

Data Collection Committee Report August 24, 2026 Ed Walker, Chair

The Committee adopted the agenda (**Tab F, No. 1**) and approved the minutes (**Tab F, No. 2**) of the June 2026 meeting.

Generic Amendment: Modifications for Gulf For-hire Data Collection Program (Tab F, No.4a-c)

Council staff reviewed a summary of public comments received and the final draft document with all the preferred alternatives. When reviewing Action 4, a Committee member asked for clarification on what sampling strata would be used to select participants for the economic survey. Staff responded that several factors could be used to develop sampling strata including state, area fished, species targeted, and vessel size. A Committee member inquired if a “sampling without replacement” approach could be used while sampling 20% annually to get a comprehensive sample of the entire fleet every 5 years. Staff cautioned that applying a prescriptive direction for a scientific sampling design could reduce the flexibility of the program and make it difficult to adapt the survey for industry needs. A Committee member noted that, for the purpose of distributing disaster relief, that the 20% economic survey would provide better information than what is currently available.

Staff noted that some revisions would be needed to the language in the various actions to ensure consistency throughout. Staff was directed to complete those changes and have them ready to review by full Council. Additionally, Southeast Regional Office (SERO) staff indicated that the codified text could be ready for review by full Council.

Presentation: Marine Recreational Information Program Fishing Effort Survey (MRIP-FES) Pilot Study Results (Tab F, No. 5)

Finalized results of the pilot study were not made available in time for presenting to the Committee. Broadly, revised effort estimates are substantially lower than the current FES units depending on species, state, and sampling wave. Without having the finalized pilot study results, it is difficult to determine how the new estimates will affect stock assessments currently be conducted, calibration with the state private recreational data collection programs, and sector allocations. As a result, Dr. Simmons requested that staff from the Office of Science and Technology, the Southeast Fishery Science Center, and SERO have a meeting to discuss what will be presented at the September Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) meeting and provide the SSC direction on what is expected during their discussion of the pilot study.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.