

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
 NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION  
 (NOAA)

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NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS)  
 ATLANTIC HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY PANEL

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PUBLIC MEETING

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FRIDAY  
 MAY 20, 2022

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The Panel met at the DoubleTree by Hilton Silver Spring, 8777 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland, at 8:45 a.m. EDT, Bennett Brooks, facilitating.

MEMBERS PRESENT

JASON ADRIANCE, Louisiana Department of  
 Wildlife and Fisheries  
 CHARLIE BERGMAN  
 PETER CHAIBONGSAI, The Billfish Foundation  
 DANIEL COFFEY, Harte Research Institute for  
 Gulf of Mexico Studies  
 DUSTIN COLSON, Atlantic States Marine  
 Fisheries Commission  
 JOHN DEPERSENAIRE, Viking Yacht Company  
 MARCUS DRYMON, Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant  
 - State Rep for Alabama  
 RAIMUNDO ESPINOZA, Conservacion ConCiencia  
 Inc.  
 YAMITZA RODRIGUEZ FERRER, Puerto Rico DNER,  
 Recreational and Sport Fisheries Division

SONJA FORDHAM, Shark Advocates International  
STEVEN GETTO, American Bluefin Tuna  
Association  
WILLY GOLDSMITH, American Saltwater Guides  
Association  
WALT GOLET, University of Maine School  
of Marine Sciences, Gulf of Maine Research  
Institute  
DEWEY HEMILRIGHT, Mid-Atlantic Fishery  
Management Council  
GREG HINKS, New Jersey Department of  
Environmental Protection  
EVAN HIPSLEY, JR.  
JAMES HULL, Hull Seafood  
BOB HUMPHREY, Sport-Ventures Charters and  
Casco Bay Bluefin Bonanza  
LISA KERR, Gulf of Maine Research Institute  
CHRISTINE KITTLE, Florida Fish and Wildlife  
Conservation Commission  
JEFF KNEEBONE, New England Aquarium  
ROBERT "FLY" NAVARRO, Fly Zone Fishing  
JEFF ODEN, F/V Sea Bound  
TIM PICKETT, Lindgren-Pitman, Inc.  
MICHAEL PIERDINOCK, CPF Charters  
"Perseverance"; Recreational Fishing  
Alliance  
STEVE POLAND, North Carolina Division of  
Marine Fisheries  
GEORGE PURMONT  
MARK SAMPSON, Ocean City Charterboat  
Captains Association  
MARTIN T. SCANLON, F/V Provider II  
DAVID SCHALIT, American Bluefin Tuna  
Association  
GREGORY SKOMAL, Massachusetts Marine  
Fisheries  
PERRY TRIAL, Texas Parks and Wildlife  
Department  
RICK WEBER, South Jersey Marina  
ALAN WEISS, Blue Water Fishing Tackle Co.  
KATIE WESTFALL, Environmental Defense Fund  
ANGEL WILLEY, Maryland Department of Natural  
Resources

## NOAA NMFS STAFF PRESENT

JANET COIT, Assistant Administrator,  
National Marine Fisheries Service and  
Acting Deputy NOAA Administrator

SAM RAUCH, Deputy Assistant Administrator,  
Regulatory Programs

RANDY BLANKINSHIP, Division Chief, Atlantic  
Highly Migratory Species Management  
Division

KARYL BREWSTER-GEISZ, HQ Fish Branch Chief,  
Atlantic Highly Migratory Species  
Management Division

CRAIG COCKRELL, Atlantic Highly Migratory  
Species Management Division

PETE COOPER, Branch Chief, Atlantic Highly  
Migratory Species Management Division

DAN CREAR, Atlantic Highly Migratory Species  
Management Division

JENNIFER CUDNEY, Atlantic Highly Migratory  
Species Management Division

TOBEY CURTIS, Atlantic Highly Migratory  
Species Management Division

GUY DUBECK, Atlantic Highly Migratory  
Species Management Division

BEN DUFFIN, Atlantic Highly Migratory  
Species Management Division

CLIFF HUTT, Atlantic Highly Migratory  
Species Management Division

DEBRA LAMBERT

BRAD MCHALE, Atlantic Highly Migratory  
Species Management Division

SARAH MCLAUGHLIN, Atlantic Highly Migratory  
Species Management Division

DELISSE ORTIZ, Atlantic Highly Migratory  
Species Management Division

LARRY REDD, JR., Atlantic Highly Migratory  
Species Management Division

TOM WARREN, Atlantic Highly Migratory  
Species Management Division

JACKIE WILSON, Atlantic Highly Migratory  
Species Management Division

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

2 8:54 a.m.

