GULF COUNCIL

SHRIMP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Golden Nugget Hotel and Casino & Virtual Biloxi, Mississippi

August 24, 2026

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Motions..... 4

Adoption of Agenda and Approval of April 2026 Minutes..... 5

Action Guide and Next Steps..... 5

July 2026 SSC Meeting Summary..... 6

Status Update on Working Group to Address Interactions and Bycatch of Protected Resources in Shrimp Trawls..... 27

Other Business..... 30
- Status of Shrimp Permit Moratorium..... 30
- Update on Shrimp Futures..... 30
- Update on Early Adopter Program..... 30

Adjournment 32

- - -

TABLE OF MOTIONS

PAGE 17: Motion that the methodology using observer data that has been developed by the SEFSC and being used to estimate red snapper bycatch in the Gulf is acceptable for data input into the current red snapper assessment model. The motion carried on page 17.

PAGE 17: Motion to support expanding the bycatch methodology to include additional finfish species that are presently in the observer database. The SSC also recommends that the results of these additional efforts be presented to the Shrimp Bycatch Working Group and/or the appropriate SEDAR workshop or topical working group. The motion carried on page 18.

PAGE 18: Motion to recommend the council write a letter to SEFSC supporting future investigations into improving the estimation of bycatch for finfish species not characterized since 2025 in the observer program. The motion carried on page 22.

PAGE 26: Motion to postpone work on updated analyses for the minimum threshold number of federal Gulf shrimp commercial permits and continue work on Shrimp Amendment 20 to update status determination criteria. The motion carried on page 27.

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The Shrimp Management Committee of the Gulf Council convened at The Golden Nugget Hotel and Casino in Biloxi, Mississippi on Monday morning, August 24, 2026, and was called to order by Chairman Chris Schieble.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA
APPROVAL OF JUNE 2026 MINUTES
ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS

CHAIRMAN CHRIS SCHIEBLE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this time, I would like to call the Shrimp Management Committee to order. Members of the committee and myself as the chair, Dr. Overton as the vice chair, Dr. Allen, Mr. Anson, Dr. Banks, Mr. Broussard, Mr. Donaldson, Mr. Frady, Mr. Osborne, Mr. Geeslin, Mr. Sanchez, General Spraggins, and Mr. Strelcheck. All the committee members are present in-person.

The first item on the agenda is Adoption of the Agenda, which is tab B, Number 1. Does anyone have any other business they would like to see added to the end of the agenda? Yes, Mr. Sanchez.

MR. JOHN SANCHEZ: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes. To Other Business, I would like to add an update on the status of the shrimp permit moratorium extension, to see where we're at with that, and that can happen either during committee, if that's possible, or at Full Council.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Okay. Duly noted. We will add that item under Other Business at the end of the agenda. Any other modifications to the agenda? Dr. Walter.

DR. JOHN WALTER: Yes, and I would like to just add a brief verbal update on a couple of topics, on the Shrimp Futures and then on where we are probably with the Early Adopter Program. I think it might be useful for the group to hear about that. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Okay. Thank you, Dr. Walter. We'll add that item also at the end of the agenda. Any other business to be added? All right. Can I get a motion to approve the agenda as modified? Motion by Dr. Banks and Billy, and second by Mr. Osborne. Is anyone opposed to the agenda as written? Okay. The agenda is approved, adopted.

Next is Approval of June 2026 Meeting Minutes, which are Tab D, Number 2. Are there any additions, deletions, or edits to those minutes? Seeing none, can I get a motion to approve the minutes as written? Mr. Osborne. Second by Dr. Banks. The minutes are adopted as they are in the briefing book.

Next on the agenda is the Action Guide and Next Steps, which is Tab D, Number 3. I believe we have Dr. Freeman, in the virtual world, to help lead us through this. Is that correct, Bernie, or I'm just winging it by myself?

DR. MATT FREEMAN: Hi, Mr. Schieble. Can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Yes, Dr. Freeman. Good morning.

MR. FREEMAN: Good morning.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Are you ready to read through the action guide for us, please?

JULY 2026 SSC MEETING SUMMARY

DR. FREEMAN: Yes, sir, and so, for the first item, the SSC chair will provide overview of the July SSC meeting summary specific to estimation of shrimp trawl bycatch methodology for finfish and its application to red snapper and gray triggerfish bycatch estimation procedures.

The SSC passed motions finding the methodology for estimating red snapper bycatch in the Gulf to be acceptable, supporting expanded use of the methodology to include additional finfish species in the observer database and finding the proxy methodology for estimating gray triggerfish bycatch in the Gulf to be acceptable.

The SSC also discussed the council's request for NMFS to update its analysis for the minimum threshold number of federal Gulf shrimp permits. The committee should consider the information provided, ask questions, and may consider adopting the SSC's motions for finfish bycatch estimation for red snapper and gray triggerfish for the Gulf shrimp fleet.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Okay. Thank you, Dr. Freeman. Moving to the first agenda item, we have Mr. Moncrief to give us the SSC summary report. Thank you, Trevor. Take it away.

MR. TREVOR MONCRIEF: All right. Thank you. I feel like Dr. Freeman knocked it out, and you don’t even need to see all this. First off, we did the red snapper bycatch estimation, and so we had the Science Center present an updated method on estimating how many red snapper are caught as bycatch in shrimp trawls.

Work began in 2021, as they began to attempt to validate the estimates that were coming out of the old method. Essentially,

when they went back and tried to actually predict the catch, it was only half of the actual landings, and so they saw that as basically a smell test, to say something is going on here, and we need to look at it a little bit closer.

This new method is considered as an input into SEDAR 98, and so the big thing here is that the research team rebuilt the entire process. I think soup-to-nuts is probably a good adjective here, and so how the observer catch data, GPS effort data, dockside landings, all of that, how it's collected, checked, and combined was basically redone in its entirety.

They had CIE reviewers evaluate the rebuilt method from 2023 to 2025, and then the recommendations were applied to the full observer data set from 2007 to 2023, and then went back into the historical years, back to 1984.

In general, the core thing here is that the catch rate, from what was listed from the observer times the total fishing effort, which was derived from the GPS base estimation, is your total bycatch. The observers would sample a portion of the trips, and, on a four-net boat, they would observe two of the four nets, which are the outside, not the inside. There was a question about that, a discussion on that one, and every red snapper in those nets is counted directly, whereas the other ones are self-sampled out and tallied up.

