

GULF COUNCIL

SHRIMP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Golden Nugget Hotel and Casino & Virtual Biloxi, Mississippi

August 24, 2026

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Kesley Banks.....Texas
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Joe Spraggins.....Mississippi
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7		
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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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1 The Shrimp Management Committee of the Gulf Council convened at
2 The Golden Nugget Hotel and Casino in Biloxi, Mississippi on Monday
3 morning, August 24, 2026, and was called to order by Chairman Chris
4 Schieble.

5
6 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
7 **APPROVAL OF JUNE 2026 MINUTES**
8 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**
9

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

17
18 The first item on the agenda is Adoption of the Agenda, which is
19 tab B, Number 1. Does anyone have any other business they would
20 like to see added to the end of the agenda? Yes, Mr. Sanchez.

21
22 **MR. JOHN SANCHEZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes. To Other Business,
23 I would like to add an update on the status of the shrimp permit
24 moratorium extension, to see where we're at with that, and that
25 can happen either during committee, if that's possible, or at Full
26 Council.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Duly noted. We will add that item under
29 Other Business at the end of the agenda. Any other modifications
30 to the agenda? Dr. Walter.

31
32 **DR. JOHN WALTER:** Yes, and I would like to just add a brief verbal
33 update on a couple of topics, on the Shrimp Futures and then on
34 where we are probably with the Early Adopter Program. I think it
35 might be useful for the group to hear about that. Thanks.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Thank you, Dr. Walter. We'll add that
38 item also at the end of the agenda. Any other business to be
39 added? All right. Can I get a motion to approve the agenda as
40 modified? Motion by Dr. Banks and Billy, and second by Mr.
41 Osborne. Is anyone opposed to the agenda as written? Okay. The
42 agenda is approved, adopted.

43
44 Next is Approval of June 2026 Meeting Minutes, which are Tab D,
45 Number 2. Are there any additions, deletions, or edits to those
46 minutes? Seeing none, can I get a motion to approve the minutes
47 as written? Mr. Osborne. Second by Dr. Banks. The minutes are
48 adopted as they are in the briefing book.

1
2 Next on the agenda is the Action Guide and Next Steps, which is
3 Tab D, Number 3. I believe we have Dr. Freeman, in the virtual
4 world, to help lead us through this. Is that correct, Bernie, or
5 I'm just winging it by myself?

6
7 **DR. MATT FREEMAN:** Hi, Mr. Schieble. Can you hear me?

8
9 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Yes, Dr. Freeman. Good morning.

10
11 **MR. FREEMAN:** Good morning.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Are you ready to read through the action guide
14 for us, please?

15
16 **JULY 2026 SSC MEETING SUMMARY**

17
18 **DR. FREEMAN:** Yes, sir, and so, for the first item, the SSC chair
19 will provide overview of the July SSC meeting summary specific to
20 estimation of shrimp trawl bycatch methodology for finfish and its
21 application to red snapper and gray triggerfish bycatch estimation
22 procedures.

23
24 The SSC passed motions finding the methodology for estimating red
25 snapper bycatch in the Gulf to be acceptable, supporting expanded
26 use of the methodology to include additional finfish species in
27 the observer database and finding the proxy methodology for
28 estimating gray triggerfish bycatch in the Gulf to be acceptable.

29
30 The SSC also discussed the council's request for NMFS to update
31 its analysis for the minimum threshold number of federal Gulf
32 shrimp permits. The committee should consider the information
33 provided, ask questions, and may consider adopting the SSC's
34 motions for finfish bycatch estimation for red snapper and gray
35 triggerfish for the Gulf shrimp fleet.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Thank you, Dr. Freeman. Moving to the
38 first agenda item, we have Mr. Moncrief to give us the SSC summary
39 report. Thank you, Trevor. Take it away.

40
41 **MR. TREVOR MONCRIEF:** All right. Thank you. I feel like Dr.
42 Freeman knocked it out, and you don't even need to see all this.
43 First off, we did the red snapper bycatch estimation, and so we
44 had the Science Center present an updated method on estimating how
45 many red snapper are caught as bycatch in shrimp trawls.

46
47 Work began in 2021, as they began to attempt to validate the
48 estimates that were coming out of the old method. Essentially,

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

5
6 This new method is considered as an input into SEDAR 98, and so
7 the big thing here is that the research team rebuilt the entire
8 process. I think soup-to-nuts is probably a good adjective here,
9 and so how the observer catch data, GPS effort data, dockside
10 landings, all of that, how it's collected, checked, and combined
11 was basically redone in its entirety.

12
13 They had CIE reviewers evaluate the rebuilt method from 2023 to
14 2025, and then the recommendations were applied to the full
15 observer data set from 2007 to 2023, and then went back into the
16 historical years, back to 1984.

17
18 In general, the core thing here is that the catch rate, from what
19 was listed from the observer times the total fishing effort, which
20 was derived from the GPS base estimation, is your total bycatch.
21 The observers would sample a portion of the trips, and, on a four-
22 net boat, they would observe two of the four nets, which are the
23 outside, not the inside. There was a question about that, a
24 discussion on that one, and every red snapper in those nets is
25 counted directly, whereas the other ones are self-sampled out and
26 tallied up.

27
28 The fishing effort, like I mentioned before, is estimated, and not
29 directly reported, and so it's built in from the GPS devices on a
30 subset of boats, and then scaled, and so they're basically using
31 diagnostics to determine, and I think there's been a few
32 presentations on that.

33
34 Then the key fix here is that there were some dramatic differences
35 in catch rates by basically gear type and time-of-day combination,
36 where some were actually like four to five X versus the others,
37 and so them splitting these categorically allowed them to be able
38 to really remove a lot of the bias and uncertainty that was going
39 into it.

40
41 In general, there was a question from one of the members about
42 observer presence changing the fisherman's behavior. This is
43 called observer bias, right, on a daily basis, and so the response
44 there was that these aren't just single-day trips, and the current
45 fishery profit margins are fairly small, and so it doesn't make
46 any sense that anyone would try to divert their behavior for a
47 week to two weeks to three weeks at a time when these folks are
48 out there, and so we kind of wrote that one off as that's likely

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

3
4 Then there was concern about estimating the bycatch for years
5 predating the observer, and so back in time, 2006 and previous,
6 and, obviously, there were some constraints in the fleet after
7 2005, and so it's just a question of whether the method used now
8 will be applicable back in time.

