

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

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HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY PANEL

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MEETING

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FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER 21, 2012

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The Advisory Panel met in
Ballrooms C and D at the DoubleTree by Hilton
Hotel, 8120 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda,
Maryland, at 8:30 a.m., Scott McCreary,
Facilitator, presiding.

PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT:

PAMELA BAKER
TERRI BEIDEMAN
RICK BELLAVANCE
ANDRE BOUSTANY
THOMAS DePERSIA
WILLIAM GERENCER
RUSSELL HUDSON
ROBERT HUETER
JOHN JOLLEY
DAVID KERSTETTER
GERALD LEAPE
SEAN McKEON
SHANA MILLER
KENNEDY NEILL
TIM PALMER
ELLEN PEEL
RALPH PRATT
RICHARD RUAIS
MARK SAMPSON
JASON SCHRATWIESER
MARK STEVENS (proxy for Sonja Fordham)
SCOTT TAYLOR (proxy for Vincent Montella)
STEVEN THOMAS
MARK TWINAM
SCOTT VAETH
RICK WEBER
CHRISTOPHER WEINER
ROM WHITAKER
ALLAN WILLIS

ICCAT REPRESENTATIVE:

JOHN GRAVES

STATE REPRESENTATIVES:

JASON ADRIANCE, Louisiana Department of
Wildlife and Fisheries
MARTHA BADEMAN, Florida Fish and Wildlife and
Conservation Commission
RANDY GREGORY, North Carolina Division of
Marine Fisheries
WALLACE JENKINS, South Carolina Department of
Natural Resources
CARRIE KENNEDY, Maryland Department of Natural
Resources
MARK LINGO, Texas Parks and Wildlife
Department

COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES:

LARRY ABELE, GMFMC
DANIELLE CHESKY, ASMFC
DAVID CUPKA, SAFMC
CARLOS FARCHETTE, CFMC

FACILITATOR:

SCOTT McCREARY

NOAA STAFF:

MARGO SCHULZE-HAUGEN, NMFS/OSF/HMSD
RANDY BLANKINSHIP, NMFS/OSF/HMSD
KARYL BREWSTER-GEISZ, NMFS/OSF/HMSD
MICHAEL CLARK, NMFS/OSF/HMSD
CRAIG COCKRELL, NMFS/OSF/HMSD
PETER COOPER, NMFS/OSF/HMSD
JENNIFER CUDNEY, NMFS/OSF/HMSD
KATIE DAVIS, NMFS/OSF/HMSD
JOE DESFOSSE, NMFS/OSF/HMSD
GUILLERMO DIAZ, NMFS/SEFSC
GUY DuBECK, NMFS/OSF/HMSD
OTHEL FREEMAN, NMFS/OSF/HMSD
NEVA HOWARD, NMFS/OSF/HMSD
BRAD McHALE, NMFS/OSF/HMSD
SARAH McLAUGHLIN, NMFS/OSF/HMSD
DELISSE ORTIZ, NMFS/OSF/HMSD
RICK PEARSON, NMFS/OSF/HMSD
RONALD SALZ, NMFS/OST/FSD
GEORGE SILVA, NMFS/OSF/HMSD
DIANNE STEPHEN, NMFS/OSF/HMSD

JENNI WALLACE, NMFS/OSF/HMSD
THOMAS WARREN, NMFS/OSF/HMSD
JACKIE WILSON, NMFS/OSF/HMSD

T-A-B-L-E O-F C-O-N-T-E-N-T-S

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

(8:44 a.m.)

CHAIR MCCREARY: We've been efficient in working through our agenda the last few days.

If we could have folks in the back focus up here, please. So we actually did the eDealer presentation already. So we have a more streamlined agenda for today.

And mainly, what we have is a series of recreational HMS issues and updates.

Before that, a couple of brief announcements. Thanks to Bill Gerencer for the lox and bagels. Very much appreciated.

Thank you, thanks to Bill. And Ellen noticed that some folks may not have signed in. She noticed that the sign in sheet was a little vacant relative to how many people are here.

So if you did not sign in, please do that. And Margo has yet another fact to share.

MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: That's right. So question was in the Gulf of Mexico, what the catches of blue and white marlin were, and the breakout between dead and live discards.

So for 2011, there were 18 blue marlin discarded dead, 132 discarded live. There were 38 white marlin discarded dead, 123 released alive. And then some more specific information, 43 vessels reported fishing in the Gulf of Mexico in 2011.

And then the question on targeting. So this is self reported, and often may not correlate perfectly with what is actually caught.

But about 44 percent indicated they were targeting yellowfin, 37 percent were mixed, tuna/swordfish, 18 percent targeting swordfish and 0.5 percent targeting dolphin. So I think that was in response to some of the questions yesterday.

CHAIR MCCREARY: All right. So the recreational HMS issues and updates is a bit of a tag team, including with people that you can't see. So I will turn it over to you, and we'll run through the flow.

MR. MCHALE: Great, thank you.

1 Good morning, everyone. Although we invited
2 our colleague Russ Dunn, who we all know well,
3 to join us, unfortunately he wasn't able to.

4 And so therefore, I'll kind of be
5 running through his presentation. So bear
6 with me. I'm kind of laying my eyes on it for
7 the first time. And you know, both myself and
8 the rest of the HMS gang here will try to
9 field any questions you may have.

10 But if we really happen to get
11 down in the weeds regarding, for instance, say
12 some of the national recreational action plan
13 questions, I'll probably have to defer those
14 back to Russ.

15 Now I notice on the agenda that we
16 were going to initially talk about the HMS
17 recreational action plan. I think I'll just
18 touch on that very briefly.

19 Otherwise, I think I kind of take
20 some of the wind out of Ron Salz's sail
21 because he's actually going to be getting into
22 some of those items that we had contained in
23 our own plan in a little bit more detail.

24 So essentially, based on input
25 from participants during the 2010 Recreational
26 Summit, the first Recreational Action Plan was
27 released approximately two years ago, right
28 around this time of the year, and essentially
29 provided a road map for NOAA's activities to
30 better identify and address some of the
31 recreational priorities that we were all
32 facing.

33 In that time, the agency has
34 completed, or at least made significant
35 progress on about 75 commitments that were
36 made within that document.

37 The voice of the anglers and the
38 attention given to recreational priorities
39 within the agency has been strengthened, in
40 part due to the position Russ now holds,
41 including those items within the HMS
42 management division.

43 Recent development and other draft
44 recreational plans within other headquarters
45 offices, Habitat and Conservation as an
46 example, and unprecedented access to
47 leadership has also been provided to that
48 recreational community.

1 So what work have we accomplished?
2 You know, we've been working hard to improve
3 catch and effort data as well as some of the
4 socioeconomic data that I know that we've just
5 discussed around this table over the years.

6 In particular how that
7 information's derived from recreational
8 fisheries and then in turn, how that is, you
9 know, folded into the regulatory process.

10 So there's been critical
11 improvements have been made to the
12 recreational catch and effort data collections
13 systems that I believe Ron may touch on, you
14 know, in the next discussion, with the
15 implementation of new MRIP catch and effort
16 estimation methodologies.

17 There's also been the 2011
18 National Angler Expenditure Survey is
19 expanding our understanding, again, some of
20 these economic components that sometimes
21 aren't as easy to get our hands around when
22 there isn't actually a business transaction
23 with the sale of a fish.

24 So kind of what's on the horizon?
25 Well, I'll just briefly mention a few
26 examples of some of the progress that's been
27 made. We understand that there's still a lot
28 of work to do. And quite frankly, there
29 probably always will be.

30 So looking forward, NOAA will be
31 essentially fielding a new national survey to
32 examine the opinions and perceptions of salt
33 water anglers, and that's slated to take place
34 this fall.

35 We're also conducting a series of
36 regional, kind of, listening sessions to check
37 in with the anglers in each various geographic
38 region starting in 2013.

39 And feeding that information along
40 with the feedback from the survey, essentially
41 to support a meeting that we currently have
42 slated for 2013, Managing Our Nation's
43 Fisheries which is where fishery managers from
44 across the nation on all the various fishery
45 management plans kind of get together and
46 share their experiences and knowledge of
47 what's worked, what hasn't, to kind of improve
48 our work collectively as a whole.

1 So essentially, what can you
2 expect on that near horizon? So stay tuned.
3 You know, there'll be some announcements
4 coming out regarding some of those regional
5 groups and meetings.

6 So we will be working with you to
7 update the regional recreational action plans,
8 you know, so we make progress on some items.
9 It may warrant that they need to fall by the
10 wayside, mission accomplished.

11 And new issues may arise. So
12 we'll want to make sure that these documents
13 remain as living documents and reflect the
14 feedback we hear from you all. But also show
15 you that we've heard and listened to the
16 feedback you've provided.

17 And as I mentioned earlier, you
18 know, essentially if there's any questions
19 that you may have outside of items that we may
20 be able to field here this morning, you know,
21 please direct those up towards Russ.

22 He doesn't really have much to do
23 these days, so he would love to hear from you
24 all. Thank you.

25 CHAIR MCCREARY: Do you want to
26 take questions now?

27 MR. MCHALE: I guess if anybody
28 had some quick hits, we could take those now.
29 I guess, and keep them focused on the
30 National Action Plan.

31 But if we start to get into the
32 weeds, I would almost prefer we hold off until
33 Ron presents, because he will be supplying us
34 more information.

35 CHAIR MCCREARY: A quick hit,
36 Ellen?

37 MEMBER PEEL: Yes, does anyone
38 know if this National Angler Expenditure
39 Survey is underway? I've never heard of it.

40 MR. MCHALE: I don't. But we'll
41 have our fact checkers --

42 MR. SILVA: The Angler Expenditure
43 Survey was underway. Actually, I think it's
44 slated to have some preliminary results out
45 this fall.

46 I wasn't, you know, conducting the
47 survey. Survey's led by our science and
48 technology division. They used a sub-sample

1 of intercepted dock side intercepts, I
2 believe.

3 And they did some extra sampling
4 on this past Angler Expenditure Survey to
5 incorporate more HMS participants by using our
6 permit universe.

7 MR. SALZ: Just to add to what
8 George said as far as how they got their
9 sample, part of it was from the people that
10 they intercepted on the regular, what used to
11 be the MRFSS survey, the dockside.

12 They asked them if they wanted to
13 participate in a follow up econ survey which
14 was done through the mail. They also used HMS
15 permit lists to sample from.

16 So it's a separate sample because
17 they wanted to make sure they had a sufficient
18 number of HMS anglers and captains in the
19 sample so that they can possibly produce some
20 results that were particular to HMS.

21 MR. MCHALE: And just one other
22 item I forgot to mention is that for our
23 spring 2013 Advisory Panel meeting, we're
24 looking to carve out a decent amount of time
25 to discuss some of these recreational issues.

26 I know Russ has requested that we
27 make some time for him to actually attend.
28 And actually kind of get into the meat of this
29 a little bit more so.

30 CHAIR MCCREARY: All right, Ron
31 Salz. Thank you. You'll be back.

32 MR. MCHALE: I know I will.

33 MR. SALZ: Okay, good morning,
34 everyone. As Brad said, one of the goals of
35 the action plan was to improve on the
36 recreational data collection.

37 So improve on the designs and the
38 accuracy and precision of the data, and also
39 to better address management needs for
40 recreational data.

41 So I'm going to be talking about
42 some of the MRIP projects that are particular
43 to HMS. But I notice there are some new faces
44 here today. So folks may not be that familiar
45 with what is MRIP in general.

46 So I wanted to just say a few
47 words about what MRIP is, because it's bigger
48 than just HMS. And then I'll get into the

1 specifics of the current HMS projects that
2 we're working on and talk about what's
3 upcoming.

4 MRIP stands for, as you can see,
5 the Marine Recreational Information Program.
6 This was initiated about four years ago after
7 an NRC, National Research Council review of
8 our recreational fisheries survey data
9 collection methodology.

10 So they did a very thorough
11 review, again, not just of HMS but really the
12 focus was more on what was previously called
13 the MRFSS survey. Those of you familiar with
14 that.

15 And they came out with a whole
16 bunch of specific recommendations for
17 improvements. And so MRIP grew out of that
18 report, out of those recommendations, and is
19 working on designing pilots, you know, testing
20 new data collection approaches and in general,
21 just trying to improve the recreational data
22 that we have, not just in the Atlantic and
23 Gulf.

24 This is a national program, and
25 again, it includes all species that are fished
26 for and caught recreationally. So with that,
27 I want to get more into the HMS side of
28 things.

29 And for today, I'm going to talk
30 about a project that we currently have in the
31 field. It's the Recreational Bluefin
32 Landings Tag pilot program in Massachusetts.

33 The acronym is RBLT. Because it's
34 a federal program, we're required to have an
35 acronym. And the initial acronym that we came
36 up with was just going to be BLT, but we faced
37 some resistance to that, and I think that was
38 copyrighted so we added the R, so it's the
39 RBLT.

40 I'm going to talk about a project
41 that the data collection is completed. We did
42 this in 2011. But we're still working on some
43 of the final reports that we did in Puerto
44 Rico.

45 And then get into some of the
46 plans for the Large Pelagic Survey, looking at
47 ways that we can produce, do our estimates in
48 a better way, and also redesigning the survey

1 to improve on the precision and the accuracy
2 of the data.

3 And then I'll just say a few words
4 about our websites and where you can get more
5 information.

6 So the RBLT is something we're
7 piloting in Massachusetts. This pilot was
8 largely driven by what we were hearing from
9 this group, from the AP, the desire for more
10 timely and in season, you know, information on
11 bluefin tuna recreational landings and also
12 building on some of the successes that we have
13 had in Maryland and North Carolina where we
14 currently have catch card programs for HMS.

15 So we designed a pilot in
16 Massachusetts to essentially not necessarily
17 copy what we're doing in Maryland and North
18 Carolina, but try to improve on the current
19 compliance rates and the accuracy of the
20 information that we're getting from the ALRS,
21 or the Automated Landings Reporting System for
22 reporting bluefin tuna recreational landings.

23 So the first thing we did was to
24 recruit participants. So realizing that, you
25 know, there's several thousand permitted
26 angling and charter boat category permit
27 holders in Massachusetts, and that we could
28 not do the pilot with all of them.

29 So we recruited participants into
30 the pilot from those permit lists. And the
31 good news is, we did the recruitment by phone.
32 We randomly called folks off of the permit
33 list.