The fishing effort, like I mentioned before, is estimated, and not directly reported, and so it's built in from the GPS devices on a subset of boats, and then scaled, and so they're basically using diagnostics to determine, and I think there's been a few presentations on that.

Then the key fix here is that there were some dramatic differences in catch rates by basically gear type and time-of-day combination, where some were actually like four to five X versus the others, and so them splitting these categorically allowed them to be able to really remove a lot of the bias and uncertainty that was going into it.

In general, there was a question from one of the members about observer presence changing the fisherman's behavior. This is called observer bias, right, on a daily basis, and so the response there was that these aren't just single-day trips, and the current fishery profit margins are fairly small, and so it doesn't make any sense that anyone would try to divert their behavior for a week to two weeks to three weeks at a time when these folks are out there, and so we kind of wrote that one off as that's likely

not present, and it seemed to be confirmed when looking at the data.

Then there was concern about estimating the bycatch for years predating the observer, and so back in time, 2006 and previous, and, obviously, there were some constraints in the fleet after 2005, and so it's just a question of whether the method used now will be applicable back in time.

Really, there was no other option, but I think, if you look at the figure on the right, which essentially shows the previous estimates along with the newly-derived ones in blue, you can see a more consistent time series, that follows a little bit more of a logical path, and, at least for myself, I like to see consistency, versus that high variability over time, and so I think it worked out.

In the next slide, I think we've got some motions here, and so the SSC found the methodology using observer data that's been developed by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center and being used to estimate red snapper bycatch in the Gulf is acceptable for data input into the current red snapper assessment model. No opposition, and then we even supported expanding the same methodology to include finfish species that are presently in the observer database.

This next species we talk about isn't in there, and so it kind of stands out a little bit, and, essentially, they go through and basically carry out the same scenario, to see if the same results come through, and that one carried without opposition.

The next one is triggerfish, and so we were presented an effort to estimate gray triggerfish bycatch in shrimp trawls for the SEDAR 100 assessment, which is currently ongoing. Observer data on gray triggerfish is limited. It wasn't on that original list, and so it wasn't included in that direct observer data.

This method uses a stand-in, or a proxy species, and, in this case, it's lane snapper, to estimate bycatch based on the relationship of catch between the two species, and so you're taking a separate survey, looking at the relationship, and applying that to the actual fishery to try to derive bycatch estimates.

There is one year of direct observer data in 2025, but it's not enough to replace the current proxy approach, and so give it a few more years, and likely we'll be able to do something a little bit more with that, but, for now, this is what it came up with.

A council working group reviewed the method and found it

statistically sound, that there were concerns about reliance on a proxy species instead of direct observations of the focus species, and I would say that directly mirrors the SSE's viewpoints on it.

All right, and so, some of the discussion around it, I think we shuffled around this one a few different ways, but the lane snapper and gray triggerfish abundances vary regionally, and it raises concerns on how well one can predict the other, and so there was a confirmation that further validation is warranted.

Essentially, what that means is that the relationship between the two species varied depending on what stat zone. Sometimes it was more, and sometimes it was less, and so it's hard to say that they're directly correlated with, you know, some accuracy when it's variable, and so we just need a little bit more double-checking on that one, but the alternative of assigning zero bycatch was ruled out as unrealistic, and so you have to have something, and the direct estimation is necessary for the assessment to proceed.

Here are the same figures I showed before. This is split by region for bycatch, the west in the orange and the east in the blue, and then you can see the previous iteration here on the right. You have the blue triangles as the previous, and the yellow as the current, and you can see, once again, consistency in the time series. You don't see it jumping all over the place. I think, in the end, leaning on that consistency probably is a little bit more representative than assuming the other.

I'll speak a little bit to this motion. The SSC found the proxy methodology using SEAMAP and observer data that has been developed by the Science Center to estimate gray triggerfish bycatch in the Gulf as acceptable for consideration as a data input for SEDAR 100. The SSC also recommends future investigations into improving the estimation of shrimp trawl bycatch for species not characterized in the observer program.

You'll see this was a substitute motion. It was nine to seven. Really, this was centered around semantics, and so the first part of this motion generally everybody agreed to. Really, it was the inclusion of the second sentence on whether it should be a separate motion included, and how exactly should it be worded, and are we saying that it's good to use for this one instance, and then after that it's bad, or are we saying it's good to use the entire time, and that was the generality. That's what happened when it was nine to seven. I think, in general, the entire SSC agreed with the statement. It was just the semantics of how the motion was worded that led to the divide between them.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Hold up there, Trevor. Don't run away. We have Captain Walker, and then Dr. Sweetman.

MR. ED WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just had a question. It seems like you guys had the same questions about using lane snapper as a proxy for triggerfish, and I think maybe the regional part that you parsed out was, you know, a step in the right direction, but, to me, it still seems like a stretch to say that you're catching a bunch of something when you're not actually catching it based on something else. Can you fill me in a little bit on how you guys come up with those estimates?

MR. MONCRIEF: I think that's a pretty good description of it, right, and you're taking the observations that you have on-hand of both species and trying to do your best to come up with what might be a good estimate, and, you know that's why the SSC discussed further validation of it.

Even there was another idea that was plumbed around, and I think it was a good one, from one of the SSC members from Texas, which was let's take the same approach and apply it to species that were present in both the observer data and in the SEAMAP data and see if the same results come true, right, because, one, you have a known correlation between the two in the observer program, and then you have the correlation from the SEAMAP.

If those perform similarly, then you can say, this is more representative than what we think it is. If they don't, that's the thought to go back to the drawing board and think a little bit more about it.

MR. WALKER: Thank you. I've been on a shrimp boat in south Florida a couple of times, at least for a short period of time, and there were hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of small lane snapper in the bycatch pile we were picking through, and I don't recall ever seeing a triggerfish, and so, to me, it seems, you know, like a stretch to try and estimate someone's triggerfish catch by having 400 small lane snappers on the boat. Maybe that's different on the other side of the Gulf, and I don't know.

