

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
(NOAA)

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NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS)

ATLANTIC HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY PANEL

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PUBLIC MEETING

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THURSDAY
MAY 16, 2024

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The Panel met at the DoubleTree by Hilton Silver Spring, 8777 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland, at 9:00 a.m., Bennett Brooks, facilitating.

MEMBERS PRESENT

JASON ADRIANCE, Louisiana Department of
Natural Resources*
DAVID APPOLONIA, F/V Blitzen*
KESLEY BANKS, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management
Council
CAROLYN BELCHER, Georgia Department of Natural
Resources*
RICK BELLAVANCE, New England Fishery Management
Council
SPENCER BODE, F/V Titan, Seafreeze Ltd.
JOHN BOHORQUEZ, The Ocean Foundation
PETER CHAIBONGSAI, The Billfish Foundation
DANIEL COFFEY, Harte Research Institute for
Gulf of Mexico Studies
MATT DAVIS, Maine Department of Marine Resources*

JOHN DEPERSENAIRE, Viking Yacht Company*
MAY DUKES, South Carolina Department of Natural
Resources
RAIMUNDO ESPINOZA, Conservacion ConCiencia Inc.*
YAMITZA RODRIGUEZ FERRER, Puerto Rico DNER,
Recreational and Sport Fisheries Division*
STEVEN GETTO, American Bluefin Tuna
Association*
WILLY GOLDSMITH, Pelagic Strategies
WALT GOLET, University of Maine School
of Marine Sciences, Gulf of Maine Research
Institute
MARTHA GUYAS, ASA Fishing
GREG HINKS, New Jersey Department of
Environmental Protection
JAMES HULL, Hull Seafood
BOB HUMPHREY, Sport-Ventures Charters and Casco
Bay Bluefin Bonanza
MATT HUTH, Fresh Catch Seafood
CHRISTINE KITTLE, Florida Fish and Wildlife
Department*
JEFF KNEEBONE, New England Aquarium*
SCOTT LENOX, Mid--Atlantic Fishery Management
Council
NADYA MAMOOZADEH, Michigan State University
JACKSON MARTINEZ, Environmental Defense Fund
AL MERCIER
ROBERT "FLY" NAVARRO, Fly Zone Fishing
SANDY NGUYEN, F/V St. Joseph & Peter
MICHAEL PIERDINOCK, Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat
Association
BRUCE POHLOT, IGFA*
MARTIN T. SCANLON, Blue Water Fisherman's
Association
DAVID SCHALIT, American Bluefin Tuna
Association
GREGORY SKOMAL, Massachusetts Division of Marine
Fisheries*
CAITLIN STARKS, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries
Commission*
PERRY TRIAL, Texas Parks and Wildlife
Department*

SCOTT VAETH, Miss Shell Seafood, Inc., Grey Ghost
Fishing
ABBY VAUGHN, Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant
- State Representative for Alabama
RICK WEBER, South Jersey Marina
ALAN WEISS, Blue Water Fishing Tackle Co.
ANGEL WILLEY, Maryland Department of Natural
Resources
CHARLES WITEK
ESTHER WOZNIAK, The Pew Charitable Trusts
ROBERT ZALES, Southeast Fisheries Association

*participating by webinar

NOAA NMFS STAFF PRESENT

MAY ANDERSON, NOAA Office of Law Enforcement
RANDY BLANKINSHIP, Division Chief, Atlantic
Highly Migratory Species Management
Division
KARYL BREWSTER-GEISZ, HQ Fish Branch Chief,
Atlantic Highly Migratory Species
Management Division
PETE COOPER, Branch Chief, Atlantic Highly
Migratory Species Management Division
LISA CRAWFORD, Atlantic Highly Migratory
Species Management Division
JENNIFER CUDNEY, Atlantic Highly Migratory
Species Management Division
BECKY CURTIS, Atlantic Highly Migratory
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GUY DUBECK, Atlantic Highly Migratory
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GEORGE SILVA, Atlantic Highly Migratory
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CARRIE SOLTANOFF, Atlantic Highly Migratory
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ANN WILLIAMSON, Atlantic Highly Migratory
Species Management Division
JACKIE WILSON, Atlantic Highly Migratory
Species Management Division

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Adjourn

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 (9:00 a.m.)

3 MR. BROOKS: All right, we are at day
4 three, just in case you're wondering. Only two
5 more days to go. All right, just kidding, just
6 kidding.

7 All right, this is the last day. It
8 is just a half day, but we have a bunch of
9 interesting things to talk about, so thank you
10 all for being here.

11 Angel, welcome back to the table.
12 Glad you could be here.

13 All right, so let's talk about what
14 we're going to talk about this morning. We will
15 in a few minutes, dive into a conversation around
16 a series of gear considerations. The four
17 different topics with several different options
18 within each.

19 I think a number of interesting
20 conversations to be had, so we'll hand that over
21 to Becky here shortly, to lead us through that.

22 We'll have a break at 10:15. At

1 10:30, Sam Rauch will be joining us and we will
2 hear from Sam.

3 I assume as always, he will come in
4 with a few comments to share and as always, we
5 will then open it up to you all.

6 And as always, I will attempt to make
7 sure we're hearing from a mix of sectors.

8 Particularly with Sam, I want to make
9 sure that he's getting a chance to hear from the
10 various perspectives that sit around this table.

11 And then, at 11:00 o'clock we will
12 have a conversation introducing a logic model for
13 exploring fishery issues. It's a different kind
14 of topic, and something that will be interesting.

15 For members of the public that are
16 here, at 11:30 we will have public comment. And
17 then we will finish up at 12:00 o'clock.

18 So, that's the game plan for today.
19 I will keep my reminder on ground rules super
20 short.

21 Thank you all for contributing; for
22 keeping your comments bounded so we can hear from

1 everyone. Really appreciate it.

2 Again, if you're in the room, just
3 flip up the card. If you're online, just raise
4 your virtual hand; that seems to be working well.
5 Hopefully our tech will be kind to us today.

6 And just a reminder if everyone could
7 start with a name for our reporter here, that
8 would be great.

9 And for any member of the public
10 that's here, again, public comment at 11:30. And
11 the chat is intended to be used during the
12 meeting only by the panelists to be able to ask
13 if there's, to weigh in on something that's been
14 said, those folks who are online.

15 For members of the public, please feel
16 free to use the chat once we get to public
17 comment, however. We'd love to hear from you
18 either with your voice, or words in a chat.

19 And I'll just continue to run the
20 queue the way I've been running it. So again,
21 balancing across all the different pieces here.

22 And we are recording yet again today,

1 so please be aware of that.

2 Any questions, comments, about today?
3 Anything left over from yesterday around the
4 table from Randy, or team? Anything?

5 (No audible response.)

6 MR. BROOKS: Okay, if not, then I think
7 it will be Randy, no?

8 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Yes, let's get
9 started.

10 MR. BROOKS: Okay.

11 Then I'm going to hand it off to
12 Becky. And we'll just to set this up a little.
13 There are about four different groupings of gear
14 considerations.

15 Becky's going to run through the slide
16 presentation laying that out. We'll take
17 clarifying questions on anything in her
18 presentation.

19 And then when we get to the
20 conversation, we'll take it up topic by topic so
21 we're not bouncing between four different things,
22 which would be remarkably confusing.

1 So, just plan on that.

2 Becky, all yours.

3 MS. CURTIS: Thanks, Bennett.

4 So, I'm Becky Curtis, and I'm going to
5 be talking today as Bennett said, about fishing
6 gear considerations in HMS fisheries.

7 So we've recently released the scoping
8 document with all this information, and a lot
9 more. So if you haven't checked that out yet,
10 please do.

11 So I'll be going through a little bit
12 of background about why we're doing the scoping
13 initiative in the first place.

14 But I'm not going to get into too much
15 detail. I'm going to get into the potential
16 options, and then we'll have lots of time for
17 feedback and discussion.

18 So, I just want to emphasize here that
19 the goal of this presentation is to gather your
20 input.

21 So please don't settle in for a long
22 presentation, and please be thinking about what

1 you think about I'm presenting as I go along, so
2 we can have a good discussion afterwards.

3 And also get some ideas for anything
4 else you might have in mind.

5 We love our acronyms. Here's just a
6 reminder of some of them that I'm using in this
7 presentation.

8 You don't want to read the words every
9 time; and, I don't want to say them. You
10 probably know all of them anyway, so I'll move
11 on.

12 So why are we doing this? So
13 basically over the years, we've introduced a
14 number of management measures related to HMS
15 fishing gear.

16 These measures were put in place to
17 achieve various fishery management and
18 conservation goals, such as preventing or
19 stopping overfishing; reducing bycatch; reducing
20 post-release mortality; and, taking measures to
21 reduce issues of loss or derelict gear.

22 However, what's been happening is that

1 HMS fishing gear and techniques have been
2 changing over time.

3 And this has happened for a number of
4 reasons, including shifting species
5 distributions; changing fishing gears and
6 techniques; and also, shifting interests in
7 fishing, and shifting markets.

8 So we wanted to review some of the
9 measures that we have in place, and check and see
10 if maybe they're limiting fishing opportunities,
11 or the ability to achieve optimum yield.

12 And additionally, we've received
13 requests for gear related changes, which I will
14 get into more into the rest of the presentation.

15 Overall, across the different options,
16 our main objective is to increase flexibility for
17 targeting HMS, while maintaining consistency and
18 achieving those same fishery management and
19 conservation goals.

20 We also need to stay in line with
21 domestic fishery regulations, and also
22 international agreements.

1 And more specifically, we wanted to
2 look at changes, regulatory changes, to allow
3 fishing for swordfish deeper in the water column.

4 As a highlight, we've seen from other
5 swordfish fisheries that we can achieve high
6 target rates, and lower bycatch rates.

7 We also wanted to reduce interference
8 between the newer, more emerging fishing gear
9 configurations and techniques, with those that
10 are more established.

11 Consider additional authorizations.
12 For example, targeting more species with certain
13 gears.

14 And, authorizing gears under different
15 permit types. And take a look at regulatory
16 inconsistencies.

17 So to our first, our first topic of
18 buoy gear. So it authorized under a certain
19 permits. You are probably all very familiar with
20 this, so under swordfish only there's several
21 permits I won't go through.

22 Also allowed for targeting BAYS tunas

1 with those holding a CCSB permit, which is of
2 course, only valid in the U.S.-Caribbean.

3 So, this is a technique that is
4 generally used at night to catch swordfish when
5 they're near the surface. And it is required to
6 be released and retrieved by hand.

7 It has been shown to have lower dead
8 discard rates when compared with pelagic
9 longline. And it's also associated with low
10 bycatch and incidental rates.

11 So for example, fisheries logbook data
12 show that from 2016 through 2022, swordfish made
13 up over 80 percent of catch by numbers. And
14 there were no catch of protected resources.

15 So there has been an increased use of
16 this deep-set buoy gear during the day, which has
17 resulted in higher swordfish selectivity.

18 An example of this is shown off the
19 southern coast of California, with daytime
20 deep-set use achieving over 80 percent
21 selectivity for swordfish, which is better than
22 the selectivity for longline, and drift gill net

1 fisheries.

2 So we'll get into the buoy gear
3 options. So, the first option is to not make any
4 change and maintain the current regulations.

5 So while this would be of course
6 simplistic, it wouldn't be responsive to requests
7 that we've had for using this gear type to fish
8 for swordfish at deeper depths in the water
9 column.

10 And it also wouldn't allow increased
11 flexibility with this gear type as I just said,
12 has lower rates of bycatch and high swordfish
13 selectivity. So it would be a missed opportunity
14 there.

15 The second opportunity would be to
16 authorize power assistance as an option for
17 retrieving the buoy gear mainline.

18 And so, this would help, this would
19 make it easier to fish for swordfish at deeper
20 depths, which could then in turn, increase the
21 effort across the swordfish management area, and
22 help to more fully utilize the North Atlantic

1 stock of swordfish, which is healthy and
2 underutilized.

3 However, if buoy gear fishing
4 increases, then this could also result in
5 additional gear conflict between this type and
6 other types, such as recreational rod and reel.

7 And although it is, this technique is
8 associated with lower bycatch, of course if you
9 increase the use in instances where it wasn't
10 used before, then that could increase bycatch.

11 Option 3 would be to authorize the use
12 of buoy gear for swordfish under Swordfish
13 General Commercial Permit.

14 And this, currently this permit is
15 limited to a certain number of permit holders as
16 it's only authorized for those holding swordfish
17 directed, or handgear LAPs and the CCSB only in
18 the U.S.-Caribbean.

19 So increasing, expanding the use of
20 buoy gear could increase the commercial fishing
21 opportunities for swordfish, and again, help
22 increase landings for an underutilized stock.

1 This could also be done without, with,
2 while still avoiding some of the gear conflict
3 concerns that fishermen have had off the
4 southeastern coast of Florida.

5 Because the Swordfish General
6 Commercial Permit has a swordfish retention limit
7 of zero, and in the management area which
8 includes that southern, southeastern Florida
9 area.

10 And for similar reasons, it's not
11 likely to have a negative impact on the swordfish
12 handgear LAP, which is used in that same area,
13 because it's more likely to increase fishing
14 opportunities elsewhere.

15 So, something to consider here would
16 be that an increase in permitted vessels using
17 buoy gear to target swordfish in areas where it
18 hasn't historically operated, could leave us with
19 some unknowns.

20 The fourth option is to allow the
21 retention of BAYS tunas with buoy gear in all
22 areas, except for the Florida swordfish

1 management area.

2 Currently, BAYS, the targeting of BAYS
3 is only allowed for CCSB permit holders in the
4 U.S.-Caribbean.

5 And since buoy gear is a type of
6 handgear, permit holders already authorized to
7 fish for BAYS tunas with handgear, could also be
8 allowed to use buoy gear.

9 So again, this would increase fishing
10 opportunities and allow more permit holders the
11 opportunity to retain BAYS tunas with a different
12 type of gear.

13 Also, the stocks for these species are
14 unlikely to be affected. Only albacore has a
15 domestic quota, which has not been fully
16 harvested in recent years.

17 Yellowfin and skipjack do not have
18 quotas, and they have healthy stocks. And also
19 the U.S. catch is just a small portion in the
20 entire Atlantic catch.

21 Bigeye does not have a quota and is
22 over fished, but the U.S. has a minimum size in

1 place to help protect juveniles. And this would
2 remain the case.

3 On the other hand, expansion of buoy
4 gear into new areas could again, increase fishing
5 gear conflicts.

6 The fifth option here is to allow the
7 retention of some shark species with buoy gear.
8 So this currently is not an authorized gear type
9 for sharks.

10 So this could expand fishing
11 opportunities and allow some sharks that would
12 have otherwise had to be discarded, to be
13 retained.

14 And again, help towards achieving
15 those U.S. quotas because shark landings have
16 decreased in recent years.

17 Something to consider would be that
18 there's a potential for sharks to be
19 misidentified, and then captured. And then, that
20 would result in violation.

21 The last option here is to require
22 circle hooks on buoy gear. So currently, there's

1 no specification. This would provide consistency
2 with other types of HMS gear types.

3 For example, those that are targeting
4 sharks with bottom longline and hook inline.

5 However, a lot of fishermen use circle, use
6 J-hooks on buoy gear to capture swordfish. So
7 this would require them to switch out the type of
8 hook that they use.

9 Also, there is a lack of data on catch
10 rate and hooking between fish caught with J-hooks
11 versus circle hooks, when using buoy gear.

12 So, it's possible that circle hooks
13 might not be as efficient as using J-hooks for
14 targeting swordfish with buoy gear.

15 And moving on to pelagic longline. So
16 generally when fishing for swordfish, pelagic
17 longline is generally deployed at sunset and
18 hauled at sunrise.

19 However, this technique as you know,
20 has been changing in recent years with the gear
21 being set deeper to target swordfish. Deeper in
22 the water column during the day.

1 The deepset technique is different
2 than the conventional type. We have determined
3 that it is consistent with the definition for
4 pelagic longline, but the two techniques are
5 different.

6 So, this brings us to potential
7 options for deepset pelagic longline. So first
8 option would be no action, to keep the current
9 definition, and the associated regulations.

10 So since we've already determined that
11 it is consistent with the current PLL definition,
12 we could just continue with the status quo.

13 It also might be premature to make
14 changes to the definition now, since this
15 technique is still evolving. People are still
16 figuring it out.

17 However, if we don't update the
18 definition, fishermen not used to this type of
19 technique might do it, and then have increasing
20 or sustained contact with the ocean floor.

21 And then this would then make the
22 technique more consistent with --

1 (Simultaneous speaking.)

2 MR. BROOKS: So hang on one second.

3 MS. CURTIS: -- bottom longline.

4 MR. BROOKS: Hey, Marty, Marty? It's
5 just it's distracting so if you need to step out,
6 that's fine.

7 MS. CURTIS: So if it does then have
8 the sustained contact with the ocean floor, then
9 it would trigger bottom longline definitions
10 because it's more similar to the definition for
11 bottom longline.

12 However, this wouldn't respond to
13 uncertainty amongst constituents and enforcement
14 partners about this technique.

15 The second option here would be to
16 modify the PLL gear definition, to more
17 explicitly allow the deepset technique.

18 So for example, we could modify the
19 definition to say, to indicate that occasional
20 and unintentional contact with the ocean floor
21 may happen.

22 This would reduce uncertainty amongst

1 constituents, and maybe facilitate wider adoption
2 of this practice.

3 Again on the other hand, it might be
4 premature to alter the definition because it is
5 evolving. Fishermen are settling on best
6 practices and once they finally do that, then it
7 might be obsolete.

8 Also, we'd have to be careful when
9 making changes to this definition so that we can
10 avoid unintended consequences of those revisions.

11 Option three would be to require
12 enhanced communication when deploying deep-set
13 PLL.

14 So, this could help to reduce gear
15 conflict, which we've received reports of
16 conflict between these two different gear types.

17 So to reduce that, fishermen could
18 indicate that they're going to be deep-set
19 fishing for, through the use of buoys or high
20 flyer markings, or through VHF call-outs,
21 announcements.

22 So this would make it easier for

1 fishermen to alter their practices, and change
2 their locations to account for differences
3 between the two gear types, including different
4 drift rates.

5 However, fishermen might not want to
6 widely communicate their fishing practices, or
7 locations.

8 And again, it's still an evolving
9 technique, so adding more regulations now might
10 be premature.

11 The last option here is to require the
12 intent to deep-set during the VMS hail-out.

13 So having this included in hail-outs
14 would make it easier for us to determine sets
15 that are deep-set PLL, when going back through
16 trip data.