34 And our refusal rates were
35 relatively low. You know, I show 11 percent
36 there. So what this suggested to us is that
37 we were getting a fairly representative group
38 of participants, you know, to test this pilot.

39 If we had, like, a 50 percent
40 refusal rate, then that might suggest that,
41 you know, particular individuals were self
42 selecting for the pilot.

43 But with an 11 percent refusal
44 rate, we felt pretty comfortable that we were
45 getting good representation.

46 The recruitment also included, so
47 in addition to the angling category and the
48 charter/head boat category permit lists, we

1 also wanted to make sure that we had certain,
2 what we were calling, high liners, you know,
3 the guys who catch a lot of bluefin in the
4 program because we felt like it was important
5 that they know about the program, that also
6 some of them could be advocates for the
7 program and could provide outreach for us and
8 talk to folks about it.

9 And so we had a list of, I think
10 it was about 15 high liners who we, you know,
11 were not part of the random selection but we
12 targeted them for the pilot and asked if they
13 would participate.

14 In addition to that, we focused on
15 one particular marina, which is Green Harbor
16 Marina, and we wanted to test to see how the
17 pilot would work if we tried to census one
18 marina, complete census.

19 And so we were able to recruit,
20 not everyone, but some of the folks out of
21 that marina. But ultimately, we ended up
22 recruiting, looks like 416 total participants.
23 And you see the split between the angling and
24 charter boat categories.

25 So once we had the
26 participants, we mailed them a tag kit, and I
27 brought an example of a tag kit. I don't know
28 if you can see it.

29 It's got a plastic pouch. I'm
30 going to pass this around, too. But we've got
31 the tags. We sent out five tags to angling
32 category permit holders and ten tags to the
33 charter/head boat category.

34 The kit also includes outreach
35 materials and a listing of the tag stations
36 which were established. And the tag stations
37 served two purposes.

38 One was to provide additional tags
39 if they ran out of their initial allotment
40 that we mailed to them. But also, the tag
41 stations could be used for collecting unused
42 tags at the end of the season.

43 So I'll talk about that aspect of
44 the pilot. But I think I'll just pass this
45 tag kit example around for anyone who wants to
46 look at it.

47 And so once we got those tag kits
48 out and the system was set up for reporting,

1 we were able to start data collection in
2 starting July 1st.

3 So the actual reporting of the
4 fish was still done through either the
5 telephone or the internet systems that are
6 currently in place.

7 But the only difference for the
8 pilot participants was when they're going
9 through that questionnaire, there's a request
10 to enter a tag number.

11 So each one of these tags has a
12 unique number, and we were asking them to
13 provide the number that they used for that
14 particular fish.

15 Throughout, you know, the season,
16 we've been making follow up calls. Mostly
17 with folks who we see are using up a lot of
18 tags.

19 We want to make sure that they
20 know where to get additional tags, that they
21 understand that they can go to one of these
22 tag stations.

23 We've also made some calls to
24 folks who have reported fish without a tag.
25 Fortunately, that has not happened very often.
26 But occasionally, we see that. And you know,
27 some other issues that we might see in the
28 database, like someone reporting the same tag
29 twice.

30 You know, clearly things that we
31 would flag and want to follow up with the
32 participants and just make sure that they
33 understand how the program works and that
34 they're following the procedures.

35 So I've got some, you know, up to
36 this week data from the pilot. So far, we've
37 got 150 fish reported with a tag placed on it.
38 Thirty by the angling category permit holders
39 and 120 by charter boat permit holders.

40 So that's the breakdown for now.
41 And if you're wondering, you know, how this
42 relates to the Massachusetts as a whole, this
43 represents about one third of all the fish,
44 all the bluefin tuna that have been reported
45 to the ALRS system to this point.

46 So the 416 folks that we recruited
47 represent roughly ten or 12 percent of the
48 total permit holders in Massachusetts. So

1 we're getting more tags proportionately than
2 the number of folks that we recruited.

3 So as far as the next steps for
4 this project, we plan to continue this data
5 collection through this bluefin tuna season.

6 At the end of the season, it's
7 going to be important to recover the unused
8 tags because, you know, the way we envisioned
9 this program working is we need to have full
10 accounting of all the tags that we ship out,
11 or that the tag stations provide.

12 And the only way to do that is to
13 try to recover any tags that are not used at
14 the end of the season so that you know that
15 they were not placed on a fish. You know,
16 they were actually unused tags.

17 And so we're going to do that
18 towards the end of October. And then once we,
19 you know, finish the data collection phase, we
20 will analyze the results and consider how well
21 this program worked.

22 And I think a big part of this
23 program evaluation is going to be a follow up
24 phone call that we make with the participants,
25 you know, asking them how they feel like the
26 program worked, what changes would they
27 suggest.

28 As well as, you know I should have
29 mentioned this from the start, but the project
30 team includes folks from the fishing industry,
31 we have Steve James is on there, Gary Cannell
32 and his wife Karen are both on the project
33 team.

34 And we're doing this in
35 partnership with the state of Massachusetts.
36 So they're sort of equal partners in this.
37 And so we're going to, you know, also listen
38 to the members on the project team, of course,
39 and see what they think of how well the
40 program worked.

41 And we expect to have the final
42 report sometime early next year. Okay, so I
43 think I'll hold off on questions until I'm
44 done with all the projects, if that works for
45 everyone.

46 But I'm going to switch gears to
47 the Puerto Rico pilots that we did, which are
48 now in the data analysis phase. So we did a

1 telephone survey of the HMS permit holders in
2 Puerto Rico.

3 And we are analyzing the data and
4 hope to have a report out next spring. At the
5 March meeting I mentioned, I provided some
6 results from the catch card pilot that we did
7 in Puerto Rico.

8 And this report is a little,
9 actually much further along. We are in the
10 final review stage of the report. And the
11 final report should be out next month.

12 Some of the findings from this
13 catch card pilot that we did in Puerto Rico,
14 and the Puerto Rico model was based, virtually
15 identical to what we've been doing in Maryland
16 and North Carolina.

17 So we were just trying to test if
18 that approach could work in Puerto Rico. And
19 it was kind of a mixed results. You know,
20 some things worked well.

21 We felt like we had a good
22 outreach campaign. We got the word out. And
23 there were significant advantages of a catch
24 card program over the current system.

25 But in the end, we found that the
26 reporting stations that we set up, so these
27 are the locations where folks would go to get
28 their landings tags and to get their catch
29 cards to fill out. The reporting stations
30 that we set up in Puerto Rico were not
31 reliable.

32 What we found out was a lot of
33 these were fishing clubs or marinas, but many
34 of them were not open seven days a week. Or
35 you know, their hours were variable.

36 And so you could not rely on them
37 being open when you needed to go and get a
38 landings tag. Some of them just did not have
39 the materials available, or could not find the
40 materials, you know, when we went to check.

41 So, you know, that aspect of the
42 pilot did not work. But still, we are
43 considering moving forward with a variation of
44 a catch card program, which may be more
45 similar to what we're pilot testing in
46 Massachusetts.

47 And that would be where you
48 provide the landings tags and the catch cards

1 to the anglers and to the captains before the
2 season, you know, before they go fishing so
3 they can keep them on their boat and have them
4 available whenever needed.

5 And so we're considering this as a
6 possible next step. But we still need to
7 evaluate, you know, some of the options and
8 also the cost of doing that and so on.

9 And also, I think we're going to
10 try to conduct an email survey with those
11 permit holders to, you know, understand their
12 thoughts about the pilot and why they feel
13 like they're not able to report or they could
14 not report because what was interesting for
15 this pilot compared to the telephone survey is
16 we had a lot more reports of billfish landings
17 on the phone survey.

18 So it's not that folks were, you
19 know, not willing to report. When we called
20 them on the phone, we had more reports than in
21 the catch card pilot.

22 And so, you know, the question is
23 what is the barrier here to reporting? And we
24 need to try to look for ways to make it as
25 easy as possible for them to report their
26 fish.

27 Okay, and the last project I want
28 to talk about is one that's just now getting
29 underway. And this, as I mentioned, is an
30 analysis and review of the Large Pelagic
31 Survey design and estimation.

32 So I've got a proposed timeline
33 for this project. We are now forming the
34 project team. And, you know, if there are
35 folks out there on the advisory panel or folks
36 that you know who might want to be involved in
37 this project, we would certainly like to get
38 some names and consider some options there.

39 As with most of all, you know, the
40 MRIP projects that we've had, we've tried to
41 get constituent and fisher industry
42 involvement and get them on the project team
43 so that they're full participants in the MRIP
44 process.

45 So we hope to have that team, you
46 know, formulated and start some of the kickoff
47 meetings this winter. The first phase of this
48 project is going to look at the re-estimation.

1 So those of you familiar with what
2 was done for the MRFSS estimates, recently we
3 released revised MRFSS estimates for 2004 to
4 2011. And so this was based on, you know,
5 some of the NRC recommendations and then a
6 follow up project.

7 And we recognize that there are
8 some similarities between, you know, the LPS
9 and the MRFSS. And particularly some of the
10 issues involving weighting the data for
11 estimation that we need to look at for LPS as
12 well.

13 So we're going to, you know,
14 assess that need for re-estimation. We're
15 going to also, you know, as a second phase,
16 evaluate redesigning the survey.

17 So considering improvements that
18 we can make to the survey in terms of the
19 accuracy and the precision of the results, and
20 also matching the design to the estimation
21 because those are, of course, linked together.

22 So whatever re-estimation
23 recommendations come out will give input to
24 how we do the new design. And this is, you
25 know, projecting, but for now the final report
26 is anticipated in the winter of 2014.

27 So, you know, early 2014 we may be
28 able to come out with a report with
29 recommendations. And if re-estimation is
30 needed, you know, that process would begin
31 shortly after that report is released.

32 And then we would consider pilot
33 studies to test any new designs that we come
34 up with. So we're not rushing into any, you
35 know, changes with LPS.

36 Just like with MRFSS, we want to
37 make sure that everything's pilot tested.
38 We're very much aware of the need for
39 consistency and the time series, right?

40 We have this time series,
41 particularly for bluefin but, you know, also
42 for other species. And any changes you make,
43 big changes to the design could obviously
44 affect that.

45 So we want to pilot test it. You
46 know, we want to make sure that we account for
47 those changes and that we can adjust or
48 calibrate if needed. But you know, that's the

1 schedule for now.

2 So then field testing, you know,
3 may not occur until later in 2014. So it's
4 pretty far out as far as the projection, and
5 these dates obviously can change.

6 But I just wanted to give everyone
7 here a heads up as to what we're thinking as
8 far as the current timeline for LPS.

9 So just the last thing I wanted to
10 say is all of the reports, you know, the final
11 reports as well as the project plans that, you
12 know, that led to these projects are available
13 at this website.

14 We're currently in the process of
15 changing our websites, revising our website.
16 And a lot of the URLs will change. But this
17 one is still the best way to get to the MRIP
18 website.

19 So you know, if you know this one,
20 you can get to projects would be the link
21 where you can then find the reports, and any
22 other information related to MRIP that you may
23 need.

24 So just wanted to mention that.
25 And I think that's all I have for today. So
26 if we want to open it up for questions now,
27 then we can do that.

28 CHAIR MCCREARY: Ron, thanks very
29 much. And let's take questions, also, on
30 Brad's opening presentation on the Rec Action
31 Plan. So if there are questions on any of
32 these first few items, feel free to put your
33 card up. Go ahead, Chris.

34 MEMBER WEINER: On the tagging
35 project in Massachusetts, I think one bit of
36 feedback I've gotten from some people, and it
37 might be the ones that are refusing, are that
38 when you call it a tag, I think people, like,
39 immediately panic and think it's starting to
40 relate to allocation.

41 And you know how they do, like,
42 deer tags and moose tags. Like, people freak
43 out a little bit. I don't know what, you
44 know, the way to deal with that. Maybe you
45 don't call it a tag. I don't know.

46 I think it's that simple. I mean,
47 I think, I just heard from people that, and I
48 tried to explain to them, you know, this isn't

1 some, like, plan to try to weed people out and
2 eventually allocate.

3 But I think some people honestly
4 think that that's what's happening here. And
5 so I don't know how you deal with that. But
6 you know, I've tried to explain in just my
7 limited interaction.

8 And even people online, and you
9 know, there's just, I don't know, conspiracy
10 theories you would almost call them.

11 But it's like, they think this is,
12 like, going down the road of eventually you're
13 going to give people two tags and, you know,
14 that's it for their season.

15 And so I would just keep that in
16 mind, how you deal with, I think it's
17 literally as simple as not, maybe not even
18 calling it a tag.

19 I mean, I don't know how you do
20 it. But some people just have that weird
21 thought in their head.

22 CHAIR MCCREARY: Do you want to
23 respond at all, or no?

24 MR. SALZ: Yes. Thanks for that
25 feedback, because we did hear a little bit of
26 that, as well. And you know, I could, at
27 least for now, honestly tell people that in
28 the design of this project, you know, that is
29 not what we were thinking.

30 We're not talking about individual
31 quotas for, you know, individual recreational
32 anglers or captains. Just as a side note, you
33 know, when we came up with the initial tag
34 allotment of ten and five, we based that on
35 some of the data.

36 But what the data was showing is,
37 you know, ten for the charter, five for the
38 angler would satisfy well over 90, you know,
39 probably 97 percent of permit holders for the
40 whole season.

41 And looking at the data up to this
42 point, we've only had probably less than five
43 folks who have needed to get more than those
44 tags.

45 So you know, if you look at the
46 angling category, most of them are just
47 reporting one fish, is what we're seeing. So
48 I don't know if that helps the discussion.

1 But you know, I think we can just
2 tell people honestly we're not, at least for
3 now, you know, and Margo may want to say
4 something about it as well, but there's no
5 plan for an individual quota or an individual
6 tag allotment for recreational fisheries.

7 MEMBER WEINER: Yes, I mean, I've
8 gotten kind of in the thick of it and tried to
9 tell people that. And, like, they think I'm
10 starting to, like, I've got some master plan,
11 too, you know?

12 So I'm just saying that's how
13 people think. And it's like, no, honestly,
14 they think, like, they're like oh, the
15 commercial guys.

16 And then another commercial guy
17 will chime in and it's, like, oh, the
18 commercial guys are, you know. It's like, I
19 just sit on the panel.