3 MR. BROOKS: Good morning, everybody.

4 Welcome back. I'm getting some feedback here,

5 Pete. All right, good morning, everybody,

6 welcome -- nope.

7 Let's try this one more time. Okay,

8 take three. Good morning everybody and welcome

9 back. Day 3 of 3 here. In a minute we will hand

10 over the microphone to leadership. We have Janet

11 Coit here and Sam Rauch here and we're thrilled

12 to have them both here.

13 But let me just give us a quick

14 orientation to our time together. After the

15 leadership update we will have a conversation

16 around equity and environmental justice as it

17 relates to highly migratory species. This is, I

18 think, a first time for us to dive into this

19 conversation. I think it would be really

20 interesting to discuss that topic and begin to

21 think about how that plays out in HMS fisheries.

22 We'll take a break at around 10:15 and

1 then we will come back for the final conversation  
2 of the day around shark depredation.

3 For members of the public that are  
4 here, we will have public comment yet again. And  
5 we will take that at 11:30 this morning. And  
6 then we will adjourn at 12 o'clock.

7 So I mentioned at the end of the day  
8 yesterday that we might have elevated COVID  
9 levels that require a mask wearing, indeed we do  
10 not. So no mask requirement for today. So just  
11 continue to do whatever is comfortable for you.

12 Let's see. Just for any members of  
13 the public that are here and haven't been here  
14 before, the conversation is around the table  
15 among the advisory panel members. We have  
16 advisory panel members who are in the room and we  
17 have advisory panel members who are on the,  
18 coming in by webinar. And so I'll continue to  
19 manage the queue sort of in the room and outside  
20 the room and try to balance that out.

21 And for folks who are on the phone, if  
22 you're able to keep your cameras on the whole

1 time we really appreciate it.

2 And just a reminder that these  
3 meetings are recorded. So please be aware of  
4 that. With that, I think I'm going to hand it  
5 off to Randy to introduce our speakers.

6 And I just do want to note that I  
7 believe we have a really hard stop at 9:30 for  
8 both Janet and Sam. So I will manage the queue  
9 accordingly. So, Randy, over to you.

10 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Thank you, Bennett.  
11 Good morning, everybody. It is great to see you  
12 all again for Day 3. Thank you for being here  
13 again.

14 We are honored to have with us Janet  
15 Coit and Sam Rauch. Janet Coit is the assistant  
16 administrator for fisheries. Sam Rauch is the  
17 deputy assistant administrator for regulatory  
18 programs.

19 Of course they've been with you before  
20 in the virtual world. And for some of you still  
21 in virtual. Those of you that are online. But  
22 we are really glad to have this in-person

1 opportunity. And thank you, Janet, for being  
2 here in person.

3 Janet has really taken a great  
4 interest in our Atlantic HMS Fisheries over the,  
5 about a year, a little bit more than a year that  
6 you've been onboard in your current position.  
7 And it's been a real honor and privilege to be  
8 able to brief her up on our issues. And thank  
9 you for taking such interest in them. We're glad  
10 you're here. Thank you.

11 MS. COIT: Good morning, everyone.  
12 And thank you very much, Randy, for that lovely  
13 and kind introduction. It's an honor to be here  
14 with all of you. Am I close enough to the mic?  
15 I feel --

16 PARTICIPANT: Pete will tell us if  
17 you're not.

18 MS. COIT: Okay. I feel like I'm  
19 reverberating around the room. Okay.

20 It is really nice to see people in  
21 person. I've met a number of you long ago. I've  
22 met some of you recently. I've seen some of your



1 virtually. And for some, this is the first time  
2 I've seen your faces. Again, I know some people  
3 who are on the line.

4 But working together in person, for  
5 me, is very preferred to doing things virtually  
6 and online. So it's been really great to start  
7 to get to know the staff.