17 It would also allow us to look at
18 catch and interaction rates between the two
19 different gear types.

20 And, it would provide a pathway for
21 separate conventional and deep-set requirements
22 and regulations.

1 Something to consider here was that,
2 would be that enforcement partners would need
3 additional training to identify stowed or
4 deployed gear that is intended to be deep-set.

5 But our initial conversations have
6 shown us that this could be possible.

7 Moving on to bait collection net
8 restrictions. So, bait collection gear such as
9 cast nets and small dip nets, are commonly
10 carried onboard HMS fishing vessels.

11 But they are not explicitly authorized
12 in HMS regulations for certain species, or under
13 certain permits.

14 So, it's not commonly, it's not
15 practical that they're going to be used to catch
16 HMS. But as of right now, it's not explicitly
17 authorized in the regulations.

18 So, the first option here would be to
19 make no changes, maintain current regulations
20 that do not authorize bait collection nets on HMS
21 fishing vessels.

22 So obviously this is simple, but it

1 wouldn't address the mismatch between the current
2 regulations and the common fishing practices.

3 We could then also modify the regs.
4 And this would more accurately reflect the
5 practical behavior of fishermen.

6 And, it would also be unlikely to
7 impact HMS that we manage, because those, the
8 authorizations would only allow nets that are too
9 small to capture them.

10 Again, we'd have to be careful when
11 defining bait collection gear so that we avoid
12 ambiguity, or enforcement challenges moving
13 forward.

14 Moving on to spearguns, which is the
15 last category, so please get ready for
16 discussion.

17 Spearguns, which were authorized in
18 2006 and they were, they're allowed for targeting
19 HMS in recreational charter/headboat fisheries,
20 limited to BAYS tunas.

21 And, they're not authorized for
22 targeting other HMS or in commercial HMS

1 fisheries.

2 So for spearguns, no action. We can
3 just keep the current regulations, and this
4 wouldn't cause any changes. But it wouldn't
5 increase flexibility for expanding speargun use.

6 The second operation would be to
7 authorize speargun use for HMS Angling, or HMS
8 Charter permit holders when they're fishing for
9 swordfish.

10 So again, this would provide more
11 flexibility and allow the expansion of speargun
12 use to include recreational retention of
13 swordfish, again, an underutilized stock that is
14 healthy.

15 Something to consider here is that
16 while speargun use can be highly selective for
17 target individuals, you could still end up
18 capturing smaller individuals under size, and
19 then they aren't released alive.

20 Option D3 would be under similar
21 permits, but authorizing them to retain sharks
22 that are authorized for retention by recreational

1 fishermen.

2 So this would expand the use of
3 speargun to include some shark species, which is
4 overall increasing flexibility and fishing
5 opportunities.

6 Again, there's potential for
7 violations here. It's highly selective but if
8 you misidentify a shark species, an unauthorized
9 species could be captured.

10 Option four would be to authorize the
11 use of spearguns to retain swordfish, BAYS tunas,
12 and sharks under some commercial permits.

13 So again, this would be providing
14 additional fishing opportunities for these
15 species.

16 And as swordfish are currently under
17 harvested and shark landings as we all know have
18 decreased, this could be beneficial in working
19 towards achieving a more full utilization of
20 those harvests, those quotas, and achieving
21 optimum yield.

22 And as a potential downside, this

1 would create a whole new fishery with unknown
2 numbers and distributions since currently, it's
3 unknown how many are interested in fishing for
4 these species commercially.

5 Additionally, there's potential for
6 violations if shark species are misidentified,
7 and an unauthorized species is captured.

8 So this brings us to a discussion.
9 Some things to think about are what do you think
10 of the options that were presented here; the pros
11 and cons?

12 Are there any other gear revisions
13 that we should consider?

14 Are there any other species and
15 permits to consider for the gear revisions, or
16 anything else you might have?

17 And then we will leave this slide up.
18 So this slide is just basically a collection of
19 all the different options under the different
20 categories, excluding the no-action options, just
21 for the sake of discussion.

22 So, thank you and we really look

1 forward to what you have to say.

2 MR. BROOKS: Great, thanks, Becky. It
3 was a great presentation; super clear.

4 So as I said before Becky started her
5 presentation, what I want to do is open it up
6 first for clarifying questions, just so we
7 understand what we're talking about.

8 And then, we'll take it topic by topic
9 and hear what's on your mind about the different
10 options.

11 So let's jump in and we will start
12 with Bob, and then over to David, and then we'll
13 take it from there.

14 MR. HUMPHREY: I'll pass and --

15 (Audio interference.)

16 MR. BROOKS: Sure.

17 David, clarifying question?

18 MR. SCHALIT: Yes, thanks very much for
19 the presentation. I have a few clarification
20 issues.

21 It's been mentioned actually
22 previously in this meeting, that this, referenced

1 this gear conflict in the east coast of Florida.

2 And I'm not clear on, I think I know
3 what it is, but I'd really rather get, hear from
4 you a sort of description of what that means.

5 And, another question regarding circle
6 hooks has to do with, has any study been done on
7 -- given the fact that there's low bycatch, I'm
8 wondering if it's a good idea or a bad idea to
9 implement circle hooks.

10 And I'm just wondering if you knew if
11 there were any studies that were done on this
12 level.

13 And I think that's pretty much all the
14 clarification questions I have.

15 MS. CURTIS: Yes, so I can speak to
16 what I know for the gear conflict, and then if
17 anyone else on the team has anything to add, feel
18 free.

19 But so the deep-set technique, the
20 gear is much lower and so the drift rate is much
21 slower. I think it's like I don't know, 10-20
22 times slower than pelagic, but more conventional

1 sets.

2 So, if fishermen are deciding where
3 they're going, what they're doing, then, and they
4 calculate and they know where someone is, they
5 calculate for a certain drift rate.

6 So they set up somewhere but the rates
7 are not what they think they are, so then they
8 can end up in, the physical conflict between the
9 gear types.

10 Yes, so are there, did I miss
11 anything?

12 MR. BLANKINSHIP: I would just add on
13 that in certain areas like the east Florida coast
14 like you mentioned in the Straits of Florida,
15 you've got an area that's highly populated, a
16 high population center.

17 Very close to deep water, excellent
18 pelagic habitat. A lot of HMS there. And a lot
19 of fishing effort; a lot of commercial boat
20 traffic that's even non-fishing.

21 And fishing traffic; recreational
22 fishermen; other commercial fisheries. A lot of

1 activity in a very narrow corridor right there.
2 That's what we're talking about with gear
3 conflicts.

4 It's just really not just gear, it's
5 just activity conflicts.

6 And then, I think your other question
7 was about circle hooks, and this is specific to
8 buoy gear.

9 I'm actually not aware of any circle
10 hook research with buoy gear. And I'm actually
11 going to look at Ally, to see if he, okay, and
12 you have your card up. If you want to speak to
13 that either now or then.

14 MR. MERCIER: I can wait.

15 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Okay.

16 MR. BROOKS: Great, thanks. Let's go
17 online. Raimundo, I see your hand is up, and
18 then we'll come back into the room.

19 If we can open up Raimundo's line?
20 All right, Raimundo, your line is open.

21 MR. ESPINOZA: Thank you. Are we still
22 on clarifying or because I have a comment on

1 several.

2 MR. BROOKS: Just clarifying right now.

3 MR. ESPINOZA: Okay.

4 So I was wondering if on the
5 modification of the pelagic longline definition,
6 if any of that is going to be including the scale
7 or length, the size, in any of the modifications.
8 Or if that's being considered at the moment?

9 MS. CURTIS: So, I think that we are
10 trying to gather ideas about all of this today.
11 We talk in the scoping document about modifying
12 the definition so that it would allow occasional
13 and unintentional contact with the sea floor.

14 But yes, I think I don't know that we
15 have any other details laid out for exactly how
16 we could change that. So we're definitely up for
17 input.

18 MR. BROOKS: Great, thanks, Becky.

19 Raimundo, any other, no? Okay, if you
20 have another clarifying question let us know.

21 Jeff Kneebone, clarifying question
22 from you? And I'll let you know when you're off.

1 Okay, you should be able to talk now, Jeff.

2 MR. KNEEBONE: Great, thanks, Bennett.

3 Just a quick clarifying question. For
4 the buoy gear retention of some shark species,
5 I'm wondering if the agency can comment on what
6 species they envision those being.

7 In my experience, the deep-set gear
8 interacts mostly with prohibited species like
9 bigeye thresher, maybe longfin mako, and some of
10 the other species that live out there, like
11 shortfin mako might, are also not able to be
12 retained.

13 So I would just like to hear some
14 feedback on that. Thank you.

15 MS. CURTIS: Yes, so this would be, I
16 think you're talking about option A5, allowing
17 retention of shark species with buoy gear.

18 So this would be shark species that
19 are authorized, including a lot of sharpnose,
20 smooth-hound, black tip, bull, and thresher
21 sharks, but those are just some examples.

22 Shortfin mako would not be allowed

1 unless the retention limit is not zero. And of
2 course, no prohibited species.

3 So it would be a permit to retain all
4 authorized shark species.

5 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. And let's stay
6 online for the last hand I see up there. John
7 DePersenaire, why don't you come on in, John, and
8 I'll let you know when your line is open.

9 You should be good, John.

10 MR. DEPERSENAIRE: Great, thank you.

11 John DePersenaire, Viking Yachts. I
12 just had a question about the bait collection
13 slide.

14 And I was just curious if you guys can
15 clarify C1 with regard to no change. I assume
16 that maintaining current regulations that do not
17 authorize bait collection nets on HMS fishing
18 vessels, is limited to commercial category
19 vessels, not angling category.

20 Can you just clarify that?

21 MS. CURTIS: I believe that would be
22 across the board.

1 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Correct.

2 MS. CURTIS: Yes.

3 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Yes, we don't
4 allow cast nets or anything right now, on any of
5 our vessels.

6 MR. BLANKINSHIP: And just to add on to
7 this, the key thing here is that we have
8 regulations that prohibit the retention of HMS
9 with unauthorized gears onboard.

10 That's the key thing here under the
11 status quo. And so, while we're not under any
12 misconception here that some of these bait nets
13 that we're talking about here are used for HMS,
14 it's a regulatory reality of the way it's set up
15 right now.

16 And that's why we're opening it up for
17 trying to figure out how to hear from you all.
18 Should we do this? How would you suggest that we
19 do this to take care of this?

20 MR. BROOKS: Is there a follow up
21 clarifying question on this point?

22 (No audible response.)

1 MR. BROOKS: I don't see anybody. Okay
2 yes, geez, let's work our way around the table.
3 Bob, go.

4 MR. ZALES: Yes, on this point I make
5 is this is new to me and so my question is to
6 clarify on a charter headboat, and I'm going to
7 go into Panama City, Florida, where I used to do
8 that and a lot of people do.

9 Most of those boats have HMS permits
10 of some type, right? And pretty much every one
11 of those boats carries a cast net for live
12 baiting, catching bait to fish in their normal
13 snapper, grouper, whatever they're going to do.
14 Not necessarily from HMS.

15 But the way this would read, is it's
16 illegal for them to have that cast net onboard.
17 Now clearly, nobody's ever thought about that yet
18 because there hasn't been a case made.

19 So, would this apply to them so that
20 they're carrying cast nets on that boat with an
21 HMS permit, it's illegal?

22 MR. BROOKS: Hence, this is on the

1 table for discussion today.

2 MR. ZALES: Just right now, is it
3 currently illegal?

4 MS. CURTIS: It's currently not
5 explicitly allowed, so, yes, this is to discuss.

6 MR. BROOKS: Okay, again, clarifying
7 questions on this point. David?

8 (Laughter.)

9 MR. BROOKS: Do that again.

10 MR. SCHALIT: Weren't we also
11 considering purse seine nets for bait? For
12 example, in Montauk, people use a purse seine net
13 to catch spearing, which are this big, right?

14 That could be something to add to this
15 mix. Thanks.

16 MR. BROOKS: More clarifying questions
17 on this piece? Martha, then over to Bob.

18 MS. GUYAS: So, I guess ditto Bob
19 Zales' comments, but this makes me also wonder
20 what other gears that are on particularly
21 recreational vessels, aren't explicitly
22 authorized, right?

1 Because chances are if you've got an
2 HMS permit, you're fishing for other things as
3 well.

4 And it could be like crab traps.
5 Like, I don't know. Like, I guess I would
6 encourage exploring what else is there.

7 I'm trying to think. I feel like in
8 the southeast there's like a list of authorized
9 gears. That probably is a good place to start.

10 I remember the Gulf Council went
11 through that list, I don't know five or six years
12 ago, Bob.

13 I feel like we tried to come up with
14 a comprehensive list of just stuff people are
15 using to fish for who knows what.

16 Yes, it might be good to cross-check
17 some of those things.

18 MR. BROOKS: I'm going to let that
19 sneak in as a clarifying question.

20 MR. HUMPHREY: Yes, yes, sorry.

21 MR. BROOKS: Bob?

22 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Thank you.

1 MR. HUMPHREY: This was actually one of
2 my questions. So, could you just clarify because
3 there can sometimes be a broad gulf between not
4 authorized, and prohibited.

5 And is presence of gear prima facie
6 evidence of use? Thank you.

7 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: So right now our
8 regulations are pretty clear on what can be on
9 the vessel. And oftentimes in our regs we say,
10 you are only allowed to have those gears onboard.

11 So what we're looking for today are
12 comments, this is all great, on what we should be
13 trying to focus and get on the vessel.

14 So, if you want as Martha said, for us
15 to go through the list and try to figure out what
16 isn't allowed currently and all of that, that's
17 great.

18 If you have a specific suggestion,
19 excellent, bring that up. I'm not sure crab
20 traps we want to deal with, but we can at least
21 talk about it.

22 We're focused more on what gear would

1 be used to catch HMS, but it is a good question
2 on does that mean it limits crab traps.

3 MR. BROOKS: It seems like a narrowly
4 drawn question from up here, is getting wider as
5 we think about it.

6 Any other clarifying questions on this
7 point? Mike.

8 MR. PIERDINOCK: No, thank you.

9 You may want to consider what we had
10 to do up in New England with mackerel and the
11 state permits that are required that, for the
12 catch of mackerel of commercially or
13 recreationally, in which many of them are then
14 used out in the federal waters for bait.

15 So there's already some criteria that
16 you could look at to set up how that would work.

17 I was curious, are these cast nets,
18 are these gill nets? What's the mesh size? And
19 then with that as has been noted, you have
20 multiple species managed by councils or Atlantic
21 States Marine Fishery Commission, that could be
22 the bait which one is collecting.

1 So that's also a clarifying question
2 I'd add. Is this bait for use specifically for
3 the vessel to catch HMS species, or is it also
4 bait to catch and then sell later?

5 So, is it one or the other, or both?

6 So I know there's a lot in that, those
7 questions and maybe you can provide some clarity
8 of if that's, if these things have been defined,
9 have not been defined.

10 Thanks.

11 MS. CURTIS: Yes, I'll answer part of
12 that and then probably give it to Karyl for the
13 other.

14 So the authorizations that we would
15 move forward with would be that, and we're still
16 defining that. We talk right now about
17 potentially adding cast nets or dip nets, to the
18 definition.

19 Again, we're trying to get ideas. Are
20 there other things we should put there, or other
21 ideas.

22 But basically the authorized

1 regulations would then require those to be small
2 enough that they can't capture HMS species.

3 So again, we're trying to work out
4 what a definition would be. And as I said, we
5 have to be careful in how we do that, and make,
6 take a bunch of different things into
7 consideration when making this definition change.

8 As far as use of the nets to capture
9 bait and sell later, I am not sure about that.

10 MR. BROOKS: Spencer? Oh, I'm sorry,
11 Karyl was going to jump in with a bit more.

12 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Sorry, Bennett.

13 So I'm just going to repeat what I
14 did, said last time. This is our process. This
15 is the time for all of you to provide those
16 questions to us. We're not always going to have
17 answers.

18 It's a good question on what is the
19 mesh size, so I'm going to go back to you and
20 ask, what is the mesh size that you use for
21 catching bait for HMS?

22 And then, yes, don't, we can keep

1 going. Sorry, I know. But those are the type of
2 comments we are looking for.

3 PARTICIPANT: And the same for personal
4 use or commercial harvest --

5 (Simultaneous speaking.)

6 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Yes.

7 PARTICIPANT: That's --

8 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: That is also
9 personal, commercial harvest of bait. How
10 important is that for all of our HMS fishermen?

11 So we are looking for these comments.
12 Overall, we have the comment period till July 31,
13 so we are welcoming all of it.

14 But we don't necessarily have answers
15 for all of your questions.

16 MR. BROOKS: Spencer, please?

17 MR. BODE: Thank you very much.

18 I just would like to provide a little
19 first. There's been a lot of scenarios thrown
20 around, so provide firsthand experience with
21 this.

22 So, the way it goes down now with

1 enforcement, and bait nets, and HMS, is I've been
2 boarded and participating on a HMS trip in state
3 waters catching bait.

4 You have to adhere to your state
5 waters regulations for the bait gathering. My
6 comment/question is trying to tackle the issue of
7 mesh size, certain gear type.

8 Ninety-nine percent of bait gathering
9 techniques at least in my 300 mile area from
10 Rhode Island north to south, I would imagine is
11 in state waters.

12 Each state already has its regulations
13 set up for specific little purse seine size, gill
14 net size. And, each state has endorsements
15 allocated for those gear types.

16 My comment is, is to tackle this issue
17 instead of trying to make new rules that bridge
18 across everything, to just default to following
19 the states' regulations.

20 And put that in the legislative and
21 the rules that when in state waters, the HMS boat
22 participating on a HMS trip needs to follow

1 whatever state they are in.

2 Because all the regulations are
3 already set up for each state. And each state
4 has different ones. So it would be kind of
5 impossible to make a broad stroke mesh size
6 across the board.

7 Thank you very much.

8 MR. BROOKS: Okay, I am going to call
9 a little audible here because I'm concerned we're
10 going to burn up all of our time on this bait net
11 question. And I don't want to do that.

12 And, I think we're going to find that
13 we probably don't have enough time to talk
14 through all of these issues.

15 And in which case, I suspect we'll
16 come back in September and pick up some of them
17 again. Obviously there's a lot here to talk
18 about.