9
10 Really, there was no other option, but I think, if you look at the
11 figure on the right, which essentially shows the previous estimates
12 along with the newly-derived ones in blue, you can see a more
13 consistent time series, that follows a little bit more of a logical
14 path, and, at least for myself, I like to see consistency, versus
15 that high variability over time, and so I think it worked out.

16
17 In the next slide, I think we've got some motions here, and so the
18 SSC found the methodology using observer data that's been developed
19 by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center and being used to
20 estimate red snapper bycatch in the Gulf is acceptable for data
21 input into the current red snapper assessment model. No
22 opposition, and then we even supported expanding the same
23 methodology to include finfish species that are presently in the
24 observer database.

25
26 This next species we talk about isn't in there, and so it kind of
27 stands out a little bit, and, essentially, they go through and
28 basically carry out the same scenario, to see if the same results
29 come through, and that one carried without opposition.

30
31 The next one is triggerfish, and so we were presented an effort to
32 estimate gray triggerfish bycatch in shrimp trawls for the SEDAR
33 100 assessment, which is currently ongoing. Observer data on gray
34 triggerfish is limited. It wasn't on that original list, and so
35 it wasn't included in that direct observer data.

36
37 This method uses a stand-in, or a proxy species, and, in this case,
38 it's lane snapper, to estimate bycatch based on the relationship
39 of catch between the two species, and so you're taking a separate
40 survey, looking at the relationship, and applying that to the
41 actual fishery to try to derive bycatch estimates.

42
43 There is one year of direct observer data in 2025, but it's not
44 enough to replace the current proxy approach, and so give it a few
45 more years, and likely we'll be able to do something a little bit
46 more with that, but, for now, this is what it came up with.

47
48 A council working group reviewed the method and found it

1 statistically sound, that there were concerns about reliance on a
2 proxy species instead of direct observations of the focus species,
3 and I would say that directly mirrors the SSE's viewpoints on it.
4

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

10
11 Essentially, what that means is that the relationship between the
12 two species varied depending on what stat zone. Sometimes it was
13 more, and sometimes it was less, and so it's hard to say that
14 they're directly correlated with, you know, some accuracy when
15 it's variable, and so we just need a little bit more double-
16 checking on that one, but the alternative of assigning zero bycatch
17 was ruled out as unrealistic, and so you have to have something,
18 and the direct estimation is necessary for the assessment to
19 proceed.
20

21 Here are the same figures I showed before. This is split by region
22 for bycatch, the west in the orange and the east in the blue, and
23 then you can see the previous iteration here on the right. You
24 have the blue triangles as the previous, and the yellow as the
25 current, and you can see, once again, consistency in the time
26 series. You don't see it jumping all over the place. I think, in
27 the end, leaning on that consistency probably is a little bit more
28 representative than assuming the other.
29

30 I'll speak a little bit to this motion. The SSC found the proxy
31 methodology using SEAMAP and observer data that has been developed
32 by the Science Center to estimate gray triggerfish bycatch in the
33 Gulf as acceptable for consideration as a data input for SEDAR
34 100. The SSC also recommends future investigations into improving
35 the estimation of shrimp trawl bycatch for species not
36 characterized in the observer program.
37

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

1
2 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Hold up there, Trevor. Don't run away. We
3 have Captain Walker, and then Dr. Sweetman.
4

5 **MR. ED WALKER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just had a question. It
6 seems like you guys had the same questions about using lane snapper
7 as a proxy for triggerfish, and I think maybe the regional part
8 that you parsed out was, you know, a step in the right direction,
9 but, to me, it still seems like a stretch to say that you're
10 catching a bunch of something when you're not actually catching it
11 based on something else. Can you fill me in a little bit on how
12 you guys come up with those estimates?
13

14 **MR. MONCRIEF:** I think that's a pretty good description of it,
15 right, and you're taking the observations that you have on-hand of
16 both species and trying to do your best to come up with what might
17 be a good estimate, and, you know that's why the SSC discussed
18 further validation of it.
19

20 Even there was another idea that was plumbed around, and I think
21 it was a good one, from one of the SSC members from Texas, which
22 was let's take the same approach and apply it to species that were
23 present in both the observer data and in the SEAMAP data and see
24 if the same results come true, right, because, one, you have a
25 known correlation between the two in the observer program, and
26 then you have the correlation from the SEAMAP.
27

28 If those perform similarly, then you can say, this is more
29 representative than what we think it is. If they don't, that's
30 the thought to go back to the drawing board and think a little bit
31 more about it.
32

33 **MR. WALKER:** Thank you. I've been on a shrimp boat in south
34 Florida a couple of times, at least for a short period of time,
35 and there were hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of small lane
36 snapper in the bycatch pile we were picking through, and I don't
37 recall ever seeing a triggerfish, and so, to me, it seems, you
38 know, like a stretch to try and estimate someone's triggerfish
39 catch by having 400 small lane snappers on the boat. Maybe that's
40 different on the other side of the Gulf, and I don't know.
41

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

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

3
4 **MR. WALKER:** Thank you.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Dr. Sweetman, and then Mr. Sanchez.

7
8 **DR. C.J. SWEETMAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so, kind of building
9 off of Ed's point there, like, yes, being in the Keys, you get a
10 lot more lane snapper, juvenile lane snapper, as bycatch, as
11 opposed to gray triggerfish, and so it's almost like there's a
12 negative correlation there, and we might have some positive
13 correlations elsewhere around the region.

14
15 That concerns me, and how we'll have to even navigate that, but
16 then I guess a broader question here, and maybe just for the entire
17 group's understanding. If we've got Gulf triggerfish as a
18 federally-managed fishery with the stock assessment, why has this
19 not been included within the observer program up until just last
20 year, and that might not even be a question for you, Trevor.

21
22 **MR. MONCRIEF:** I wouldn't say that it has been included now, and
23 so it's been established as a priority. I think, when I saw the
24 list, when they presented it to us, it had a lot of species on
25 there that kind of caught my eye as to, well, that's kind of a
26 strange one, and they made it seem like it was just an established
27 list of the priorities at the time, and it just never got picked
28 back up and reevaluated, because you've got several estuarine
29 species on there that are certainly important to state management
30 that don't match the federal priority. I'm not sure if the Science
31 Center or Ryan has more background on it, but I'm not sure, but I
32 know it's there now.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Dr. Walter, to that question?

35
36 **DR. WALTER:** Yes, and I think gray snapper just hasn't gotten the
37 respect that I think it does now in terms of from a fishery
38 perspective, where it's now a target species, and it has a lot of
39 interest, and so that's why it wasn't recorded in the datasets in
40 the observer program.