8 This is the first time I'm meeting  
9 Randy in person. He looks good three-  
10 dimensional.

11 (Laughter.)

12 MS. COIT: So, I just want to start by  
13 thanking you. You know, one of the aspects of  
14 fisheries management that is so rewarding is how  
15 participatory it is. And we consider you valued  
16 partners. And I look forward to learning from  
17 you and to working with you.

18 No shortage of difficult issues. And  
19 I have great appreciation for the experience and  
20 diversity in the room. I find that despite the  
21 challenges that we have in the fisheries  
22 management world we manage to share divergent

1 views, agree to disagree sometimes and continue  
2 to work forward towards consensus sometimes.

3 So this advisory panel and highly  
4 migratory species work are really unique in terms  
5 of how we manage fisheries under the Magnuson-  
6 Stevens Act. And appreciate, I know you have the  
7 robust discussion about Amendment 13. And all  
8 the input as we work on these draft management  
9 plans. Listen and incorporate input and then  
10 continue to move forward.

11 I wanted to just quickly, and I don't  
12 want to consume all the time because I want you  
13 to hear from Sam, but talk this administration's  
14 priorities and what I've been focusing on. And  
15 in short, equity, climate change, seafood  
16 strategy and conservation. So I'm just going to  
17 touch on those.

18 In regard to equity, I think you have  
19 some time to discuss that with Sam. Or you'll  
20 hear more from Sam --

21 (Off-microphone comments.)

22 MS. COIT: Pardon?

1 (Off-microphone comments.)

2 MS. COIT: Oh, okay. Well, we have a  
3 strategy that we put forward that we very, very  
4 much want input on. And it's not a new concept.

5 There has been an executive order on  
6 equity and environmental justice for some time.  
7 But really looking at how we promote access to  
8 fisheries and don't shut people out because of  
9 systemic or management practices, is one of the  
10 areas that I hope you can provide input on.

11 I want to take some time to talk about  
12 climate change. Anybody who is on the water  
13 knows that climate change is here. I'm from the  
14 State of Rhode Island and we see dramatic changes  
15 in the last 30 years in terms of fisheries off  
16 the coast of southern New England.

17 And how to move forward to ensure that  
18 our science-based fisheries management, which is  
19 the hallmark of what we do here at NOAA, is  
20 adaptive and provides for resilient habitats.  
21 Takes into account the changes in the ecosystem,  
22 the latest science. That is very much a focus in

1       how we make sure our science informs our  
2       management.

3                       So when we're talking about, and I  
4       think maybe even some cutting-edge things in  
5       respect to management around highly migratory  
6       species, you know, really being adaptive to  
7       looking at changes in the ecosystem and what that  
8       means for conservation measure, you know, those  
9       are the types of things that we're talking about  
10      and thinking about every day.

11                      I know you heard from Brian Hooker and  
12      had a lively discussion with BOEM. So I can't  
13      talk about climate change and managing fisheries  
14      without talking about this administration's  
15      efforts to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions.  
16      Mainly from the energy sector.

17                      And how that ambitious program to  
18      scale up offshore winds, starting in the Atlantic  
19      and expanded to the Pacific and then the Gulf, is  
20      affecting fisheries. And it's affecting us at  
21      NOAA Fisheries.

22                      We have a rather static workforce and

1 a huge workload surrounding offshore wind. So, I  
2 won't go into all the aspects of it, but I want  
3 to just briefly say that we have a regulatory  
4 responsibility that is tremendous under the  
5 Marine Mammal Protection Act, the Endangered  
6 Species Act, Magnuson-Stevens Act and NEPA.

7 A huge workload around just doing our  
8 regulatory job and making sure these projects, to  
9 the extent we can, with all the unknowns, around,  
10 how does a wall of wind farms affecting migratory  
11 species, how does it affect fisheries, how does  
12 it affect safety. These are things that we're  
13 working on under the gun.

14 Because the pace and the ambitions of  
15 this administration to scale that up require us  
16 to deal with one project after another coming out  
17 the chute. So that is a huge focus. And we're  
18 trying to staff up and be that hackneyed metaphor  
19 about building the plane while you're flying it.  
20 It does feel like that.

21 And we're constantly trying to apply  
22 lessons learned and improve processes. Including

1 engagement.