19 And Bob, I see your --

20 MR. ZALES: I've got one clarifying
21 question. This goes past the net part of it.

22 In commercial and for hire fishing and

1 with rec fishing where I'm from, they have ghost
2 hook gear. They have Sabiki rigs. They have
3 different things that you use to catch bait with,
4 right?

5 So there are gear that you're catching
6 bait. So from what I'm reading here technically,
7 that's illegal.

8 So you've got a charter boat you there
9 that's got a 6-year-old kid back there having a
10 great time ghost hooking bait.

11 And you've got a Barney Fife HMS cop
12 over here that says okay, damn, I got a new law.
13 He's going to go arrest this kid.

14 MR. BROOKS: Yes, yes, so that's,
15 that's again, I think you all are doing a great
16 job of defining it. I'm going to put you on
17 hold, David.

18 No, I'm going to take us to buoy gear,
19 and I want us to talk about buoy gear. And I'm
20 just going to open it up if you have either a
21 clarifying question but mostly we want to hear,
22 what are you thinking.

1 So if you need to start your comment
2 with a clarifying question, great, we want to
3 hear it.

4 Again, let's try to get through as we
5 can. I'm going to push us, but I think we just
6 may have not enough time to cover all the things
7 we want to talk about, and let's just acknowledge
8 that.

9 So, buoy gear. We've got the slide up
10 there. You've got five different options on the
11 table, as well as no change alternative.

12 So if you have a thought about buoy
13 gear, please keep your card up. If it's not
14 about buoy gear, pop it down and then put it back
15 up again.

16 And if you have a thought about bait
17 net gear, please don't share it right now.

18 (Laughter.)

19 MR. BROOKS: So, buoy gear. Let's go
20 Sandy, you wanted to get in.

21 So again, what we want to hear here
22 is, is what are your thoughts about the different

1 alternatives on the table? What makes sense,
2 what doesn't make sense? Why?

3 And please be super succinct in your
4 comments. There's a lot of comments to hear.

5 MS. NGUYEN: I just have a clarifying
6 question. Martha, I wanted to know did any of
7 these options arrive or derive from the Deepwater
8 Horizon Alternative Gear Program, that the
9 southeast fleet in Louisiana worked 6-7 years
10 with you guys on?

11 Did any of the option came out of
12 that? If not, I highly recommend that you guys
13 review. That was sent to me just yesterday.

14 MS. CURTIS: Yes.

15 MS. NGUYEN: Okay.

16 MS. CURTIS: Yes, that's good to know.

17 (Audio interference.)

18 MR. BROOKS: Great. Matt, why don't
19 you come on in?

20 MR. HUTH: Yes, just to clarify. So
21 right now as it stands, to buoy gear fish you
22 have to have a Directed Swordfish Permit, is that

1 correct?

2 MR. BLANKINSHIP: That is one of the
3 permits that allow it. So, if you have a
4 triple-pack permit, you've got to have the
5 Swordfish Directed in order to allow for buoy
6 gear to be used, and be authorized.

7 Also, Swordfish Handgear Permit is
8 another permit that authorizes it. And the
9 Caribbean Small Boat Permit does. But that's
10 only valid in the U.S.-Caribbean.

11 MR. HUTH: Okay, that being said,
12 that's a limited access permit, the Handgear
13 Permit?

14 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Yes.

15 MR. HUTH: How many are there in
16 circulation? Because we got, well I don't even
17 know how many. How many Directed Swordfish
18 Permits are there in circulation? Do y'all know
19 that, either one of those?

20 MR. BLANKINSHIP: We do know it, and
21 it's in the SAFE Report, and I don't know that,
22 there you go. Becky's got it.

1 MS. CURTIS: Okay, so I'm sorry. I
2 will read off. So there were 82 Swordfish
3 Handgear Permits and 177 Swordfish Directed
4 Permits in 2021.

5 So, those are the numbers I have in
6 front of me. If you need something else, we can
7 get that.

8 MR. BROOKS: 177, 122?

9 MS. CURTIS: There were 82 Swordfish
10 Handgear, and 177 Swordfish Directed. In 2021.

11 MR. BROOKS: And Matt, did you have a
12 perspective on any of the alternatives you wanted
13 to share?

14 MR. HUTH: Not right now.

15 MR. BROOKS: Thank you. Ally?

16 MR. MERCIER: Okay, on your question
17 Randy, on circle hooks, I experimented a little
18 bit with it already on that program.

19 But it didn't work good because
20 there's no way to hook the fish, because there's
21 no buoy gear and the bait drifts the same speed.

22 And it wouldn't, we lost the fish on

1 it. We just couldn't keep it on.

2 Back to the buoy gear because that's
3 what I've been doing now for, I did it for
4 Deepwater Horizon.

5 I know they did a video on it. They
6 made a movie like of it. It shows it, how it
7 works. And that was part of the program.

8 I don't know if you guys ever saw it
9 or not because you saw the video? Okay. So
10 people can look at that and see what's going on.

11 And also, buoy gear has been fished
12 from Cape Canaveral south for like the last 12-15
13 years. I know you have logbooks for all that
14 because everybody fills out their logbooks.

15 You can see how good the fishing is,
16 and how clean it is.

17 Now I'm deep-setting with buoy gear.
18 We're experimenting with that. We've been doing
19 it now for over a year with power haul-back,
20 because we need to do power haul-back to go down
21 to the bottom and reel it back up.

22 And then we cut the leader, cut the

1 braid, put it on a buoy, single buoy. It drifts
2 with the tide.

3 You got to have trackers on it, and
4 they're not cheap. And it works out fine. I
5 think we have 90 set so far, in the Straits so
6 far, doing this between two boats.

7 Me and another boat have the EFP to do
8 it. And there's other boats trying it. They see
9 how successful it is doing it, but you need the
10 power haul-back.

11 And that's why that was proposed
12 because you cannot, you can hand crank it up on a
13 two-speed finial rod or whatever, but it just
14 takes forever.

15 You're fishing in the tide anywhere
16 from 15 pounds to 12 pounds of lead. And that
17 takes a lot to get up.

18 MR. BROOKS: So Ally, is that a yes
19 supportive, yes supportive of power assist?

20 MR. MERCIER: Yes, yes, to power,
21 definitely. You need that. And at the fishery,
22 I think it's good.

1 And you go up the east coast. I know
2 there's boats up there in the Carolinas already
3 doing it. They're doing very well doing it.

4 There's some sport boats doing it;
5 playing with it. And they're doing very well
6 because the way if you have an HMS permit --

7 (Simultaneous speaking.)

8 MR. BROOKS: Ally, I'm going to, just.

9 MR. MERCIER: Okay, no problem.

10 MR. BROOKS: Thanks.

11 All right, thank you. Scott?

12 MR. VAETH: Yes, I just want to put on
13 record that I'm all for the power assist also.

14 And I did have a question is why could
15 you not keep BAYS tunas in the Florida management
16 area? Why are they separated out in that area?
17 Is there a reason?

18 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: It really just has
19 to do with that as Randy was describing it,
20 activity conflicts. So if we start allowing BAYS
21 in that area, it could increase effort even more.

22 So, we're just looking for comments

1 and thoughts about that.

2 MR. VAETH: I mean, there's probably
3 very few tunas caught during the buoy fishing in
4 that area.

5 It's just, I would believe that you
6 should be able to keep one or two if you do catch
7 them in that area.

8 MR. BROOKS: So that's a yes, but with
9 some kind of --

10 (Audio interference.)

11 MR. BROOKS: -- a yes with some kind
12 of limit on it, or were you?

13 MR. VAETH: Yes. Yes.

14 MR. BROOKS: Yes with some kind of cap?

15 MR. VAETH: I don't think it matters.
16 I think there's actually a cap on it anyway
17 because there's so very few caught in the
18 industry anyway.

19 I mean, Ally would probably know more
20 about it than I do, but I think there's very few
21 tunas caught. And there shouldn't be a reason
22 why you couldn't keep one if you did catch it.

1 MR. BROOKS: Great, thank you.

2 Marty?

3 MR. SCANLON: Yes, I have several
4 things here. On slide 6 there, I have no problem
5 with them using the assisted mechanizing, that
6 fishery there.

7 But any increase of mechanism I think
8 believes come with better oversight. I don't
9 know whether those boats have VMSs on them, or
10 what they're subjected to legally.

11 But I believe that if they're going to
12 use a mechanized method in fishing, that they
13 need to have VMS so we know, have a better
14 understanding of what they're doing.

15 A3 on that slide there when it comes
16 to the general category. I believe that that
17 would just present, that that would be a
18 nightmare.

19 That would create an incredible
20 conflict, gear conflict, with the PLL industry.

21 Right now up in the Hudson Canyon and
22 along the canyons up in the northeast there, we

1 already have a conflict with buoy gear.

2 I mean, from my understanding, is
3 they're supposed to set that gear and tend it.
4 But right now what we have a situation is those
5 guys set that gear in our way, they never
6 communicate with us. They just set it wherever
7 the hell they want.

8 It's really not very well marked.
9 It's just marked by a buoy. Can't see it. And
10 then they go about their business of trawling, or
11 whatever else they do.

12 And then they come back and they haul
13 it. And it just tears the living hell out of our
14 gear.

15 As far as circle hooks go, circle
16 hooks has an effect on the PLL industry, as well,
17 on what we catch and what we bring to the boat.

18 And I was under the understanding that
19 HMS fisheries, all HMS fisheries, were required
20 to use circle hooks because they do have the
21 potential to interact with whales, and the
22 protected species.

1 MR. BROOKS: So that's a yes for circle
2 hooks?

3 (Audio interference.)

4 MR. BROOKS: That's a yes for circle
5 hooks?

6 MR. SCANLON: No, I would say I would
7 be opposed of circle hooks, to be honest with
8 you.

9 The other thing, the other questions
10 I have here. We already, in A3, we already
11 communicate when you talk about, I don't know
12 whether this is a different page or not there.

13 But when you talk about, well, that's
14 a deep-set thing. That's a different issue here.

15 When we get back, a little bit back to
16 the cast netting thing there --

17 (Simultaneous speaking.)

18 MR. BROOKS: No, no, no.

19 MR. SCANLON: Well, I just got one
20 quick comment on that then.

21 (Audio interference.)

22 MR. BROOKS: No. Marty --

1 MR. SCANLON: Okay, well let me ask you
2 this then.

3 MR. BROOKS: We're going to come back
4 to it.

5 (Audio interference.)

6 MR. SCANLON: Is it legal, is it only
7 illegal to fish for live bait, use live bait in
8 the PLL fishery in HMS?

9 MR. BROOKS: I know that someone saw
10 that in the chat. I really want us to stay where
11 we are right now.

12 I'm going to go online to Raimundo,
13 and then we'll come back and we look like we've
14 got three or four more people.

15 Raimundo, you are open.

16 MR. ESPINOZA: Thank you. Thank you,
17 Bennett. Becky, thank you for addressing this, I
18 think.

19 Specifically, my comment is aimed
20 towards the pelagic longline. And specifically
21 for the Caribbean, and more so, Puerto Rico.

22 Just beyond, there isn't too much

1 about directed shark fishing. Around Puerto
2 Rico, there is a very small scale.

3 And so, when you talk about pelagic
4 longlines, considering that the average pelagic
5 longline in the U.S. is what, something like 20
6 miles long.

7 It's something very different in
8 scale. So in the Caribbean Small Boat Permit,
9 it's currently not allowed for any pelagic
10 longlines.

11 And so, most of the fishers and under
12 40 fishers that do target sharks, more than half
13 of them use pelagic longlines of what would be in
14 the definition.

15 However, pelagic longlines in Puerto
16 Rico are no longer than 400 meters long, and
17 maybe about 15-20 hooks for each line.

18 And so, within the Puerto Rico
19 regulations, pelagic longlines that are longer
20 than 3 miles are already illegal.

21 And so, this is something to consider
22 when you're talking about one modification can be

1 done.

2 Again, specifically for the Caribbean
3 Permit is that right now if you're a shark fisher
4 and you get the commercial permit, the small
5 permit, you actually, the gear that you would
6 use, the small scale gear that you use, which
7 falls under the definition of pelagic longline,
8 you no longer would be eligible to consider using
9 it.

10 And of course, we haven't had any
11 interventions with this even though it's totally
12 used on a daily basis. But this is one of the
13 things that needs to be addressed.

14 My comment earlier, my clarifying
15 question, is about scale because in Puerto Rico
16 where the scale is a lot, lot smaller.

17 And so, when one of those things where
18 the permit could also be addressed in how, how
19 that fits on to it in the scale just because it's
20 a very different fishery.

21 So thank you, thank you so much.

22 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Raimundo. I've

1 got four more speakers I think, on this topic and
2 then I want to push us to the deepset pelagic
3 longline.

4 And I really want to try to make sure
5 we're touching on each of these. So if folks
6 could be super succinct in what it is you are,
7 you think makes sense and what doesn't, we can
8 hear from everybody.

9 Rick?

10 MR. WEBER: Again, broadly I'm in favor
11 of anything that increases catch while avoiding
12 conflict.

13 Because if there are underutilized, so
14 let's increase the efficiency with the power
15 assist.

16 If A3 causes conflict, then don't go
17 there.

18 A4 I'm cautious on because of where
19 we, as in flux as we are with the ICCAT right now
20 with no idea what's coming, I have no reason not
21 to trust Matt or Scott that it's an incident
22 right now.

1 But if it was allowed, we can't be
2 sure it doesn't become more targeted. And we
3 just don't know what, where we're going with the
4 BAYS.

5 If there are under caught shark
6 species then of course. But I, circle hooks,
7 yes, they should be used in my opinion and I
8 don't even need to go further. Everyone knows
9 the logic.

10 Thank you.

11 MR. BROOKS: Excellent, thanks.

12 David, quick?

13 MR. SCHALIT: Thank you.

14 Couple questions. One for the
15 swordfish, the A3 authorize the use of buoy gear
16 for swordfish. It suggests to me that the
17 agency's looking to increase the universe of buoy
18 gear fishermen.

19 That would be a question for you
20 folks.

21 And the other issue I have is, I'm a
22 little bit not agreeing with the previous comment

1 in the sense that we have a singular opportunity
2 now to develop our BAYS fishery, before the door
3 is closed when we, when ICCAT gives us our fixed
4 quota.

5 So, if we have any idea that we want
6 to increase our utilization of, to increase our
7 landings, now would be the time to do it because
8 we won't have the opportunity in the future.

9 Thanks.

10 MS. CURTIS: Yes, thank you.

11 So I think across all the options for
12 buoy gear, generally yes, we're trying to
13 increase flexibility.

14 And, some of these things could
15 increase the number of people using the gear.
16 And allowing it under new circumstances.

17 So I think overall, increasing
18 flexibility and opportunities for using this gear
19 is, yes, definitely part of it.

20 MR. BROOKS: Great. Mike, and then up
21 to Abby.

22 MR. PIERDINOCK: Sorry, but I'm still

1 on clarifying questions. I'm glad that Marty
2 indicated that they're up in New England and
3 having conflict, because I was curious of how far
4 north this was.

5 And I didn't know whether there was
6 one area of the Atlantic. Whether it was more
7 down your neck of the woods in Florida, or it was
8 mid-Atlantic, or north Atlantic.

9 Or, do you have any kind of statistics
10 with that? That's number one.

11 Number two, I'm a little confused.
12 You indicated there's 50-some limited access
13 permits that presently, or have this as an
14 approved gear type.

15 So are all 50 of them using it? Why
16 or why not? Are there 20 of them using it, 50 of
17 them?

18 Which makes me scratch my head of why
19 then we're trying to expand and do another permit
20 if the mechanism already exists to do it, yet
21 it's not being utilized.

22 MS. CURTIS: So I'm sorry, the first

1 part was asking about where the concentration of
2 swordfish fishing is.

3 And so, this is yes, the southeastern
4 Florida area that I had mentioned. There's a
5 high concentration of.

6 The swordfish fishery is concentrated
7 there because it's the environmental conditions
8 are supportive of that, and there's the very deep
9 oceanic water near the Gulf current.

10 And a lot of high concentration of
11 population there.

12 So, I think that was part of your
13 question. I'm going to let Karyl and Randy take
14 the rest of that.

15 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Yes, and buoy gear
16 interest is spreading. So while it's centered
17 in south Florida, there's been some use further
18 north.

19 And, the permit situation. So there's
20 more than 50. The numbers were I think 80 and
21 100 and some odd.

22 But for the Swordfish Directed Permit,

1 that is a permit that is part of the triple-pack
2 that's used for longline fishing. So that is
3 another primary use.

4 And a lot of those longline vessels
5 are not fishing buoy gear. So not all of the
6 Directed Swordfish Permits are being used with
7 buoy gear.

8 Swordfish Handgear is the other one
9 that's used, and much more of them are using buoy
10 gear. But that's not the only gear that they
11 use.

12 MR. PIERDINOCK: Thank you for that
13 clarification. So I am good with A2. I am good
14 with anything that can help cull the shark
15 predation issue.

16 And if there is other approaches that
17 can be taken as a mechanism to do that, I'm good
18 with that.

19 I'm sensitive to Marty and the people
20 of New England, and the northeast. And I'm just
21 going to stay silent on that because I'm
22 concerned about the user conflicts.

1 Marty said it, and their vessels are
2 regulated to death with all the bells and
3 whistles known to mankind, to make sure that the
4 fish are captured and recorded.

5 So, I'm just sensitive to what you
6 said there, Marty, so I'm just going to stay
7 silent on it because I'm not sure which way we
8 should go with that.

9 Thank you.

10 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Mike. Let's go
11 over to Abby.

12 MS. VAUGHN: Hi, Abby Vaughn. Thank
13 you for your presentation.

14 I wanted to provide a comment on the
15 deep-set pelagic longlines. I think I would be
16 hesitant --

17 (Simultaneous speaking.)

18 MR. BROOKS: Actually, we're going to
19 be there shortly.

20 MS. VAUGHN: Oh, okay.

21 MR. BROOKS: Just hang in. Hang on.

22 Matt?

1 MR. HUTH: Thank you.

2 Yes, I'm for the power assist. I'm
3 totally against the expansion of authorizing it
4 under the general commercial permit holders.

5 I just, there's definitely going to be
6 conflict. It might work down in Florida, but
7 there would be conflict in North Carolina.

8 And totally against that, and that's
9 it.

10 The shark? Yes, I think we should
11 keep the sharks. We need to keep all the sharks
12 we can, and develop markets for that.

13 Thank you.

14 MR. BROOKS: Okay, great. And I'm
15 going to bump us to PLL. Is it an urgent comment
16 here?

17 MR. BODE: Yes.

18 MR. BROOKS: Spencer?

19 MR. SCANLON: I just wanted to --

20 (Audio interference.)