20 And I told them, I'll relay what I
21 heard. But that's just, you know, how people.

22 And I'm not saying you change it for those
23 people. I'm just saying that's something you
24 need to keep in mind because --

25 MR. SALZ: It's good feedback.
26 Thanks, Chris.

27 MEMBER WEINER: And I think, for
28 most people, zero tags would probably get them
29 through the season. So I mean, I think five
30 and ten is, most people don't catch one.

31 CHAIR MCCREARY: Okay, no secret
32 plan in the drawer?

33 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: Correct.

34 CHAIR MCCREARY: All right. I
35 have Jason, Rom, Rick, Tom and Rusty. Jason?

36 MEMBER ADRIANCE: Thanks. And
37 thanks for the presentation, Ron. My
38 question, I have two questions. The first
39 one, I guess, in relation to the Large Pelagic
40 Survey, but it could apply to MRIP in general.

41 Obviously, there are the HMS
42 angling permits that gives you an idea of
43 participation. But overall, what's being done
44 to validate those participation numbers?

45 Are there any methods in place?
46 Are there any future methods that will be
47 utilized to get a better participation number?

48 MR. SALZ: Yes, as far as

1 participation, there is currently a project,
2 there's an MRIP project that's looking at how
3 we estimate participation for the former
4 MRFSS.

5 You know, so that's participation
6 for all fisheries, for all recreational
7 fisheries. And so we're evaluating that. You
8 know, we're well aware of the gap between the
9 U.S. Fish and Wildlife numbers for
10 participation and our numbers.

11 You know, that's existed for quite
12 a long time. We're working with Fish and
13 Wildlife on that. And so were trying to come
14 up with a better way to estimate that in
15 general.

16 As far as for HMS in particular,
17 that becomes a little more difficult, you
18 know, because one, you're assuming that
19 everyone who's fishing for HMS has a permit.
20 So if you're just using permit numbers.

21 But then, that assumption may not
22 be good for a couple of reasons. Some guys
23 may get the permit but may not fish that year.

24 You know, whereas other guys may fish for HMS
25 but not have the permit.

26 The Large Pelagic Survey adds
27 another nuance in that to be eligible for
28 Large Pelagic Survey intercept, you could be
29 targeting and catching fish that you don't
30 need an HMS permit for.

31 So you know, LPS, the suite of LPS
32 species is bigger than the suite of HMS, you
33 know, species that you need an HMS permit for.

34 So you know, I'm glad you brought
35 it up. And that could be a question that we
36 want to pose in the redesign of LPS is, you
37 know, how can we come up with a better
38 estimate of participation, you know, if you
39 feel like the permits themselves, just the
40 count of permits is not giving you an accurate
41 view of that?

42 MEMBER ADRIANCE: Thanks. And the
43 second question, I guess, is in relation to
44 the tuna BLT. Is there any reason there's no
45 biological data taking something as simple as
46 length, or did I miss that? Is there some
47 information being taken?

48 MR. SALZ: You mean by the angler

1 or the captain?

2 MEMBER ADRIANCE: Well, just when
3 they report, is there any length data
4 reported, or any weight data?

5 MR. SALZ: Yes, length is
6 required, you know, when they report. But
7 that's always been the case. That's not new
8 for the pilot.

9 You know, under the ALRS, the
10 Automated Landings Reporting System, length is
11 a field that they're required to report.

12 CHAIR MCCREARY: All right, let's
13 go to Rom.

14 MEMBER WHITAKER: Yes, Ron, thank
15 you for the report. And I know this MRIP can
16 be very important. But I did have a question.
17 Is there any legal requirement for
18 Massachusetts or Puerto Rico to report?

19 MR. SALZ: So the legal
20 requirement is the same as for other states
21 for Massachusetts and Puerto Rico, which is
22 there is a requirement to report any
23 recreational landed bluefin, tuna or billfish
24 or swordfish, you know, through one of the
25 NMFS systems that, you know, the online system
26 or the phone system.

27 There was no additional mandatory
28 requirement to participate in the RBLT or to
29 participate in the catch card pilot in Puerto
30 Rico.

31 And this is one of the things we
32 talk about in the report, in Puerto Rico in
33 particular, is the non-mandatory nature of it,
34 and that had this been made a mandatory
35 program, if we go that route, it's possible
36 that compliance will be a lot higher just
37 because of that fact.

38 So there is a difficulty in pilot
39 testing these types of programs because in the
40 pilot test phase, it's very difficult to make
41 it mandatory.

42 And so you're pilot testing
43 something as a voluntary program, but thinking
44 about implementing it as a mandatory program.
45 So it's a problem.

46 MEMBER WHITAKER: Okay, thank you.
47 Well, as important as the MRIP is, and I know
48 that it will probably, and is being used as a

1 very important management tool, that before
2 there's a legal requirement to place that tag
3 on there, then I think the information's going
4 to be spotty, at best.

5 I know, and I just speak for North
6 Carolina, that you know, a guy brings in a
7 marlin or a tuna or whatever, first thing he
8 does and goes puts a tag on it before it's
9 ever unloaded from the boat.

10 So I think you get a pretty
11 doggone, even the outboards, you know, they
12 make sure that their fish are tagged. So I
13 think it's very important.

14 You know, the more accurate the
15 information is in this MRIP program, the
16 better our management decisions will be,
17 whether they hurt us or help us.

18 Sometimes they don't always help
19 us. But still, we need accurate information.
20 So I think, that being said, that you know,
21 you put a legal requirement on it, and then
22 you make them available. Probably points of
23 landing seems to work best in our state.

24 And then you're more than welcome
25 to put my name on the help, because I think
26 it's a very important program and we need to
27 get it right. Thank you.

28 CHAIR MCCREARY: Rom, thanks. I
29 have a pretty good queue going here. I have
30 Rick, Tom, Rusty, Mark, Allan and Carrie, I'm
31 not sure if you -- you withdraw, okay. Rick?

32 MEMBER BELLAVANCE: Thank you.
33 Thanks, Ron, for that presentation. It was
34 good. I was interested in all the different
35 projects that you put together, or you
36 actually reported on.

37 And I didn't see anything with
38 electronic reporting. And I was wondering if
39 you knew of any projects that might be in the
40 works, or any consideration towards using more
41 modern technology to get a grip on what the
42 recreational communities landing for HMS?

43 MR. SALZ: Yes, that's a very good
44 point. And we are pilot testing in other
45 areas, we've been pilot testing some of the
46 electronic reporting options.

47 We spent a lot of time for the
48 RBLT discussing those options, and considering

1 implementing them for the pilot. But
2 ultimately, we felt like the main thing we
3 wanted to test was this tag system.

4 And we decided to leave the
5 current system in place, the ALRS as the
6 reporting mechanism. But before the pilot, we
7 did a pre-survey asking folks of, you know,
8 their reporting capabilities.

9 So how many of them have, you
10 know, smart phones, how many of them use apps?

11 You know, questions like that and based on
12 the results, as these pilots move forward and
13 maybe become implemented, we're going to
14 consider options for either smart phone apps
15 or a reporting, you know, it could be an
16 online, I mean, we have the online reporting
17 system now.

18 But you could just make some
19 tweaks to that and make it a mobile, you know,
20 something you could use easily on your iPhone
21 or your Android based cell phone.

22 And so, you know, I think it's
23 inevitable that we're going to go that route.
24 But as of now, we haven't done anything
25 specifically with the HMS pilots that we're
26 testing.

27 MEMBER BELLAVANCE: Could I follow
28 up real quick? That's encouraging to hear,
29 for sure. I think it's definitely the way of
30 the future, and it's very easy.

31 You know, one of the things that
32 you mentioned, we were trying to get something
33 easy for folks to be able to use. And
34 technology is growing so quickly that I think
35 that that's definitely a road you should go
36 down.

37 I would also suggest maybe that
38 you entertain collaboration with the private
39 sector, because their grip on technology is a
40 lot farther ahead than some of the government
41 agencies that we have.

42 And they can offer products pretty
43 cheaply. I know there's several companies
44 that are interested in trying to work with the
45 government to get a good, solid reporting tool
46 in place that's user friendly.

47 And I think also, a little sidebar
48 here, I was trying to get one central

1 warehouse where all the data can go and all
2 the different agencies can access it.

3 I think that would ease the
4 reporting requirements on the anglers and make
5 it easier for all the different agencies,
6 academia, and the public to access whatever
7 information they're allowed to.

8 So I just suggest that, and I
9 would also love to be part of that design
10 project that you mentioned earlier.

11 CHAIR MCCREARY: Good, thanks very
12 much. Tom DePersia?

13 MEMBER DEBERSIA: For the spring
14 HMS meeting, I tried to get compared data for
15 the southern zone versus the northern zone on
16 angling caught fish.

17 But I had difficulty, and I
18 believe I used that website, Brad had given it
19 to me. And I had difficulty getting data for
20 North Carolina.

21 And this was in March, trying to
22 get data for 2011. And I didn't look at it
23 recently, so I have no idea whether it's been
24 updated.

25 But it seemed like the information
26 from North Carolina was coming slow to that
27 particular website. Do you have any comments
28 on that?

29 MR. SALZ: Yes. The 2011 data's
30 up there now. And that was the first, you
31 know, we just implemented the LPS and the HMS
32 catch card data queries. That was when I
33 presented in March.

34 And so there was a little lag
35 there in terms of getting some of that data
36 loaded. But for, you know, future years, the
37 plan is to have the catch card data, you know,
38 which is North Carolina and Maryland, will be
39 posted on an annual basis.

40 And it should show up, you know,
41 early in the following year. So the 2012
42 information, we should have that up, you know,
43 I would say by late January, maybe early
44 February of 2013.

45 And for those of you who are not
46 familiar with what Tom's talking about, we
47 have, if you go to this website here, there's
48 an option to do a data query. So you can

1 query the data.

2 And then if you go through the
3 menu system, there's LPS estimates, and then
4 you can also look at the catch card
5 information. And that's where North Carolina
6 would be in the catch card section of that.

7 MEMBER DEPERZIA: I have one more
8 question. How were the boats chosen for the
9 Massachusetts survey? I spoke to Steve James
10 and said, you know, I had three boats and I
11 would be willing to participate in it.

12 But he said I'll get back to you,
13 but was never chosen. Was it a random choice,
14 or was it they tried to get as many boats as
15 possible? I'm just curious.

16 MR. SALZ: We had four lists. So
17 we had random selections from the angling
18 category and charter/head boat category permit
19 lists. But I believe your boats are all at
20 Green Harbor Marina.

21 So Green Harbor Marina was
22 selected to try to do an attempted census.
23 And I don't know why Steve didn't follow up
24 on, you know, did he ask you to participate
25 and it just never happened?

26 You know, because what we were
27 trying to get from Steve was a list, actually
28 from the, you know, Steve was working with the
29 marina operator, but to get a list of folks
30 who wanted to participate from your marina.

31 And I don't know what happened
32 there as far as, you know, why your boats were
33 not on the list. But we attempted a census
34 from Green Harbor.

35 MEMBER DEPERZIA: He didn't ask
36 me, I asked him. I said, you know, have you
37 chosen the boats yet? And he said, well we
38 chose a lot of them. But he never got back to
39 me as to ask me to do it.

40 MR. SALZ: Yes, I mean, other than
41 I'm sorry that, you know, that was an
42 oversight, I think. And we certainly would
43 have wanted you to be part of the pilot.

44 But you know, I think we
45 ultimately didn't get every boat from Green
46 Harbor Marina. But you know, we tried to also
47 get the highliners that I mentioned and, you
48 know, folks who are very active in the fishery

1 and land a lot of fish.

2 But we still want your input on
3 the project. And I could send you some
4 information if you haven't received anything
5 or if you want to participate from this point
6 on. You know, we could probably set that up,
7 as well.

8 CHAIR MCCREARY: Tom, thanks.
9 Rusty?

10 MEMBER HUDSON: Rusty Hudson, hi
11 Ron. Two questions, first on the LPS, is that
12 still pretty much limited to Maine to Virginia
13 and from whatever, June to October?

14 Is it states in the Loftus/Stone
15 Document from nine years ago?

16 MR. SALZ: Yes. LPS is Maine
17 through Virginia and June through October,
18 that's right.

19 MEMBER HUDSON: My second question
20 has to do with the MRIP, the calibration
21 workshop that occurred. Did you convert MRFSS
22 into MRIP and with sharks, particularly the
23 assess sharks.

24 You went back to 2004, and I
25 assume that everything's going to go back to,
26 what, 1998? And then that's pretty much it
27 with converting MRFSS.

28 And my big problem has been the
29 early years of MRFSS, of course, '81 through
30 about '92. And so I guess my question is, are
31 any of the assess sharks, will there be an
32 attempt to recalibrate the MRFSS into MRIP.

33 And then here in the near future,
34 like next year with our Atlantic sharpnose and
35 bonnethead assessment coming up, the Atlantic
36 sharpnose has already been assessed and
37 bonnethead and whatever.

38 So that was done with MRFSS. So I
39 believe it will be going into that with MRIP
40 material next year.

41 And that should go back to '98,
42 but other animals like the recently assessed
43 blacktip in the gulf and as to whether that
44 has been fully recalibrated, and if it was
45 only a partial MRIP because when we went into
46 Spanish mackerel with SEDAR 28, we were
47 dealing with a partial MRIP for some of that
48 stuff.

1 So I'm just trying to get a feel
2 where our future is with the assessed stock so
3 far.

4 MR. SALZ: Yes. The calibration
5 workshop, and actually I should mention also
6 that the reports from that workshop are up on
7 this website.

8 What came out of that workshop, or
9 one of the things that came out of that
10 workshop was the formation of an ad hoc
11 committee, which I was on, which was charged
12 with coming up with a consistent approach for
13 calibration.

14 So realizing that, you know,
15 currently we only can go back to 2004. And
16 ultimately, you know, we're likely not going
17 to go all the way back to the time series, to
18 the start of the time series.

19 So that report provides, you know,
20 a standard, agreed upon calibration approach.

21 You know, all the fishery management, or the
22 regional offices and the science centers were
23 involved in that decision.

24 But how that document is actually
25 used or how that approach is actually used for
26 a particular assessment, you know, I can't
27 really speak to that.

28 That's going to be up to whoever's
29 doing that assessment and whatever group is,
30 you know, because we're not mandating use of
31 that approach, the calibration approach.

32 And we also leave it open for, you
33 know, folks to go beyond that and use more
34 sophisticated approaches as time allows.