2           So another area that we're focused on  
3 is mitigation and compensation to affected  
4 fisheries. I suspect Brian talked to you about a  
5 policy that BOEM is working on that we have  
6 informed, but is not our policy, that's coming  
7 out shortly. Because things like, those are  
8 trailing aspects of offshore wind.

9           We don't have a clear federal policy.  
10 And in this case it will be guidance on how to  
11 minimize impacts and compensate effective  
12 fisheries.

13           There is other aspects of offshore  
14 wind, but I just want to, when we think about  
15 climate change and the impacts in our ecosystems  
16 we're simultaneously trying to take efforts to  
17 reduce carbon emissions and to promote resilience  
18 in our ecosystems. And I can't think of one  
19 thing we're doing, whether it's talking about  
20 equity, conservation, a seafood strategy that  
21 isn't foundationally or framed on thinking about  
22 climate change.

1 I can't recall if the last time I  
2 spoke with you I spoke about America the  
3 Beautiful, but just shifting to a related issue,  
4 which is around conservation. And so, this  
5 administration has two 30x30 goals.

6 30 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030,  
7 which is tremendously ambitious. And 30 percent  
8 of lands and waters in the U.S. conserved by  
9 2030. And that's called America the Beautiful.

10 So that's another area where in  
11 particular the marine and coastal areas, we're  
12 focused on interpreting, you know, what does it  
13 mean to be conserved. You all know that many  
14 marine protected areas, almost all of them, allow  
15 recreational fishing.

16 What does it mean to be conserved.  
17 And when we look at the goals of the America the  
18 Beautiful, which are conservation for access,  
19 conservation for biodiversity and conservation  
20 for climate resilience.

21 Based on respect for local efforts to  
22 conserve places that matter to people based on

1 using existing tools, yes, we're both  
2 participating in that, excited about that. We  
3 have no funding under the Infrastructure Act.  
4 Over a billion dollars to NOAA Fisheries to work  
5 on habitat restoration, fish passage.

6 So that is another area of focus  
7 that's really hopefully and actually kind of fun  
8 in that with the funding that we have through the  
9 infrastructure bill we have really a historic  
10 opportunity to scale up resources put towards  
11 restoration and conservation.

12 And we had an interesting discussion  
13 with the heads of all the regional MFC Councils  
14 yesterday, I think yesterday, about, again, about  
15 what does it means to be conserved. If you're  
16 managed for sustainable fisheries, is that a  
17 conservation area.

18 You know, sort of the degree of  
19 conservation. And agree that we'll work with the  
20 Councils on conservation measures, whether they  
21 qualify under America the Beautiful or not.  
22 Because the definition of conservation in the



1 atlas at the Administrations Building is still a  
2 work in progress.

3 Some of the protected species issues  
4 that you're dealing with are part of the focus  
5 around conservation that I am not bringing anew  
6 to this Fisheries service. But that is an area  
7 that I'm enjoying working with the staff on. And  
8 where I think you have really been in the  
9 vanguard of thinking about conservation of the  
10 species that you care about.

11 The National Seafood Strategy is  
12 something that Secretary Raimundo, who used to  
13 the governor of Rhode Island, is very interested  
14 in. And we also plan to rollout a draft of that  
15 this summer.

16 It is intended to build climate  
17 resilience using our bully pulpit and every means  
18 we can to talk about the sustainable way we  
19 manage fisheries in the U.S. and how if you care  
20 about where your food comes from, and we want to  
21 deliver a healthy protein to Americans and  
22 supporting our U.S. fisheries is a great way to

1 do that.

2 We're also hoping to promote  
3 aquaculture. That's something that we've never  
4 had much funding for, and I know it can be  
5 controversial. It's another competing ocean use.

6 But our aquaculture AOA, Aquaculture  
7 Opportunities Area, they come from really using  
8 the best available modern science to, in a fine-  
9 grained way, map the ocean and look for areas  
10 that won't pose conflicts with fisheries and  
11 other uses. That is an approach we want to bring  
12 more to offshore wind, by the way.

13 In terms of, Randy gave me an update  
14 about Amendment 13 and the ongoing research in  
15 data collection. And again, just want to  
16 appreciate your input as we rollout that draft  
17 EIS in the proposed rule.