21 MR. BROOKS: And I don't want more
22 commentary right now because it's just --

1 (Audio interference.)

2 MR. BROOKS: -- the break.

3 If you have an opinion you want to
4 give on one of these, throw it in. If not --

5 (Audio interference.)

6 MR. BODE: Yes, I have an opinion.

7 Just on A3, the gear conflict. In the
8 last two years with the uptake of gear that's
9 been in the Hudson Canyon that is not, that is
10 buoy gear.

11 I can just say in a firsthand I've cut
12 up more gear in the last 2 years than I have in
13 the previous 20, so thank you.

14 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Marty, super
15 fast.

16 MR. SCANLON: I kind of have a
17 clarifying question on this. Is it legal to both
18 simultaneously buoy fish, and PLL fish?

19 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Yes, but logistically
20 I don't know how you'd it. And if you've got PLL
21 gear on board, you would have to use, it would
22 trigger all of the suite of sea turtle bycatch

1 mitigation measures would be applied to buoy
2 gear.

3 MR. BROOKS: Great.

4 Okay, thank you, that was super
5 helpful. Got a lot of good thoughts. I think
6 we've got a lot of opinions for the agency to
7 work with there.

8 I want to just note there was a member
9 of the public who raised their hand. Please note
10 that we will have public comment at 11:30.

11 So definitely want to hear your
12 thoughts, but we'll ask you to hold off until
13 11:30.

14 So with that, let's switch to the
15 deep-set pelagic longline set of options. We've
16 got a couple of options on the table.

17 Modify the definition; enhance
18 communication during deployment; require VMS
19 hail-out. Again, poor Marty's not going to get
20 to talk now.

21 (Laughter.)

22 MR. BROOKS: Somehow I think he's going

1 to pass that, but the timing on that was
2 impeccable.

3 All right, anyway as folks have been
4 doing, if you can be sort of really short and
5 focused in your comments, it's really helpful.

6 So, let's go Alan we haven't heard
7 from you yet. Jump in, please.

8 MR. WEISS: Thanks.

9 B2 makes sense to modify the
10 definition to clarify to include deep-setting.

11 Requiring enhanced communication,
12 there's already a lot of communication. I mean,
13 even if everybody's shallow-setting, they need to
14 communicate and coordinate if they're fishing in
15 the same area.

16 And, the fishery is so small everybody
17 knows each other. So, especially with guys
18 fishing in the same areas.

19 So, I don't know what kind of enhanced
20 communication you contemplate could be required.
21 But, and I would defer to Marty if I'm misstating
22 this, to Marty and Matt.

1 (Audio interference.)

2 MR. BROOKS: Can you move away from
3 your computer maybe?

4 MR. WEISS: I'll try.

5 MR. BROOKS: Thank you.

6 MR. WEISS: That doesn't seem to be.

7 (Audio interference.)

8 PARTICIPANT: Now try talking.

9 MR. WEISS: Does that work better?

10 PARTICIPANT: There you go, there you
11 go.

12 MR. WEISS: Okay.

13 MR. BROOKS: If you can just try to
14 wrap it up quickly here, that will be helpful.

15 (Laughter.)

16 MR. BROOKS: This is going to earn my
17 money, guys.

18 MR. WEISS: Required statement of
19 intent. I don't see the need for it. Basically,
20 deep-setting is a variation. It's not a
21 different activity. It's a different tool in the
22 toolbox.

1 And as it's now developing, there may
2 be modifications, and there are situations where
3 someone could go out and think they're on a
4 shallow-set trip. They make a shallow-set. It's
5 not working out.

6 (Simultaneous speaking.)

7 They then --

8 MR. BROOKS: Got it.

9 MR. WEISS: -- got to try
10 deep-setting. So --

11 MR. BROOKS: Got it. Thank you.

12 MR. WEISS: The summation is maintain
13 maximum flexibility.

14 MR. BROOKS: Perfect, thank you.

15 Marty?

16 MR. SCANLON: Yes, I really don't
17 believe that, I really don't think there is need
18 for any changes.

19 Like Alan says, we totally communicate
20 on a continual basis when we set the gear.
21 However, we're sitting on top of each other.

22 Depth is a major factor. When

1 somebody's fishing next to you, we need to be in,
2 the gear has to be compatible in order to fish or
3 it gets all entangled.

4 The gear drifts differently at
5 different depths.

6 As far as we already distinguished the
7 gear in our set logs. There's a column there
8 where we, how many hooks you set per buoy
9 indicates whether or not you're deep-setting,
10 you're not deep-setting.

11 And like you said, there's varying
12 differences in deep-setting. You have some guys
13 that use the line shooters. You have other guys
14 that use different techniques as far as the
15 deep-setting goes.

16 There's a developing fishery at the
17 time. So, to, I don't think we need to have any
18 distinction on that there. The fishermen kind of
19 take care of that themselves on the water.

20 MR. BROOKS: And sorry, Marty, and on
21 B1, keep the current definitions or change?

22 MR. SCANLON: What was that, B1? I

1 would think that we don't really need any changes
2 in the regulation right now.

3 I think not at this time anyway. We
4 may in the future, but right now I think that the
5 fishermen themselves are in the process of
6 developing this fishery.

7 And until we really finish developing
8 it.

9 MR. BROOKS: It's too soon. Okay, it's
10 too soon.

11 MR. SCANLON: Too soon.

12 MR. BROOKS: Yes, great.

13 MR. WEISS: I'm sorry, if I may just to
14 that point. As long as there's nothing in the
15 current definition that precludes what they're
16 doing.

17 Thanks.

18 MR. BROOKS: And I think that's what we
19 heard earlier, so okay, good, thank you.

20 Abby, was your card back up?

21 MS. VAUGHN: I think my point, just to
22 reiterate, Marty, specifically, in the goals. I

1 know these deep set techniques are very evolving.
2 Some guys are trying to do it with doubling the
3 buoy length, even the gangion lines, elongating
4 those. We're also starting to look at the
5 cannonball weight, so I'd be hesitant to start a
6 new definition.

7 MR. BROOKS: Great. David.

8 MR. SCHALIT: First, quick question
9 for Randy. Is this -- are we to consider this to
10 be a scoping process that we're in right now?

11 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Yes.

12 MR. SCHALIT: Okay. All right. Then
13 regarding deep set long line. I just want to
14 remind that this is a technique that was
15 developed by the Japanese about 40 years ago for
16 the specific purpose of targeting Bigeye. The
17 feeling I'm getting here is that it's being
18 construed as being -- specifically for targeting
19 swordfish. But in actual practice, I understand
20 because I'm not a longliner, that's when one is
21 doing deep set, using deep set gear for the
22 purpose of targeting Bigeye, one also captures

1 swordfish at the same time. Okay.

2 But this goes to the question of
3 should we tell them what we're doing when we hail
4 out? Okay? And I believe there's -- I don't
5 know that it's necessary to do it that way. I
6 think the PLL is so overly documented as it
7 stands right now, we'll probably get the data.
8 But the key here that when they do a CPUE
9 calculation, they need to know whether it was
10 done -- that set was deep set or not because it
11 changes the selectivity of the catch. Okay?
12 Thanks.

13 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, David. Rick and
14 then down to Matt.

15 MR. WEBER: Doing this entirely
16 backwards, I have clarifying questions that don't
17 actually need answers because this is scoping.
18 So we can talk about it in the fall. These are
19 holes that I think you are missing which is you
20 talked a lot about PLL gear conflict. I find
21 myself wondering if this is industry driven. Are
22 we bringing the solution that is being asked for

1 or are we dealing with a hypothetical problem?
2 We brought forward RFDs as an industry-led
3 solution. If the industry is leading this, that
4 should be part of the discussion.

5 Further, I don't understand, though I
6 do very much understand Dave's purpose for data
7 collection on defining deep and not deep. What
8 you were talking about was whether or not it
9 would hit the bottom and merely defining it isn't
10 going to tell me -- isn't going to tell you that
11 which makes me feel like there is going to be a
12 further regulation behind it about whether PLL
13 can hit the bottom and whether that becomes BLL
14 at that time. And those were the two things that
15 I had which could have been questions if we had
16 more time, take them as comments for the next
17 presentation.

18 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Thanks, Rick. So
19 I just want to dive into a little bit on the
20 hitting of the bottom. So right now, one of the
21 main differences in our regs between pelagic
22 longline and bottom longline is whether or not it

1 hits the bottom. So bottom longline explicitly
2 says it is laid at or near the bottom, so you're
3 expecting it to hit the bottom. Whereas, pelagic
4 longline is set in the water column, so that is
5 where that question is coming from because we do
6 recognize that sometimes deep set PLL, you guys
7 are not intending to hit the bottom, but
8 occasionally we do end up picking up bottom
9 species on what we believe to be deep set.

10 MR. BROOKS: Marty can give us --

11 (Simultaneous speaking.)

12 MR. SCANLON: That's the thing we
13 should also put in our set logs. Whether we're
14 pelagically -- or whether we're surface fishing
15 or bottom longlining.

16 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Marty. Let's
17 grab two more on this and then I want to jump us
18 to spear gun.

19 So let's see. We've got Matt.

20 MR. HUTH: Thanks. I'm for no change.
21 I feel like all the information is in our log
22 books already. You can get everything out of our

1 log books and definitely know VMS hail out
2 because I think that can get confusing as time
3 went on. We might want to change it up or
4 something in the middle of the set.

5 But hey, we wouldn't have so many
6 comments if you didn't pick on us --

7 (Laughter.)

8 -- for the way the regulations are.

9 MR. BROOKS: Sandy, I'm going to give
10 you the last word on this one and then we're
11 going to move on.

12 MS. NGUYEN: Again, I just want to
13 emphasize that any new changes on any of these
14 options, please refer to the result of our Deep
15 water Horizon project. And I wanted to see if --
16 is that public information that what you share
17 about the project, is it public information?
18 Because I would like the panel to have access to
19 the result of the project we did with the fleet?

20 MR. BLANKINSHIP: So yes. I think the
21 final report is public, but I don't know if it's
22 out in the public. I haven't seen it yet myself.

1 I understand it's either out or it's close to
2 being out, but yes, it will ultimately be public.
3 So yes.

4 MS. NGUYEN: I want to make sure that
5 this panel receives the result of that and it
6 will answer a lot of the questions here.

7 MR. BROOKS: Thank you, Bob. Is this
8 the last comment or are you getting ready for the
9 spear gun?

10 All right.

11 MR. CHAIBONGSAI: Yes, I just would
12 say while it's going to be public, please share
13 with the panel. Please. Thank you.

14 MR. BROOKS: Great. Alan, you're in
15 overtime here. Go ahead.

16 MR. WEISS: If you're unclear with the
17 information you're getting in the log books, as
18 it is, whether it's a deep set or shallow set,
19 put a box that they can check, deep set or
20 shallow set, when you know. Thanks.

21 MR. BROOKS: You win points for a good
22 idea. Good one. Okay. All right, we are

1 dealing with the spear gun. We have three
2 different options on the table we would love to
3 hear about, adding in HMS angling, adding in
4 swordfish, adding in recreationally-authorized
5 sharks, and commercial permit holders. So would
6 love to hear thoughts on this. And again, it's
7 10 after. Anticipate we'll clip some time from
8 break so we get to hear Bob, you get to go first.

9 MR. CHAIBONGSAI: I am never going to
10 pass again when I have a microphone.

11 (Laughter.)

12 Do you have a definition of speargun
13 or could that possibly include something more
14 broad like compound bow and cross bow? Thank
15 you.

16 MS. CURTIS: So the spear gun, the
17 definition from the regulations is a
18 muscle-powered spear gun, equipped with a trip
19 mechanism, a spear with a tip design to penetrate
20 and retain fish and terminal gear and then
21 describes what the terminal gear might be. The
22 rest of that, I don't know if that is -- what the

1 answer to that is, cross bow.

2 MR. BLANKINSHIP: So actually I
3 haven't looked at your specific question, but
4 some things that I'm picking up on that, what she
5 just read about the definition is like trigger
6 mechanism, so you know, we would have to think
7 about that on a case-by-case basis about what
8 gear you're talking about. I would say off the
9 top of my head, bow, no; maybe cross bow, if it
10 has a trigger, but I don't know. But this is all
11 under water. I think that's also an aspect to
12 the definition as well. So this is not from the
13 top down. This is under water.

14 MR. HUMPHREY: Okay, just a quick
15 follow up. If it's under water, then it's a moot
16 point. Part of the reason I ask is because is
17 because I believe it is legal on the West Coast
18 and Hawaii, so I just thought why not bring it
19 over to the East Coast. Thank you.

20 MS. CURTIS: Yes, it must be used
21 while the operator is physically in the water.

22 MR. BROOKS: Bob, before we leave you,

1 did you want to weigh in on any of the
2 alternatives?

3 MR. HUMPHREY: No, I'll send them in.

4 MR. BROOKS: Okay. Angel.

5 Microphone, please.

6 MS. WILLEY: Thanks. I was just
7 wondering considering the lack of data, if you
8 guys would have any reporting requirements if
9 speargun is added?

10 MS. CURTIS: We could, yes. So this
11 is all again scoping and trying to figure all of
12 this out. So that's possible.

13 MR. BROOKS: Mike, and then over to
14 Marty.

15 MR. PIERDINOCK: Thank you. As far as
16 the options go, I don't want to necessarily
17 prohibit recreationally or commercially anyone to
18 do this. Personally, I would not, but especially
19 with sharks to think about trying to spear a
20 shark and going ballistic on you, as well as
21 bigger pelagics, but if that's what some people
22 are into, so be it.

1 I do wonder with the for-hire operator
2 whether my insurance is going to go up if I have
3 to take clientele out there and they're going to
4 jump in the water and shoot with a spear.

5 Probably will go up. I don't know whether I want
6 to participate in it, but I just throw out there
7 that I'm not necessarily against any of this, but
8 I don't know whether I'd personally do it.

9 Thanks.

10 MR. BROOKS: And that's across all
11 three options, Mike? Okay.

12 Marty, then over to Bob.

13 MR. BROOKS: Yes. Of course, any
14 increase in access, we prefer that they have
15 increased accountability for that access. But in
16 echoing Mike there, I brought the subject up to
17 Margo several years ago because we were working,
18 there were some weather buoys put in over by the
19 Block Canyon and we were catching bigeyes right
20 offshore with buoys and there were guys on the
21 water, they were spear fishing and our bigeyes
22 were being eaten whole by tiger sharks. And we

1 see the tiger sharks coming alongside the boat,
2 so I mean God bless them, if they want to go in
3 and play with those sharks --

4 MR. BROOKS: There we go, the Darwin
5 Award. Perfect. Bob.

6 MR. ZALES: Again, I guess I mean I
7 can't imagine using a spear gun in commercial
8 fisheries would be too much different from the
9 rec- -- I don't see a big effort here. I mean I
10 don't see a lot of these crazy people out there
11 doing this, right? So I don't see why you would
12 restrict it. I mean I can't see that the
13 commercial harvest is going to increase that
14 much, but if some idiot wants to get out there
15 and go try to spear a great white shark, have at
16 it, you know? I don't see any reason to restrict
17 any of this.

18 MR. BROOKS: All right, I'm hearing a
19 general agreement on if there are people that
20 want to do that, woof, okay, let them do it.

21 I've got Dave, then over the Spencer
22 and then I'm going to go back to the ever popular

1 bait nets.

2 MR. SCHALIT: Because there are a
3 couple of considerations in connection with a
4 targeting base, I suppose recreationally or
5 commercially, with using the spear gun. We're
6 talking about fishing in deep water, okay? Which
7 means that when the person with the spear gun has
8 their own vessel and they're in the water, what
9 is their vessel doing? It's drifting because
10 they can't drop an anchor in deep water. And
11 when we have divers, for example, they put out a
12 little ring with a red flag that tells you that
13 diver is there. But it's a consideration because
14 typically where these people are operating is in
15 an area where you have a fleet of vessels that
16 are using other types of gear and my concern
17 would be for the --

18 MR. BROOKS: -- safety considerations.

19 MR. SCHALIT: Yes, exactly. Thank
20 you.

21 MR. BROOKS: Spencer, bring you in,
22 and then I want to jump to bait nets.

1 MR. BODE: Yes, I would just like to
2 add on to the fleet consideration. I'm for D1,
3 no changes. I've been using mobile gear on
4 120-foot vessel and have seen people hop in the
5 water behind our boat and there's a new trend of
6 fishing for tunas behind mobile gear vessels in
7 the Northeast that's really picked up. And it
8 does nothing but increase the risk of having an
9 intensified marine incident when you allow spear
10 gunning in an area where there's traditional
11 mobile gear fishing and like Marty said, longline
12 fishing, especially because these are smaller
13 vessels that do not have AIS. These vessels
14 don't have any tracking and it's such a high
15 risk, low reward for the vessels that have
16 traditionally worked in this area. I just would
17 like to provide that comment. Thank you.

18 MR. BROOKS: Thank you. All right, I
19 want to jump to bait nets. I want to remind the
20 members of the public that the chat is only to be
21 used when we're at the public comment period. So
22 I would ask members of the public please to

1 refrain from using it while we're in discussion
2 here.

3 Randy?

4 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Yes, since we're
5 shifting to the bait net question, there was a
6 topic about Sabiki rigs that came up and I want
7 to nip that in the bud right here. Because
8 Sabikis are used with rod and reel and rod and
9 reel is an authorized gear. So this issue that
10 we're talking about here is not about Sabiki
11 rigs. So I just want to focus us.

12 MR. ZALES: I would like to respond.
13 I understand that. But it's used to catch bait,
14 right? So if you're combining that with throwing
15 a cast net versus using a ghost hook to catch
16 bait, they're pretty much one and the same. So I
17 mean I would agree with you that with rod and
18 reel gear, it shouldn't be done. But if we're
19 playing technicalities here, because this is the
20 first I've done this. And I've played with HMS
21 way back and never knew this before. And the
22 fleet clearly doesn't know it.

1 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. So we've got --
2 we're at 10:18. Sam is already in the room.
3 He's coming up front at 10:30, so I want to make
4 sure we're not losing our time with Sam this
5 morning. But I just want to hear any other
6 thoughts folks have on bait nets. I would say
7 from our earlier clarifying questions, there's a
8 lot of interest here. There's a lot of details
9 that seem like they need to be thought through,
10 but let's just get some quick thoughts on the
11 table so we have a sense of what's being talked
12 about and give the agency some stuff to work with
13 over the summer.