41
42 I think one of the things is that this is not -- No one is saying
43 that this is a great method, and I think, moving forward, the goal
44 would be to use the observer data when we get more years of data
45 under the program's belt, and so I think this is a stopgap for
46 what will probably improve in the future, and one of the things
47 that I think we also need to understand is it's not that
48 influential in the stock assessment, and SEDAR 100 was reviewed

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

4
5 I think we're a lot -- While we might have concerns here about the
6 methodology, right now it's what we've got. We can probably take
7 some solace in that it's probably not driving the population trends
8 as bycatch has in the past, and one comment here I think is a key
9 improvement that really needs to be noted is that, particularly
10 for red snapper and for the other finfish that we have good
11 observer coverage for, we are now using directly the observer data,
12 and not using the SEAMAP survey as a proxy.

13
14 That's really a big advancement in the modeling, and I think that's
15 rippling through the stock assessments, where it's being more
16 accurately accounted for within the stock assessment, and so we're
17 moving forward. We're making progress, and we're using the data
18 that comes off the commercial fishing operations. Thanks.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. I saw Andy pop your hand up. Is that
21 to this point?

22
23 **MR. ANDY STRELCHECK:** Yes, and I just wanted to follow up on what
24 John was saying, and ask him kind of a follow-on question, and so
25 I don't recall with SEDAR 100, but you just mentioned, obviously,
26 the assessment is not very sensitive to, obviously, the shrimp
27 trawl bycatch. How is shrimp trawl bycatch kind of handled? Is
28 it input? Is there a lot of uncertainty that's surrounding those
29 estimates when we conduct assessments like this, or is it species-
30 specific, contingent on the quality of the data and the information
31 we're using?

32
33 **DR. WALTER:** So the way we use it is we take basically -- We don't
34 use the interannual variability in the shrimp trawl estimates to
35 then inform recruitment, because we don't believe that interannual
36 variability is necessarily informative of much. What we use is
37 the long-term average catch rate and then the shrimp effort time
38 series, because, one, we know the shrimp effort pretty well. We
39 know what the fishery has done, and we know we've seen big declines
40 in shrimp effort, and so, consequently, we think there would be
41 big declines in the total bycatch.

42
43 Then we just take the average catch rates, and the model then
44 calculates what that bycatch should be and removes it from the
45 population without it directly affecting the estimates of
46 recruitment that come more from the age composition and other
47 datasets that we think have less uncertainty related to them, and
48 that's the basic approach that's used for red snapper, king

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

3
4 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Mr. Sanchez, you had your hand up
5 earlier.

6
7 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Was there any discussion at
8 the SSC level for any appetite to maybe consider using a middle-
9 of-the-road data species like king mackerel, rather than going
10 from data-rich extreme to data poor?

11
12 **MR. MONCRIEF:** I think, when we discussed the next step with using
13 the observer data, I believe king mackerel was listed as the next
14 priority. Is that correct, Ryan?

15
16 **MR. RYAN RINDONE:** You got me. Can you say it again?

17
18 **MR. MONCRIEF:** When we talked through the observer data, and then
19 highlighted the need to do it for -- Basically run the same thing
20 for red snapper for the other species listed in the observer
21 program, was king mackerel not listed as a priority?

22
23 **MR. RINDONE:** King mackerel is listed as a priority, yes, and that
24 has a lot also to do with the new data coming out of Mexico and
25 trying to start building on a better understanding of possible
26 connectivity between those areas.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Mr. Sanchez, a response?

29
30 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Yes, and, just so that, I know we have the king
31 mackerel SEDAR coming up and it's picking up steam with some, you
32 know, data from Mexico, and so it might -- The timing might be
33 good, is what I'm suggesting.

34
35 **MR. MONCRIEF:** Yes, and I agree with that.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Dr. Simmons.

38
39 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so that was
40 a request of the finfish shrimp trawl bycatch working group. It's
41 just kind of taking some -- You know, we have a little additional
42 time, because of the king mackerel, the Mexico landings we're
43 trying to integrate, and I think it's just going to take a bit of
44 a backseat, because we need to move forward with a protected
45 resources group, as we'll talk about in the next agenda item, but
46 it's on our list.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Thank you, Dr. Simmons. I guess I'll

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

4
5 **DR. FREEMAN:** We don't yet. There's a possibility, and I'll
6 discuss that with Dr. Simmons and Dr. Froeschke after this week's
7 council meeting and we have a sense of direction from Full Council,
8 but we may try to schedule one before the October council meeting.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. That sounds good. I guess, with that
11 said, we have the Shrimp AP chair in the audience. I don't know
12 if she would want to speak on this, really quickly, ahead of that
13 potential Shrimp AP meeting, before we adopt these motions.

14
15 **MS. LEANN BOSARGE:** Thanks. It's good to see everybody. I think
16 you had some great discussion, and I do agree with Dr. Walter that
17 this new methodology is an improvement, because we're moving away
18 from the SEAMAP proxies, and actually trying to use the observer
19 data.

20
21 However, the one thing that was a little concerning, that I think
22 we're going to get to, and we looked at it, the workgroup and the
23 SSC and SEDAR for red snapper, which is the best of the best,
24 right? That's not a sample, per se. It's more like a census from
25 an observer standpoint.

26
27 They look at every red snapper that hits the deck, and they measure
28 and count it. Everything else is a sample, right? The worst of
29 the worst is gray trigger, because you don't even have a sample,
30 right? You're just trying to invent it. It's not sampled by the
31 observers.

32
33 The workgroup, as well as the SSC, said, hey, this is a step
34 forward in methodology, but we need to see how it will work for
35 the sampled species. We haven't done that yet. That would be
36 like your king mackerel or something like that.

37
38 We suggested king mackerel, because we know the analysis is coming
39 up anyway. It's something that has to be done, and not extra work,
40 and so I do hope that the council will continue to engage that
41 workgroup, even if it has to take a backseat to protected
42 resources. We need to look at it when that analysis is done on
43 king mackerel, and let's make sure this methodology works well for
44 the sampled species, and not the census species. Thanks.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Appreciate that. Do
47 we have any other further conversation? I'm sorry. Mr. Donaldson,
48 I forgot.