MR. MONCRIEF: No, and I think it carried through to the statement I made when we reviewed that table, right, is that we've got an established relationship that we're assuming, you know, is representative, but, when you look at the actual catches across the different regions, you see that fluctuation go back and forth, and so they're trying to carve out in between the middle and make an assumption about it. I think the next move is to test that

assumption with what we just talked about, something that is known between the two programs.

MR. WALKER: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Dr. Sweetman, and then Mr. Sanchez.

DR. C.J. SWEETMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so, kind of building off of Ed's point there, like, yes, being in the Keys, you get a lot more lane snapper, juvenile lane snapper, as bycatch, as opposed to gray triggerfish, and so it's almost like there's a negative correlation there, and we might have some positive correlations elsewhere around the region.

That concerns me, and how we'll have to even navigate that, but then I guess a broader question here, and maybe just for the entire group's understanding. If we've got Gulf triggerfish as a federally-managed fishery with the stock assessment, why has this not been included within the observer program up until just last year, and that might not even be a question for you, Trevor.

MR. MONCRIEF: I wouldn't say that it has been included now, and so it's been established as a priority. I think, when I saw the list, when they presented it to us, it had a lot of species on there that kind of caught my eye as to, well, that's kind of a strange one, and they made it seem like it was just an established list of the priorities at the time, and it just never got picked back up and reevaluated, because you've got several estuarine species on there that are certainly important to state management that don't match the federal priority. I'm not sure if the Science Center or Ryan has more background on it, but I'm not sure, but I know it's there now.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Dr. Walter, to that question?

DR. WALTER: Yes, and I think gray snapper just hasn't gotten the respect that I think it does now in terms of from a fishery perspective, where it's now a target species, and it has a lot of interest, and so that's why it wasn't recorded in the datasets in the observer program.

I think one of the things is that this is not -- No one is saying that this is a great method, and I think, moving forward, the goal would be to use the observer data when we get more years of data under the program's belt, and so I think this is a stopgap for what will probably improve in the future, and one of the things that I think we also need to understand is it's not that influential in the stock assessment, and SEDAR 100 was reviewed

recently, and found that this method was acceptable by the reviewers, but also not a major driving force in the stock assessment.

I think we're a lot -- While we might have concerns here about the methodology, right now it's what we've got. We can probably take some solace in that it's probably not driving the population trends as bycatch has in the past, and one comment here I think is a key improvement that really needs to be noted is that, particularly for red snapper and for the other finfish that we have good observer coverage for, we are now using directly the observer data, and not using the SEAMAP survey as a proxy.

That’s really a big advancement in the modeling, and I think that's rippling through the stock assessments, where it's being more accurately accounted for within the stock assessment, and so we're moving forward. We're making progress, and we're using the data that comes off the commercial fishing operations. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Okay. I saw Andy pop your hand up. Is that to this point?

MR. ANDY STRELCHECK: Yes, and I just wanted to follow up on what John was saying, and ask him kind of a follow-on question, and so I don't recall with SEDAR 100, but you just mentioned, obviously, the assessment is not very sensitive to, obviously, the shrimp trawl bycatch. How is shrimp trawl bycatch kind of handled? Is it input? Is there a lot of uncertainty that's surrounding those estimates when we conduct assessments like this, or is it species-specific, contingent on the quality of the data and the information we're using?

DR. WALTER: So the way we use it is we take basically -- We don't use the interannual variability in the shrimp trawl estimates to then inform recruitment, because we don't believe that interannual variability is necessarily informative of much. What we use is the long-term average catch rate and then the shrimp effort time series, because, one, we know the shrimp effort pretty well. We know what the fishery has done, and we know we've seen big declines in shrimp effort, and so, consequently, we think there would be big declines in the total bycatch.

Then we just take the average catch rates, and the model then calculates what that bycatch should be and removes it from the population without it directly affecting the estimates of recruitment that come more from the age composition and other datasets that we think have less uncertainty related to them, and that's the basic approach that's used for red snapper, king

mackerel, gray triggerfish, and any other species that uses that bycatch. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Okay. Mr. Sanchez, you had your hand up earlier.

MR. SANCHEZ: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Was there any discussion at the SSC level for any appetite to maybe consider using a middle-of-the-road data species like king mackerel, rather than going from data-rich extreme to data poor?

MR. MONCRIEF: I think, when we discussed the next step with using the observer data, I believe king mackerel was listed as the next priority. Is that correct, Ryan?

MR. RYAN RINDONE: You got me. Can you say it again?

MR. MONCRIEF: When we talked through the observer data, and then highlighted the need to do it for -- Basically run the same thing for red snapper for the other species listed in the observer program, was king mackerel not listed as a priority?

MR. RINDONE: King mackerel is listed as a priority, yes, and that has a lot also to do with the new data coming out of Mexico and trying to start building on a better understanding of possible connectivity between those areas.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Okay. Mr. Sanchez, a response?

MR. SANCHEZ: Yes, and, just so that, I know we have the king mackerel SEDAR coming up and it's picking up steam with some, you know, data from Mexico, and so it might -- The timing might be good, is what I'm suggesting.

MR. MONCRIEF: Yes, and I agree with that.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Dr. Simmons.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so that was a request of the finfish shrimp trawl bycatch working group. It's just kind of taking some -- You know, we have a little additional time, because of the king mackerel, the Mexico landings we're trying to integrate, and I think it's just going to take a bit of a backseat, because we need to move forward with a protected resources group, as we'll talk about in the next agenda item, but it's on our list.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Okay. Thank you, Dr. Simmons. I guess I'll

ask Matt the question virtually online, and so, before we adopt some of these motions going forward here, when is the next Shrimp AP meeting scheduled to occur? Do we know that yet, Dr. Freeman?

DR. FREEMAN: We don't yet. There's a possibility, and I'll discuss that with Dr. Simmons and Dr. Froeschke after this week's council meeting and we have a sense of direction from Full Council, but we may try to schedule one before the October council meeting.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Okay. That sounds good. I guess, with that said, we have the Shrimp AP chair in the audience. I don't know if she would want to speak on this, really quickly, ahead of that potential Shrimp AP meeting, before we adopt these motions.

MS. LEANN BOSARGE: Thanks. It’s good to see everybody. I think you had some great discussion, and I do agree with Dr. Walter that this new methodology is an improvement, because we're moving away from the SEAMAP proxies, and actually trying to use the observer data.

