr. Sweetman.

33  
34 **DR. C. J. SWEETMAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so I'm not on your  
35 committee, but I appreciate -- I just had a question. Sarah. Well,  
36 first of all, I mean, I guess I would totally agree with the SSC  
37 recommendations of combining hardbottom and reef habitat, and  
38 absolutely getting rid of the water column, because it's just  
39 everything, and you're not getting any information insight there.

40  
41 My question is just on slide 20, when you used the gag grouper  
42 adult map as an example, and you're showing some EFH off of  
43 Louisiana, but you're saying that that doesn't necessarily mean  
44 that gag grouper are there. Is it just that the habitat that  
45 you're seeing there could, in theory, be suitable for gag grouper?  
46 Is that --

1  
2 **MS. GARDINER:** Yes, and thanks for that. It's essentially yes.  
3 Your answer is yes, but it's -- You know, the literature has  
4 identified that in that area there may be suitable habitat, and at  
5 one point gag grouper may have been there, but it doesn't  
6 necessarily mean that it is there, but the habitat type is  
7 prevalent there.

8  
9 **DR. JOHN FROESCHKE:** The other way you can think about it is she  
10 showed earlier that map those ecoregions, and so the way that the  
11 tables work is it's the habitat type within each ecoregion, and  
12 so, if there's a ecoregion, and, for example, I think that would  
13 be 3 or something, that you think, okay, that's not correct, then  
14 we could fix that, and we could remove that ecoregion from this  
15 association, and that would correct those kinds of things.

16  
17 There are some species and things that were done incorrectly,  
18 inadvertently, and earlier, and we are correcting those. For  
19 example, there were -- I think there was one where it was SAV  
20 offshore. You know, there's not going to be seagrass 200 miles  
21 offshore, and so we're going to fix those. If there's other things  
22 like that, that would be the mechanism, because, ultimately, it's  
23 those linkages in the text that matters.

24  
25 For example, we use this in the consultation process, and so, if  
26 there is a consultation, and it would impact EFH, even if it's not  
27 mapped, and there's hardbottom there, it would still fall under  
28 that, and so the text is always the actual things. These are just  
29 our best representations of it, but it's always the textual  
30 description that makes the difference.

31  
32 **CHAIRMAN MARQUEZ:** Any further questions? Dr. Allen.

33  
34 **DR. MIKE ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and, Sarah, good job on  
35 this. I just want to make the point that I think one of the best  
36 uses of this, for researchers and people new at stock assessments  
37 and that kind of thing, is the updated literature review, and so  
38 having those papers accessible, where people can just go pull and  
39 say these are the papers they used for EFH designation, would  
40 really be a good use of this, and valuable to the researchers, and  
41 so thank you.

42  
43 **CHAIRMAN MARQUEZ:** Okay any further questions for Sarah? All  
44 right. So, at this time, I think we'll move on to the SSC report  
45 with Mr. Trevor Moncrief.

46

1 **MR. TREVOR MONCRIEF:** Given the breadth of the discussion the  
2 presentation already had, there's not really much additional for  
3 me to say. I think the SSC largely agreed the tool, the work the  
4 staff has done, and everything else like that, is impressive,  
5 having all that in one place, and I think you're really  
6 underselling the 280 progress, because, if you multiply that by  
7 all the ecoregions and everything else, that number balloons pretty  
8 fast.

9  
10 I mean, in general, right, we do these things, and look at EFH as  
11 a way to make sure we're ensuring sustainable fisheries habitat,  
12 and everything else like that, and I think, from our perspective,  
13 where the discussion went to is, obviously, there's a lot of gaps  
14 across-the-board, and there's a lot of life stages associated with  
15 these designations and everything else, and we struggle,  
16 oftentimes, to even have detailed information on the adult life  
17 stages of some of these reef fish and everything else.

18  
19 The thought that we're going to have every single one of them  
20 there, from every single life stage, I think is a little bit of a  
21 stretch, and so we did talk about potentially reducing the amount  
22 of life stages covered, which will come up in a discussion later  
23 on, and not for this one, and then the other one was simply for  
24 the staff to make adjustments as the they saw fit.

25  
26 Obviously, Dr. Froeschke brought up an example of one, but there  
27 was a multitude of them associated with you know wenchman snapper,  
28 scamp, everything else like that, and, you know, our thought was  
29 that, you know, as we -- As they step through all the different  
30 species, there's enough knowledge with the SSC regionally that  
31 most of those questions should be able to be answered.

32  
33 Gag exist off Louisiana, but they're in very low amounts of  
34 habitat, and so that kind of stuff I think would work out pretty  
35 well as those things arise, but, given the breadth of the species,  
36 and the detail, I'm sure this is going to be an ongoing process  
37 for decades to come, and that's all I've got.

38  
39 **CHAIRMAN MARQUEZ:** Any questions from Ms. Moncrief? Thank you,  
40 and so now I think I'm going to go back to Ms. Gardiner and the  
41 draft document.

42  
43 **MS. GARDINER:** I think, if there's no further comments, or  
44 discussion, if the committee feels prudent to recommend a  
45 preferred, that would be helpful at this point.

46

1 **CHAIRMAN MARQUEZ:** Mr. Sanchez.

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3 **MR. JOHN SANCHEZ:** I make a motion to select Alternative 2 as the  
4 preferred.

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6 **CHAIRMAN MARQUEZ:** Is there a second? Any discussion? **Any**  
7 **opposition to the motion? The motion passes.** Any other business?

8 I think we're concluded Mr. Chair. Thank you very much, Ms.

9 Gardiner.

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11 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on November 3, 2025.)

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