35 But we do have, at least, this
36 standard approach, if they choose to use it.
37 So, you know, that's sort of a recommendation
38 that came out of the workshop.

39 CHAIR MCCREARY: All right, let's
40 continue here. I have Mark Sampson.

41 MEMBER SAMPSON: Yes, thank you.
42 A few questions about the pilot tagging
43 program here. Obviously you are very aware of
44 what's going on in Maryland.

45 I'm sure you studied that program
46 quite a bit. And one of the things that, I
47 just happen to be on the circuit here now
48 where I have the tags in front of me, it looks

1 like that in addition to putting the tag on
2 the fish, they still have to call in and
3 report the fish, as well.

4 Now in Maryland, that was one
5 thing that by doing the tagging thing, that's
6 one thing we didn't have to do. So as a
7 fisherman, that took one step out of the
8 process.

9 And it was almost like, and even
10 though it sounds more involved than going and
11 getting your tag and putting on the fish, that
12 sounds more involved than just making a phone
13 call and reporting it, it actually, for us
14 fishermen, it's worked out better because
15 usually we go home at the end of the day and
16 make our calls, if we can remember to do it or
17 have the measurements of the fish with us when
18 we do and all that.

19 And now at the marina, you just
20 slip up to the dock office, fill out the card,
21 they give you the tag, you put it on the fish
22 and you're done.

23 That whole process, too, by the
24 way, and while this might seem trivial to a
25 lot of people who aren't maybe into it, for a
26 fisherman, that's sort of like a pat on the
27 back.

28 It's like when you check the deer
29 that you've shot, you know, we don't do it in
30 Maryland anymore, but you would go into the
31 check station and weigh your deer, get the
32 card.

33 That was sort of like almost like
34 a right of passage. And you look forward to
35 that, right, because hey, I got a deer, man.
36 Same thing now. You go into the shop, I
37 caught some bluefins today.

38 You know, and then you walk down
39 the dock carrying your tags, and everybody
40 knows what you've done and all that.

41 Anyway, so there's actually
42 incentive. I know it kind of seems silly and
43 trivial, but there is incentive there and it's
44 like getting a little citation for your fish
45 when you're able to walk down, you know, sort
46 of the walk of fame back to your boat before
47 you unload your fish.

48 So fishermen actually look forward

1 to that. In this, it looks like okay, you've
2 got the tags on the boat. So you catch the
3 fish, you put the tag on it.

4 You come back, you call it in.
5 And you're done. So I assume the purpose of
6 the tag is therefore just so that any fish on
7 the dock can be identified as one that has
8 been tagged, or has probably been called in,
9 right?

10 This wouldn't even identify that
11 it's definitely been called in, right? I
12 mean, a guy could tag it, put his tags on the
13 fish but then not make the call.

14 So you don't get the record. At
15 the end of the year, he doesn't have this tag
16 to turn in, but this was the main reason why I
17 wanted to speak was the fact that I'm going to
18 just suggest that unless you have a really
19 good mechanism for collecting these at the end
20 of the year, if it's going to be important to
21 you that you get the unused tags back, you
22 might find it's going to be difficult to get
23 them back.

24 Just the nature of boaters and
25 fishermen, when the season comes to an end and
26 we've put our boats and stuff away, a lot of
27 times people are out of fishing mode. And
28 there's so much stuff that's just left undone.

29 And I've got a feeling that you
30 might see that a lot of these aren't going to
31 be returned, unless you make it, and you
32 suggest it that they can turn them in to where
33 they would collect more tags as they go
34 through the season.

35 But you might want to just make
36 sure you have a really good way of getting
37 these back. Or perhaps set up in such a way
38 that it's not as important to get these back.

39 You know, of course in Maryland,
40 you don't get the tag until you fill out the
41 card. You turn in the card, they give you the
42 tag. You put it on the fish, and that's the
43 end of it.

44 So the tags aren't issued.
45 There's no floating tags around there at the
46 end of the season. And also, in here, I don't
47 see where they're actually reporting the size
48 of the fish they catch.

1 It just looks like you just report
2 that we tagged a bluefin. Isn't size a
3 critical issue in the process, the length?

4 MR. SALZ: Yes, the length is
5 still part of the report when you call it in,
6 or go online.

7 MEMBER SAMPSON: Okay, all right.

8 MR. SALZ: That's still part.

9 MEMBER SAMPSON: I got that, it's
10 just it's not in the paperwork here. It's on
11 this card, which, I guess, is what they would
12 keep on the boat.

13 That's probably just a reminder
14 card for them? It's got the tag number and a
15 tagged or reported. Maybe if it had the
16 measurement on there so whenever they report
17 it, it's in front of them when they're making
18 that call or going online or however they're
19 doing it or something.

20 MR. SALZ: Yes, good suggestion.
21 But that little index card is just for their
22 use so they can check off which tag number
23 they used.

24 This way, they'll know when they
25 go to report, you know, because they may be
26 reporting when they get home, say. And so
27 it's just for their own use.

28 But you brought up some really
29 good points. And some of that we discussed in
30 the project team. You know, we've had a lot
31 of discussions when we were designing this.

32 And I think, you know, we're going
33 to have to evaluate that to see how many
34 people do return their tags. We've provided,
35 you know, business reply, postage paid
36 envelopes.

37 We're going to do another follow
38 up reminder call, if they don't send them in.
39 So we are going to make a strong effort to
40 get them back.

41 But you know, all the points
42 you're bringing up were certainly ones we
43 discussed and we'll have to evaluate moving
44 forward.

45 CHAIR MCCREARY: Use the mic.

46 MEMBER SAMPSON: One of the things
47 I think that has made acceptance of the
48 Maryland program so well among the fishermen

1 is it is easy. It seems very easy.

2 And some guys are into it. And
3 again, very often in this room, when there's
4 been discussion about the LPS survey and all
5 that, and the numbers that come from that and
6 compliance with that and reporting the bluefin
7 as compared to what's being reported in
8 Maryland through the catch card program, it
9 seems like very often it's just like, oh well,
10 the numbers are about the same.

11 So it's not that the Maryland
12 program isn't that big a deal. You know, the
13 numbers are showing out to be about the same.

14 I would have to say that, just
15 from my own personal experience, and certainly
16 what I see on the dock and all, people are
17 complying very much more with the tagging
18 program, the catch card program in Maryland
19 than they were when we did the call in thing.

20 I know personally, maybe you're
21 going to lock me up for this, but before the
22 catch card program started in Maryland, there
23 were a lot of times when we would return at
24 the end of the day and I just flat forget to
25 call in.

26 And a couple days would go by and
27 I would be like oh yes, what, Thursday I
28 forgot to call in and whatever, blow it off.
29 Very few people are doing that with the tags.

30 And I would suggest that if the
31 numbers are showing that they're about the
32 same as far as compliance, then not the catch
33 card, but the LPS surveys and all that, I
34 would say that, you know, somebody's got to
35 really look at those numbers because they are
36 not reflecting the true amount of fish that
37 are being caught.

38 They're grossly, I would say,
39 there's gross amounts of unreported fish
40 coming in on the call in.

41 CHAIR MCCREARY: Thanks, Mark.

42 MEMBER SAMPSON: Okay, thank you.

43 CHAIR MCCREARY: Good points. Any
44 other response or, I think you kind of
45 responded already.

46 MR. SALZ: Yes.

47 CHAIR MCCREARY: Okay. Thank you
48 very much. All right, let's move on. Allan,

1 Larry and John. Allan?

2 MEMBER WILLIS: Allan Willis.
3 Thanks for doing the surveys. Obviously
4 really important to get accurate estimates of
5 effort and catch in the recreational sector.

6 My comments were mostly related to
7 the data analysis and the under reporting that
8 was just mentioned.

9 If a lot of the data are based on
10 intercepts at marinas, you're probably going
11 to have large regional differences in a
12 proportion of anglers that you intercept
13 because in different parts of the country,
14 anglers may not return to marinas, they may
15 return to their backyard as has been discussed
16 previously.

17 May be important when you analyze
18 the data to appropriately weight, by region,
19 the amount of effort you're actually
20 capturing.

21 And maybe recognize that in
22 certain parts of the country, maybe a majority
23 of the guys who are out fishing HMS don't
24 return to marinas at all.

25 You know, the guys who can afford
26 the 36 yellowfins often return to their
27 backyard, not to any marina where they might
28 be intercepted.

29 So you may actually have a pretty
30 large bias in your survey just because of the
31 opportunistic methodology that they're able to
32 use.

33 So just any effort to correct the
34 data or to weight it to regionally capture
35 that possible underestimate of the effort and
36 catch would probably be very helpful.

37 MR. SALZ: Yes, that's a good
38 point. Private access is one of the more
39 difficult, you know, elements of the fishery
40 to sample. And I will say that as far as
41 effort goes, they are covered in our effort
42 surveys because our effort is gotten from off
43 site surveys through either telephone, we're
44 now looking into mail surveys.

45 But we have other ways of getting
46 effort. And so they are covered on the
47 effort, you know, number of trips. The
48 assumption, though, that we're making is that

1 their catch rates are similar to those folks
2 that we intercept in the public marinas we're
3 allowed to intercept.

4 And you know, some of those are
5 private. The definition of private can get
6 kind of, you know, fuzzy because some of them
7 are private marinas. But they'll give us
8 access to intercept there.

9 So we consider those, you know,
10 they're part of our frame. But it's really
11 the ones in the backyards, you know, the ones
12 that you really can't get access to conduct an
13 interview.

14 We do have some of the MRIP
15 pilots, they're not again, not focused on HMS,
16 but we have some pilots looking at the issue
17 of private access versus public and comparing
18 catch rates.

19 You know, we're doing some
20 logbooks with the private access guys. And so
21 we hope to have some information in a general
22 sense, but you know, understanding that it may
23 differ by state and it may differ for
24 specialized fisheries like HMS.

25 So you know, private access is
26 something we are very much aware of, and it
27 was part of the NRC review. You know, it was a
28 very strong point they made.

29 MEMBER WILLIS: I suspect, yes,
30 that at least in the Florida portion of the
31 recreational fishery, the assumption that the
32 private entry catch is similar to the publicly
33 landed catch may not be a very good
34 assumption.

35 CHAIR MCCREARY: Allan, thanks
36 very much, good points. Larry?

37 MEMBER ABELE: The Gulf Council
38 has had a pilot, started in 2010 called
39 iSnapper. And it is a phone app, or an iPad
40 app that you can prepopulate with, you know,
41 most of the species you catch.

42 And it does two things. It
43 gathers the number of fish, the size of the
44 fish, how many people were fishing.

45 And then, as you get, it already
46 prepopulates lat/long collapse so you don't
47 give up your good numbers. But you get about
48 ten miles from shore, it automatically uploads

1 everything.

2 And even some of the older
3 captains who never used an iPad or a phone,
4 really started to like it. There's a second
5 piece of it that, this is a charter boat in
6 the first pilot, all they have to do then is
7 touch the screen and a sort of socioeconomic
8 questionnaire pops up.

9 And they had 95 percent people
10 agree to fill it out. So they're getting
11 quite a bit of data. I think it's just so
12 easy to use because, you know, you put in your
13 five fish you catch the most.

14 So it's already done, you just
15 touch the screen, because of GPS, it's got
16 where you are. It really works nice. And the
17 other nice thing about it is as you get close
18 to shore, it downloads automatically.

19 You don't have to, you know, think
20 oh, well, I got to do this. And I would
21 comment on just one thing that a little bit
22 related to some of the others.

23 When it says you will receive,
24 initially, five tags in the red handout, that
25 would make me nervous. You mean I'm only
26 going to get five tags?

27 And maybe if you word it you can
28 have as many as you want, we'll start with
29 five and when you turn those in? You know,
30 five, when you read it like that, it does
31 sound like it's some kind of limit or
32 allocation. Thanks.

33 CHAIR MCCREARY: All right, thank
34 you very much. Good advice. John?

35 MEMBER JOLLEY: Yes, thank you. I
36 had a question. What's happening with all the
37 tournament data that goes in now? And I know
38 historically about some of the reports used to
39 come out annually, whether it was in the Gulf
40 of Mexico with Nakamura or whoever.

41 But the data, I know, is going
42 into a databank someplace, but is NMFS doing
43 anything with that data to look at, give us
44 some kind of an annual report and looking at
45 the effect of weather on distribution of these
46 fish, and how, over time, catch rates have
47 varied in these various locales?

48 And I know that you used to do

1 some things. But I haven't seen anything
2 recently.

3 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: Well, so all
4 billfish tournaments are selected to report.
5 That data goes to the Southeast Fishery
6 Science Center and is used to report to ICCAT
7 for our 250 blue and white marlin annual limit
8 in addition to non-tournament reporting that
9 comes in to us.

10 In terms of report on the billfish
11 tournaments, I haven't seen one. But that
12 doesn't necessarily mean that it's not
13 available.

14 And we can check on that. But
15 certainly the data is coming into the agency.

16 MEMBER JOLLEY: Of course we see
17 it in the popular, you know, fishing
18 magazines. We see a lot of the results just in
19 general reporting.

20 CHAIR MCCREARY: John, just one
21 piece of information. There is coming up
22 soon, an update on tournaments. So you may
23 get more information there.

24 CHAIR MCCREARY: They won't
25 address that? Okay. Sorry, go ahead.

26 MEMBER JOLLEY: And just a
27 historical comment, you know, we've been
28 dealing with this aspect of trying to collect
29 recreational information for 60, 70 years now.

30 And we've got a lot of experience
31 with trying to get angler participation in
32 some kind of a consistent and scientifically
33 acceptable way.

34 But I think the results suggest to
35 us after all this time that you really got to
36 put observers on the ground to go get the
37 data.

38 It's hard to get anglers, and we
39 were just talking about it, too, to over a
40 long period of time, to turn in tags, I'm
41 talking about the tag and release program.

42 We saw this back in the '60s at
43 Woods Hole with the cooperative game, fish
44 tagging program. You get a lot of enthusiasm
45 from anglers and a lot of promises.

46 But over a long period of time,
47 it's hard for most people to be consistent in
48 turning in this information.

1 And I wondered if there has been
2 any thought given to trying to get better data
3 by, you know, there are access points to and
4 from off shore that are fairly limited along
5 the eastern seaboard.

6 In Florida, for example, we go in
7 and out of a few inlets compared to where
8 people live and keep their boats all over the
9 damn place that you can't get to.