However, the one thing that was a little concerning, that I think we're going to get to, and we looked at it, the workgroup and the SSC and SEDAR for red snapper, which is the best of the best, right? That's not a sample, per se. It's more like a census from an observer standpoint.

They look at every red snapper that hits the deck, and they measure and count it. Everything else is a sample, right? The worst of the worst is gray trigger, because you don't even have a sample, right? You're just trying to invent it. It's not sampled by the observers.

The workgroup, as well as the SSC, said, hey, this is a step forward in methodology, but we need to see how it will work for the sampled species. We haven't done that yet. That would be like your king mackerel or something like that.

We suggested king mackerel, because we know the analysis is coming up anyway. It's something that has to be done, and not extra work, and so I do hope that the council will continue to engage that workgroup, even if it has to take a backseat to protected resources. We need to look at it when that analysis is done on king mackerel, and let's make sure this methodology works well for the sampled species, and not the census species. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Appreciate that. Do we have any other further conversation? I'm sorry. Mr. Donaldson, I forgot.

MR. DAVE DONALDSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so I share the concerns about this proxy species, and, Trevor, you mentioned looking at a species that is found in SEAMAP as well as the observer. Is there plans to do that in the future, or what's the status of that?

MR. MONCRIEF: It was only suggested by the SSC, and I think we talked about, you know, you've got red snapper and lane snapper, and you've got one that's known and one that's fairly -- Should be there and highly present. It wasn't up to us to dictate whether it was going to happen or not, and so I'm leaning to Dr. Walter, or the analyst, to say whether they're taking it or not.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Dr. Walter.

DR. WALTER: Yes, and, while I think it's a good suggestion, I'm trying to think about how it would get used. If we find out that it doesn't work well for say king mackerel, you're not going to implement it for king mackerel, because we have the actual observer data, but then the inference would be perhaps it doesn't work well for gray triggerfish, which then what we would do with gray triggerfish is go back through SEDAR 100 and revise it.

I'm not sure that, again, given how it wasn't that influential, and there was a number of sensitivity runs to even excluding it altogether, that it would provide us a very useful path forward, and so it would be work to then go back to triggerfish, and so I don't know what it would -- I think it's a lot of work to not really give us a path forward, and so I would be a little reluctant to have staff proceed with it unless there was a clear path to how that would lead to alternate decision-making.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Dr. Allen.

DR. MIKE ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This was -- First, I appreciate this getting back on the SSC schedule, and giving the SSC time to dig into this. Last time they looked at it, they really didn't have time to dig into it, and so I appreciate that, this coming back up.

With regard to lane snapper, you know, I was there for the discussion, and I don't think anyone in the room was completely satisfied with using a proxy species, but it seemed like what carried the weight of the argument is that there was actually a lot of spatial overlap between lane snapper and gray triggerfish, you know, Gulf-wide in the SEAMAP trawls.

There was like three-times more lane snapper than gray triggerfish in the trawls, but the spatial overlap of the two species overlapped pretty well, and so I think that -- It seemed, to me, that kind of was enough to sway everybody to use it in this case, but I think that's where it fell out. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: All right. Thank you for that insight, Dr. Allen. Any other comments or discussions about this going forward? C.J.

DR. C.J. SWEETMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I'm not on your committee, but, I mean, just my general perspectives here, and, I mean, we're blatantly admitting that even though it's not influential, we know that the data is wrong, and so I have just a philosophical problem with just we know what's wrong, and we're going to throw it in because it's not influential. I would rather get to the bottom of it.

We're, obviously, going to have to run SEDAR 100 again with the new MRIP data here, and so I don't know a best pathway forward here, but, I mean, in this circumstance, I mean, just philosophically, I've got an issue with it, but, like I said, I don't have a solution there, but just it being not too influential is not -- It doesn't -- Go ahead.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Dr. Walter.

DR. WALTER: I don't think anyone said that the data is wrong. I think that the methodology was reviewed and found to be acceptable at this point. I think that, if there was a determination that it was wrong data, then the SSC would have said that, and I think the SSC very carefully reviewed this, and so I think that's -- I would definitely reflect and want that to not be the take-home message here. Thank you.

DR. SWEETMAN: Understood. Maybe "wrong" was the wrong word there, but inaccurate, and not representative of what actual queen triggerfish is in that fishery, because you're using a completely different species altogether. It's not going to be 100 percent.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Okay. Any further discussion on this topic going forward here? I guess maybe C.J. can help me with this a little bit too then, considering the discussion here. In the action guide, then we're supposed to, as a council, adopt these motions from the SSC going forward.

I guess we have a couple of options on how to do this. We could get a motion to adopt the motions for finfish bycatch estimation

for red snapper and gray triggerfish, or we could separate these out into the independent motions that they are from the SSC. Is there a preference for how we would want to do that? We could do red snapper separately, and then gray triggerfish, entertain that separately. Mr. Donaldson.

MR. DONALDSON: I think doing it separately is probably a better approach, in my opinion.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Okay. We'll tackle these one-by-one then. The first motion from the SSC, and, Bernie, if you could pull that back up, was they found the methodology using observer data that has been developed by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center and being used to estimate red snapper bycatch in the Gulf is acceptable for data input into the current red snapper assessment model. Can I get anyone to make a motion on that?

MR. J.D. DUGAS: Chris, I'm not on your committee, but you might want to remind the council members who are on your committee that can make this motion, and all of them.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Billy made the motion, and so I need a second. Second by Mr. Osborne. Is there any discussion of this motion? **Any opposition to the motion?** Okay. **That motion passes.**

For the second motion, Bernie, if you could pull that back up in the report, and I'll read it. The SSC supports expanding the bycatch methodology to include additional finfish species that are presently in the observer database. The SSC also recommends that the results of these additional efforts be presented to the shrimp bycatch working group and/or the appropriate SEDAR workshop or topical working group. Can I get someone to make a motion on that? Mr. Osborne. Second by Mr. Sanchez. We have a question from Dr. Overton.

DR. ANTHONY OVERTON: A question before the motion. You say additional species. How many estimated additional species will be included in the new methodology?

MR. MONCRIEF: So it would be based on the list that we provided, and I can't remember the exact number, but, like with Dr. Sweetman's question, a fair amount of those are estuarine species that are under state management, and not federal management. Those would likely automatically be popped off the list, and then, obviously, you have what will be coming up in priority, and so I think it's about a half dozen that would meet criteria.