1
2 **MR. DAVE DONALDSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so I share the
3 concerns about this proxy species, and, Trevor, you mentioned
4 looking at a species that is found in SEAMAP as well as the
5 observer. Is there plans to do that in the future, or what's the
6 status of that?
7

8 **MR. MONCRIEF:** It was only suggested by the SSC, and I think we
9 talked about, you know, you've got red snapper and lane snapper,
10 and you've got one that's known and one that's fairly -- Should be
11 there and highly present. It wasn't up to us to dictate whether
12 it was going to happen or not, and so I'm leaning to Dr. Walter,
13 or the analyst, to say whether they're taking it or not.
14

15 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Dr. Walter.
16

17 **DR. WALTER:** Yes, and, while I think it's a good suggestion, I'm
18 trying to think about how it would get used. If we find out that
19 it doesn't work well for say king mackerel, you're not going to
20 implement it for king mackerel, because we have the actual observer
21 data, but then the inference would be perhaps it doesn't work well
22 for gray triggerfish, which then what we would do with gray
23 triggerfish is go back through SEDAR 100 and revise it.
24

25 I'm not sure that, again, given how it wasn't that influential,
26 and there was a number of sensitivity runs to even excluding it
27 altogether, that it would provide us a very useful path forward,
28 and so it would be work to then go back to triggerfish, and so I
29 don't know what it would -- I think it's a lot of work to not
30 really give us a path forward, and so I would be a little reluctant
31 to have staff proceed with it unless there was a clear path to how
32 that would lead to alternate decision-making.
33

34 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Dr. Allen.
35

36 **DR. MIKE ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This was -- First, I
37 appreciate this getting back on the SSC schedule, and giving the
38 SSC time to dig into this. Last time they looked at it, they
39 really didn't have time to dig into it, and so I appreciate that,
40 this coming back up.
41

42 With regard to lane snapper, you know, I was there for the
43 discussion, and I don't think anyone in the room was completely
44 satisfied with using a proxy species, but it seemed like what
45 carried the weight of the argument is that there was actually a
46 lot of spatial overlap between lane snapper and gray triggerfish,
47 you know, Gulf-wide in the SEAMAP trawls.
48

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

6
7 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** All right. Thank you for that insight, Dr.
8 Allen. Any other comments or discussions about this going forward?
9 C.J.

10
11 **DR. C.J. SWEETMAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I'm not on your
12 committee, but, I mean, just my general perspectives here, and, I
13 mean, we're blatantly admitting that even though it's not
14 influential, we know that the data is wrong, and so I have just a
15 philosophical problem with just we know what's wrong, and we're
16 going to throw it in because it's not influential. I would rather
17 get to the bottom of it.

18
19 We're, obviously, going to have to run SEDAR 100 again with the
20 new MRIP data here, and so I don't know a best pathway forward
21 here, but, I mean, in this circumstance, I mean, just
22 philosophically, I've got an issue with it, but, like I said, I
23 don't have a solution there, but just it being not too influential
24 is not -- It doesn't -- Go ahead.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Dr. Walter.

27
28 **DR. WALTER:** I don't think anyone said that the data is wrong. I
29 think that the methodology was reviewed and found to be acceptable
30 at this point. I think that, if there was a determination that it
31 was wrong data, then the SSC would have said that, and I think the
32 SSC very carefully reviewed this, and so I think that's -- I would
33 definitely reflect and want that to not be the take-home message
34 here. Thank you.

35
36 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Understood. Maybe "wrong" was the wrong word there,
37 but inaccurate, and not representative of what actual queen
38 triggerfish is in that fishery, because you're using a completely
39 different species altogether. It's not going to be 100 percent.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Any further discussion on this topic
42 going forward here? I guess maybe C.J. can help me with this a
43 little bit too then, considering the discussion here. In the
44 action guide, then we're supposed to, as a council, adopt these
45 motions from the SSC going forward.

46
47 I guess we have a couple of options on how to do this. We could
48 get a motion to adopt the motions for finfish bycatch estimation

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

6
7 **MR. DONALDSON:** I think doing it separately is probably a better
8 approach, in my opinion.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. We'll tackle these one-by-one then.
11 The first motion from the SSC, and, Bernie, if you could pull that
12 back up, was they found the methodology using observer data that
13 has been developed by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center and
14 being used to estimate red snapper bycatch in the Gulf is
15 acceptable for data input into the current red snapper assessment
16 model. Can I get anyone to make a motion on that?

17
18 **MR. J.D. DUGAS:** Chris, I'm not on your committee, but you might
19 want to remind the council members who are on your committee that
20 can make this motion, and all of them.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Billy made the motion, and so I need a second.
23 Second by Mr. Osborne. Is there any discussion of this motion?
24 **Any opposition to the motion?** Okay. **That motion passes.**

25
26 For the second motion, Bernie, if you could pull that back up in
27 the report, and I'll read it. The SSC supports expanding the
28 bycatch methodology to include additional finfish species that are
29 presently in the observer database. The SSC also recommends that
30 the results of these additional efforts be presented to the shrimp
31 bycatch working group and/or the appropriate SEDAR workshop or
32 topical working group. Can I get someone to make a motion on that?
33 Mr. Osborne. Second by Mr. Sanchez. We have a question from Dr.
34 Overton.

35
36 **DR. ANTHONY OVERTON:** A question before the motion. You say
37 additional species. How many estimated additional species will be
38 included in the new methodology?

39
40 **MR. MONCRIEF:** So it would be based on the list that we provided,
41 and I can't remember the exact number, but, like with Dr.
42 Sweetman's question, a fair amount of those are estuarine species
43 that are under state management, and not federal management. Those
44 would likely automatically be popped off the list, and then,
45 obviously, you have what will be coming up in priority, and so I
46 think it's about a half dozen that would meet criteria.

47
48 **DR. OVERTON:** Thank you.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Dr. Walter.

3
4 **DR. WALTER:** Yes, and I'm not on the committee, but I'm confused,
5 because a lot of these are really SSC decisions regarding the
6 scientific input. I don't know that they need to be council
7 decisions, because there's innumerable data inputs that go through
8 into our stock assessments or science that gets vetted by the SSC,
9 and so it seems like, if we were to embark upon this process for
10 all of the data inputs, we would never get through a council
11 meeting, and so I'm confused as to why these need to get passed by
12 the council.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Good question. My understanding was that
15 because they apply to the bycatch working group, and so we're
16 recommending these motions then go to the working group, correct,
17 Dr. Simmons?

18
19 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so I think
20 fair point. You know, staff wrote this some time ago. I think
21 what we were trying to do is bring things full circle, since we
22 had this working group, and we convened them, and it went back to
23 the SSC, and then the council is getting all that information now,
24 and so I think that's what we were trying to suggest here with the
25 motions.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Strelcheck.