18 I know you're talking about shark  
19 management and depredation. And I look forward  
20 to, I've heard a lot about that from fisherman's  
21 that I've encountered. And I know it's a concern  
22 across our fisheries, so I'm interested to hear

1 more about that.

2 I guess I'll close with saying Randy  
3 misspoke. I've been here less than a year. And  
4 the complexity, there are no easy issues.

5 The complexity of what you're dealing  
6 with and the way we work together is heartening.  
7 But we want to all make sure that we are using  
8 our precious time and effort to focus on the most  
9 important issues.

10 And your advice in regard to that, and  
11 what we're encountering around the stressors that  
12 we can't control and the things we can control  
13 are, I think, are really rewarding aspect of  
14 working in fisheries management. So I really  
15 thank everyone for your time. Taking it away  
16 from getting out on the water, from other aspects  
17 of your job.

18 And I want to just commend that I  
19 think we have fantastic experts working in this  
20 area at NOAA Fisheries. And so I feel like I'm  
21 in good hands with you and you're in good hands  
22 with Randy and Kelly and Jenny and the other

1 folks who've worked on these issues over the  
2 years.

3 So thank you. I'm happy to -- I think  
4 I'm turning it over to Sam and then we're --

5 MR. BROOKS: Questions.

6 MS. COIT: Oh, okay. I think I'm  
7 turning it over to all of you for questions. But  
8 I'm glad that you are meeting here in Silver  
9 Spring so that I can see you in person, even  
10 briefly. And I look forward to seeing and  
11 hearing from you more. Thank you.

12 MR. BROOKS: Great, thank you so much.  
13 We've got time for some questions and a little  
14 bit of conversation. And as always, I know folks  
15 are eager are to participate here, and I will do  
16 my best to mix it up so we have a range of voices  
17 and perspectives weighing in.

18 And let me go with Rick and then over  
19 to John and then to Charlie to start. And if  
20 folks can start with name and affiliation, I'm  
21 sure that will be helpful.

22 MR. WEBER: Thank you for the

1 reminder, Bennett. Good call.

2 Janet, I'm Rick Weber. I have a  
3 recreational marine and tournament circuit in  
4 Cape May, New Jersey. I have been on this panel  
5 for a long time. I will be one of the ones  
6 eventually rotated out here in a couple of years,  
7 but I'm supposed to sit in a recreational seat,  
8 but my thoughts are more as a citizen and people  
9 who share the water.

10 And I'm going to probably color the  
11 rest of your time here because to me, the rest of  
12 this fisheries discussion is nothing if wind  
13 overtakes this entire process. I have never felt  
14 so small in the process as I do when I engaged  
15 BOEM.

16 It verges on patronizing, if you will.  
17 Like, oh, you do fish, that's nice, we do the  
18 ocean. And as we're talking about the 30x30  
19 goals I'm seeing, I'm seeing an urbanization, if  
20 you will, of the ocean we're going to zone it  
21 into, this is the area we preserve and this is  
22 the area that we develop, and nothing is going to

1 be left wild, as it was.

2 And that will destroy the spirit of  
3 the ocean that brought so many of us to it. The  
4 ocean has always been an escape from modernity.  
5 When you can't take what's going on, on land  
6 anymore, you escape to the water.

7 Whether it's recreational or whether  
8 it's a commercial fisherman who don't want the  
9 9:00 to 5:00 job, they want something that feels  
10 more grounded and more bounded with the earth.  
11 You escape to the ocean to get away from  
12 modernity.

13 And the two 30x30 goals, and I'm not  
14 even sure right now, I don't know what effect you  
15 personally have as the AA for fisheries, even  
16 have. And that just reinforces the steam-roll  
17 process because our very highest, most respected  
18 people, Sam has been with us for a long time.

19 And we need to come together as a  
20 fisheries team, to some extent. And, Sam, I will  
21 address this to you because I'm likely to be here  
22 and you're likely to be here after the

1 administration changes again. But we need to  
2 come together as fisheries, people, and defend  
3 what has been ours for a long time.

4 So whether that's making sure that the  
5 data is making it to BOEM, as fish people, and  
6 you are now one, Janet, and welcome. But as fish  
7 people we need to make sure that we don't get  
8 steam rolled in this process.