DR. OVERTON: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Dr. Walter.

DR. WALTER: Yes, and I'm not on the committee, but I'm confused, because a lot of these are really SSC decisions regarding the scientific input. I don't know that they need to be council decisions, because there's innumerable data inputs that go through into our stock assessments or science that gets vetted by the SSC, and so it seems like, if we were to embark upon this process for all of the data inputs, we would never get through a council meeting, and so I'm confused as to why these need to get passed by the council.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Good question. My understanding was that because they apply to the bycatch working group, and so we're recommending these motions then go to the working group, correct, Dr. Simmons?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so I think fair point. You know, staff wrote this some time ago. I think what we were trying to do is bring things full circle, since we had this working group, and we convened them, and it went back to the SSC, and then the council is getting all that information now, and so I think that's what we were trying to suggest here with the motions.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Mr. Strelcheck.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and, just to add on to John's point, I think the first motion that we just passed was very much in the line of what the Scientific and Statistical Committee would recommend to us, and it wasn't necessarily needed for council approval. This one is more in our purview, because it, obviously, includes additional direction related to work we're conducting at the council.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Okay. Any other discussion on the motion on the board? **Is anyone opposed to the motion on the board? Seeing none, the motion passes.**

Now moving to the more contentious motion that came out of the SSC, that we had a bunch of discussion about, and I'll read it, and see if we have anyone interested in making a motion to adopt.

The SSC found the proxy methodology using SEAMAP and observer data that has been developed by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center to estimate gray triggerfish bycatch in the Gulf as acceptable for consideration as a data input for SEDAR 100. The SSC also

recommends future investigations into improving the estimation of shrimp trawl bycatch for species not characterized in the observer program. Does anyone have a motion for that? Dr. Allen. Can we get a second? General Spraggins seconds that motion. Dr. Simmons.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so just a quick question. I mean, my understanding, because we just had the triggerfish review, is they're using this methodology currently in the stock assessment, and that was reviewed, but the second part from the SSC. Is that, I guess, timing of that -- That's the next time we have another assessment, and is that what you're asking us to do, as far as a memo goes? Is that what we were talking about, Trevor, or is that going to come up again when we talk about king mackerel future investigations?

Are we running with what we have for triggerfish, and we're going to do sensitivity runs, right, when we get it, is the plan, after the MRIP-FES lites, and then this additional investigation is going to happen when?

MR. MONCRIEF: Yes, and I think the discussion was kind of all over the place when it came to the future investigations, because that's where a lot of the semantics came into. Are we saying we should evaluate everything that's not included? Should we do it as the assessments come up? Should this be another iteration of the analyses that we had talked about?

I think, at the end, yes, the triggerfish one, it's already there. It's as used. We have -- I think the SSC expressed just as many concerns as everyone else at this table about it, but that's why you have sensitivity runs, to be able to try to basically see where the impact is for some of these.

The future investigations, at least to sum up their thoughts, and sum up mine, it will basically be ranked in order of priority, because certainly you're going to have some of those that aren't overly present within the shrimp trawl bycatch, but then you're probably going to have some where it might be a little bit more impactful, and so the future investigations should likely take that into account and run down the priority list.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Okay. Thank you, Trevor. Mr. Anson.

MR. KEVIN ANSON: Yes, and so, following up on the comment that Dr. Walter made relative to the motions that are being offered here, I kind of think that the first part, you know, going with what Dr. Walter mentioned about us kind of approving things that have already gone through the SSC, that it does kind of go a little

bit outside of our purview, and so I'm not going to be in favor of this motion as it's written, because of that first sentence.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Would you want to make an amendment, or a substitute motion?

MR. ANSON: I'll try, I guess, yes. The substitute motion would be that the council -- I might need a little help here, Dr. Simmons, about how we might go ahead, and would this be something that we would encourage the Science Center to take the lead on in trying to investigate this, and that's what the letter would be then?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Yes, and I figured this would be like a data request we would have to put in, and so I think we would start with king mackerel next for this one, and we kind of have that on our list already, but, if you want to pass that in support, and then it would probably fall to stack assessment schedule, is what I'm envisioning, and we would need to get with the SSC leadership and figure out exactly what we're requesting on timing and all that kind of stuff.

MR. ANSON: So then maybe a substitute motion would be the council write a letter to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center --

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Supporting future investigations, something like that.

MR. ANSON: Yes. **Supporting future investigations into improving the estimation of bycatch for species not characterized in the observer program, beginning with king mackerel, and incorporating into future assessments. Sorry. For species not characterized in the observer program, beginning with king mackerel.**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: I think just maybe just take "king mackerel" out, because, actually, king mackerel is characterized, I believe, in the observer program currently, and so it gets kind of tricky quickly, and so I think maybe just more general, and perhaps the council write a letter to the Science Center supporting future investigations to improve the estimation bycatch for finfish species not characterized since 2025 in the observer program, or something like that. Is that right, Mr. Moncrief? Would that make sense?

MR. MONCRIEF: Yes, and that was the date that triggerfish was added into it, and so, yes, and I think that's going to take a little bit of, you know, at least maybe a look by council staff, or whoever else, to really figure out which of those species are within that priority that interact with that fleet that are, you

know, coming up for management evaluation or anything else like that.

MR. ANSON: All right, and so if you can add a period after "program", that would be my motion.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: All right. We have a second for the substitute motion from Mr. Sanchez. I'll read the motion real quick, and then we can vote. **The substitute motion is the council write a letter to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center supporting future investigations into improving the estimation of bycatch for finfish species not characterized since 2025 in the observer program.** Any other discussion on this? Dr. Walter.

DR. WALTER: Thanks. I think this is helpful. My comment is that I'm not sure that I could, off the top of my head, name a single species that would be a priority for a stock assessment that it hasn't been characterized, and so I'm not sure which these are going to apply to when we look through the program, and I'm not sure I would allocate a lot of staff time to this when we would really be allocating staff time to the species that are on the docket for pending assessments.

I think that's really where our focus would be, but I'm happy to look at what has been characterized, and what might be a priority, as we screen across the species for ones that either could get an alternate management approach, that might not be a full stock assessment, and that's one of our ongoing exercises, is looking at things which might be able to be assessed a little bit more efficiently, perhaps index-based approaches, and so perhaps this would be part of that. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Okay. Any further comments on the substitute motion on the board? Dr. Allen.