28
29 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Yes, and, just to add on to John's point, I think
30 the first motion that we just passed was very much in the line of
31 what the Scientific and Statistical Committee would recommend to
32 us, and it wasn't necessarily needed for council approval. This
33 one is more in our purview, because it, obviously, includes
34 additional direction related to work we're conducting at the
35 council.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Any other discussion on the motion on
38 the board? **Is anyone opposed to the motion on the board? Seeing**
39 **none, the motion passes.**

40
41 Now moving to the more contentious motion that came out of the
42 SSC, that we had a bunch of discussion about, and I'll read it,
43 and see if we have anyone interested in making a motion to adopt.

44
45 The SSC found the proxy methodology using SEAMAP and observer data
46 that has been developed by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center
47 to estimate gray triggerfish bycatch in the Gulf as acceptable for
48 consideration as a data input for SEDAR 100. The SSC also

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

5
6 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so just a
7 quick question. I mean, my understanding, because we just had the
8 triggerfish review, is they're using this methodology currently in
9 the stock assessment, and that was reviewed, but the second part
10 from the SSC. Is that, I guess, timing of that -- That's the next
11 time we have another assessment, and is that what you're asking us
12 to do, as far as a memo goes? Is that what we were talking about,
13 Trevor, or is that going to come up again when we talk about king
14 mackerel future investigations?

15
16 Are we running with what we have for triggerfish, and we're going
17 to do sensitivity runs, right, when we get it, is the plan, after
18 the MRIP-FES lites, and then this additional investigation is going
19 to happen when?

20
21 **MR. MONCRIEF:** Yes, and I think the discussion was kind of all
22 over the place when it came to the future investigations, because
23 that's where a lot of the semantics came into. Are we saying we
24 should evaluate everything that's not included? Should we do it
25 as the assessments come up? Should this be another iteration of
26 the analyses that we had talked about?

27
28 I think, at the end, yes, the triggerfish one, it's already there.
29 It's as used. We have -- I think the SSC expressed just as many
30 concerns as everyone else at this table about it, but that's why
31 you have sensitivity runs, to be able to try to basically see where
32 the impact is for some of these.

33
34 The future investigations, at least to sum up their thoughts, and
35 sum up mine, it will basically be ranked in order of priority,
36 because certainly you're going to have some of those that aren't
37 overly present within the shrimp trawl bycatch, but then you're
38 probably going to have some where it might be a little bit more
39 impactful, and so the future investigations should likely take
40 that into account and run down the priority list.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Thank you, Trevor. Mr. Anson.

43
44 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Yes, and so, following up on the comment that
45 Dr. Walter made relative to the motions that are being offered
46 here, I kind of think that the first part, you know, going with
47 what Dr. Walter mentioned about us kind of approving things that
48 have already gone through the SSC, that it does kind of go a little

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

3
4 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Would you want to make an amendment, or a
5 substitute motion?

6
7 **MR. ANSON:** I'll try, I guess, yes. The substitute motion would
8 be that the council -- I might need a little help here, Dr. Simmons,
9 about how we might go ahead, and would this be something that we
10 would encourage the Science Center to take the lead on in trying
11 to investigate this, and that's what the letter would be then?

12
13 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Yes, and I figured this would be like
14 a data request we would have to put in, and so I think we would
15 start with king mackerel next for this one, and we kind of have
16 that on our list already, but, if you want to pass that in support,
17 and then it would probably fall to stock assessment schedule, is
18 what I'm envisioning, and we would need to get with the SSC
19 leadership and figure out exactly what we're requesting on timing
20 and all that kind of stuff.

21
22 **MR. ANSON:** So then maybe a substitute motion would be the council
23 write a letter to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center --

24
25 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Supporting future investigations,
26 something like that.

27
28 **MR. ANSON:** Yes. Supporting future investigations into improving
29 the estimation of bycatch for species not characterized in the
30 observer program, beginning with king mackerel, and incorporating
31 into future assessments. Sorry. For species not characterized in
32 the observer program, beginning with king mackerel.

33
34 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** I think just maybe just take "king
35 mackerel" out, because, actually, king mackerel is characterized,
36 I believe, in the observer program currently, and so it gets kind
37 of tricky quickly, and so I think maybe just more general, and
38 perhaps the council write a letter to the Science Center supporting
39 future investigations to improve the estimation bycatch for
40 finfish species not characterized since 2025 in the observer
41 program, or something like that. Is that right, Mr. Moncrief?
42 Would that make sense?

43
44 **MR. MONCRIEF:** Yes, and that was the date that triggerfish was
45 added into it, and so, yes, and I think that's going to take a
46 little bit of, you know, at least maybe a look by council staff,
47 or whoever else, to really figure out which of those species are
48 within that priority that interact with that fleet that are, you

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

3
4 **MR. ANSON:** All right, and so if you can add a period after
5 "program", that would be my motion.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** All right. We have a second for the substitute
8 motion from Mr. Sanchez. I'll read the motion real quick, and
9 then we can vote. **The substitute motion is the council write a**
10 **letter to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center supporting future**
11 **investigations into improving the estimation of bycatch for**
12 **finfish species not characterized since 2025 in the observer**
13 **program.** Any other discussion on this? Dr. Walter.

14
15 **DR. WALTER:** Thanks. I think this is helpful. My comment is that
16 I'm not sure that I could, off the top of my head, name a single
17 species that would be a priority for a stock assessment that it
18 hasn't been characterized, and so I'm not sure which these are
19 going to apply to when we look through the program, and I'm not
20 sure I would allocate a lot of staff time to this when we would
21 really be allocating staff time to the species that are on the
22 docket for pending assessments.

23
24 I think that's really where our focus would be, but I'm happy to
25 look at what has been characterized, and what might be a priority,
26 as we screen across the species for ones that either could get an
27 alternate management approach, that might not be a full stock
28 assessment, and that's one of our ongoing exercises, is looking at
29 things which might be able to be assessed a little bit more
30 efficiently, perhaps index-based approaches, and so perhaps this
31 would be part of that. Thanks.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Any further comments on the substitute
34 motion on the board? Dr. Allen.

35
36 **DR. ALLEN:** Yes, and I'm just -- I'm wondering, and like there's
37 really two parts to this motion from the SSC and the motion I made,
38 which is the first part is about great triggerfish and SEDAR 100,
39 and the second part is what this substitute motion gets at. I
40 guess, procedurally, is this -- Do we need to address both those
41 in the substitute motion, is my question, or not?

42
43 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Anson.

44
45 **MR. ANSON:** My purpose for the substitute motion was to explicitly
46 exclude the first part, because it is kind of something that's
47 already gone through the SSC, and it's the science side of things.