10 Have there been any attempts to
11 put people in boats at the inlets with
12 binoculars and some kind of a little tower?

13 You know, back in the '70s when I
14 was doing recreational fishing surveys for
15 sailfish, we put people at the inlets and we
16 could identify boats going and coming from
17 these inlets that were fishing or diving or
18 going sight seeing.

19 We were very confident that we
20 could tell who was fishing, and then we could
21 sample some of those boats at the end of the
22 day when they came back.

23 And I've been thinking for a long
24 time that all of this time and money and
25 effort that we spend in trying to do these
26 various surveys that have had all kinds of
27 problems, and 30 years ago we started MRFSS,
28 and we find out later that it isn't adequate
29 for what we need.

30 Have we thought outside the box?
31 You say, well it's expensive to have boats and
32 people. But if you designed a program
33 properly, maybe putting people in these access
34 places in inlets around the country on some
35 kind of an acceptable scientific basis, we
36 could get real good data on catch and effort
37 from the recreational fishery. Any comment?

38 MR. SALZ: Yes, just to that
39 point, as far as getting effort, we do have,
40 on the west coast, some of the survey designs
41 there use onsite approaches to get effort.

42 And it includes, at some areas,
43 you know, but the setup has to be just right
44 to be able to do, like, an inlet count. But
45 they do some of that in Oregon and in some of
46 the other sites on the Pacific Coast.

47 They also do trailer counts at
48 some sites. So they are getting, you know,

1 effort and using that in the design, in the
2 estimation of number of angler trips or vessel
3 trips.

4 But on the Atlantic and Gulf
5 Coasts, you know, effort has traditionally,
6 and looking forward, will mostly come from the
7 off-site approaches, which while they do have
8 issues, you know, we have response issues on
9 the phone, we're trying to improve our
10 response rates.

11 We, of course, have to be
12 concerned of the accuracy of the reports. But
13 in general, off site approaches are much less
14 expensive than on-site.

15 And so, you know, we will continue
16 to look at ways to improve on our effort
17 estimates, and if there are particular areas
18 where an inlet count makes sense, you know, I
19 think we can evaluate that.

20 But for the most part, along the
21 Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, that would be very
22 difficult, you know, when you think about
23 states where there are multiple points of
24 access to the fisheries.

25 And so, you know, I think it
26 really just depends on the geography and the
27 particular layout of the fishery. And up to
28 this point, for the Atlantic and Gulf, we've
29 determined that these off site approaches seem
30 to work best for effort.

31 MEMBER JOLLEY: Well, I certainly
32 do appreciate that, and I know it's very
33 difficult.

34 But when you take an area like
35 Florida, for example, where I'm most familiar,
36 one of our biggest problems is how do you get
37 the private angler behind private residences
38 and everything.

39 And that's consistently a tough
40 problem. If you get them in the inlet, you
41 haven't missed them. If you take a random
42 sample of everybody that comes through that
43 inlet that particular day, and you stop the
44 boat and can sample what they caught.

45 I'm not sure that the system that
46 we're using to gather catch statistics has
47 been, all of the methodologies have been
48 thoroughly tried.

1 And I'm not sure that it wouldn't
2 be cheaper and more reliable to have 15 boats
3 on the east coast, and you move them up and
4 down the coast to collect information at
5 random from 10,000 places that people might go
6 in and out of.

7 I'm not sure that that wouldn't
8 work better, and be cheaper in the long run.
9 I don't think we've thought creatively enough.

10 And I think, given the problems
11 that we've seen over this long period of time,
12 of collecting this recreational fishing data,
13 that we've exhausted every other possibility.

14 And I think we ought to think more
15 creatively about it. Anyway, enough said.
16 Thanks.

17 CHAIR McCreary: Thank you, John.
18 Randy, do you want to jump in on this one?

19 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Yes. John, a
20 follow up to your suggestion about observers.
21 It's a, you know, a very interesting concept.

22 And, you know, in the course of
23 discussing observer issues around this table
24 over the years, one of the big things about
25 that is the cost of observer programs in
26 order, especially the cost when there's a
27 coverage at a level that it really gives you
28 good estimates.

29 And so I would be interested in
30 suggestions about, you know, in follow up to
31 your suggestion about that for the
32 recreational fishery, how would one go about
33 that in relation to the overall cost of that?

34 Now, I know that in some
35 situations, suggestions have been made of, you
36 know, potentially thinking about incorporating
37 third parties and their involvement in doing
38 that.

39 For instance, you know, there are
40 IGFA Certified observers in some tournaments
41 as potential idea, but there's still a cost
42 issue. So any thoughts from you or anybody
43 else about that?

44 CHAIR MCCREARY: But probably off
45 line. Not today, right? But Randy, you are
46 up next, I believe. Thank you. Very good
47 suggestions. A lot of ideas and a lot of good
48 information, Ron. Thank you very much.

1 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: So maybe
2 while Randy's getting the presentation up, I
3 just want to make a distinction in the
4 conversation between having some observers at
5 tournaments, at the, you know, shore side
6 versus observers, I think, maybe have been
7 discussed as maybe more vessel side.

8 So we do have observer coverage
9 for billfish tournaments, minimally eight
10 percent. And then there's a lot of NMFS stuff
11 that attend a lot of the shark tournaments in
12 the northeast. So that is a point where we're
13 getting some information, as well.

14 MR. BLANKINSHIP: All right. So
15 this part of the agenda is set aside for
16 talking about yellowfin tuna recreational
17 landings data issues.

18 The issues is what is on your
19 agenda, listed there. Up here it says data.
20 This is really a discussion about the issues
21 surrounding the data. I'm not presenting any
22 data, necessarily.

23 More along the lines of a
24 continued discussion that followed on the last
25 advisory panel meeting about the, you know,
26 recognizing that there's some additional work
27 needing to be done related to yellowfin tuna
28 data, in particular.

29 And then not necessarily just
30 yellowfin tuna data, in the scope of things,
31 but other HMS as well. So some of this was,
32 this desire for improved data was highlighted
33 by a couple of things.

34 One was the 2011 negotiations at
35 ICCAT related to the yellowfin tuna total
36 allowable catch that was established, and the
37 provisions, potentially to follow on from
38 that, depending on how, you know, that TAC is
39 managed and with the results of the landings
40 against that from different countries.

41 Also, through the MRIP re-
42 estimation program, which Ron has gone through
43 some of that information, and continuing to
44 think about the need for improving those MRIP
45 estimates, and other estimates as well, also
46 from tournaments.

47 And so one of the things that I've
48 got on this slide is highlighting, this is a

1 data pool from the Count My Fish website that
2 was referred to earlier in pulling some of the
3 catch time series information from MRIP on a
4 regional basis for 2011.

5 And you can see the regions that
6 are listed here. North Atlantic didn't show
7 any results for yellowfin tuna in 2011. But
8 Mid Atlantic, South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico
9 did, and Puerto Rico.

10 And Puerto Rico, while it's a
11 territory in and of itself, that's where the
12 MRIP program has been established and has been
13 functioning for a while in Puerto Rico, while
14 in the Virgin Islands, it has not.

15 And so that's why that Caribbean
16 region is only represented by Puerto Rico.
17 But the proportional standard error, which is
18 the PSE in the right hand column, is a thing
19 that's a little bit of interest.

20 And this is where you see, you
21 know, pretty wide or pretty large numbers
22 there for that PSE value.

23 And you know, one of the things
24 that we would try to do over time in looking
25 at trying to improve these yellowfin tuna
26 numbers is trying to reduce that PSE number
27 and have a little more confidence in the
28 estimates that are made.

29 You can see that right now, those
30 numbers are below 40 for the regions, and for
31 Puerto Rico is quite high, 95.7. But if you
32 go back and actually look at the year to year
33 variation on these numbers, for some regions
34 it's fairly good.

35 For others, there are wide swings
36 from, you know, relatively lower numbers up to
37 100 on the PSE. So it can vary widely, which
38 highlights the need for improving the data.

39 So in the course of this
40 discussion, following on the last AP meeting,
41 we had a public conference call to discuss the
42 issue, just get some folks' feedback about
43 yellowfin tuna data collection. That was in
44 April.

45 And, following on that, we have
46 continued to have agency discussions about
47 this. And really looking at, you know,
48 balancing what are the potential actions for

1 improving estimates against the resources
2 available to actually do that?

3 And those discussions are ongoing.
4 They involve things like more targeted survey
5 effort, potentially through pilot studies
6 associated with MRIP.

7 We are also looking at other
8 things as well, like improving tournament
9 reporting capabilities. You know, for
10 instance, going with online reporting, if
11 we're able to do that in some form or fashion,
12 and being able to select more tournaments for
13 reporting than are currently selected, which
14 would give us more information about HMS and
15 other species in addition to that that are
16 landed.

17 Also, you know, the concept has
18 been discussed about selection of charter/head
19 boats for log book reporting. We have the
20 authority to do that, but have not exercised
21 that so far.

22 So with that, this is teeing up
23 continued discussion of this issue. It will
24 benefit us within the agency as we continue to
25 think about the balancing of the actions with
26 resources.

27 This discussion today will be
28 followed on, I'm sure, with continued
29 discussion at the IAC meeting, and also in
30 other venues, as well. So this presentation
31 was intended to tee up the discussion.

32 CHAIR MCCREARY: So Randy, are
33 there particular points of feedback or advice
34 that you would want to begin hearing today?
35 Or do you imagine that this conversation is
36 really unfolding after today?

37 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Yes, probably a
38 little of both. And I'll recognize that some
39 of the discussion has already started to
40 happen in relation to the comments that have
41 happened, you know, about the MRIP
42 presentation about tournaments, tournament
43 reporting and some of that.

44 And so I recognize we have hit on
45 some of these points. But be here and
46 following on this, too.

47 CHAIR MCCREARY: Okay. So if
48 folks have any comments now, we welcome that.

1 Jason?

2 MEMBER ADRIANCE: Yes, thanks. I
3 just think it's important that in ICCAT
4 negotiations, that a number's not settled on
5 until we have better yellowfin data, if it
6 gets to that for recreational landings.

7 Especially in the Gulf of Mexico.
8 I think some of those may be underestimated
9 just because of in the way MRIP intercepts
10 happen.

11 CHAIR MCCREARY: Thank you. John,
12 did you have a comment on this subject? Your
13 card's still up. Sorry, all right.

14 MEMBER JOLLEY: Thank you, no.

15 CHAIR MCCREARY: Any other
16 immediate ideas? Yes, go ahead, Allan.

17 MEMBER WILLIS: Thanks. I spoke
18 with a number of guys who chase yellowfin in
19 south Florida before this meeting to get their
20 thoughts. And none of them voluntarily
21 report, nor do they get intercepted, none of
22 the guys I spoke with.

23 So I think some outreach in terms
24 of what could be coming down the line from
25 ICCAT and why it's in the recreational guys'
26 best interest to be voluntarily reporting
27 their utilization of the resource could be
28 really helpful in terms of getting more guys
29 reporting what they catch.

30 Some of the guys are never going
31 to because of the way they fish and their
32 general attitude. But I think some of the
33 guys were surprised to hear that they should
34 be reporting, and they will report in the
35 future. So that's all.

36 CHAIR MCCREARY: So convey and
37 reinforce incentives to report?

38 MEMBER WILLIS: Really help guys
39 understand why it's in their best interest to
40 report.

41 CHAIR MCCREARY: Right, thank you.

42 Ellen?

43 MEMBER PEEL: To what Jason said,
44 you know, last year at ICCAT for those that
45 haven't read about it or weren't there, there
46 was a recommendation on the table to set a
47 limit that we would have to live with.

48 Fortunately, that got shot down.

1 But I fully expect it will come up again. So
2 this is a major effort within our community.

3 What I have found, major charter
4 basins or marinas, where they offer cleaning
5 services, amount per pound, that there are
6 some incredible records available in pounds,
7 you know, 10,000 pounds a day was not uncommon
8 in some of these marinas.

9 We're working with one, you know,
10 to try to get that converted somehow on a
11 conservative basis. But you know, our numbers
12 are way, way conservative and underestimating
13 what's actually landed.

14 CHAIR MCCREARY: Thank you, Ellen.
15 Rom?

16 MEMBER WHITAKER: Well, I mean,
17 yellowfin tuna used to be our main targeted
18 species in the charter industry, and still is
19 in North Carolina.

20 And just echoing what Jason and
21 Ellen said, our numbers are way
22 underestimated. I mean, even though there is
23 a legal requirement to report, it just hasn't
24 been picked up.

25 And I know, you know, we do have
26 dockside surveys in North Carolina that have
27 done an excellent job, but they certainly
28 hadn't gotten them all.

29 So if we start with a number based
30 on what we're reporting, we're going to be
31 way, way under, especially if we find a method
32 to start capturing everything that we are
33 catching. So that being said, we've got to do
34 a better job.

35 CHAIR MCCREARY: Thanks, Rom.
36 Scott? Sorry, did you want to jump in, Margo?

37 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: Just to jump
38 in to clarify that the requirement to report
39 is if selected for the intercept, and that
40 they have to participate.

41 We don't have a mandatory call in
42 or anything for yellowfin independently of the
43 surveys. And just also in the note for ICCAT,
44 we do have an ICCAT overall tack, but there's
45 no country specific quotas.

46 So that was part of what happened
47 in the negotiation is the idea of country
48 specific quotas was not adopted. But there is

1 a single number for all the yellowfin at
2 ICCAT. So just for folks that may not know.

3 CHAIR MCCREARY: Good, thank you.
4 Scott?

5 MEMBER TAYLOR: I just wanted to
6 briefly reiterate the same issue about the
7 comment about south Florida. The nature of
8 the recreational fishery down there is the
9 same as all the other recreational fisheries
10 issues down there with the reporting problem.

11 And the yellowfin is even more
12 complicated because of where they're catching
13 the fish. So you know, the reality of the
14 situation is that you're never going to get
15 good numbers on that because we really don't
16 have yellowfins in Florida waters on the east
17 coast.

18 Essentially, they're accessing the
19 fish on the other side of the stream. You
20 know, they're running out there outside of the
21 EEZ and then they're landing the fish.

22 Certainly different in the Gulf.
23 But in general, the nature of the fishery, you
24 know, is going to be problematic to get those
25 numbers.