DR. ALLEN: Yes, and I'm just -- I'm wondering, and like there's really two parts to this motion from the SSC and the motion I made, which is the first part is about great triggerfish and SEDAR 100, and the second part is what this substitute motion gets at. I guess, procedurally, is this -- Do we need to address both those in the substitute motion, is my question, or not?

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Mr. Anson.

MR. ANSON: My purpose for the substitute motion was to explicitly exclude the first part, because it is kind of something that's already gone through the SSC, and it's the science side of things.

DR. ALLEN: I see. Okay. Thank you. Understood.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Okay. Any further discussion? **Is there anyone opposed to the motion, the substitute motion, on the board? Seeing none, the substitute motion passes.**

Moving on in the agenda, thank you, Trevor, for standing up there as long as you have and giving us the insight from the meeting. That was very helpful.

MR. MONCRIEF: Absolutely.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Next up, we have a discussion on the working group to address interaction and bycatch of protected resources in shrimp trawls. Dr. Freeman, can you briefly go through that in the action guide, and then Dr. Simmons.

DR. FREEMAN: Mr. Chair, I apologize. Did the SSC chair finish talking about the permit threshold, because he had a slide on that.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Sorry, Trevor. I let you loose too soon. I didn't realize that.

MR. MONCRIEF: All right. If we can pull that presentation back up, or I can do it without it, but so the moratorium information was brought to us, the SSC, to get recommendations on any analyses that could support or help out the decision-making process on it.

In general, there was a couple of comments about, you know, taking into consideration of interactions across different species groups, stuff like that, to try to inform it, and trying to come up with some, you know, economic impact there, but I think the overall sentiment is that these kind of exercises and analysis are much easier recommended when the direction is opposite, right, if you're trying to limit, or you're approaching some level to try to come up with what that number needs to be.

Given the direction of this fishery, and where it's been after the last decade, there wasn't much in terms of direct inputs or information from the SSC that was provided, other than try to look at what you can and make the best judgment possible. It's just a little bit of a different situation, and so I'll take any questions on that.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: It looks like we have one question from Mr. Sanchez.

MR. SANCHEZ: To be clear, is the intent here to go forward like

we did in the past, the last time we looked at this, using a -- You know, convening a working group combined of NMFS folks, SSC folks, and industry people, and put them all together to arrive at something, you know, doable, acceptable to everybody? Is that the intent here, or no?

MR. MONCRIEF: I'm not sure of the direct intent, and I think Andy will speak to it, but I would at least say that, given the situation, and the amount of complexity currently in the fishery, and the trajectory that it’s on, you're not going to get here with just one group's answer, or one SSC's recommendations. You're probably going to need exactly what was discussed, which is a pretty wide-ranging group, and a lot of considerations.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Okay. Mr. Anson, and, Mr. Strelcheck, is it to that point? Okay. Kevin, go ahead.

MR. ANSON: I think I know the answer to this question that I'm going to ask relative to the updated method that NMFS -- Do they have any information, as far as kind of what they're thinking about, or what they are proposing, or is it just literally that they're at the very start?

MR. MONCRIEF: I think it was at the very start when Mr. Helies gave the information, and so, if he's got anything to provide, he can.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: To tie John's comments and Kevin's question together, we presented some initial data and information to the SSC, essentially updating catch per unit effort information, overall shrimp effort. We have some, obviously, bycatch information that we're updating.

All of that was taken into consideration when we established the initial permit threshold, right, and it was kind of a snapshot, a single year that the previous committee thought optimized kind of achieving all of those goals of maximizing catch-per-unit effort, keeping bycatch for red snapper and other species at threshold levels or below what we need them to, as well as optimizing yield in the fishery.

In looking at this very issue, and what Trevor is saying, the complexity is that now we have an industry that's reeling from poor economic conditions. Effort is declining. We're certainly seeing catch per unit effort go up, and we're well below those bycatch thresholds.

We can't achieve optimum yield though, based on the economic conditions of the fishery, and so we went to the SSC just asking for some general guidance, advice, and do you have any ideas, input, on how we could analyze this, because the other challenge is, if economic conditions turned around, and improved, right now we still have more permits out there than we believe would be optimal for that threshold that was originally established, right?

With all that said, I mean, we're quickly kind of coming to the conclusion that it's very difficult to kind of revisit and review this threshold, given the current economic conditions of the fishery, and that it might be better to focus on the upcoming trigger, which would start looking at the permit pool for reserving permits, rather than revisiting the threshold at this time, given some of the economic changes that are experiencing.

We wanted to, obviously, discuss that with the council, see if there was any feedback, or input, on kind of setting aside the analysis of the permit threshold for now and focusing more on the trigger.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Mr. Sanchez.

MR. SANCHEZ: My thoughts on that is I understand what you're saying, but I don't feel comfortable not proceeding with industry involvement, because who better than the industry to tell you what their economic challenges are? I'm in the fuel business, and I can tell you fuel is one of them. I think to proceed without their input would be a disservice to what we're trying to accomplish, and so setting up a working group, much like we've done in the past, I think would be the appropriate path forward.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Go ahead, Mr. Strelcheck.

MR. STRELCHECK: I don't know if Matt can comment to this, and we might be talking about two different things, John, but there's a permit threshold that, once you fall below, it would reserve permits in the fishery, right, and there's a trigger that essentially establishes a review committee working group that's part of a prior amendment that's been passed by this council.

I would be curious if Matt, or anyone else, remembers exactly what that would include, if it involves industry members, if we have flexibility in terms of how we're designing that working group, but that's really what I'm focused on, is trying to start looking at this, because, once that trigger is met, I believe we have 100, or 120 permits or so, before we hit the threshold, and we need to,

obviously, be looking at this very carefully.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Dr. Freeman.

DR. FREEMAN: Mr. Strelcheck, I believe your question is for the review panel, as to the composition, and so that review panel, the way it's worded in Amendment 17B, is it would consist of Shrimp AP members, SSC members, NMFS, and council staff.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Mr. Strelcheck.

MR, STRELCHECK: So, John, we haven't hit the trigger yet, but does that address your concern, is that that panel would be convened once the trigger is met to continue to look at, obviously, this permitting issue?