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

2
3 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Any further discussion? **Is there anyone**
4 **opposed to the motion, the substitute motion, on the board? Seeing**
5 **none, the substitute motion passes.**
6

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

10
11 **MR. MONCRIEF:** Absolutely.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Next up, we have a discussion on the working
14 group to address interaction and bycatch of protected resources in
15 shrimp trawls. Dr. Freeman, can you briefly go through that in
16 the action guide, and then Dr. Simmons.

17
18 **DR. FREEMAN:** Mr. Chair, I apologize. Did the SSC chair finish
19 talking about the permit threshold, because he had a slide on that.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Sorry, Trevor. I let you loose too soon. I
22 didn't realize that.

23
24 **MR. MONCRIEF:** All right. If we can pull that presentation back
25 up, or I can do it without it, but so the moratorium information
26 was brought to us, the SSC, to get recommendations on any analyses
27 that could support or help out the decision-making process on it.

28
29 In general, there was a couple of comments about, you know, taking
30 into consideration of interactions across different species
31 groups, stuff like that, to try to inform it, and trying to come
32 up with some, you know, economic impact there, but I think the
33 overall sentiment is that these kind of exercises and analysis are
34 much easier recommended when the direction is opposite, right, if
35 you're trying to limit, or you're approaching some level to try to
36 come up with what that number needs to be.

37
38 Given the direction of this fishery, and where it's been after the
39 last decade, there wasn't much in terms of direct inputs or
40 information from the SSC that was provided, other than try to look
41 at what you can and make the best judgment possible. It's just a
42 little bit of a different situation, and so I'll take any questions
43 on that.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** It looks like we have one question from Mr.
46 Sanchez.

47
48 **MR. SANCHEZ:** To be clear, is the intent here to go forward like

1 we did in the past, the last time we looked at this, using a --
2 You know, convening a working group combined of NMFS folks, SSC
3 folks, and industry people, and put them all together to arrive at
4 something, you know, doable, acceptable to everybody? Is that the
5 intent here, or no?
6

7 **MR. MONCRIEF:** I'm not sure of the direct intent, and I think Andy
8 will speak to it, but I would at least say that, given the
9 situation, and the amount of complexity currently in the fishery,
10 and the trajectory that it's on, you're not going to get here with
11 just one group's answer, or one SSC's recommendations. You're
12 probably going to need exactly what was discussed, which is a
13 pretty wide-ranging group, and a lot of considerations.
14

15 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Mr. Anson, and, Mr. Strelcheck, is it
16 to that point? Okay. Kevin, go ahead.
17

18 **MR. ANSON:** I think I know the answer to this question that I'm
19 going to ask relative to the updated method that NMFS -- Do they
20 have any information, as far as kind of what they're thinking
21 about, or what they are proposing, or is it just literally that
22 they're at the very start?
23

24 **MR. MONCRIEF:** I think it was at the very start when Mr. Helies
25 gave the information, and so, if he's got anything to provide, he
26 can.
27

28 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Andy.
29

30 **MR. STRELCHECK:** To tie John's comments and Kevin's question
31 together, we presented some initial data and information to the
32 SSC, essentially updating catch per unit effort information,
33 overall shrimp effort. We have some, obviously, bycatch
34 information that we're updating.
35

36 All of that was taken into consideration when we established the
37 initial permit threshold, right, and it was kind of a snapshot, a
38 single year that the previous committee thought optimized kind of
39 achieving all of those goals of maximizing catch-per-unit effort,
40 keeping bycatch for red snapper and other species at threshold
41 levels or below what we need them to, as well as optimizing yield
42 in the fishery.
43

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

1
2 We can't achieve optimum yield though, based on the economic
3 conditions of the fishery, and so we went to the SSC just asking
4 for some general guidance, advice, and do you have any ideas,
5 input, on how we could analyze this, because the other challenge
6 is, if economic conditions turned around, and improved, right now
7 we still have more permits out there than we believe would be
8 optimal for that threshold that was originally established, right?
9

10 With all that said, I mean, we're quickly kind of coming to the
11 conclusion that it's very difficult to kind of revisit and review
12 this threshold, given the current economic conditions of the
13 fishery, and that it might be better to focus on the upcoming
14 trigger, which would start looking at the permit pool for reserving
15 permits, rather than revisiting the threshold at this time, given
16 some of the economic changes that are experiencing.
17

18 We wanted to, obviously, discuss that with the council, see if
19 there was any feedback, or input, on kind of setting aside the
20 analysis of the permit threshold for now and focusing more on the
21 trigger.
22

23 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Sanchez.
24

25 **MR. SANCHEZ:** My thoughts on that is I understand what you're
26 saying, but I don't feel comfortable not proceeding with industry
27 involvement, because who better than the industry to tell you what
28 their economic challenges are? I'm in the fuel business, and I
29 can tell you fuel is one of them. I think to proceed without their
30 input would be a disservice to what we're trying to accomplish,
31 and so setting up a working group, much like we've done in the
32 past, I think would be the appropriate path forward.
33

34 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Go ahead, Mr. Strelcheck.
35

36 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I don't know if Matt can comment to this, and we
37 might be talking about two different things, John, but there's a
38 permit threshold that, once you fall below, it would reserve
39 permits in the fishery, right, and there's a trigger that
40 essentially establishes a review committee working group that's
41 part of a prior amendment that's been passed by this council.
42

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

1 obviously, be looking at this very carefully.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Dr. Freeman.

4
5 **DR. FREEMAN:** Mr. Strelcheck, I believe your question is for the
6 review panel, as to the composition, and so that review panel, the
7 way it's worded in Amendment 17B, is it would consist of Shrimp AP
8 members, SSC members, NMFS, and council staff.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Strelcheck.

11
12 **MR. STRELCHECK:** So, John, we haven't hit the trigger yet, but
13 does that address your concern, is that that panel would be
14 convened once the trigger is met to continue to look at, obviously,
15 this permitting issue?

16
17 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Yes. Thank you.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Anson.

20
21 **MR. ANSON:** I wonder -- Dr. Freeman, of the current AP members,
22 are there any members that would be considered to be representative
23 of processors, or are they all those that operate shrimp vessels?

24
25 **DR. FREEMAN:** Yes, sir, and that's a good question, and so, last
26 time the council populated the Shrimp AP, there were some
27 processors that were appointed for membership, and so you would
28 have both harvesters as well as processors for selection from the
29 AP.