26 CHAIR MCCREARY: Thank you. Rick
27 Weber?

28 MEMBER GREGORY: My microphone is
29 well as my tag. Randy Gregory. Sorry, my
30 tag's on the floor.

31 CHAIR MCCREARY: Okay.

32 MEMBER GREGORY: On the previous
33 number two there, on the previous slide, you
34 said that all these data points came from
35 Count My Fish? So is that right, Randy?

36 MEMBER WEBER: Yes, it was a
37 straight poll off of the MRIP website.

38 MEMBER GREGORY: So that's a
39 voluntary reporting?

40 MEMBER WEBER: This is the survey
41 information coming from intercepts, from MRIP.

42 MEMBER GREGORY: Okay, well do we
43 ask, and this is maybe a question for Ron as
44 well, do we ask if they've reported their
45 catch in an online voluntary survey in the
46 MRIP surveys, when we do angler intercepts?

47 MR. SALZ: That's not a standard
48 question that we ask. Are you talking about

1 the state? Like, some states have their own
2 voluntary surveys. But we don't ask them that
3 when we intercept them for the MRIP survey.

4 MEMBER GREGORY: So I was just
5 wondering if there was a voluntary survey that
6 we've set up somewhere? We've done it in our
7 state. We have a angler CAP -- I don't even
8 remember what it stands for -- where you can
9 go in and register your catch. Does Doug and
10 that group ask their anglers have they
11 registered so we can figure out if that's a
12 tool that we could use to figure out, to get
13 to some of these numbers in a voluntary way?

14 MR. SALZ: I don't know, it's not
15 part of the questionnaire for the MRIP. So if
16 they're asking it, it's sort of as an aside.
17 And that's a different database, which you
18 would have to ask Doug about. But I'm not
19 aware of any information like that.

20 MEMBER GREGORY: Well, anyway,
21 there might be an idea. If we had voluntary
22 reporting, online voluntary reporting for the
23 recreational anglers, then ask that question
24 in our MRIP survey, we could get an idea of
25 how many people we're hitting.

26 CHAIR MCCREARY: Thanks, Randy.
27 Rick?

28 MEMBER BELLAVANCE: Thank you.
29 Just in regards to the topic of selecting
30 charter/head boats for log book reporting, I
31 favor that idea.

32 I think it's a great idea. But I
33 would also caution to just be cognizant of all
34 of the different reporting that we need to do
35 at this point.

36 Up in New England, I have a
37 groundfish permit. So I have to do VTRs, I
38 have mandatory state reporting for some fish
39 at a state level, and then our different
40 surveys, a LPS survey that we're subject to as
41 well.

42 So as you're crafting those
43 regulations, just try to keep in mind the
44 power of electronic reporting and how that
45 would fit into the for-hire world.

46 And I definitely think that we
47 should be mandatorily reporting. Thanks.

48 CHAIR MCCREARY: Thank you, Rick.

1 Wallace?

2 MEMBER JENKINS: Well, I'm glad
3 this is on the agenda. As Randy knows, South
4 Carolina's yellowfin tuna harvest has gone to
5 zero and has been zero since 2006.

6 We have not seen a yellowfin tuna
7 in the Governor's Cup billfish series since
8 that time. In the early 2000s, we routinely
9 saw 400 to 500 fish per year in the five
10 series tournament.

11 Yellowfin is of great concern to
12 our people as far as recreational landings in
13 our state. I would venture to say it's less
14 than ten per year in the last seven years now.

15 I've never seen a yellowfin since
16 I took my job in 2007. They used to be on the
17 docks in large numbers.

18 The south Atlantic number there,
19 in my opinion, I don't know what the catch
20 rate is in Florida, you know, I think that's
21 primarily from North Carolina, which is great
22 that they're catching fish up there.

23 But we're like the canary in the
24 mine. I'm letting you know that there's a
25 problem with yellowfin. And unless we figure
26 out how to let ICCAT know, we have our data
27 which I've given to Randy.

28 Thirty years of catch per unit
29 effort, real catch per unit effort data of
30 every single boat that's fished in our
31 tournaments.

32 I would hope that that data can be
33 used in some way to build up MRIP or what have
34 you. We enter all of our catches into the HMS
35 tournament database two days after each
36 tournament.

37 I don't know what happens to that
38 data, but there's no yellowfin tuna in it in
39 the last seven years. And I don't know, I
40 just wanted to put it out there.

41 I've been talking with Randy and
42 everybody I could about this for seven years
43 now, and hopefully things will change. Any
44 yellowfin that are landed in our state are
45 caught where those VMS numbers were yesterday
46 on the border of the Bahamas and US EEZ.

47 Those are commercial landings.
48 There are commercial landings in our state,

1 but that's where they're coming from. They're
2 not coming from anywhere near South Carolina.

3 It's of great concern to our
4 fishermen, especially recreational fishermen.
5 And obviously, commercial fishermen have seen
6 their charters go down because who wants to
7 charter a boat -- I mean, people do obviously
8 go charter a boat to go out and white marlin
9 fish or blue marlin fish or sailfish.

10 But yellowfin tuna was the focus
11 of our charter boat fishery for decades. And
12 now there are none out there, and so I mean,
13 you could catch dolphin, wahoo. But yellowfin
14 tuna was what people really wanted to go
15 after.

16 And they're gone. And they're not
17 back yet. I hope before I retire to see one
18 landed in one of our tournaments. But I
19 haven't yet. So that's all I'm going to say.

20 I hope you can use the data I've
21 given you. If you need any more data, we've
22 got 30 years of it. Thank you.

23 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Yes, well I
24 appreciate you sending that data. We've had
25 that as well.

26 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: So just to
27 your points about not seeing yellowfin and it
28 being a major concern, this is something that
29 we've seen for several years, as well, across
30 the U.S.

31 And it was a major reason that the
32 United States was pushing hard at ICCAT to get
33 better management and control in the eastern
34 Atlantic and the Gulf of Guinea, particularly
35 which is a spawning area.

36 So new time area closures were
37 implemented. They should be going into
38 effect, I believe, this January. I may be
39 getting that wrong.

40 And so I think we're very hopeful
41 that that will improve the yellowfin fishery
42 for us, in time. But no, we've seen that and
43 are aware of it.

44 CHAIR MCCREARY: Thank you.
45 Thanks, Wally. Rom, did you have another
46 point?

47 MEMBER WHITAKER: Well, I'll just
48 reiterate what Wally said. And I've been

1 hollering it for five years. I won't dwell on
2 it.

3 CHAIR MCCREARY: All right, thanks
4 very much. So I believe we're on to our next
5 item, then, which I believe is a verbal report
6 from Jason on Louisiana yellowfin tuna
7 recreational permit and reporting.

8 MEMBER ADRIANCE: Yes, do you mind
9 if I do it from here? It's very brief.

10 CHAIR MCCREARY: It's fine, go
11 ahead.

12 MEMBER ADRIANCE: And I'll be
13 happy to take any questions. So since the
14 last meeting, all our regulations are in
15 place. We are well along in development of a
16 website for reporting, a mobile website for
17 reporting.

18 There'll be an Android and iPhone
19 app to report as well. And they'll be a phone
20 IVR system that folks can use to call in.
21 We've ordered the tags for our charter guys,
22 those are here.

23 As soon as our website can go
24 live, we'll begin our massive outreach blitz
25 and start asking folks to report. So that's
26 pretty much the update.

27 CHAIR MCCREARY: Very concise.
28 All right, any questions for Jason? I guess
29 not. All right, Katie Davis, on to you.

30 MS. DAVIS: Thank you. I'm Katie,
31 I work down in the southeast regional office
32 of HMS in St. Pete, Florida and I'm going to
33 give you a brief update on the HMS
34 tournaments.

35 So briefly, and as a reminder,
36 these are the registration and reporting
37 requirements for HMS tournaments. Operators
38 are required to register at least four weeks
39 in advance of the start of the tournament.

40 They do this by filling out a
41 registration form that they send to the
42 southeast office. We create a unique
43 confirmation number for that registration and
44 send it back to the tournament operator.

45 We share the registration
46 information with our science centers and our
47 data collectors, and they then select
48 tournaments for reporting. All billfish

1 tournaments, at this time, are selected for
2 reporting.

3 A catch report is submitted, and
4 catch reports are submitted via fax, email and
5 mail right now. HMS is reviewing ways to
6 improve this program, including potential
7 venues for online registration and reporting.

8 Earlier this year, we began
9 sending reminders to register two months in
10 advance of the historic start of the events.
11 And we send those along with a blank
12 registration form.

13 This is an overview of the
14 registration history since 2003. Florida's
15 had the greatest number of HMS tournaments,
16 representing over 30 percent of the
17 tournaments that register with HMS.

18 In 2007, we received the greatest
19 number of registrations for tournaments, and
20 that was 299. As of earlier this week, this
21 year we've received 231 tournament
22 registrations, which is comparable with this
23 time last year. We continue to seek ways to
24 improve registration compliance rates.

25 So the HMS tournaments information
26 collection, which includes the registration
27 and reporting forms, was due for renewal of
28 clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act
29 this year. This gave us an opportunity to get
30 with the data collectors to identify issues
31 with and make improvements to the forms. An
32 issue that we identified was that we have two
33 reporting forms.

34 One was for billfish tournaments,
35 and the other was for all HMS species,
36 including billfish. For simplicity, we've
37 combined these two forms into one HMS
38 tournament reporting form.

39 We've also expanded the fishing
40 effort section on the reporting form to
41 include exact dates and times of fishing for
42 each day of the event.

43 In previous versions, it was
44 unclear where and how individual fish sizes
45 should be entered on the form. So we've
46 separated that onto a second page so it's
47 separate from the total numbers of fish landed
48 by species.

1 Finally, due to concern over
2 whether or not reports accurately reflected
3 white marlin and roundscale spearfish landings
4 and releases, we've created an additional
5 species category on both the registration and
6 reporting forms that combines these species in
7 the event that a tournament has not
8 differentiated them in their records.

9 Another avenue to mitigate the
10 species identification issue is through our
11 tournament outreach. Tournaments can elect to
12 receive educational outreach with their
13 registration.

14 And they also identify how many
15 outreach materials they would like to receive
16 and distribute. In 2011, over 100
17 registrations elected to receive outreach.

18 And so far this year, we've had
19 over 120 tournaments elect to receive
20 outreach, which equates to 12,000 units of
21 outreach being sent to all of the tournaments.

22 To educate the public on billfish
23 and tuna identification, we've recently begun
24 attaching an ID guide for Atlantic swordfish,
25 billfish and tunas to email registration
26 confirmations for billfish and tuna
27 tournaments.

28 We're discussing the potential to
29 print and distribute this guide to these
30 tournaments that request outreach as well.

31 Overall, in an effort to make
32 compliance with HMS tournament registration
33 and reporting less burdensome and to improve
34 the compliance rates, we've developed and are
35 distributing an HMS tournament operator
36 survey.

37 The survey includes 15 questions
38 on program improvements and operator
39 satisfaction with registration reminders, the
40 HMS website and email address, and outreach,
41 as well as requests opinions regarding the
42 potential for online registration and
43 reporting.

44 I'm sorry. I apologize, I forgot
45 a piece. Well, as of earlier this week, we'd
46 received 32 responses. 84 percent of the
47 responders have been tournament operators for
48 over three years.

1 72 percent received a reminder to
2 register, and all of the respondents found
3 reminders helpful. One comment was that a
4 change of address was the reason why they
5 wouldn't have received a reminder.

6 61 percent of them knew that they
7 could email their registrations, while 39
8 percent did not know. While 77 percent would
9 prefer to have registration confirmations
10 emailed to them, 100 percent would prefer to
11 register online.

12 One comment said that emails may
13 be overlooked and registration is too
14 important for the email confirmation to be
15 sent to them. Others stated that they would
16 like both hard and electronic copies of
17 confirmation.

18 65 percent of the responders
19 requested and received outreach, all of whom
20 were pleased with what they received. And the
21 only comment on outreach was that they could
22 have ordered fewer.

23 94 percent of responders would
24 prefer to report their catch online. In
25 addition to that, two comments stated that
26 reasons that reporting catch in general is
27 difficult is one, to report catch through
28 emails would be difficult because there's too
29 much paperwork to include in the email
30 including radio logs, tournament rules,
31 brochures and clippings.

32 Another comment was that there are
33 many fish that aren't brought to the weigh-in,
34 and therefore are not accounted for in the
35 tournament report.

36 Further comments included an
37 interest in seeing the results of the catch
38 reporting, having one reporting form instead
39 of two, and several compliments on the service
40 that has been received from the HMS management
41 office.

42 So only tournament operators that
43 registered a tournament this year have been
44 contacted. So please feel free to share this
45 link with operators that cancelled or didn't
46 hold an event in 2012.

47 We're looking for constructive
48 comments on improvements that we've made and

1 improvements that you would like to see. Feel
2 free to email me with any comments and
3 suggestions you may have regarding this
4 presentation and the potential for online
5 tournament registration reporting. Thank you.

6 CHAIR MCCREARY: Thank you, Katie.

7 So would you prefer to get comments via
8 email? Or would you like to entertain a few
9 questions now, if there are any?

10 MS. DAVIS: I can entertain
11 questions, if you have any.

12 CHAIR MCCREARY: Okay. Mark?

13 MEMBER SAMPSON: Yes, I guess I
14 would just like to reiterate what you've
15 heard, apparently from a lot of people already
16 is the online registration, it just seems like
17 a no-brainer.

18 And it's really a pretty simple
19 form, but you know, it just makes sense. So I
20 would suggest that. And then even the online
21 tournament reporting afterwards.

22 Although we almost never get
23 selected for that, it seems, but if we had to
24 do it, that would make sense.

25 CHAIR MCCREARY: Thank you.
26 Allan?

27 MEMBER WILLIS: This is actually
28 not directly related to this, but it appears
29 to be the opportunity to make this comment.

30 I had several charter guys who
31 typically participate in billfish tournaments
32 in Florida tell me that because of their
33 reduced catch rate using the circle hooks,
34 that they're no longer entering.

35 It's just not fun, it's not worth
36 it. So they've stopped entering billfish
37 tournaments. It's just what the guys have
38 told me, so I told them I would pass that on.

39 CHAIR MCCREARY: Okay, thank you.
40 Wally?

41 MEMBER JENKINS: You said you
42 select all billfish tournaments for reporting.
43 I would advocate that all tournaments should
44 be selected for reporting these HMS species.

45 We spent a lot of time here
46 talking about this stuff, and I think the data
47 would be useful, especially if tuna, sharks,
48 swordfish, everything we've talked about here.