MR. SANCHEZ: Yes. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Mr. Anson.

MR. ANSON: I wonder -- Dr. Freeman, of the current AP members, are there any members that would be considered to be representative of processors, or are they all those that operate shrimp vessels?

DR. FREEMAN: Yes, sir, and that’s a good question, and so, last time the council populated the Shrimp AP, there were some processors that were appointed for membership, and so you would have both harvesters as well as processors for selection from the AP.

One thing that I did discuss with the Shimp Committee chair, given that the trigger for the review panel is coming up relatively soon, the information was provided to the SSC suggested that, in July, we were only ten permits away, that the council may want to consider, at its October meeting, going ahead and looking at membership for that review panel, so that it's prepared when that trigger is met.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Okay. I guess can we make sure that's added to the Shrimp Committee agenda for October then?

DR. FREEMAN: Certainly.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Any other discussion? Mr. Strelcheck.

MR. STRELCHECK: Thanks, Chris, and we can be prepared to bring back the permit information for October. I think, last check, we were within about ten permits of that trigger, and so we're very

close to, obviously, meeting that trigger.

I would like -- I just sent a motion, and so I would like to put a motion on the table with regard to the permit threshold.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: You sent an email?

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, I sent an email. If it's lost in cyberspace, I can read it out.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: You better read it, Andy. It sounds like it may not be there yet.

MR. STRELCHECK: All right. **The motion is to postpone work on updated analyses for the minimum threshold number of federal Gulf shrimp commercial permits and continue work on Shrimp Amendment 20 to update status determination criteria.** If I have a second, I can explain my motion.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: We have a second from Mr. Sanchez.

MR. STRELCHECK: So, as discussed, I'm not saying we stop work. I think right now it's best to postpone this. We will be taking up the discussion of the trigger and the review group, and that would be convened in October, and, to me, that's kind of the more immediate need for the council to be proceeding.

Then, as more information becomes available, I think it's going to be important that we work with the shrimping industry, especially in light of economic conditions, to be able to evaluate this permit threshold more holistically.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Mr. Anson.

MR. ANSON: Just a question about the October meeting and what we're going to do at the October meeting relative to the working group. We're going to further discuss it to then determine how we would select and populate, or we actually just approve a list of members at that time? I'm just curious as to the timing of that relative to the October meeting.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Well, Dr. Freeman, can you speak to that a little bit? I'm not sure either as to what would be on the agenda for October.

DR. FREEMAN: Certainly, and so I would envision that, if the council would like, we could perhaps bring a draft membership list for consideration, and certainly the committee and Full Council

could make additions, deletions, suggestions, you know, but, if it would be the preference to have further discussion, and start from scratch at the October council meeting, we can do that, too. Like I said, the Amendment 17B does kind of limit in terms of the membership, again, to Shrimp AP members, SSC members, and then to council staff and NMFS staff.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Does it answer your question, Mr. Anson?

MR. ANSON: It does. Thank you, Dr. Freeman.

DR. FREEMAN: Certainly, and one other thing, just while I'm unmuted, Mr. Strelcheck, could you add the word "commercial" in your motion, "for federal Gulf shrimp commercial permits"?

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes. Thanks.

DR. FREEMAN: Certainly.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Okay. Our seconder is nodding his head that he's good with that edit. Do we have any other further discussion on this motion before we put up for a vote? **Seeing none, is anyone opposed to the motion on the board as written? Seeing no opposition, the motion carries with no opposition.**

All right, Trevor, and you're finally off the hook here, it looks like. Was there one more slide here, Bernie? That's next? Okay. All right, Dr. Simmons, you're next up. Thank you, Trevor.

STATUS UPDATE ON WORKING GROUP TO ADDRESS INTERACTIONS AND BYCATCH OF PROTECTED RESOURCES IN SHRIMP TRAWLS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a very brief verbal update on the status of the working group to address interactions and bycatch of protected resources in Gulf shrimp trawls.

Our staff met with the Southeast Regional Office staff and Protected Resources staff to discuss a data request for holding a meeting. We met August 5th with them, and we've asked for some data to be updated, the protected resources bycatch up to 2025, updated smalltooth sawfish population viability analysis based on feedback provided by the SSC for May 2025, or at least get a status report for the group on where that is, permit information on active permits, economic information on the state of the shrimp fishery in the Gulf, and this would include, but not be limited to, the decrease in participating vessels, the effect of imports on domestic pricing, fuel use, and cost and recent revenue trends of

the fleet.

Our staff are trying to help with updating some of these analyses, and we received much of the protected resources information on bycatch, and we're working with those datasets and with SERO and the Science Center staff.

We're in the process, and I guess we're going to get an update here under Other Business on the Early Adopter information, and see if we can use some of that in those stat areas to get more up-to-date information, and we're working on scheduling to -- Get those timelines together, have a meeting, get those data requests together, and then have a public agenda put out for the working group here in the next week or two.

That is our plan to work expediently on that, try to update these data requests, but right now we need to get a call, right after the council meeting, with our staff, the Science Center staff, and the Regional Office staff to discuss this data request.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Thank you, Dr. Simmons. I think I might have missed it, but when do you expect the next meeting for the working group?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: We may have a short virtual call, but we don't have one established yet. It has to be published in the Federal Register, and we would like to get some of this data updated first.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Roger that. Understood. Any questions or comments? Mr. Strelcheck.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and, as Carrie alluded to, we'll have a call with the council staff soon, and we've been reviewing the data requests. We have updates with regard to kind of what's readily available and what would maybe take some additional time, obviously, to complete, and we'll try to give a timeline and sense of kind of when we could have that information for the working group. As I've recommended to Carrie, maybe not all of it will be ready for that first workgroup meeting, but hopefully we can have a lot of it ready and available to go for the workgroup.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Okay. Thank you, Andy. Appreciate that. Any other comments, or questions? Dr. Walter.

DR. WALTER: Yes, and, as I think the working group is going to really benefit from having the best and most recent information, we are also -- We are committed to bringing that to the group, and

we've also secured agency funding for increasing observer coverage in the pink shrimp fishery.