14 Scott.

15 MR. LENOX: Thank you. Scott Lenox,
16 Mid-Atlantic Council. So I would definitely
17 recommend C2 for allowing some sort of bait net
18 collection, but I would also be very specific
19 about the size of the mesh, the type of the net.
20 In the Mid-Atlantic, where we are, we have
21 several. I would guess that there's a lot of
22 overlap with HMS permit holders and folks that

1 fish bottom species like flounder and that sort
2 of thing. So I think the difference between the
3 nets would be very important because they would
4 want to have a landing net on the boat, so I
5 think those differences would want to be spelled
6 out beforehand.

7 MR. BROOKS: Great. Let's go to
8 Charlie and then over to Jimmy.

9 MR. WITEK: I'm going to talk about
10 angling category only here and what I would
11 suggest is something like what we have in New
12 York. I just pulled up the statute. Cast nets
13 not in excess of 20 feet in diameter operated by
14 hand, limited to one net per boat. That makes
15 perfect sense for the angling category if you
16 don't want to start worrying about how that
17 interacts with things like the Mid-Atlantic
18 Council's Unmanaged Forage Fish Amendment or
19 something like that in the EEZ. You could limit
20 it to use in state waters and must be stowed
21 below decks when the boat is in the EEZ.

22 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Charlie, that's

1 helpful and I'll note that we heard earlier from
2 Mike, I think New England mackerel as well, so I
3 think there's some suggestions of language that
4 may be out there to sort of draw on. So that's
5 helpful. Thank you.

6 Jimmy.

7 MR. HULL: Yes. Thank you. Jimmy
8 Hull, Ponce Inlet, Florida. I think as to
9 Charlie's point, gear stowage is something that
10 for tools that you're using on the boat in
11 certain ways, if you don't want them to be
12 intended or you want the gear to be used I think
13 of a descending device in the South Atlantic. It
14 was to be on deck when you're actually fishing.
15 Well, conversely, if you're actively fishing for
16 HMS, maybe the bait net has to be stowed below,
17 that type of thing.

18 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Jimmy. Let's go
19 over to Mike.

20 MR. PIERDINOCK: Thank you. Just not
21 to be repetitive, but yes, it's already set up
22 this way for mackerel and I'd just like to point

1 out that recreational for-hire and commercial
2 fleet of Massachusetts and New England is
3 familiar with this process and they know what
4 gears need to be kept at the dock after or what's
5 permitted in state waters and then the
6 prohibition that have cast nets, gill nets, and
7 so on depending upon whether you're commercial or
8 recreational on the vessel. So there's been
9 compliance down our way.

10 It's been much and maybe there isn't
11 in other parts of the country, but I just want to
12 point that out because that goes out to the days
13 of herring. I remember this coming back up ten
14 years ago with herring. So you have herring as
15 an example. You have mackerel as an example.
16 Are you fishing in state waters, federal waters?
17 And as Scott said, what he recommended there was
18 good because there's all types of different
19 forage fish that one can -- that are managed by
20 others, but then you have to manage that catch
21 and how to report it, so it's kind of a hornet's
22 nest to go down that road and there's a lot of

1 moving parts. Thanks.

2 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. I'm going to
3 take three more comments. I've got David, Marty,
4 and Alan and then we'll go to break and then Sam.

5 MR. SCHALIT: I know general category
6 permit holders who are using gill net, let's say
7 100-foot gill net for catching herring and that's
8 not contemplated in this and it's something
9 that's easily stowable. It's small and it's only
10 used for catching bait. So that's something we
11 could add to the mix.

12 I also took a look at the -- online
13 just now, actually, to see what kind of mesh
14 we're talking about for let's say menhaden. In
15 one entry it was 3/8th inch mesh, another one,
16 3/4 inch. So I think the idea of using mesh as
17 the determinant is a good idea, but I think we
18 should, let's say try to find something which is
19 not greater than, do you follow me? Thanks.

20 MR. BROOKS: Perfect. Thanks. Marty.

21 MR. SCANLON: Well, I'll ask my
22 question again. Is PLL the only category that's

1 prohibited from using live bait in the HMS
2 fishery? That's my first question.

3 MR. BLANKINSHIP: So prohibition of
4 live bait for pelagic longline is in the Gulf of
5 Mexico and then outside of the Gulf of Mexico
6 there are other bait restrictions that limit what
7 bait can be used in some areas, but there's not a
8 prohibition on live bait, as long as it's
9 consistent with the other bait restrictions in
10 the Atlantic.

11 MR. BROOKS: Great, thank you.

12 MR. SCANLON: Other than that I really
13 - cast net, if that's beneficial for them,
14 that's fine. With us, I mean, you know.

15 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Marty. Alan.

16 MR. WEISS: Thanks. You could just
17 put something in to the effect that whether
18 whatever type of net is used to catch bait has to
19 conform with existing federal or state
20 regulations for the species that you're catching.
21 And that should really cover it and it should be
22 consistent with that. Thank you.

1 MR. BROOKS: Thank you. I am going to
2 call it because I have a couple cards up and we
3 got to get you to break. I'm going to call here.
4 We got to get a break.

5 MR. PIERDINOCK: He makes a good point
6 because it's a mess with all the states, so it's
7 more complicated. Going through the mackerel
8 process and how that had to be dealt with at
9 state waters or federal waters, so you have to
10 bring that into the discussion.

11 MR. BROOKS: Got it. Thank you. All
12 right, let's go to break. It is 10:25. We will
13 start with Sam in five minutes, so please return
14 quickly.

15 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
16 went off the record at 10:25 a.m. and resumed at
17 10:31 a.m.)

18 MR. BROOKS: All right, so we always
19 try to build in a time with leadership. We've
20 got Sam Rauch here, Deputy Assistant
21 Administrator for Regulatory Programs. Again,
22 the way we try to work this half hour is to

1 invite Sam to share some thoughts which he does,
2 and then open it up for questions and I'll try to
3 manage that so we just hear from across the
4 different sectors and both in the room and out of
5 the room and remind folks that we really are
6 looking for questions for Sam that he can respond
7 to and not soliloquies.

8 Sam, you're up.

9 MR. RAUCH: All right, good morning.
10 For those of you who don't know me, I'm Sam
11 Rauch. I'm one of the Deputy Directors. I
12 oversee all of the work of our Regional Offices
13 and our Headquarters' Offices of Sustainable
14 Fisheries, Protected Resources, Habitat
15 Conservation and Policy.

16 And I've addressed this group before.
17 It's always a pleasure to be back here to talk
18 with you about the important work that you do,
19 the important advice that you give us on how to
20 manage HMS Fisheries.

21 I wanted to start, as I often do with
22 some national perspective on this endeavor and

1 then have a few comments on what the work that
2 you are doing here today. So across the country,
3 we've managed 506 stocks of fish varying from
4 really important commercial fisheries to really
5 artisanal, subsistence fisheries around the
6 country from Alaska and Maine to St. Thomas to
7 Guam and everything in between.

8 In general, we are doing a great job
9 collectively. This year, we just put out our
10 status of the stocks report and only six percent
11 of our stock is subject to overfishing.

12 Ninety-four percent are not. That is the highest
13 number ever. It is a testament to the work that
14 you all do that our colleagues on the Council
15 does that the states are doing as our partners,
16 that other people that are doing, but
17 collectively, we are doing a great job at making
18 sure that the fish are sustainable and they can
19 continue to provide important commercial and
20 recreational opportunities for the present and
21 the future.

22 In terms of over fished, we have got

1 18 percent of the stocks that are over fished
2 that is doing really well compared to it. We
3 just rebuilt our 50th stock this year in the
4 last, since we started this 20 years ago. That
5 is a fantastic number.

6 Overall, the collective enterprise
7 provides 2.3 million jobs around the country,
8 \$321 billion in sales. And that's both through
9 the commercial direct sales and through the
10 important values of recreational fisheries which
11 can have a huge economic driver in many of our
12 communities.

13 There was 8.4 billion pounds of
14 commercial fish landed last year and 20 million
15 recreational angler trips landing one billion
16 fish of which 65 percent of those were released.
17 Huge numbers, huge importance to both
18 economically, socially, part of the fabric of
19 many of our coastal communities.

20 You're an important part of that. You
21 work with us, as you know, on the HMS Fisheries.
22 We take your advice seriously. You've had a

1 number of discussions here at this meeting about
2 initiatives that you're engaged in where we're
3 actively seeking your advice and your advice does
4 color what we do. We take that into account. We
5 don't always do what all of you want to do, but
6 we find it very important, and we try very hard
7 to help with issues. It helps us if we've
8 overlooked things. It helps us design things in
9 ways that minimizes impacts that we may not see.
10 It helps us identify areas we need to work in for
11 the future. All your input is valuable and it
12 takes a lot of time to do that.

13 A couple of national initiatives, I
14 think I've talked about many of these before, I
15 just wanted to broach them now. We are in the
16 middle of a huge funding increase, but temporary,
17 under two important statutes, the Bipartisan
18 Infrastructure Law or BIL, and the Inflation
19 Reduction Act, or IRA. We call them BIL and IRA.
20 BIL and IRA will be leaving us in a couple of
21 years here, so they have given us -- Congress
22 through those two acts, appropriated hundreds of

1 millions of dollars in temporary funding to allow
2 us to do -- make an investment in certain
3 programs under congressional direction. We can't
4 do everything with them, but we have used that
5 money and are continuing to use that money to
6 work on a number of data acquisition initiatives,
7 a number of climate change initiatives, working
8 on huge projects, transformative projects for
9 habitat restoration. This passage has been
10 dedicated money to right whales, dedicated money
11 for red snapper, other kinds of things that we
12 can do within the congressional authorization.

13 This is an exciting time. There is a
14 lot that we can do, but it is not unlimited and
15 it is only term-limited money. But we're in the
16 middle of that and that has provided us a number
17 of opportunities. The vast majority of that
18 money is going out the door to partners to help
19 us do good work on the ground to help improve the
20 status of fish and fishing around the country and
21 to get us better prepared and positioned as we
22 face changes due to climate change going into the

1 future.

2 Part of climate change, part of that
3 is an initiative we call CEFI, or the Climate and
4 Ecosystem Fisheries Initiative. It is an
5 initiative driven at rethinking how we collect
6 and use and model climate impact in science that
7 can help feed into stock assessments that then
8 can feed into management decisions so that we can
9 better position ourselves both now and in the
10 future for that. That is built into a lot of our
11 ecosystem work that has gone before it, but it
12 supercharges all that work and it is an exciting
13 prospect for that as we go forward.

14 Something I've personally been
15 involved in and I've led with the great
16 assistance from a number of energetic staff and
17 partners around the country is our Equity and
18 Environmental Justice Initiative. We've been
19 doing environmental justice, technically, since
20 the Clinton administration, but we really have
21 done it in hyperdrive in this administration. We
22 issued a policy, our strategy, a national

1 strategy on this last year, which outlines broad
2 national principles of how you can think about
3 equity externally in the fishery context. When
4 you think about where are we doing our surveys,
5 how we do our allocations under our catch share
6 program, where do we target our habitat
7 restoration dollars? Are we looking at those
8 underserved communities and making sure that not
9 only are we not imposing disproportionate burdens
10 on them, but that we are also looking at benefits
11 proportionately.

12 How then can we also build in and
13 incorporate the diverse set of voices that have
14 often not traditionally been part of our
15 decision-making structure into our
16 decision-making structure. So there's a lot of
17 exciting work there to be done, but there's a lot
18 of work to do and we continue to do that. This
19 year, we are focusing on step down, regional
20 implementation plans which we hope to come out
21 this summer. So we can talk more about that in a
22 future meeting where we take some of these broad

1 national principles and actually put some meat on
2 the bone about what we are really going to do in
3 the regions because much like politics, all
4 equity and environmental justice is kind of
5 local.

6 Last August, we put out our Seafood
7 Strategy which reflects that we have the
8 importance of seafood in this country, the role
9 that seafood plays as an end product in many of
10 our commercial enterprises here, as an important
11 part of recreational, getting that fish home to
12 eat as part of your weekly grocery protein
13 budget, the strategy. Lots of important things
14 about trying to improve the status of Seafood
15 Strategy really grew out of COVID which was a
16 real shock to the system, not only of the
17 country, but also to the seafood sector.

18 I was thinking about what role the
19 National Fisheries should do. Still talks about
20 the importance of our domestic fishery work. It
21 talks about aquaculture. It talks about
22 international objectives and looking at the

1 playing field that our U.S. fisherman have to
2 face when they go compete in the open market with
3 foreign products. There's a lot of stuff in
4 there. We're excited about that. We are starting
5 to implement some of the principles in there.
6 Many of the principles we've been implementing
7 before. There's power in putting it all together
8 in a coherent document.

9 On the other side of the rec, we
10 issued last year the Rec Fish Policy with input
11 from many people which is not a new policy with a
12 revision to our Rec Fish Policy, but it
13 incorporated issues of climate change into that
14 that some of our new thinking since we first did
15 that about a decade or so ago and that came out
16 last year.

17 And finally, although this has not
18 happened yet, we have put out a request for
19 comment on whether to put out new guidance for
20 national standards 4, 8, and 9. We are working
21 on a potential proposed rule for those things.
22 We had hoped to have any proposed rule if we were

1 going to do it out for the climate -- the Council
2 Coordinating Committee meeting next week in San
3 Juan, Puerto Rico where all the councils are
4 getting together, but that is unlikely happy
5 given there's only five days left. It's not going
6 to happen. But we still hope to have that after
7 the summer and put it out for extensive public
8 comment. It governs how we think about 4, 8, and
9 9. It is our advice to other entities. It is
10 advice as you give us advice on event measures to
11 you be guided by how we are thinking about those
12 things.

13 Within that, so those are some
14 national issues. I know you guys have been
15 working on some difficult and thorny issues here
16 as you always do. You know that we just issued
17 Amendment 15. I know you've talked about that.
18 I know you've talked about sharks. I was here
19 for a little bit of the discussion that you just
20 had, although maybe you're going to continue
21 that. I don't know. But there's a lot of real
22 substantive work and without that work we will

1 not achieve any of those broader national
2 objectives that I started with, so I really
3 appreciate the work you do here and I think I
4 have left enough time for a few questions.

5 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thanks, Sam.
6 Appreciate it. And again, we want to open this
7 up for questions. We want to make sure we're
8 hearing from the cross section of voices here.
9 In the past, I've asked you all to sort of tell
10 me if there's someone you want to designate.

11 You never played that game. So it
12 just means I get to choose. Sorry. But remain
13 interested in that. So let's open it up. Marty,
14 we'll start with you.

15 MR. SCANLON: Good morning, Sam. I'm
16 Marty Scanlon, President of Blue Water
17 Fisherman's Association. With everything that
18 you just said here, we have a situation in the
19 pelagic longline industry there where we do most
20 of the heavy lifting as far as research in the
21 HMS fishery here.

22 And it's troubling to us. We'd like

1 to know what the basis is for your -- all the
2 money you're talking about you received. How can
3 you justify trying to pass on the cost of the
4 research that you want to do in the spatial
5 management areas onto the pelagic longline
6 industry? And the other problem that Blue Water
7 has is the failure of NOAA to support -- to level
8 the playing field on a sustainable fisheries in
9 regards to imports into the country there.

10 MR. RAUCH: Thank you for the
11 question. You're talking about Amendment 15 and
12 the fact that we are looking at potentially
13 opening up some areas and providing opportunity
14 to industry that the industry has not had for
15 decades. That quite a controversial thing as I
16 think that there are other people who have
17 different views about whether we should be doing
18 that.

19 In order to do that, to look at
20 whether or not those opportunities should be
21 provided to the commercial fishery, we need to
22 understand some more baseline information. There

1 is a benefit in the long run to the industry from
2 doing that. If the industry chooses to not do
3 that, then the industry doesn't have to take us
4 up on that offer.

5 But there is a -- so you talk about
6 research that we want to do. I view it as
7 research that has the potential to provide
8 important information that could benefit
9 potentially the commercial industry. And if
10 they're not interested in that, they don't have
11 to take us up on that.

12 In terms of leveling the playing
13 field, we've tried very hard over the years to --
14 within our authority. We're not a marketing
15 agency. We're a regulatory agency, and we like
16 to -- we will trumpet with the industry with the
17 recreational fishery the good management that the
18 U.S. does.

19 And I think that helps in certain
20 markets provide opening the doors and access. We
21 also work very hard to try to work on tariffs and
22 imports and other kinds of things. It is a

1 difficult kind of thing to do.

2 But it is something that we're working
3 on. It's something the Seafood Strategy does.
4 And if there's specific things that you'd like to
5 do, I would like -- afterwards, we're certainly
6 happy to talk with you about those opportunities
7 that you think we might've missed.

8 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Sam. I see
9 several other cards. At the moment, they're all
10 commercial. I just want to see if any other
11 sector wants to get in before I keep working my
12 way through the commercial cards. And online
13 folks, of course, please raise your hand if you
14 want to get in. Okay. If not, let's go to Matt.

15 MR. HUTH: Thank you. Yeah, just to
16 add on to Marty, I do think we've done a good job
17 of rebuilding stocks of fish. And the commercial
18 sector has beared the brunt through the hard
19 times.

20 And now we have some rebuilt stocks.
21 And we're seeing an increase in sharks and stuff.
22 But I think we need, again, more flexibility in

1 the commercial sector to take advantage of these
2 species because inflation is killing us.

3 You said that about the imports and I
4 appreciate you trying to level the playing field.
5 We've heard that a lot, and I think that's very
6 important. But the fact remaining is the
7 commercial sector, the boats, the guys are
8 struggling to survive.

9 And our infrastructure is
10 disappearing. The working waterfront is
11 disappearing. And I think we need to really push
12 hard to try to preserve that because when it's
13 gone, it's not coming back.

14 I mean, since our last meeting in my
15 town, Wanchese, North Carolina. There's a fish
16 house there that's been in business for 80 years
17 and close their doors. So it's happening, man.
18 We need some help.

19 MR. RAUCH: I'm not sure there was a
20 question there. But I will reiterate I agree
21 with you and it's not just in the HMS sector.
22 There are issues facing many of our commercial

1 import and commercial fisheries around the
2 country which is in part why we started the
3 Seafood Strategy is to try to -- as I indicated,
4 we're not an omnipresent or omniscient,
5 omnipowerful federal agency.