1 There's not that many tournaments.
2 I would suggest that they should all have to
3 mandatory report.

4 CHAIR MCCREARY: Thanks. Bob?

5 MEMBER HUETER: Thanks, Katie. I
6 have three questions. First, can you remind
7 us, are there any penalties for not reporting?
8 Maybe you said that and I missed it, but I
9 would like to be refreshed on that.

10 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: Well, so I
11 mean, I think lack of reporting would fall
12 under the general penalties that are
13 applicable. There's not a specific, I don't
14 think, tournament penalty schedule.

15 MEMBER HUETER: What does that
16 mean? What happens?

17 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: There's a
18 penalty schedule that includes things like
19 lack of reporting. Not a tournament section
20 of the penalty schedule that has lack of
21 reporting.

22 It's a general schedule. Does
23 that make sense? I mean, we do follow up on
24 them, if that's your point.

25 MEMBER HUETER: I mean, is there
26 any threat to the tournament that the
27 tournament will not be allowed to continue if
28 they don't report?

29 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: There have
30 been a number of cases made for lack of
31 registering and reporting over the years, yes.

32 MEMBER HUETER: The second
33 question is, and somebody mentioned this
34 before, exactly where are these data going?
35 The catch data from these tournaments, and are
36 any of the science centers using them for any
37 kind of stock assessment process?

38 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: Well, as I
39 said before, the billfish tournaments are the
40 ones that are selected for reporting 100
41 percent right now. That data is going to the
42 Southeast Fishery Science Center.

43 It is used for monitoring
44 compliance with our limits on catch, and is
45 used by them beyond that, yes, I do think it
46 does get fed into the stock assessment so I
47 don't have the details on exactly how.

48 CHAIR MCCREARY: Thank you. And

1 Sean, do you want to jump in on this specific
2 point?

3 MEMBER MCKEON: I do, thank you.
4 I usually don't jump in on these issues, but
5 with respect to reporting, I mean, my feeling
6 is that human nature being what it is, if you
7 don't make it mandatory and have some teeth
8 behind it, it's not going to happen to a large
9 extent.

10 In particular, people understand
11 they're coming up against a quota of some
12 sort, and you know, reporting is going to put
13 you in jeopardy for having a fishery closed
14 down, and you don't have to do it, I just
15 think there's a lot of people who are going to
16 ignore any kind of requests for reporting
17 unless there are teeth in it.

18 And that's all I have to say. I
19 think that's a very important part, have
20 something that they have to do and something
21 that requires them to do it. And if they
22 don't do it, there should be some
23 consequences.

24 Same way that, you know, my guys
25 don't report, it's not a slap in the wrist.
26 They can be shut out of a fishery.

27 CHAIR MCCREARY: Thank you. Bob,
28 did you finish your questions?

29 MEMBER HUETER: I finished my
30 questions, but I had a positive suggestion,
31 and that is on the tournament reporting forms,
32 it's hard to see because they're on top of
33 each other.

34 But with the emergence and
35 continued rise in catch and release fishing
36 for these tournaments, it looked like, to me,
37 that the reporting was just number of fish
38 released.

39 It would be useful to try to get
40 some kind of estimate, some kind of handle on
41 the size of those fish as well, because when
42 you look at tournament data over time, there's
43 two things that are useful in terms of
44 population trends and stock assessment:
45 one is number of fish caught per unit effort.

46 The other is the size. And historically,
47 size of fish has gone down when populations
48 are at trouble, and it's reflected in

1 tournament catches.

2 So I couldn't tell if that was
3 there. And it's a squishy thing when you're
4 dealing with release fish. But if you could
5 have some kind of estimates of size, I think
6 it would be useful for the stock assessment
7 people.

8 MS. DAVIS: So on the second page,
9 and I do apologize because it is small, but
10 also we haven't had 100 percent clearance on
11 these forms yet. We expect them, by the
12 beginning, probably of 2013.

13 On the second page, it does
14 request individual fish sizes. I think when
15 they're released, I'm not sure how often fish
16 size estimates are actually reported to the
17 recreational billfish survey.

18 But we have separated that off
19 onto the second page, so it's easier to fill
20 out for the tournaments.

21 CHAIR MCCREARY: Randy, sorry.

22 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Yes, so in
23 follow up to Allan, to your comment and I
24 know, Steve, you and I had, all three of us
25 had a conversation earlier related to circle
26 hooks in tournaments and the feedback that you
27 gave about potentially lower catch rates and
28 reduced participation in tournaments.

29 You know, the intent of that
30 requirement was to improve the post-release
31 mortality rate of billfishes that are caught
32 in tournaments.

33 And so you know, I would be
34 interested in the feedback now, or maybe
35 afterwards in follow-up, is any other
36 alternative ideas that might be out there for
37 keeping post-release mortality rates, you
38 know, better.

39 So any feedback you have about
40 that would be good.

41 CHAIR MCCREARY: Good, thank you.

42 Use the microphone, please, Steve.

43 MEMBER THOMAS: Sorry. It's
44 impossible for a tournament operator to
45 enforce use of circle hooks. It's impossible
46 for HMS or NMFS to enforce it.

47 It encourages cheating. I mean,
48 you know, it's a physical impossibility

1 trolling at nine knots to gut hook a fish
2 using a J-hook on a lure. Don't start, John.

3 CHAIR MCCREARY: We may have other
4 views on that, but let's go back to our queue.
5 Margo?

6 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: So yes, just
7 the objective of the rule was to keep post-
8 release survival as high as possible. It
9 primarily focused on white marlin.

10 Recall, there have been a number
11 of petitions to list white marlin under ESA.
12 And so we don't want to lose opportunities to
13 have fish released alive when we have
14 available tools to do that.

15 So the objective of that rule was
16 to improve the post-release survival. So if
17 there are other ways, and this is, I think,
18 what Randy was trying to get at, we are
19 certainly open to that, and would welcome that
20 kind of comment and input.

21 CHAIR MCCREARY: Good, thank you.
22 All right, let's go to Jason.

23 MEMBER ADRIANCE: Yes, this is, I
24 guess, a little more specific to Bob's first
25 point. Have any tournaments ever been denied
26 a permit due to non-reporting at some point?
27 And if so, how many?

28 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: I don't
29 believe, if there have been that have been
30 denied the ability to have a tournament, I
31 don't know that.

32 But I do know that there have been
33 several fairly significant cases. And I can
34 connect you with our enforcement folks, if you
35 would like the details on that, that they can
36 share.

37 CHAIR MCCREARY: Okay, let's go to
38 John.

39 MEMBER JOLLEY: Thank you. I
40 would echo what Robert has said over here
41 about, you know, how the data is being used.
42 And it might be nice to have a little snippet
43 of how this tournament data is being used.

44 I don't think we know, and we
45 would like to know how it's being used. With
46 regard to size, most of these billfish
47 tournaments, of course, are released.

48 So any size estimates would be

1 just that, they would be estimates somehow by
2 the fleet. So I can tell you, we're not
3 seeing any difference in size in over 60 years
4 in south Florida as far as tournaments are
5 concerned.

6 We get swings from year to year in
7 catch per unit of effort, and sometimes we get
8 an influx of small fish. But there's been no
9 measurable decline in the average size, for
10 example, of sailfish in these tournaments over
11 60 years.

12 With regard to circle hooks, I
13 think the comment with artificial lures is
14 absolutely correct. You just don't gut hook a
15 fish with J-hooks and artificial lures.

16 And I thought we were saying
17 that's okay in tournaments. We don't use them
18 in south Florida sailfish tournaments. We're
19 fishing live bait with circle hooks.

20 But I would just remind everybody
21 here that last year in three days, the fishing
22 club, the Silver Sailfish Derby, we caught and
23 released over 1,000 sailfish in three days
24 with 50 boats. And I think damn near all of
25 them survived.

26 CHAIR MCCREARY: Do you want to
27 comment?

28 MEMBER JOLLEY: And also, if you
29 look at the evidence, this one last thing, the
30 catch per unit of effort in the Silver
31 Sailfish Derby has gone up significantly in
32 the last ten years, highly significantly.

33 Average catch rate in south
34 Florida over the last 60 years has been
35 somewhere around 1.3 fish per boat per day.
36 Last year it was over 2 fish per boat per day.

37 And we've seen a steady -- not
38 every year, but a fairly steady increase in
39 catch per unit of effort over the last ten to
40 15 years.

41 MS. DAVIS: So I do want to add,
42 and I apologize, Bob, for not answering this
43 question fully when you asked it. But the
44 data from the recreational billfish survey is
45 put in our national report to ICCAT. We also
46 publish it in our SAFE Report, the landings
47 numbers from tournaments.

48 CHAIR MCCREARY: All right. Let's

1 continue through our queue. I have Carrie,
2 Mark, Wally, Ellen and Terri. Carrie?

3 MEMBER KENNEDY: Hi, Carrie from
4 Maryland DNR. So I guess part of it is my
5 ignorance, and part of it, I guess I just want
6 a little bit of a clarification.

7 If the tournament data are sent to
8 the science centers and used in stock
9 assessments as catch data, and then presumably
10 the LPS catch estimates are also used in stock
11 assessments as a substitute for catch, is
12 there any duplication, and how would the LPS
13 survey account for tournament catch and
14 tournament efforts in their survey?

15 Am I asking my question clearly
16 enough?

17 MR. SALZ: Yes, I think I can
18 address that as far as the LPS and the overlap
19 goes. Tournaments are covered by the Large
20 Pelagic Survey. But they are only selected as
21 part of the random draw.

22 So we don't target them, we don't
23 have a separate sample frame for tournaments.
24 It's just if that particular day and that
25 particular site is randomly selected, and it's
26 a tournament, we will sample there.

27 So they are counted, you know, in
28 the catch rates. And that gets expanded by
29 the effort to come up with a total catch. So
30 if you were to add the LPS catch estimates or
31 landings estimates to what you're getting from
32 the tournaments, you're correct, that would be
33 double counting.

34 But that is not what's done when
35 the data actually get used. So if the science
36 centers are using the tournament information,
37 they might be using it for an index, you know,
38 a CPU index or something.
39 Something that's independent of total catch,
40 you know, or doesn't affect total catch. So I
41 think there are overlaps, you're correct, in
42 the data itself.

43 But we're very careful in how it's
44 used so that when it gets used, we avoid any
45 kind of duplication when it comes to
46 particularly monitoring and quota assessment
47 of allocation and such.

48 MEMBER KENNEDY: Thank you.

1 CHAIR MCCREARY: Thank you. Mark?

2 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Let me just add,
3 also, that some of those same provisions for
4 making sure that fish aren't double counted go
5 into, you know, counting fish when we look at
6 blue marlin and white marlin counts against
7 the 250 cap.

8 And in fact, we have an
9 established protocol for how we do that from
10 the different databases and how it's handled.

11 CHAIR MCCREARY: Good, thank you.

12 MEMBER SAMPSON: Yes, in regards
13 to some of the comments that were made about
14 the requirements of circle hooks being used in
15 the billfish tournaments, you have to remember
16 that tournaments are about rules.

17 I mean, whenever a tournament is
18 set up, the fishermen that go into those
19 tournaments know this is not a normal fishing
20 day for them.

21 We're going to have to start at a
22 certain time, end at a certain time, fish in
23 certain places, number of lines, all that kind
24 of stuff.

25 So the requirement of circle hooks
26 is -- while it cannot be enforced 100 percent,
27 there's no way to guarantee everybody's going
28 to use those hooks any more than they can
29 guarantee that more than one person isn't
30 going to handle the rod during the fighting of
31 the fish, that lines won't be in the water
32 before 8:30, blah, blah, blah.

33 So any angler that was questioning
34 the enforceability of that, I would just
35 respond to them that, well, it's just another
36 rule. You know, we're not 100 percent with
37 it, but everybody has to.

38 That's what tournaments are about,
39 they're about rules. And then another comment
40 was made about, well some anglers might choose
41 not to participate in a tournament because of
42 that rule.

43 Again, same thing. We hear the
44 same thing with rules that we have within our
45 tournaments. Sometimes people don't like
46 them, they don't like the way you structure
47 the tournament.

48 But hey, you got to set rules.

1 And not everybody is going to like them.
2 Hopefully most people will, and they choose to
3 participate. But that's just the way it goes.

4 There's no way you can structure a
5 tournament so everybody's happy. They won't
6 like the food you serve at the banquet, or the
7 T-shirt prints or whatever. You know, there's
8 no way. But you do the best you can. Well,
9 anyway, that's all.

10 CHAIR MCCREARY: Exactly. Wally?

11 MEMBER JENKINS: I was just going
12 to discuss the circle hooks, too. Again, when
13 the rule went into effect in 2007 we did see
14 our catch per unit of effort go down.

15 However, this past year was the
16 highest catch per unit of effort of billfish
17 in South Carolina in history. 1.96 billfish
18 released per boat that participated.

19 And just to give you some
20 perspective, in 2000 through 2004, that
21 release rate was 0.26. So it's nine times
22 higher or something like that.

23 We do have our law enforcement go
24 on the boats and make sure that the bear hooks
25 on the reels are circle hooks. And you can,
26 obviously pull a J-hook with a lure all day.

27 That's part of the rules. But
28 that doesn't preclude them taking, changing
29 their rigs on the way in. But most of our
30 guys on the way in, they're drinking. They're
31 not going to be changing their lures.

32 (Laughter.)

33 MEMBER JENKINS: So anyway, I
34 really think, I want to say that circle hooks,
35 although I've caught hell from the fishermen
36 for years about it, I don't think there's any
37 denying that you can catch billfish with
38 circle hooks in large numbers.

39 CHAIR MCCREARY: Thank you.
40 Ellen?

41 MEMBER PEEL: It would be
42 interesting to know whether we're killing more
43 white marlin in the government's weak hook
44 experiment than are being saved with the
45 circle hooks in tournaments.

46 With John Jolley's mention of
47 sailfish, and the obvious higher encounter
48 rate, you know, we need to keep that in mind

1 when we go to ICCAT this year, that we have a
2 robust fishery in, certainly, Florida, where I
3 think the government says 97 percent of them
4 are caught.

5 CHAIR MCCREARY: Thank you.
6 Terri?

7 MEMBER BEIDEMAN: This is just a
8 question, I guess. You said that you had done
9 outreach. And I'm looking at your document, I
10 guess, those documents you reproduced, that
11 and the ID document there.