30
31 One thing that I did discuss with the Shimp Committee chair, given
32 that the trigger for the review panel is coming up relatively soon,
33 the information was provided to the SSC suggested that, in July,
34 we were only ten permits away, that the council may want to
35 consider, at its October meeting, going ahead and looking at
36 membership for that review panel, so that it's prepared when that
37 trigger is met.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. I guess can we make sure that's added
40 to the Shrimp Committee agenda for October then?

41
42 **DR. FREEMAN:** Certainly.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Any other discussion? Mr. Strelcheck.

45
46 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks, Chris, and we can be prepared to bring
47 back the permit information for October. I think, last check, we
48 were within about ten permits of that trigger, and so we're very

1 close to, obviously, meeting that trigger.

2
3 I would like -- I just sent a motion, and so I would like to put
4 a motion on the table with regard to the permit threshold.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** You sent an email?

7
8 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Yes, I sent an email. If it's lost in cyberspace,
9 I can read it out.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** You better read it, Andy. It sounds like it
12 may not be there yet.

13
14 **MR. STRELCHECK:** All right. **The motion is to postpone work on**
15 **updated analyses for the minimum threshold number of federal Gulf**
16 **shrimp commercial permits and continue work on Shrimp Amendment 20**
17 **to update status determination criteria.** If I have a second, I
18 can explain my motion.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** We have a second from Mr. Sanchez.

21
22 **MR. STRELCHECK:** So, as discussed, I'm not saying we stop work. I
23 think right now it's best to postpone this. We will be taking up
24 the discussion of the trigger and the review group, and that would
25 be convened in October, and, to me, that's kind of the more
26 immediate need for the council to be proceeding.

27
28 Then, as more information becomes available, I think it's going to
29 be important that we work with the shrimping industry, especially
30 in light of economic conditions, to be able to evaluate this permit
31 threshold more holistically.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Anson.

34
35 **MR. ANSON:** Just a question about the October meeting and what
36 we're going to do at the October meeting relative to the working
37 group. We're going to further discuss it to then determine how we
38 would select and populate, or we actually just approve a list of
39 members at that time? I'm just curious as to the timing of that
40 relative to the October meeting.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Well, Dr. Freeman, can you speak to that a
43 little bit? I'm not sure either as to what would be on the agenda
44 for October.

45
46 **DR. FREEMAN:** Certainly, and so I would envision that, if the
47 council would like, we could perhaps bring a draft membership list
48 for consideration, and certainly the committee and Full Council

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

7
8 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Does it answer your question, Mr. Anson?

9
10 **MR. ANSON:** It does. Thank you, Dr. Freeman.

11
12 **DR. FREEMAN:** Certainly, and one other thing, just while I'm
13 unmuted, Mr. Strelcheck, could you add the word "commercial" in
14 your motion, "for federal Gulf shrimp commercial permits"?

15
16 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Yes. Thanks.

17
18 **DR. FREEMAN:** Certainly.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Our seconder is nodding his head that
21 he's good with that edit. Do we have any other further discussion
22 on this motion before we put up for a vote? **Seeing none, is anyone**
23 **opposed to the motion on the board as written? Seeing no**
24 **opposition, the motion carries with no opposition.**

25
26 All right, Trevor, and you're finally off the hook here, it looks
27 like. Was there one more slide here, Bernie? That's next? Okay.
28 All right, Dr. Simmons, you're next up. Thank you, Trevor.

29
30 **STATUS UPDATE ON WORKING GROUP TO ADDRESS INTERACTIONS AND**
31 **BYCATCH OF PROTECTED RESOURCES IN SHRIMP TRAWLS**

32
33 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a very
34 brief verbal update on the status of the working group to address
35 interactions and bycatch of protected resources in Gulf shrimp
36 trawls.

37
38 Our staff met with the Southeast Regional Office staff and
39 Protected Resources staff to discuss a data request for holding a
40 meeting. We met August 5th with them, and we've asked for some
41 data to be updated, the protected resources bycatch up to 2025,
42 updated smalltooth sawfish population viability analysis based on
43 feedback provided by the SSC for May 2025, or at least get a status
44 report for the group on where that is, permit information on active
45 permits, economic information on the state of the shrimp fishery
46 in the Gulf, and this would include, but not be limited to, the
47 decrease in participating vessels, the effect of imports on
48 domestic pricing, fuel use, and cost and recent revenue trends of

1 the fleet.

2
3 Our staff are trying to help with updating some of these analyses,
4 and we received much of the protected resources information on
5 bycatch, and we're working with those datasets and with SERO and
6 the Science Center staff.

7
8 We're in the process, and I guess we're going to get an update
9 here under Other Business on the Early Adopter information, and
10 see if we can use some of that in those stat areas to get more up-
11 to-date information, and we're working on scheduling to -- Get
12 those timelines together, have a meeting, get those data requests
13 together, and then have a public agenda put out for the working
14 group here in the next week or two.

15
16 That is our plan to work expediently on that, try to update these
17 data requests, but right now we need to get a call, right after
18 the council meeting, with our staff, the Science Center staff, and
19 the Regional Office staff to discuss this data request.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Dr. Simmons. I think I might have
22 missed it, but when do you expect the next meeting for the working
23 group?

24
25 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** We may have a short virtual call, but
26 we don't have one established yet. It has to be published in the
27 Federal Register, and we would like to get some of this data
28 updated first.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Roger that. Understood. Any questions or
31 comments? Mr. Strelcheck.

32
33 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Yes, and, as Carrie alluded to, we'll have a call
34 with the council staff soon, and we've been reviewing the data
35 requests. We have updates with regard to kind of what's readily
36 available and what would maybe take some additional time,
37 obviously, to complete, and we'll try to give a timeline and sense
38 of kind of when we could have that information for the working
39 group. As I've recommended to Carrie, maybe not all of it will be
40 ready for that first workgroup meeting, but hopefully we can have
41 a lot of it ready and available to go for the workgroup.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Thank you, Andy. Appreciate that. Any
44 other comments, or questions? Dr. Walter.

45
46 **DR. WALTER:** Yes, and, as I think the working group is going to
47 really benefit from having the best and most recent information,
48 we are also -- We are committed to bringing that to the group, and

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

3
4 Our plan is to double observer coverage, from about 2.5 percent to
5 5 percent, for 2027, so that we get better information in that
6 area where the smalltooth sawfish interactions really occur, and
7 so we hope that will give us better information to make more
8 informed decisions and we look forward to industry participation
9 in carrying observers to get that information. Thanks.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Thank you, Dr. Walter. Any other
12 questions for Dr. Simmons regarding the working group? Dr.
13 Simmons.