6 We have certain authority. But the
7 authorities that we do have, we are one of the
8 largest spokesperson for the importance of
9 commercial fishing, what it provides to the
10 country, not just in job and coastal communities
11 but the fish it provides to the country. And we
12 are trying to use that more effectively and
13 better within the authorities that we have.

14 We are seeing what you are seeing. So
15 it's not -- I mean, I am sadly not surprised that
16 those kinds of things are happening. They're
17 happening across the government.

18 And we are looking at ways that we can
19 use what limited authorities we have, either as
20 an amplifier in terms of the value of U.S.
21 fisheries, both the products that it provides,
22 the well managed -- how the commercial industry

1 has made the sacrifices, how they are associated
2 with fishing when many in the world are not.
3 Many of the products that you compete with are
4 not well managed, how we can do that. How we can
5 look at coordinating other programs in the
6 federal government that might be able to better
7 provide some sort of assistance to these kinds of
8 things.

9 It's not an easy job. But it's why we
10 created the Seafood Strategy to begin with to
11 have those kind of conversations. What can we do
12 to try to do that within the authorities that we
13 have?

14 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Sam. Let me
15 again just check and see if there's any other
16 sector that wants to be coming in here before I
17 go to the next commercial sector. Okay. Let's
18 keep going there. And again, questions are
19 really what we're looking for since Sam has a
20 chance to respond. Oh, okay. Mike, why don't
21 you jump in.

22 MR. PIERDINOCK: Thank you. And thank

1 you, Sam for your time. Mike Pierdinock,
2 President of the Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat
3 Association. There are cuts that are proposed by
4 the NOAA on the research end of things and
5 matters that can impact many different programs
6 up and down the coast and so on.

7 Is there any comments you can have in
8 that where there's any hope at the end of the
9 tunnel that will get funded? Is it still in the
10 works? I just know that it's out there. There's
11 so many projects that can be of significant
12 impact, Northeast Fisheries Science Center,
13 Southeast Fisheries Science Center as a result of
14 those cuts.

15 MR. RAUCH: I think what you're
16 referring to is in the President's budget for the
17 upcoming year. There's a proposal to cut the
18 cooperative research program -- the external
19 grants for cooperative research. That is not
20 unique to that grant program.

21 Virtually every grant program that
22 NOAA Fisheries has is proposed to be cut with the

1 exception of the Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery
2 Fund, PCSRF. But every other one is proposed to
3 be cut. So it wasn't specific to -- it wasn't an
4 indictment on the value of the program which is a
5 great program.

6 But it was a broader effort that in
7 order to fund other priorities, we were
8 instructed or the President decided to cut our
9 various grant programs. In terms of the future
10 of that, that's just a bunch of proposal --
11 that's the President's proposal. It's a proposal
12 that we support because I work for the President.

13 But it is only a proposal. And
14 Congress will ultimately have to pass the actual
15 budget and decide whether or not to accept those
16 President's cuts or not. So those would only
17 occur if Congress agrees with the President and
18 implements those cuts.

19 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Sam. Sandy.

20 MS. NGUYEN: Hi, Sam. I'm the
21 executive director of a nonprofit that does
22 direct assistance to commercial fishermen and

1 their businesses. And I wanted to make a comment
2 about the EEJ issue. Quite frankly, I just
3 learned about it myself.

4 I just think there's no justice in the
5 communities we serve. But the problem I have
6 moving forward with this is when you guys come up
7 with a program, of course, our organization works
8 very closely with NOAA on a lot of issues. But
9 recently, programs that are coming out regarding
10 EEJ, the way it's presented most of the time,
11 they're always looking for comments and engaging
12 the BIPOC community or the non-English speaking
13 immigrant community.

14 And to me, in southeast Louisiana, I'm
15 assuming everywhere else in any rural coastal
16 fishing town, a white generational American
17 fisherman feels like they're not part of this EEJ
18 issue. And a lot of your programs that approach
19 our office are looking for surveys or comments
20 and engagement from immigrant communities and the
21 BIPOC community. And I feel that we shouldn't do
22 that because they feel -- I guess the way we're

1 asking the program as written whenever there's an
2 EEJ issue, these generation white fishermen are,
3 like, no, that's not for us, Sandy. That's for
4 the people of color or you guys.

5 And I don't think that's the intention
6 because I feel like every rural coastal fishing
7 community are marginalized communities,
8 disadvantaged small businesses. So I don't know
9 how to incorporate into your world to where when
10 you put out programs that our generation of
11 fishermen understand that they are part of this
12 outside of having to go to communities and kind
13 of explain it to them. Does that make sense?

14 MR. BROOKS: There's the question.

15 MR. RAUCH: Yeah, there wasn't a
16 question till there at the end. So I mean, I
17 agree with you in large part. If you look at
18 when we think in fishery service about EEJ, we
19 think about all different kinds of way to look at
20 communities.

21 And it is often very difficult to
22 characterize communities sort of simplistically

1 on racial lines. A more powerful measure -- a
2 more appropriate measures in many ways is we look
3 at poverty and economic indicators. And there
4 are great -- as you indicated, great many fishing
5 communities are below various social indicators
6 for economic distress.

7 They're reliant on fishing. They
8 don't have a lot of opportunities. They are
9 distressed. And if the fishing goes away, those
10 are particularly vulnerable communities.

11 So we do a lot in looking at our -- we
12 call it the social indicator because we have a
13 Social Indicator Working Group that looks at
14 that. And that is one of the criteria when we're
15 thinking about environmental justice. Are those
16 communities -- have they been impacted in the
17 past?

18 As we look forward in creating new
19 opportunities or restrictions on fishing, are we
20 looking at those? Because traditionally, we
21 often have not because those communities often do
22 not have the ability to hire a lobbyist or to

1 come and articular their views. And so sometimes
2 a lot of the conservation effort we've done has
3 been on the backs of the economically
4 underserved.

5 So those are some of the communities
6 that we're looking at. There are other ways to
7 look at that. But in the fishery service, we are
8 particularly interested in looking at economic
9 underserved communities, those traditionally ones
10 that are below the poverty line that are
11 struggling where they don't have a lot of other
12 opportunities. Have we impacted them harshly or
13 unequitably in the past. And as we go forward,
14 can we create programs to insure that they
15 continue to have equitable access to our
16 fisheries?

17 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Sam.

18 MS. NGUYEN: Yeah, but I'm just, like,
19 the last two EEJ projects I did with NOAA was
20 specifically talking to immigrant and BIPOC
21 community. And I don't care for it. I feel like
22 we're hurting regardless, same way as these

1 communities, whatever color you are as commercial
2 fishermen. So I just wanted you guys to be aware
3 that moving forward, we have to write up the
4 programs to where these American fishermen
5 understand that they are a part of it because
6 they're the smartest people when it comes to the
7 land and the water and the coasts.

8 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Sandy. All
9 right. We've got just under five minutes left.
10 Again, succinct questions would be great. I
11 would love to get Alan and Bob in. And then I
12 know Sam is going to have to run. So if you have
13 a succinct question, that would be particularly
14 helpful. Alan.

15 MR. WEISS: Well, I have two of them
16 actually.

17 MR. BROOKS: We'll take one,
18 seriously.

19 MR. WEISS: Okay. Then the one is why
20 haven't you been able to take more rapid or full
21 advantage of the legal authorities that you have
22 that have been on the books for some years now to

1 address the problem of imports competing with
2 American seafood and where our sustainability
3 costs money. Our input costs here are much
4 higher. The imports have a cost advantage
5 because they don't have the regulatory stuff that
6 we have to deal with. So what more can you do
7 now to more rapidly take advantage of the
8 authorities you already have --

9 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Alan.

10 MR. WEISS: -- because as you're
11 hearing, there's not much time left.

12 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Sam.

13 MR. RAUCH: Really, you guys have this
14 feedback issue that is sometimes hard to deal
15 with. So I agree with you that we have
16 authorities that can assist. We are not the
17 customs department. We are not the trade
18 department -- the International Trade
19 Administration.

20 But we do have some authorities.
21 We've tried that. We've created the seafood
22 import provision that looks at banning imports

1 that are fraudulent or are not compliant with
2 other applicable laws.

3 We have looked at other kinds of
4 things. There are other parts of the Commerce
5 Department that look at antidumping duties.
6 There are marketing things that we do.

7 We provide qualified competent
8 veterinary services where our exporters need the
9 federal government to qualify things. So there
10 are things that we can do. I'm happy to hear if
11 there are other authorities that you think that
12 we're not doing.

13 The federal government has more
14 authorities than the fishery service. But part
15 of Prong 3 for Seafood Strategy was to ask that
16 very question. And so to the extent that you
17 have ideas, let us know about those ideas about
18 different things that you think we could do or
19 that we can communicate to other agencies, too,
20 because we do agree that the U.S. fishermen are
21 suffering and that a more pointed, directed
22 effort should be made.

1 So we are trying to do that. That is
2 the goal of the Seafood Strategy. And I
3 understand you believe that we haven't done it
4 fast enough, but we are trying to do that.

5 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. According to my
6 clock, we are just about at 10:59. And I'm not
7 sure if we really have time for questions, Sam.

8 MR. RAUCH: Yeah, I do have to go to
9 the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee which is
10 also meeting today. It's why I have to get out
11 of here and go to that. So I apologize.

12 I know there are other questions I
13 didn't get to. I think you might invite me back
14 at some point. So save those for next time, and
15 I'll be happy to answer those then.

16 MR. BROOKS: We'll always invite you
17 back, Sam.

18 MR. RAUCH: Thank you.

19 MR. BROOKS: Bob, sorry. We're not
20 going to have time for any other questions today.
21 But I will make note for next time. All right.
22 Thanks, Sam, very much.

1 Okay. Let's shift to our final topic
2 before we get to public comment at 11:30. And
3 Jennifer Cudney is going to come and talk to us
4 about a logic model for exploring fishery issues.
5 And we'll get that presentation teed up. And
6 Karyl is back.

7 MS. CUDNEY: All right. Hello again
8 this morning. I'm going to be talking with you
9 about the use of logic models to explore
10 fisheries issues. So you may be asking yourself
11 why are we talking about this.

12 Well, HMS staff recently learned about
13 a tool that can be used to facilitate discussion
14 and an understanding of complex issues. We
15 thought that perhaps it could be used at a future
16 AP meeting. However, it's also fairly
17 complicated.

18 We're still trying to wrap our heads
19 around this. So we wanted to introduce the
20 technique to the AP in the next 20 minutes or so.
21 We'll walk you through a description of the tool
22 and then provide a few examples.

1 So again, coming back to this, why?
2 Some HMS staff including Karyl and myself
3 attended a workshop on shark depredation at the
4 World Fisheries Congress. This past spring, it
5 was hosted by Jonathan Mitchell, Marcus Drymon,
6 and Gary Jackson. So we had a couple folks from
7 Australia here.

8 We had several folks from the U.S.
9 representing as well. Marcus and his team have
10 been conducting similar types of workshops in the
11 Gulf of Mexico region to understand shark
12 depredation issues. And even some of you may
13 have attended one of these workshops.

14 Based on this experience, we thought
15 that this tool might be a good one to keep in our
16 back pocket for AP engagement on certain issues.
17 It basically includes small group work to
18 identify concepts related to shark depredation.
19 And this workshop just by nature of where we were
20 at had mainly academics and managers that were
21 attending the conference.

22 So this workshop featured a free tool

1 called mental modeler which can be found at
2 www.mentalmodeler.com. Mental Modeler was
3 developed by Dr. Steven Gray from Michigan State
4 with funding from the USDA and the National
5 Science Foundation. This software is now being
6 implemented in several community-based planning
7 and research projects and has demonstrated value
8 as an engagement tool to help map out complicated
9 situations or issues.

10 Buy the way, there are some excellent
11 videos on this website that give a very clear
12 description of these tools. So if you find
13 yourself interested after this discussion, we
14 would highly recommend that you check them out.
15 So Mental Modeler uses a participatory technique
16 to help capture knowledge.

17 Users develop models based on their
18 understanding of a situation that can then be
19 used to run what-if scenarios. So this approach
20 has a name. It is based on a concept called
21 Fuzzy-Logic Cognitive Mapping.

22 And the word fuzzy is referring in

1 this instance to things that are not clearly
2 categorized information. One of the examples
3 that Dr. Gray includes in his documentation that
4 I find particularly relevant is a description of
5 people as tall or short. So there is no clear
6 definition of what makes a tall person tall and a
7 short person short.

8 It's relative to individuals. So I'm
9 only 5'2. When I look up into this room, I see a
10 room full of tall people. You can probably all
11 reach into the top cupboard of -- or the top
12 cabinet of your cupboard and get a glass and you
13 don't need a step stool. I do. However,
14 Bennett, I'm sure you're at least 6 foot tall, at
15 least seems to be when we're standing in an
16 elevator together.

17 MR. BROOKS: Not even close, but thank
18 you.

19 MS. CUDNEY: Okay. Well, to me,
20 you're quite tall. Anybody who is 6 foot tall
21 might look around or folks that are even taller
22 than that might looking around and see a room

1 full of short people. So in this sense, it's
2 fuzzy. There's no clear definition.

3 And neither one of us are right or
4 wrong. It's based on our own kind of perceptions
5 of what we see around us. These concepts kind of
6 collectively are based on the science and
7 theories of knowledge co-production and
8 stakeholder or rights holder engagement.

9 So there's quite a bit of literature
10 on this that's out there. There is a rather
11 robust definition for what knowledge
12 co-production is on the slide. But at its heart,
13 it features collaboration between managers,
14 scientists, and stakeholders.

15 The scope of knowledge co-production
16 can be pretty wide. And it can cover the entire
17 science to management process. And it just
18 depends on the situation and the framing of the
19 questions that are being analyzed and asked.

20 There are many examples of knowledge
21 co-production techniques such as the tool we're
22 about to introduce you to. But this can also

1 broadly cover a lot of different things like
2 meetings, roundtables. We're certainly learning
3 a lot from each other here, workshops,
4 brainstorming tools like Mental Modeler,
5 cooperative research, citizen science, strategic
6 planning, and prioritization exercises.

7 So these are all examples of different
8 ways that we can build our collective knowledge
9 base about different things that are going on.

10 We have used different engagement tools and
11 knowledge co-production techniques at past AP
12 meetings to generate feedback and develop ideas
13 and to inform management priorities. So for
14 example, at the fall 2022 AP meeting, we hosted a
15 recreational roundtable.

16 The goal of this roundtable was to
17 discuss and capture thoughts, ideas, and concerns
18 about recreational HMS fisheries. Each region
19 also held their own regional roundtable
20 discussions. Conversation was kind of directed
21 by numerous prompt questions and information
22 provided to the AP in a presentation.

1 We have done other types of activities
2 as well. In 2016, we had breakout groups to talk
3 about bluefin tuna management issues. And some
4 of you may remember the infamous dot exercise
5 from May 2017 where we had so many different
6 requests for regulatory changes that we ended up
7 doing a kind of collaborative look and see and
8 prioritize with dots of the things that people
9 were most interested in seeing happen.

10 So now we're going to get a little
11 more detail on this Mental Modeler tool. So
12 again, back to some information about what
13 actually happened at World Fisheries Congress,
14 attendees were invited to join the workshop
15 through the online agenda. The organizers had no
16 idea who's going to show up in advance.

17 But as I said, that audience does tend
18 to lend itself more towards managers, academics,
19 and those types because it was a professional
20 fisheries conference. Participants were given a
21 high level overview of the Mental Modeler tool
22 and general instructions in a presentation like

1 this one. And then we were split into smaller
2 workgroups.

3 Those represented different sectors or
4 regions. So for example, we had a bunch of south
5 Atlantic researchers that were there. We had
6 some Australian researchers and managers. And
7 they had different groups for those different
8 areas or sectors.

9 Each small group worked to develop
10 their own model. I wanted to quickly show you
11 the website and what it looks like. So we all
12 had access and set up free accounts to use the
13 software.

14 So since this tool was online, it was
15 very easy to access and relatively easy to use
16 with the facilitation support that we had. It
17 really did work well for live, realtime exercise
18 within our small groups. So when you use this
19 tool, you're attempting to do a couple of things.

20 You're attempting to define important
21 system components for whatever question you're
22 pondering. You're attempting to define the

1 relationships between those components. You can
2 develop questions or hypotheses that you want to
3 test as you're going through this exercise.

4 And you can actually do on-the-fly
5 refining and testing of scenarios. So once you
6 have your kind of mental map of a situation, you
7 can explore what happens if you make changes to
8 certain components of that model. So we thought
9 that this tool might be good for some topics of
10 discussion.

11 These topics would likely need to be
12 kind of a specific and definable issue. It would
13 be helpful if they were of interest to the entire
14 AP topic affecting only a small portion of AP
15 members or of interest to only specific sectors.
16 That might not be the best use of the full
17 group's attention and time.

18 We thought this could be useful for
19 projects that are in scoping or brainstorming
20 phases perhaps early in the process of
21 considering a management problem and we thought
22 if we needed to capture diverse perspectives on a

1 question. So if you sit there and you find
2 yourself asking, why is this happening, maybe we
3 want to think about using this tool. And these
4 are not the only situations where we might want
5 to break this out. But there are some of them.

6 So some of the benefits of using this
7 type of an approach are it gives us a chance to
8 examine diverse perspectives and perceptions. It
9 is useful when we have a high uncertainty and
10 little empirical data. So again, that question
11 of why is something happening, there may not be a
12 whole lot of scientific information out there to
13 guide us on certain topics.

14 And this is where the knowledge of the
15 group is going to be really useful to help us
16 think through what information we need to collect
17 in order to address a management issue. Some of
18 the known biggest benefits of using this are
19 community learning, again, that opportunity to
20 learn from each other. And reflecting on our
21 group, we have a very diverse advisory panel.

22 And there is some research that

1 suggests that when you have a diverse participant
2 group, you're going to get a better type of
3 participatory model. And some of the challenges
4 of this tool, it requires a lot of time. We
5 attended a half day workshop.

6 But some of the workshops that we're
7 aware of which have been held in the Gulf of
8 Mexico lasted several days. There is a learning
9 curve. The tool is complicated and it takes time
10 to understand the process and to the exercise.

11 And as always with models, it's a
12 representation of something that's very
13 complicated and a complex process or situation.
14 So we really want to make sure that we get,
15 again, that diverse group of perspectives so we
16 have as best of a model as possible. And then
17 you also run into facilitation challenges. So do
18 we have loud voices? Do we have quiet voices?

19 Is everybody being heard? Are folks
20 feeling the pressure to try to do something super
21 quickly? Some folks like to think about things
22 and bring their ideas at a slower pace.