12 So was it those documents were
13 what you provided outreach to the tournaments?

14 MS. DAVIS: We just recently
15 developed these documents. I've been sending
16 them with confirmations of registrations to
17 billfish and tuna tournaments as of recently.

18 And we've been discussing
19 producing hard copies of these and including
20 them with the batch of other outreach that we
21 send to tournaments that request outreach.

22 CHAIR MCCREARY: Great. All
23 right, I think --

24 MEMBER BEIDEMAN: Well, no, no,
25 no, I'm not -- thank you.

26 So you said you had done 12,000
27 units of outreach for the tournaments. That's
28 what I wrote down. And your response, or at
29 least the feedback was that they could have
30 had less.

31 So I'm just wondering, isn't it
32 possible that you could post this stuff and
33 tournaments could download what they need, as
34 well, you know, on demand I guess? Cost
35 savings.

36 So, and you know what, I wouldn't
37 mind having some of those handy, too. They
38 come in handy. Thanks.

39 MS. DAVIS: Thank you. And we
40 actually do post all of the outreach on the
41 tournament's website, so people can do that.
42 And yes, thank you for your comment.

43 CHAIR MCCREARY: Thank you, Katie,
44 very much. And thank you for the questions
45 and discussion. At this point, we want to
46 turn back to public comment.

47 And we want to ask -- sorry, who
48 are you pointing at, Terri?

1 That's fine. We want to ask if
2 there are any members of the public who would
3 like to address the advisory panel at this
4 point.

5 And if you are here to address the
6 panel, please stand up so we can identify you.
7 Does not look like it. Margo, I think it's
8 back to your wrap-up.

9 Let's take a very short break, and
10 we'll load up the final presentation. Thank
11 you.

12 (Whereupon, the above-entitled
13 matter went off the record at 10:53 a.m. and
14 resumed at 11:06 a.m.)

15 MS. SCHUTZE-HAUGEN: All right,
16 why don't we go ahead and finish up?
17 Apparently some folks went to check out. So
18 they should be here shortly.

19 So you'll see some new format to
20 the slides. This is the new NOAA fisheries
21 template. So you'll be seeing a lot of this.
22 There'll be different pictures up in the top
23 left corner.

24 So it's your first preview of the
25 new look. And so, whoops, okay. So just to
26 refresh people's memories, this is the live
27 fire exercise for me.

28 I haven't seen a word of what I'm
29 about to relay to you. And what we're trying
30 to do here is provide some, just feedback on
31 what we've heard during the meeting, some big
32 take-aways.

33 Not trying to capture every single
34 point that was stated. So what I would ask is
35 if you see something really big that's missing
36 or not quite what the panel said, then I'm
37 happy to make those changes.

38 But I don't want to make it the
39 transcripts, because we'll have those in just
40 a couple of days.

41 And then I think it goes topic by
42 topic. So for draft Amendment 5 on sharks,
43 interest in holding this a smaller, more
44 focused meeting, potentially webinar, face to
45 face blend. And then maybe just the shark-
46 interested folks would come.

47 No need to rush comment coming in.
48 Specific to hammerheads, consider the

1 scalloped hammerhead prohibition. But then
2 don't prohibit and also don't group all the
3 hammerheads together.

4 And look at time/area closures and
5 hook and gear restrictions and consider use of
6 hook timers to look at post-release mortality
7 and soak times.

8 Couple of comments on giving
9 blacktip sharks their own quota. And then
10 look at where and how dusky shark interactions
11 are occurring.

12 So on electronic dealer reporting,
13 more outreach is needed. We are actively
14 working on that.

15 CHAIR MCCREARY: I'm sorry, hang
16 on a second.

17 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: I think I
18 would like to go through it.

19 CHAIR MCCREARY: You want to go
20 through it, yes. It's kind of --

21 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: It's not that
22 long.

23 CHAIR MCCREARY: It holds together
24 as a piece.

25 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: Yes. So we
26 are working on more outreach, truly as we
27 speak. And bluefin dealers are already
28 reporting, but consider having that bluefin
29 tuna fold into the eDealer system.

30 On the year to date review for
31 bluefin, that the bluefin trophy closures need
32 to be better publicized, and consider
33 adjusting the general category limit upward to
34 maximize landings.

35 And then on pre-draft Amendment 7,
36 accountability, transparency, responsibility,
37 flexibility. It's like our tagline I guess,
38 huh?

39 Need to assess the number of
40 active pelagic longline vessels, target
41 species, observer coverage, location as well
42 as look across years.

43 We really need real time
44 reporting. The new VMS units need to be better
45 utilized. Need for flexibility in time/area
46 closures, quota transfers, both between
47 individuals and categories.

48 Maximize landings within the U.S.

1 quota of both bluefin and swordfish. Consider
2 the effectiveness of alternative gears like
3 buoy gear and product quality of green stick.

4 And be careful of unintended
5 impacts to directed fisheries. Support for
6 the catch cap with industry sorting the
7 details out. Also, interest for a small group
8 discussion on that issue.

9 Mixed views on dead discard
10 accounting, different categories. And also
11 mixed views on the Gulf of Mexico closure
12 ideas. Support for mandatory retention.

13 Drop in minimum size to the ICCAT
14 minimum and elimination of the target catch
15 requirements. Comments that we should remove
16 the NED allocation from the analyses.

17 And then also support for year
18 round general category fishery, particularly
19 is useful for identification of hot spots.

20 For Amendment 4, final rule will
21 publish next week. The Southeast Permit
22 Office will be administering the permits late
23 in 2012, but they will be effective January
24 2nd.

25 So people can get them and have
26 them in hand for when it's effective. And
27 then concerns about seafood product safety
28 were raised as well.

29 On Amendment 8, for commercial
30 access for swordfish. On permitting, proceed
31 cautiously. We're getting close to our
32 baseline quota.

33 That it should be a commercial
34 permit and it should be available to
35 charter/head boats. That it should be open
36 access, and that it should be limited access.

37 Okay, so I think that covers the
38 gamut. I would say that's mixed. For
39 retention limits, general support for regional
40 management.

41 Some mixed views on south Florida
42 retention limit at zero or not zero. But good
43 opportunities in this region, have a Mid-
44 Atlantic Bight region and then use the
45 statistical areas, ICCAT, for as regions go.

46 For catch reporting and the tag
47 program, idea that tagging should only be
48 required in the area of concern, specifically

1 south Florida, the tag program may not improve
2 enforcement.

3 Comments that we should issue tags
4 to vessels, and that people may harvest and
5 land in different areas to avoid the tagging
6 requirements. But that there may be marketing
7 benefits to a tag program.

8 Other takeaways, we need to land
9 our quota to protect from losing it, but we're
10 getting closer to the base. So I think less
11 urgency coming through.

12 Quickly implement/don't implement
13 permit. Again, mixed. Consider the regional
14 differences. Support for the tagging program
15 with reporting requirements, and then the idea
16 that maybe the permit could be a pilot given
17 some of the concerns with impacts to quotas or
18 current permit holders.

19 So a couple of things for you all
20 when you go home, if you would please get your
21 travel forms, they're in your folder, with
22 receipts back to us by next Friday.

23 Please don't keep your name tags
24 or table tents because we'll reuse them at the
25 next meeting. So just leave them on the table.

26 And then we have the evaluation
27 form. Particularly given that we're in a new
28 location, both hotel, city, I would be very
29 interested for input on whether this was a
30 place we should consider coming back or not.

31 If you were not added to the
32 Hilton room block, please see Jenni. She's
33 back there in the white. Hi, Jenni.

34 And before we maybe open up for
35 comments, I wanted to give a really big thanks
36 to all the HMSers that do so much all year.
37 And particularly in getting ready for panel
38 meetings to make sure that we've got
39 presentations done, things actually cleared
40 and publically available that we can share.

41 So, my thanks to the HMSers for
42 all their support.

43 (Applause.)

44 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: All right, so
45 I understand Gerry has a question. Not just
46 Gerry, okay.

47 CHAIR MCCREARY: So just to
48 reiterate a point that you should all know

1 well, this is not a transcript. This is, as
2 you said, a live fire exercise.

3 And we do have a very detailed,
4 meticulous transcript. So if these don't
5 capture everything that was said in the
6 meeting, that's okay. That's intentional.

7 So I have Ralph, Rich and Sean.
8 Ralph?

9 MEMBER PRATT: Live fire, so you
10 just loaded the gun. Could you go to
11 Amendment 7? The bottom, support for year
12 round general category fishery, useful for
13 identification of hot spots.

14 You know, I'm not sure if there
15 was wide agreement on that. There was a
16 little bit of a discussion. But you know, the
17 general category's cod in New England.

18 We're not going to let that go and
19 be divided up and down the coast. And I'm not
20 sure there was a discussion in that regard to
21 that extent.

22 So although there was a little
23 discussion for identification of hot spots,
24 and that might be a benefit, I don't think
25 there's support for utilizing the general
26 category for that purpose. Thank you.

27 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: So this
28 comment came through in the scoping meeting.
29 And so I think we recognize what was behind it
30 maybe a little bit more than what was fully
31 discussed in the panel meeting.

32 So I think we could qualify this
33 as mixed support. I think there is some, but
34 clearly not general or universal.

35 CHAIR MCCREARY: Yes, just another
36 point about this. You know this, as has been
37 said many times, this is an input-gathering,
38 information-seeking forum.

39 It's not a consensus-seeking
40 forum. And so all of these bullets are
41 individual comments. They're not necessarily
42 sense of the group comments. And they haven't
43 been vetted in that sense.

44 So Ralph, your point's well taken
45 about there are various views on this subject.
46 And many others, I'm sure. Rich?

47 MEMBER RUAIS: Well, it's
48 basically to back up what Ralph wants to say.

1 And when we saw it flash by us, we said, I
2 almost forgot that there was any discussion of
3 that issue here.

4 Maybe there was a little bit. But
5 that was really in the context, in the scoping
6 process with one group of people trying to get
7 more quota by asking for that.

8 What it doesn't do is it doesn't
9 recognize, in reality, when the bulk of
10 bluefin are available to the United States. I
11 mean, clearly we have the June through
12 October, November, December fishery for a
13 reason.

14 That's when most of the bluefin
15 are in here. And then in the wintertime, they
16 move to the Gulf Stream and maybe some stick
17 around in January and February. And maybe
18 smaller fish, but certainly not the general
19 category size for that.

20 So I think there's an allocation
21 motivation behind that that has been rejected
22 in the past. So anyway, I'd issue the same
23 qualification as Ralph does on that one.

24 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: Well, so
25 Rich, what I would say is I will add mixed.
26 But I think most of the discussion on
27 Amendment 7 was an allocation discussion.

28 MEMBER RUAIS: That would be fine.

29 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: So I don't
30 think that this is alone in that.

31 MEMBER RUAIS: I think you can
32 handle it, yes.

33 CHAIR MCCREARY: Thank you.
34 Terri, are you eager to weigh in on this
35 point? You were waving your arm, so.

36 MEMBER BEIDEMAN: No, not
37 particularly on that specific issue. But just
38 noting that the word "allocation" is
39 conspicuously low on that particular thing.

40 And I believe that the discussion
41 about quota shares and allocation was
42 mentioned many times, not just in regard to
43 the any day and, you know, so that's my basic
44 comment. It doesn't have specifically to do
45 with how you divide up the general category.

46 CHAIR MCCREARY: Got it, thank
47 you. Gerry? Microphone?

48 MEMBER LEAPE: Brief one on

1 Amendment 7. On the discussion around catch
2 caps, there seem to be some general support
3 for the need for greater monitoring and
4 enforcement of any catch caps, regardless of
5 how they're implemented.

6 And under sharks, that there was
7 at least disappointment expressed by many of
8 not being able to consider a proposal at this
9 meeting.

10 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: We were
11 disappointed, too.

12 CHAIR MCCREARY: Shared
13 disappointment.

14 MEMBER LEAPE: Right, no, I mean,
15 if we could just have a note in there, thanks.

16 CHAIR MCCREARY: Sean?

17 MEMBER MCKEON: I had pretty much
18 the same comments regarding the percent
19 allocation issue. That was a pretty
20 substantial discussion, and I just didn't see
21 it.

22 But I know it's in the detailed
23 comments. But just that it should be a little
24 bit more highlighted, that's all.

25 CHAIR MCCREARY: Thank you. Mark?

26 MEMBER STEVENS: Thanks. On
27 Amendment 5, just on the don't rush bullet, I
28 remember the comments came after I spoke
29 saying that there's no hurry to get this done.

30 And in our written submission, we
31 did reiterate it's important that NOAA keep
32 its target date of Spring 2013, and I just
33 wanted to say it out loud, in addition to in
34 writing. We think that it's important to stay
35 on track.

36 And the second thing is there were
37 folks around the table who said don't prohibit
38 and don't group the hammerheads together. We
39 said do prohibit and do group the hammerheads
40 together as well. So thanks.

41 CHAIR MCCREARY: Thank you, Mark.

42 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: We could add
43 a don't rush/rush. And a don't/do prohibit,
44 how about that?

45 (Laughter.)

46 CHAIR MCCREARY: All right, Margo,
47 any other final comments or thoughts at this
48 point?

1 MS. SCHULZE-HAUGEN: I find these
2 meetings very helpful. Just to hear the
3 dialogue, the different views.

4 I mean, we talk with a lot of you
5 individually or in smaller groups through the
6 year, at hearings or at ICCAT meetings. And
7 so having all of you together, I think, is
8 very helpful, especially you can hear each
9 other as well.

10 So we have a lot to sort through
11 and think about over the next several months.

12 So you know, I think, we may seem a little
13 quieter than we have in the last couple of
14 months because we won't have quite the blitz
15 of things coming out.

16 But it doesn't mean that we're not
17 working hard. And so I will be seeing some of
18 you as the ICCAT process and season kicks off.
19 But if I don't, please don't hesitate to get
20 in touch with me or any of the HMSers here.

21 We're always open to talking about
22 whatever you need to talk about. So thank
23 you. I really appreciate your time. And
24 we'll be in touch. Have a safe trip home.

25 (Whereupon, the above-entitled
26 matter was concluded at 11:21 a.m.)
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C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Highly Migratory Species
Advisory Panel Meeting

Before: DOC/NOAA/NMFS

Date: 09-21-12

Place: Bethesda, MD

was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under
my direction; further, that said transcript is a
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Court Reporter

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