Our plan is to double observer coverage, from about 2.5 percent to 5 percent, for 2027, so that we get better information in that area where the smalltooth sawfish interactions really occur, and so we hope that will give us better information to make more informed decisions and we look forward to industry participation in carrying observers to get that information. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Okay. Thank you, Dr. Walter. Any other questions for Dr. Simmons regarding the working group? Dr. Simmons.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just had a question about the observer coverage. You said that's going to start in 2027, and is that also going to cover the giant manta ray interaction area too, or is that just the smalltooth sawfish?

DR. WALTER: The increase in observer coverage is for the pink shrimp fishery, but not for the giant manta ray areas.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS: Excuse me, Mr. Chair, and I understand that there's not interactions there, but what I'm saying is there's not increased observer coverage on that fleet in that area, but only on the pink shrimp fleet, and my understanding is there's more interactions with giant manta ray than there are with smalltooth sawfish in the observer program historically, and so that's why I was just asking why that decision was made.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Dr. Walter.

DR. WALTER Why was the decision made? Primarily because of the concerns about the status for smalltooth sawfish and that we -- Because the observer coverage is sparse, and it's fairly localized, it seems like that's the area that we need more information on the size and age composition of smalltooth sawfish, and the potential for any mitigation efforts really relies on having good spatially-explicit data. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Okay. Mr. Anson.

MR. ANSON: Dr. Walter, I’m just curious. On those additional surveys, they're going to be conducted as per standard surveys, I would assume, meaning that they'll get the additional species like for bycatch for finfish species, other finfish species, or is it just kind of to observe interactions with smalltooth sawfish?

DR. WALTER: This is the standard observer program, and so they'll collect all the standard data in addition to the protected species.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: All right. Any other questions or comments regarding that agenda item? All right. Seeing none, we came to the end. Last is Other Business. We had two Other Business items. I think the first one was from Mr. Sanchez, and some of this may have been discussed already, but you may want to speak on it.

OTHER BUSINESS
STATUS OF SHRIMP PERMIT MORATORIUM

MR. SANCHEZ: Yes, and just to get an update on where we're at with the extension of the permit moratorium that expires in October 2026. It can be now, or it can be at Full Council.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Mr. Helies.

MR. FRANK HELIES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, and I would be happy to give an update on that. Amendment 19 to the Shrimp FMP, we took public comment on the amendment, and that comment period ended the beginning of August. We have to make a decision on the amendment by next week, so that package is ready to go up to Headquarters when we get the okay on that, and we do have an update on the proposed rule. That's going to publish tomorrow, and we're going to take a thirty-day comment period on the proposed rule, and so keep an eye out on the Fishery Bulletin we'll send out tomorrow morning. Comments will be due on September 24th.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Mr. Sanchez.

MR. SANCHEZ: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Thank you, Frank. We appreciate that update. Then the second Other Business item was from Dr. Walter.

UPDATE ON SHRIMP FUTURES PROJECT
UPDATE ON EARLY ADOPTER PROGRAM

DR. WALTER: Thanks, and so I wanted to just update the group on two topics. As we mentioned, I think in a report-out from my colleague, Carissa Gervasi, we are going to be having the scenario planning workshops, with target dates of December 1st through 3rd, 2026, and February 23rd to 25th, 2027.

We think those will likely be in the Louisiana region, and those are designed to work with stakeholders to develop the scenario planning for the future of the shrimp fishery, really where the

shrimp fishery wants to go, what are the barriers to achieving the long-term sustainability of the fishery, and what are the interactions that may need to happen to be able to maintain that fishery, and so this is an extension of a lot of the work we've been doing.

It's the next step in the Shrimp Futures Project, and we hope what that will do is identify specific actions that can be taken to ensure the sustainability of the shrimp fishery, and so we've got a number of recommendations for working group participants from -- The council has been providing recommendations, and those are going to be open to the public, and so it's available to anyone, and so we hope that we'll get good participation in that.

The other update is on the Early Adopter Program, where we've had four years of data, and we've done two deployments of Early Adopter installations. We're now at 312 total vessels with devices installed, and, with the remaining funds, we should be able to get a total of 884 vessels, which would be nearly the entire active fleet, and, in fact, potentially above the current active fleet, which the benefit of that is that any vessel that is interested in getting one of these devices should be able to get it as part of this program, which is really great.

What it does is allows us, when eventually the amendment becomes binding, that we're not saying that all vessels are going to have to be reporting, but we are going to have to have all vessels be part of the universe of sampling.

That means, when their number is called to provide their data, then, if they have a device, then they would need to turn that on and then report using the cellular reporting network.

The benefit of having the device ahead of time means that, if your number gets called, you can then turn it on and report, and you don't have to go about getting that installation to happen at a time that is not of your convenience, and so we would recommend that all vessels who are going to be actively shrimping participate in the Early Adopter Program, to get a device for free, and then, as the sampling program comes online, then there'll be a sampling -- A decision about whose number gets called.

An update on that sampling program, what we're going to be doing is we're going to be using those Early Adopter Program vessels, when they already have vessels, and so they'll be part of that, but we're also going to need to ensure that we have representative coverage in space and time to cover the entire Gulf, and we may need to cover some particular areas of high interaction with some

of the protected species as recommendations come out of the BiOp as to what we might need to do, and so that sampling design will get rolled out fairly soon as the amendment goes and becomes live. Any questions? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE: Okay. Thank you, Dr. Walter. I especially appreciate the update on the Shrimp Futures Program. I look forward to our department working with you guys. If you need assistance setting anything up in Louisiana, as far as venues, we could supply a couple different venues for you, if that would be helpful. Either our Marine Lab or our headquarters in Baton Rouge would work well, and so please contact us for that stuff as you go forward in planning.

Also, I think it couldn't come at a better time, because we just opened shrimp season last week, and sixteen to twenty-count white shrimp are getting under a dollar a pound dockside, and so -- I'm sorry. Under two-dollars a pound dockside, and so it's needed, with as much urgency on that as possible. Thank you. Any other comments or questions around the table? Mr. Chairman, that concludes the Shrimp Management Committee. Back to you with about 16 minutes left.

MR. DUGAS: Thank you, Mr. Schieble. We're going to take a break. Before we take a break, I just want to recognize Ms. Bosarge was here. Thank you, Leann, for being here as the AP chair, and also a previous council member. Let's take our break, and we'll come back at 10:45.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned August 24, 2026.)

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