1 And then also the hybrid meeting that
2 we run might also present some facilitation
3 challenges. So some examples, this example was
4 provided to me by the gentleman that facilitated
5 our experience at the World Fisheries Congress.
6 I want to note that this is Evan Prasky who is a
7 UMass grad student.

8 So this example is an oversimplified
9 one based on climate change. So some of the
10 connections and things represented in here might
11 not be entirely accurate. But it's meant to be
12 just a kind of place to get us started to help
13 you understand what this thing is supposed to do.

14 So we start with a singular variable
15 component, in this case, emissions, making sure
16 to input neutral variables. So we don't want to
17 ascribe a valuation or a state change.
18 Non-neutral terms like increasing emissions,
19 decreasing emissions are just going to make
20 things more complicated.

21 So we're going for single things,
22 single ideas that we think might be important to

1 the overall question. So we would add the
2 following variable, climate change. So based on
3 the body of common knowledge, we know that
4 emissions can substantially affect climate
5 change.

6 So we draw an arrow to indicate the
7 relationship and the directionality. There's
8 also in this case a couple of pluses that can
9 indicate the strength of that relationship which
10 is something that the Mental Modeler tool lets us
11 do. So next, Evan added laws and regulations as
12 another variable and anticipated that passing of
13 laws and regulations could hypothetically lower
14 emissions which in turn are driving climate
15 change.

16 So we have a somewhat decreasing
17 connection added here indicated by a singular
18 minus sign next to the red arrow. The last
19 variable in this example would be human
20 populations. So with this, as human populations
21 have increased, they'll have the number of laws
22 and regulations.

1 So we draw a line in that direction.
2 So since this is an increase in this example, you
3 see a single plus. But what about humans impact
4 on the other variables?

5 So each time you add a new variable,
6 it's a good idea to stop and check on the
7 relationships between all of the variables. So
8 in this example, we have an arrow that indicates
9 that climate change could have a potentially
10 negative impact on human populations. And then
11 double checking the other kind of components of
12 this and their relationships, Evan went in and
13 added a strong positive between human population
14 and emissions meaning as the human population
15 gets increased, there's going to be a lot more
16 emissions.

17 And then emissions themselves could
18 have a negative impact on the human population.
19 So with our shark depredation workshop, we have
20 this general prompt to think about what may be
21 causing, influencing, or impacting shark
22 depredation. So we started with a central topic

1 or at least our group did.

2 We started with shark depredation and
3 thought about the inputs and outputs, so what
4 affects it and what does it affect. As you saw
5 with the other example, we assign positive,
6 negative, or there's an uncertain association.
7 So you can put something down. If there's a lot
8 of uncertainty around the relationship, you can
9 put a little question mark in between those two
10 variables.

11 And then we can also weigh the
12 relationships. And so you'll see in the example
13 I'm going to show next that there are different
14 thicknesses of the lines. And that is based on
15 the influence and weight of those variables on
16 each other.

17 And it got a little complicated pretty
18 quickly. So there are 15 variables in here.
19 Evan told me that it's really good to keep your
20 models below 25.

21 That feels a little chaotic. I
22 thought we had a pretty good representation with

1 15 variables. But we found it was easiest once
2 we started going because when we first did this,
3 we had variables all over the place.

4 We found it was easiest to pull them
5 out into a circle so that we could go through
6 that process of checking variables and their
7 relationships on each other. So I'm just showing
8 this as an example of what a model might look
9 like after you plug in a lot of the variables.
10 We didn't actually finish all of the steps in
11 this process.

12 So again, we only had three hours. So
13 I think there's still a little bit more work that
14 could be done on this model. But because the
15 majority of the time spent was just creating that
16 mental model that I just showed you, the next
17 step, we didn't really get -- have a whole lot of
18 time to dig in the next step which is getting
19 into those scenario analyses and exploring the
20 if-then.

21 What happens if we play around with
22 these different variables and see their influence

1 on each other? So we think this really could be
2 a powerful tool for exploring that. So this is
3 an example of that scenario analysis screen.

4 So once you have the model builder,
5 you can go to -- there's different things you can
6 do with this. So if you hit the scenario button,
7 you're going to see an output like this. On the
8 left side of the screen, there is a table where
9 if you zoom in, you can actually -- these little
10 slider buttons that you can select on the arrows
11 that are next to -- oh, I don't know that's going
12 to show.

13 Okay. There's this little slider
14 that's next to shark depredation. And so you can
15 move that back and forth. You can set things
16 like what are our preferred states, what are our
17 actual states, and incorporate that type of
18 knowledge.

19 But it's neat because it lets you say
20 you want to increase or decrease shark
21 depredation. You can see what that does to these
22 variables. So in this instance, if we increase

1 shark depredation on the model that we created,
2 our model indicated that would decrease
3 stakeholder and angler satisfaction which would
4 come as no surprise to anybody based on the
5 recent conversations that we've had.

6 However, if you decrease shark
7 depredation in this example, it would increase
8 the stakeholder-angler satisfaction. So this is
9 just looking at one variable as an example. It's
10 shown with the arrow.

11 So just to show you, this is the first
12 option for increasing shark depredation and then
13 the second option. So you'll see some of these
14 flip. So again, we're still wrapping our heads
15 around this technique and learning about it.

16 But we found it very interesting, and
17 we wanted to share it with you. So if you have
18 any questions, we'll do our best to answer them.
19 Also, we're very interested in hearing if you
20 have any thoughts on what might be a good
21 candidate for a future exercise. So we would
22 love to hear your thoughts there. Thank you.

1 MR. BROOKS: Great. Let's open it up
2 for any questions and, again, feedback on how
3 this might be used or the utility of it. Let's
4 go to David and then over to Mike.

5 MR. SCHALIT: Thank you, Jen. This is
6 terrific. I definitely want to see what this is,
7 Fuzzy-Logic Cognitive Mapping, just for the name
8 only. It's really worth it. No, I'm serious.

9 But we had an experience. We learned
10 something in the process of this nine-year long
11 project to develop a bluefin MSE. And we tapped
12 into some of the existing peer reviewed
13 literature which talked about the difficulties,
14 the challenges involved in stakeholder
15 engagement.

16 And for your guidance, the stakeholder
17 engagement for MSE is defined the same way you
18 defined it. It includes the managers and the
19 stakeholders. And the stakeholder is basically
20 anyone who's involved at any level, including
21 NGOs, et cetera.

22 So one thing we got from other sources

1 was that we should not take for granted that
2 every fisherman understands what the word model
3 means. You know what I mean? So we start from
4 that. We work from there.

5 But for example, in this case, we have
6 the standard best practices stock assessment
7 paradigm that we've been working with for God
8 knows how long, right, which is and now we have
9 this MSE. How does it differ? And the operating
10 models that are used, we had, I think, 96
11 operating models in the bluefin MSE.

12 These are, like, mini stock
13 assessments. So we're -- so the concept and
14 model is so key that you can't really go forward
15 until you really get -- and then it seems that
16 what the other scientists -- people who were
17 involved in other MSEs are telling us is that the
18 extent to which you are able to address where
19 these problems could be is directly linked to the
20 buy-in you're going to get on the project. And
21 so we also, for example, identified that very few
22 people understand what is a spider plot -- how a

1 spider plot works and other sexy plots. Okay?

2 So if we're going to delve into --
3 it's a real simple -- it's a no-brainer. Just
4 explain how you read the plot or what the plot is
5 telling you. So I'm absolutely in favor of this.
6 I definitely think we should try it and see how
7 it goes. Thanks very much for this.

8 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, David. So yeah,
9 definitely interested. And if we're going to use
10 it, take the time to make sure that people
11 actually understand what this thing is. Mike,
12 then over to Jimmy, then to Bob.

13 MR. PIERDINOCK: Thank you, Jen,
14 Karyl, for your presentation. As noted earlier,
15 this was prepared by academics and managers and
16 doesn't have the users around the table that
17 participate that have a wide array of opinions
18 from rec, for hire, commercial, all the different
19 user types, NGOs, seafood dealers, and so on. So
20 I just point that out because it is a model.

21 And there's a lot of assumptions made
22 with the model. And this artificial intelligence

1 world we live in now, there is a tendency
2 nowadays to provide such topics, put it on the
3 internet, and get a result. I'm worried that
4 this may an AI type of approach to avoid the
5 discussion that we have around this table.

6 Especially with AI, you have to be
7 careful, no different than this model. What are
8 the assumptions of the input? What is the source
9 of the assumptions in order to come out with a
10 result?

11 I look at this too. And maybe I'm
12 just too old that I remember it was called the
13 Deming's systems of the 1980s where we all sat
14 down in a room all of us and we discussed the
15 issues at hand, prioritized it, and worked it
16 out. This seems to have less of an interaction
17 with people here which is the focus of here or
18 elsewhere where we have meetings to try to take
19 an input, press a button, and come out with a
20 result.

21 So I'm not saying I'm necessarily
22 against this. It's a first step to look at it.

1 But I'm still with the old fashioned way. Maybe
2 I'm gray and old and just that's the way it is to
3 sit down, discuss the matter at hand, and try to
4 come up with a consensus to move forward. So
5 that's my recommendation. Thank you.

6 MR. BROOKS: Yeah, a number of
7 interesting points here, Mike. Jen?

8 MS. CUDNEY: And Karyl, you might have
9 something else to add. But I think it's -- I
10 understand where you're coming from there. I
11 also recognize that this is not going to be
12 appropriate for every situation.

13 And it's not intended to replace the
14 value and benefits of a group discussion like
15 this. It's simply a tool that we could consider
16 where if we find ourselves thinking, hey, maybe
17 we need to dig into this in breakout groups, it
18 would be an option for consideration of breakout
19 groups. So there's a specific time and a place
20 for this. And it may not be -- like, we may just
21 put it in the back pocket until we have that
22 right situation where we want to try it.

1 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Yeah, and I just
2 wanted to add that you would be having those
3 discussions with the people next to you and
4 everyone in the room. As you build the model,
5 like, if you go back to that climate change
6 example, the arrows and the pluses and what goes
7 into those circles. Those you would be having
8 discussions with Alan next to you going, hey,
9 what do you think emissions would do to climate
10 change?

11 Is it a strong increase? Is it a
12 decrease? And you would have all those
13 discussions. So while it was an academic who
14 created the tool, you would be the one creating
15 the model and those interactions and having those
16 discussions and then just seeing what happens.
17 And it helps build that community. So all of
18 your understanding where the other one is coming
19 from in terms of those connections and
20 interactions.

21 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Jimmy then Bob.

22 MR. HULL: Yeah, thank you. Jimmy

1 Hull. Karyl just pretty much answered --
2 explained it better to me to a question I had.
3 But this is a lot like what was already said,
4 reminds me of the MSE and with a lot of anecdotal
5 inputs in creating this model.

6 But I think that it holds promise in
7 certain situations. And we thought when we first
8 learned about MSE that it was going to, like,
9 change everything. And so far, it really hasn't.
10 But it's interesting, thought provoking. Thanks.

11 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Jimmy. Bob?

12 MR. ZALES: Yeah, and in the Gulf,
13 it's been a couple years now, I guess. But I've
14 worked with Marcus and with a bunch of them. We
15 had workshops in Gulf Shores, Alabama that they
16 brought a lot of people together about this whole
17 shark issue.

18 And Karyl in some of her trips down
19 there to the Gulf Council about the sharks,
20 clearly there's a problem. Everybody is bitching
21 about sharks but nobody could identify what
22 sharks they were having a problem with or where

1 they were located or whatever. So because there
2 was no way to -- in any of the data programs to
3 list that, right?

4 So she asked us. So we worked with
5 Marcus and he worked with the fishery service,
6 southeast center. And for whatever reason, they
7 kept putting up roadblocks as to why you couldn't
8 have had a shark species to the data that was
9 there and whether or not you have predation or
10 whatever. We worked hard.

11 And they eventually got to the point
12 to where they were going to be able to have a
13 column to where you could list some of that. And
14 then at that point in time, the data program went
15 away which we're working on it now. But
16 hopefully, that'll get there.

17 But that was on the for hire side and
18 also for the commercial side. Because on the
19 commercial log book, you couldn't put down --
20 like I commented in the past day or two you
21 couldn't put down the shark species that you were
22 having problems with and whether or not it was

1 the depredation or whatever the issue was so that
2 you could have the data that was there. So we
3 need further help, I guess, with the fishery
4 service and I guess with you all on this to see
5 where this could go to try to get that
6 information there because whatever you try to do
7 with these models or whatnot, if you don't have
8 the right data that's in there, the outcome of
9 that model is not going to be any good.

10 MR. BROOKS: Good point. Thank you.
11 Let me go to Jeff Kneebone online, then we come
12 back to you, Danny. Jeff, where did you just go?
13 Jeff, I'll let you know when your line is open.
14 There you go, Jeff. You should be good.

15 MR. KNEEBONE: Great. Thanks,
16 Bennett. Jeff Kneebone. Thank you, Jen. A
17 couple questions about the process, assuming that
18 you're observing this.

19 And I apologize if I missed them. So
20 can you give some feedback about how you decided
21 on those central topics? I know that it's a
22 discussion. But basically, there's a lot of

1 them.

2 Were any one of them not chosen? And
3 if they were not chosen to be included as topics,
4 was there any kind of threshold or standard that
5 was set to either exclude or include them? And
6 then related to that, if you had differing
7 opinions about the positivity or negativity of a
8 topic, how was it treated?

9 So for example, if you had some people
10 that were saying it's positive and some people
11 that saying was negative, how was that treated?
12 Was that just lumped in as uncertain? Thanks so
13 much.

14 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: All right. So I
15 will provide some thoughts here. And then Karyl,
16 if you want to jump in on anything, then you can.
17 So it was a small group activity.

18 We sat down and said, okay, what's
19 important? And we put ideas down in our model.
20 And that was the threshold. That's what came to
21 mind. That's what the group said. Hey, that is
22 something we should include.

1 It was very collaborative within our
2 little group of folks. So I don't recall getting
3 a whole lot of guidance on thresholds in the
4 overview presentation because this is really --
5 it felt very organic in terms of the conversation
6 and the way that we did this. I didn't attend
7 the workshops that were held in the Gulf.

8 So I don't know specifically what
9 Marcus may have done in terms of providing
10 additional refine guidance. But I know for ours,
11 we didn't get a whole lot. So I'm going to let
12 Karyl jump in if she has anything else to add
13 there.

14 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Yeah, what Jen
15 said. It was very organic. There were
16 definitely topics we listed at first that after
17 we started creating links, we questions whether
18 or not we needed them. So we would remove them.

19 And then we kept adding in others. We
20 would go away for a few minutes and go, oh, yeah,
21 we should include stock assessments. Oh, yeah,
22 we should include regulations. And then somebody

1 wanted to add statutes and what is the difference
2 and how does that play in.

3 And there was a lot of adding things
4 in and taking things out, rejiggering it, going
5 back, asking the questions about the linkages.
6 It was all collaborative. It was all a
7 discussion.

8 It made me understand Jen's points
9 more. It made me understand -- in our particular
10 group, we had CJ Sweetman from Florida and his
11 thought process. And that's where it helps.

12 That's the benefit of the model. The
13 model is not to point out this is the solution.
14 The model is to get people talking and
15 collaborating and understanding the different
16 perspectives. There is no solution that comes
17 out of it other than just that understanding
18 which can then, of course, lead to a solution.

19 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Karyl. And that
20 comment makes me think about, I think, one of the
21 things that a model like this can bring out are
22 the underlying assumptions that many of us are

1 bringing in, all of our comments. But they're
2 not explicit.

3 They're driving what we say. But they
4 may not be apparent to others. And I think a
5 model can -- something like this can help surface
6 that which is helpful.

7 MS. CUDNEY: Okay. And then Jeff, to
8 get to your other question about uncertainty and
9 what we could or couldn't do, there were things
10 that we just weren't sure about. So there was a
11 question mark that we could leave. And we chose
12 to not define it as a positive or a negative
13 influence or the strength of the influence
14 because we just didn't know.

15 We thought there may be a
16 relationship. But there were some situations
17 where we kind of thought ourselves in circles
18 about the directionality of that. And that's
19 okay.

20 And I think that's part of this
21 process. I think it's important to get down as
22 many ideas as you can. Now we can think about

1 the design of an activity, whether we need small
2 group facilitators to help manage that
3 conversation. I think there are pros and cons to
4 that. And so that's where we would probably work
5 with folks that have experience with this tool to
6 figure out the best approaches for our particular
7 set of questions or question or topic that we
8 want to address.

9 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. I'm just going
10 to note we're a minute beyond where we should be.
11 Shifting to public comment, I don't want to push
12 too long past that. But Danny, we have not had a
13 chance to hear from you. So I want to invite you
14 in.

15 MR. COFFEY: Thank you, Jen and Karyl,
16 for that presentation. I just had a quick
17 question regarding the slide where you're playing
18 out the scenario if you increase shark
19 depredation, then you'll see, for example, a
20 decrease in stakeholder engagement. And it looks
21 like there's a drop down menu to describe the
22 type of relationship between those variables.

1 And in this example, I guess it's
2 sigmoidal. I was just wondering if you could
3 clarify how you would select the type of
4 relationship because obviously that would be a
5 big determination of the outcome of that
6 scenario, whether it's linear or exponential and
7 if those choices exist. Thank you.

8 MS. CUDNEY: And I have to admit here
9 I'm going to plead a little bit of ignorance
10 because we were doing what was recommended to us
11 by our workshop facilitators. And I don't think
12 we played around a whole lot with that type of
13 model. Do you remember, Karyl?

14 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Yeah, it came up
15 at the very end. But at that point, the three
16 hours was pretty much up. So yes, you can change
17 that. But we didn't get to really play with it.

18 MS. CUDNEY: So this is one of those
19 things where we would definitely need to chat
20 with people that were a little -- that were
21 knowledgeable about this to help us set the
22 parameters for the use of this tool.

1 MR. BROOKS: David, 30 seconds.

2 MR. SCHALIT: Ten seconds, okay. This
3 is not MSE. MSE is your worst nightmare. This
4 is a tool that looks to me, first blush, that it
5 will crystalize somewhat an issue for us. It
6 won't give us an answer.

7 But it will definitely help to
8 clarify, particularly in connection with HMS
9 which is -- how shall I say it politely -- data
10 deficient. Okay. I mean, it really makes --
11 this will make a difference. One of the things
12 that I want to mention to the panel here is that
13 we don't want these people doing this exercise
14 without our being in the room because we can be
15 major contributors to both confounding elements
16 which you're going to need in this process.