14
15 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just had a
16 question about the observer coverage. You said that's going to
17 start in 2027, and is that also going to cover the giant manta ray
18 interaction area too, or is that just the smalltooth sawfish?

19
20 **DR. WALTER:** The increase in observer coverage is for the pink
21 shrimp fishery, but not for the giant manta ray areas.

22
23 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Excuse me, Mr. Chair, and I understand
24 that there's not interactions there, but what I'm saying is there's
25 not increased observer coverage on that fleet in that area, but
26 only on the pink shrimp fleet, and my understanding is there's
27 more interactions with giant manta ray than there are with
28 smalltooth sawfish in the observer program historically, and so
29 that's why I was just asking why that decision was made.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Dr. Walter.

32
33 **DR. WALTER** Why was the decision made? Primarily because of the
34 concerns about the status for smalltooth sawfish and that we --
35 Because the observer coverage is sparse, and it's fairly localized,
36 it seems like that's the area that we need more information on the
37 size and age composition of smalltooth sawfish, and the potential
38 for any mitigation efforts really relies on having good spatially-
39 explicit data. Thanks.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Mr. Anson.

42
43 **MR. ANSON:** Dr. Walter, I'm just curious. On those additional
44 surveys, they're going to be conducted as per standard surveys, I
45 would assume, meaning that they'll get the additional species like
46 for bycatch for finfish species, other finfish species, or is it
47 just kind of to observe interactions with smalltooth sawfish?

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

3
4 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** All right. Any other questions or comments
5 regarding that agenda item? All right. Seeing none, we came to
6 the end. Last is Other Business. We had two Other Business items.
7 I think the first one was from Mr. Sanchez, and some of this may
8 have been discussed already, but you may want to speak on it.

9
10 **OTHER BUSINESS**
11 **STATUS OF SHRIMP PERMIT MORATORIUM**
12

13 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Yes, and just to get an update on where we're at
14 with the extension of the permit moratorium that expires in October
15 2026. It can be now, or it can be at Full Council.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Helies.

18
19 **MR. FRANK HELIES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, and I would be happy
20 to give an update on that. Amendment 19 to the Shrimp FMP, we
21 took public comment on the amendment, and that comment period ended
22 the beginning of August. We have to make a decision on the
23 amendment by next week, so that package is ready to go up to
24 Headquarters when we get the okay on that, and we do have an update
25 on the proposed rule. That's going to publish tomorrow, and we're
26 going to take a thirty-day comment period on the proposed rule,
27 and so keep an eye out on the Fishery Bulletin we'll send out
28 tomorrow morning. Comments will be due on September 24th.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Sanchez.

31
32 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Thank you.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Frank. We appreciate that update.
35 Then the second Other Business item was from Dr. Walter.

36
37 **UPDATE ON SHRIMP FUTURES PROJECT**
38 **UPDATE ON EARLY ADOPTER PROGRAM**
39

40 **DR. WALTER:** Thanks, and so I wanted to just update the group on
41 two topics. As we mentioned, I think in a report-out from my
42 colleague, Carissa Gervasi, we are going to be having the scenario
43 planning workshops, with target dates of December 1st through 3rd,
44 2026, and February 23rd to 25th, 2027.

45
46 We think those will likely be in the Louisiana region, and those
47 are designed to work with stakeholders to develop the scenario
48 planning for the future of the shrimp fishery, really where the

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

6
7 It's the next step in the Shrimp Futures Project, and we hope what
8 that will do is identify specific actions that can be taken to
9 ensure the sustainability of the shrimp fishery, and so we've got
10 a number of recommendations for working group participants from -
11 - The council has been providing recommendations, and those are
12 going to be open to the public, and so it's available to anyone,
13 and so we hope that we'll get good participation in that.

14
15 The other update is on the Early Adopter Program, where we've had
16 four years of data, and we've done two deployments of Early Adopter
17 installations. We're now at 312 total vessels with devices
18 installed, and, with the remaining funds, we should be able to get
19 a total of 884 vessels, which would be nearly the entire active
20 fleet, and, in fact, potentially above the current active fleet,
21 which the benefit of that is that any vessel that is interested in
22 getting one of these devices should be able to get it as part of
23 this program, which is really great.

24
25 What it does is allows us, when eventually the amendment becomes
26 binding, that we're not saying that all vessels are going to have
27 to be reporting, but we are going to have to have all vessels be
28 part of the universe of sampling.

29
30 That means, when their number is called to provide their data,
31 then, if they have a device, then they would need to turn that on
32 and then report using the cellular reporting network.

33
34 The benefit of having the device ahead of time means that, if your
35 number gets called, you can then turn it on and report, and you
36 don't have to go about getting that installation to happen at a
37 time that is not of your convenience, and so we would recommend
38 that all vessels who are going to be actively shrimping participate
39 in the Early Adopter Program, to get a device for free, and then,
40 as the sampling program comes online, then there'll be a sampling
41 -- A decision about whose number gets called.

42
43 An update on that sampling program, what we're going to be doing
44 is we're going to be using those Early Adopter Program vessels,
45 when they already have vessels, and so they'll be part of that,
46 but we're also going to need to ensure that we have representative
47 coverage in space and time to cover the entire Gulf, and we may
48 need to cover some particular areas of high interaction with some

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

5
6 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Thank you, Dr. Walter. I especially
7 appreciate the update on the Shrimp Futures Program. I look
8 forward to our department working with you guys. If you need
9 assistance setting anything up in Louisiana, as far as venues, we
10 could supply a couple different venues for you, if that would be
11 helpful. Either our Marine Lab or our headquarters in Baton Rouge
12 would work well, and so please contact us for that stuff as you go
13 forward in planning.

14
15 Also, I think it couldn't come at a better time, because we just
16 opened shrimp season last week, and sixteen to twenty-count white
17 shrimp are getting under a dollar a pound dockside, and so -- I'm
18 sorry. Under two-dollars a pound dockside, and so it's needed,
19 with as much urgency on that as possible. Thank you. Any other
20 comments or questions around the table? Mr. Chairman, that
21 concludes the Shrimp Management Committee. Back to you with about
22 16 minutes left.

23
24 **MR. DUGAS:** Thank you, Mr. Schieble. We're going to take a break.
25 Before we take a break, I just want to recognize Ms. Bosarge was
26 here. Thank you, Leann, for being here as the AP chair, and also
27 a previous council member. Let's take our break, and we'll come
28 back at 10:45.

29
30 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned August 24, 2026.)

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