17 Confounding elements are the things
18 that we're going to come up with and say, wait a
19 minute. This will influence this. And they may
20 not think about that.

21 One of the biggest problems in
22 scientific research in general is the lack of

1 confounding elements. Confounding -- let me
2 explain. What's the easiest way to explain?

3 MR. BROOKS: Just a reminder, 30
4 seconds.

5 MR. SCHALIT: Okay, 30 seconds. Okay.
6 In the 1950s, scientists believe that there was a
7 connection between smoking and lung cancer. But
8 it could not be proved until the 1960s when they
9 looked at all the possible -- other confounding
10 elements like air pollution could cause lung
11 cancer. Other things can cause lung cancer.

12 So once they finally looked at all the
13 confounding elements, they realized, yes, there
14 is empirical evidence. We can make this
15 connection. That's what a confounder is. Thank
16 you.

17 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, David. All
18 right. So thank you all for the comments. I
19 actually think your comments were super
20 thoughtful. I'm just going to add one thing
21 going through my mind is the earlier -- I think
22 this come up a bunch which is around

1 communication.

2 And I think a model like this is going
3 to require a ton of communication.

4 Communication, what are we using it for? How are
5 we using it? How is it being designed?

6 One of my memories from the sticky dot
7 exercise is we didn't have a lot of buy in from
8 folks around the table on using this exercise,
9 what it would look like, how it would be used.

10 And I think anytime we're going to shift to
11 something like this, we need to think hard about
12 that and make sure everyone is comfortable. And
13 the last thing I'll say is I would strongly
14 recommend trying this out with something that is
15 incredibly innocuous first.

16 Because if people are not comfortable
17 with a model, don't understand what it is, how it
18 works, you're going to get pushback just from the
19 fact that it's a new technique. So I would
20 strongly recommend using it with something that
21 is perhaps thoroughly unrelated just so people
22 get a feel for how this thing works. So with

1 that, let's go to public comment.

2 So if there is anyone in the room who
3 would like to make a comment, please raise your
4 hand so we see you. If there's anyone online who
5 would like to make a public comment, again, if
6 you could raise your hands. And I see three
7 hands raised online.

8 So let's go to online. And just a
9 reminder to folks when you make your public
10 comment, first of all, if you could start with
11 your name, affiliation, and the topic you want to
12 talk about, that would be great so we know who's
13 making the comment. And I'll ask you to limit
14 your remarks to three minutes or so.

15 And again, this is an opportunity for
16 you to give your comment. It's not a Q&A, back
17 and forth. So with that, let me open up first
18 for Brady Lybarger. In a second, Brady, I'll
19 tell you when your line is open and you can start
20 talking. All right. Brady, you should be able
21 to talk now.

22 MR. LYBARGER: Okay. Can you hear me?

1 MR. BROOKS: Yes, I do. Thank you.

2 MR. LYBARGER: Yeah, okay. Forgive me
3 if you guys hear an engine in the background.
4 I'm 150 miles out on Georgia's bank. So I wanted
5 to put a couple -- my feeling on the buoy year
6 permit.

7 I'm in favor of A2 for electrical and
8 hydraulic assist for the buoy year fishery. I
9 am not in favor with A3. From the amount of
10 permits that are available now, it's about 250
11 permit out there.

12 I think it should start by allowing
13 power assist in those fisheries. And then after
14 seven years of research, then maybe come back and
15 we can talk about A3 later. I am in favor of A4
16 and A5 as well.

17 And I believe A6 should be researched
18 before jumping to conclusions for circle hooks
19 because it has been proven that the interaction
20 in deep depths are not interacting with marine
21 mammals. So that's how I feel at this time. And
22 also while I'm on here, I'd like to say I am in

1 favor on marlin spearfisherman who will jump over
2 in the water.

3 And I'm for allowing it. I don't
4 think a couple yahoos out there who are very well
5 educated in their safety. And allowing a handful
6 of people out there to do something they love and
7 they're passionate about couldn't hurt the
8 industry. Thank you.

9 MR. BROOKS: That's great. Thanks,
10 Brady. Appreciate it. Let's bring in Eric
11 Hesse. And Eric, I'll let you know when your
12 line is open. Okay, Eric. You're good.

13 MR. HESSE: Yes, thank you. So you
14 may recall that I --

15 MR. BROOKS: Eric, can you just start
16 again with -- Eric, just start with your name and
17 affiliation just so we know who you are. Thanks.

18 MR. HESSE: Eric Hesse, fishing vessel
19 Tenacious II. I'm a harpoon category participant
20 and submitted a petition that we discussed last
21 September's AP advisory meeting. The petition
22 has recently been rejected by Administrator Coit.

1 And in the rejection letter, it just
2 says in your letter of 2022 about the same issue.
3 She suggested that NMFS doesn't have its own data
4 relevant to the fishing activity in question.
5 And at the same time in her letter, it made no
6 indication that they intend to collect any
7 information relative to that fishing type.

8 And whereas you had 95 percent of the
9 participants in the category sign a petition
10 asking for rulemaking around this issue, that's a
11 lot of people who believe that at the very least
12 an attempt should be made to more thoroughly
13 document this issue. So I'm just calling to
14 suggest that instead of continuing to have no
15 data and pleading that they had no data so no
16 decision will be made, that NMFS take action
17 immediately to do three things.

18 One, put a question or some kind of
19 indication on deal reporting forms for the
20 harpoon category indicating whether or not the
21 fish was harvested in this manner. Two, a
22 checkbox on the electronic reporting form that

1 all fisherman need to use for HMS reporting now
2 indicating from the fisherman themselves whether or
3 not the fish was caught according to this manner.
4 And three, adding questions by port sampling
5 people who are canvassing fishermen when they
6 come in about the type of harpooning.

7 And this would help document what's
8 going on. As more people who actually never
9 wanted to harpoon in this way end up having to do
10 it in order to make their living, I'm guessing
11 that they're going to want to volunteer
12 information about the extent of this practice in
13 the fishery. And this will provide an avenue for
14 them to do that, provide information to the
15 fishery service.

16 The other thing it does is establish
17 a paper trail so that you can have accurate
18 reporting and not misreporting around what's
19 actually happening on the water. And I
20 appreciate your time. Thank you.

21 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thanks so much,
22 Eric. Appreciate it. Todd, why don't you come

1 on in now, and I'll let you know when you are
2 open. And Todd, you may want to bring in some of
3 the points you mentioned in the chat earlier so
4 folks can get the benefit of that information.
5 All right, Todd. Your line is open.

6 MR. ELDER: Hi, I'm down here living
7 in Virginia Beach. I've been spear fishing for
8 the last 20 years. In most of my adult life,
9 I've been a commercial diver all around the
10 world.

11 But in comparison to most people here
12 today, I'm relatively new to the commercial
13 fishing industry. However, for the last four
14 years, I've been solely focused on providing
15 local people with local fish here in Virginia
16 Beach. And I'm focused using the most
17 sustainable methods which mainly is spear guns
18 and freediving.

19 And then in the winter months, I do
20 hook and line. Three years ago, I put in this
21 request to commercially harvest tuna. And since
22 then, I've only requested that I don't have any

1 interest in spearfishing sharks or swordfish.

2 That sounds extremely dangerous even
3 for a crazy diver. When commercial diving, we
4 usually call a dive if we see swordfish and makos
5 around. Those are no-gos.

6 As mentioned earlier by a gentleman on
7 your committee, the gear is already permitted for
8 commercial harvest on the West Coast and Hawaii.
9 And it's also allowed here on the East Coast for
10 recreational harvest. There'll be a very minimal
11 increase to the annual catch as the number of
12 commercial spear is relatively low.

13 For reference, I'm the only one
14 commercial spearer here in the state of Virginia.
15 I do agree that there needs to be some guidelines
16 on diving near other vessels and near gear that's
17 been set out. Another fisherman at the meeting
18 mentioned that the divers up north jump in on
19 their gear and they're hard to keep track of.

20 If AIS is helpful for that issue,
21 maybe that's a requirement to be considered. For
22 me personally, most days that I go diving, I do

1 not see another boat once I get away from land.

2 I don't feel that there will be an issue on
3 shooting undersized tunas or confusion with
4 species due to the nature of the gear and the
5 knowledge of the diver.

6 As it stands, we tend to normally
7 shoot larger for all other species we harvest.
8 For example, I shot a 14 pound sheepshead last
9 week. It's already mandatory to have a large
10 diver's down flag displayed at the highest point
11 of the vessel.

12 And in addition, all divers on my boat
13 have a float and float line attached to their gun
14 and are never far from the boat. If we see
15 another boat approaching, the diver manning the
16 helm will hail out and gather the divers that are
17 in the water. We do not dive near other boats
18 and we do not leave the boat unmanned ever.

19 I think I met most of the points of
20 contention mentioned earlier in this discussion
21 portion. And I'm hopeful that we can come to
22 some sort of agreement to allow spearing of tunas

1 for commercial harvest. And I'm happy to answer
2 any questions or concerns that anyone may have.

3 MR. BROOKS: Todd, before you cut out,
4 one question I have. I just want to confirm your
5 last name is Elder, right?

6 MR. ELDER: Yes, sir.

7 MR. BROOKS: Perfect. Thank you very
8 much. Okay. Any other public comment in the
9 room from members of the -- hang on, Spencer. I
10 just want to check on public comment. Anybody
11 else online? And Eric and Todd, I'll let you
12 lower your hands. That would be great. Thank
13 you.

14 All right. In that case, we should
15 start to move to wrap up. But before I do, let
16 me just see. It seems like there's a comment or
17 two around the table here. Bob, is that left
18 over? Is yours left over? Okay. So yeah, so at
19 this point, let's close public comment and just
20 bring you in as members of the panel. So we'll
21 go to Bob and then Spencer.

22 MR. ZALES: Bob Zales, Southeast

1 Fisheries. I just want to make some comments. I
2 appreciate the fact that I got to sit in, in
3 Charlie's place on this panel.

4 And it was nice being back and
5 engaging in everything here and being around
6 everybody and hearing everything because it all
7 relates back to what I've been hearing from our
8 members and also on the water at home in the
9 Gulf. Pretty much everybody is on the same page
10 when it comes to sharks and swordfish and that
11 whole bit. And I've read somewhere recently the
12 commercial fishing industry is the seventh
13 heaviest regulated industry in the country.

14 When you look at the makeup of the
15 commercial fishing industry which is
16 predominately from my experience and my knowledge
17 historical, families, multi-generational, small
18 families in the business. That's pretty
19 impressive number when you see the regulations on
20 small families that are working out of small
21 communities, trying to do their best to provide a
22 good product to consumers throughout this

1 country. And when you look at the regulatory
2 impacts that we get from the fishery service and
3 with the very, in my mind, little help and
4 promoting the seafood industry, we're seeking
5 help from the fishery service, not only to ease
6 up the regulatory burden on us but also to help
7 promote what we do.

8 Because what we do is very important.
9 It's historical. When you look at working
10 waterfronts, the history of this country is based
11 on when you go all the way back when Native
12 Americans were the only ones here. It all
13 started on the water. Every bit of it started on
14 the water.

15 Everything started, fishing,
16 everything came into that. Everything evolved
17 from fishing and what we provide. And so you see
18 that history that's there. And you've heard
19 several comments around here. This industry is
20 struggling.

21 And once you lose it, it's done. And
22 I've seen lately where Red Lobster is going out

1 of business. So if you're going to not eat fresh
2 seafood from us, apparently you're not going to
3 get imported seafood because Red Lobster is going
4 out of business. So you're not going to get the
5 junk that they bring in from overseas.

6 So we need help in promoting what we
7 do because we do a great job in complying with
8 regulations, doing everything to keep fisheries
9 sustainable and to provide good products to the
10 American public. So we just need all the help we
11 can get. Thank you.

12 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Bob. Spencer.

13 MR. BODE: Hello. Thank you, Bennett.
14 I just wanted to touch the nonissue of adding
15 dealer requirements on dealer reports. I
16 represent multiple family members that are in the
17 HMS dealer category.

18 And adding more requirements for the
19 harvester and for the dealer I think just adds on
20 to Bob's point of more regulation. The fishery,
21 specific the harpoon fisheries already operates
22 under Magnuson and all the national standards.

1 It doesn't violate anything.

2 We harvest the TAC at a sustainable
3 level. Adding more regulatory requirements I
4 think is unjust. And I just wanted to add that
5 there was a comment about 95 percent of the
6 permit holder signing a petition.

7 A, I would like to fact check that.
8 And B, the petition never says -- I read it --
9 never says anything about adding reporting
10 requirements. So to have those two in the same
11 sentence I think is kind of manipulating the
12 situation.

13 And I just wanted to reiterate as
14 someone who's highly involved with the dealer
15 reporting, we do not want any more reporting
16 requirements. And I just am wracking my head
17 about other fisheries that have federal VTRs and
18 federal dealer reporting requirements. I can't
19 think of an instance where the dealer has to
20 report what type of method the harvester used to
21 catch the fish.

22 I'm just thinking about fluke, for

1 example. They don't say, did he use an X net or
2 a Y net. And if there's an example that someone
3 could provide me to say, oh, no, this is the
4 template.

5 But I don't think there is a template
6 for this. And I think we're going in uncharted
7 territory. Thank you very much.

8 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Spencer. I see
9 two more cards and then we need to -- I see one
10 more card and then we need to close here. Marty?

11 MR. SCANLON: Yes, as this meeting
12 closes, I just want to take the time here, Randy,
13 to thank you and the agency and everybody that
14 worked on Amendment 15. Steve, I know Karyl, I
15 know Larry put a lot of work into this. We
16 certainly appreciate the work and effort that you
17 put into moving that forward.

18 And I know it took a lot of courage in
19 order to do that as well. And we certainly want
20 to thank you for all the time you spent with Blue
21 Water in trying to move that forward and helping
22 develop that amendment there. So thank you very

1 much on behalf of the fisherman, on behalf of
2 Blue Water Fishermen's Association.

3 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Marty. All
4 right. I'm just going to -- go ahead, Sandy.

5 MR. NGUYEN: I wanted to echo what
6 Robert said because I service a lot of
7 generational American fisherman. Today is the
8 start of our 2024 shrimp season. And our federal
9 boats out there has spent 20, 30,000 on diesel
10 expenses.

11 Our fleet are leaving today without a
12 price at dockside. And I don't know -- I mean,
13 it has nothing to do with PLL. But we'll just
14 talk about HMS and NOAA and whoever is here that
15 can help.

16 I've never had to describe our shrimp
17 prices being inhumane and our last season as
18 being deadly. Yesterday, the rate we had in the
19 afternoon, I got a call. Another one of our
20 fishermen killed himself.

21 This is what's going on in southeast
22 Louisiana. And it all has to do with federal

1 regulations on imports. And it's really too late
2 to do anything now considering two decades of
3 price oppression due to imports.

4 So just that and we need a better
5 plan. This will be our fourth season given the
6 war. So I'm going to leave you guys with this.
7 My dad was doing this as a shrimp at the
8 longline.

9 Shrimp was 4 dollars at dockside and
10 diesel was at 8. Today, diesel is at 4 dollars
11 and our shrimp prices at 0.80. No, we don't have
12 a price. That's was last year's price.

13 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Really quick.

14 MR. ZALES: We're participating you
15 all know on the 5th of June. You've got the
16 seafood thing at Department of Commerce, right?
17 We're participating from the Gulf and coming up
18 and bringing some good tuna fish and some other
19 stuff up here.

20 Yesterday apparently the news for this
21 thing went online. Within two minutes, the thing
22 was sold out. And I was surprised. I thought

1 tickets were free.

2 But apparently, they cost 45 dollars
3 apiece. I don't know how many people bought
4 tickets. But within two minutes once the website
5 went active, it sold out.

6 So that tells you pretty much in my
7 mind the importance of the seafood industry
8 that's there. So I don't know if anybody is
9 going to come or not. But if you do, we'll be
10 there and you can come by and get some good tuna
11 fish and good red snapper from area seafood.

12 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Bob. All right.
13 Well, thank you all for hanging in really to the
14 end here. I note that we really kept folks
15 around the table on this third day which was good
16 because there was important stuff to talk about.

17 So just thanks to everybody for all of
18 the input along the way, for indulging me this
19 morning when I had to keep us moving a little
20 bit. Thanks to Randy and team. A reminder, just
21 please leave your name tags and your table tents
22 on the table so HMS folks can grab it and reuse

1 it.

2 I'm sure I should be saying please get
3 your travel requests in. Randy has got that.
4 He'll repeat it again. And I think that's it.
5 So just thank you all for a really good meeting,
6 and over to Randy.

7 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Yes, and I'll just
8 say thank you for staying. I think we may have
9 had -- folks have just in the last couple of
10 minutes kind of started to kind of move away.
11 But this may be the most people stayed to the end
12 that we've had which is great and we really
13 appreciate that. Of course, this was a good day
14 of engagement.

15 Real quickly, you should be getting an
16 email, I think, from Peter Cooper very soon with
17 instructions for what to do. But they include
18 emailing your receipts to Pete Cooper and also
19 filling out the Google voucher form. And I think
20 the link will be in the email with that.

21 Also, double check to make sure you
22 packed up all of your laptop and phone charging

1 cables around your area there. And I want to
2 give a quick but very important thanks to the HMS
3 management division for all of the preparation
4 for this meeting and for making it happen,
5 especially Pete Cooper and his team of folks
6 really with working on in-room and virtual
7 logistics form making this happen. We don't have
8 a contractor or anybody that runs this.

9 This is HMS management division folks
10 running the show. And they do a great job. It's
11 amazing how well they do it. Thank you to the
12 invited speakers.

13 Thanks to Bennett Brooks for doing a
14 fantastic job facilitating as usual. And thank
15 you again to all of you for coming and your AP
16 members and proxies. Thanks for the in-room and
17 online participation for the engagement and the
18 input.

19 And that's it. We look forward to
20 seeing you in the fall. Announcements will be
21 coming later about the times for that.

22 Eyeball the usual traditional week

1 that we have which is the week of Labor Day. But
2 that's quite likely. So more news will come out
3 about that later. That's it for me. Thank you.

4 MR. BROOKS: Thanks everybody.

5 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
6 went off the record at 11:56 a.m.)

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This is to certify that the foregoing transcript


In the matter of: Highly Migratory Species Panel

Before: NOAA

Date: 05-16-24

Place: Silver Spring, Maryland

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