9 MS. COIT: Thank you, Rick. I'd like  
10 to address that and then offer Sam the mic.

11 First, I have been a fish person. So  
12 my entire life. But the last ten years, in my  
13 role as the head of a state's agency, was  
14 overseeing fisheries management, promoting  
15 seafood and pursuing all the aspects of  
16 fisheries.

17 So I bring that to this. And not only  
18 that, but Rhode Island is the first place we have  
19 an offshore wind farm. And I commend the process  
20 that we use there, which is very stakeholder  
21 intensive to try to identify the right place for  
22 an offshore wind farm, albeit five turbines, that

1 now are a bit of a recreational fishing  
2 attraction for our charter boat, party boat  
3 folks. People go out to see them, people go out  
4 to fish there, fish aggregate there.

5           Okay, a couple of things, Rick. Thank  
6 you. That was really eloquent and meaningful.  
7 We used to call Rhode Island and end game state  
8 because it's small and it's dense and at the end  
9 of the day every single acre was either going to  
10 be developed or in conservation status. And I  
11 hear you saying, I don't want my EEZ or my ocean  
12 to be like that.

13           I also find, my husband and I often  
14 say the only wilderness left in Rhode Island is  
15 out on the water. And I completely relate to  
16 what you're saying on the intrinsic value that  
17 you're talking about.

18           Sam has seen a lot of administrations  
19 come and go. So have you, Rick. You know, I  
20 represent President Biden and the goals of this  
21 administration, and everyone in the room knows  
22 that.



1           Having said that, I spend a majority  
2 of my time on offshore wind trying to, given the  
3 statutory authority we have, which BOEM, NOAA  
4 Fisheries are compelled to abide by, the  
5 directive from the administration, and then all  
6 that I bring to this role and all the expertise  
7 that folks at NOAA Fisheries to see, can we move  
8 forward consistent with this administration's  
9 goals in the way that's smarter, that is science  
10 based, mitigates the impacts on fisheries,  
11 fisherman, migratory species, marine mammals. I  
12 don't know the answer.

13           But we're trying really hard with  
14 every fiber to improve the processes, to raise  
15 the importance of the living marine resources,  
16 the ecosystem, the power of the ocean in all the  
17 ways that we're responsible for stewarding it to  
18 have more weight in this process. I think  
19 ultimately the laws that we're responsible for,  
20 they didn't contemplate offshore wind.

21           No one was thinking about that when  
22 Magnuson-Stevens Act was enacted. So, I feel

1 that may be coming down the pipe for some new  
2 statutory authorities. Because even basic  
3 things, like mitigation and compensation for  
4 fishing, aren't really spelled out anywhere.

5 And so I think many people, I can say  
6 this also from my old position, we have the first  
7 two major offshore wind farms, Vineyard Wind and  
8 South Fork, come forward while I was the head of  
9 the Rhode Island DEM. We're kind of making it up  
10 as we went along.

11 And then many of these unknowns,  
12 bedevil, the process. But we keep moving forward  
13 with the process not really knowing the  
14 cumulative impacts, not knowing. And so, that's  
15 kind of my charge right now.

16 And all the way up to the president  
17 and Secretary Raimundo, or like try to make this  
18 a better process. Try to de-conflict up-front,  
19 try to make sure we have the science basis.

20 But I hear you. And I think a lot of,  
21 I know that a lot of people that I represent or  
22 that I work with share a lot of those feelings.

1 MR. RAUCH: Yes. I mean, the only  
2 thing I would add, this has been a priority for  
3 the last three administrations. And I imagine it  
4 will be a priority for any future administration.

5 We've been working very hard. You're  
6 right, that BOEM doesn't rule the ocean, neither  
7 do we. We all have to work together to try to  
8 bring our authorities, they need to bring their  
9 authorities. And we're working on it as a  
10 federal family.

11 It's not easy. We did two wind  
12 projects this last year. We've never done any of  
13 those before. Janet talked about Rhode Island,  
14 we weren't really a part of that.

15 This has been a real learning  
16 experience for all of us, BOEM included, as to  
17 how to engage, what the right data sets are, how  
18 they get applied.

19 We're working very hard with BOEM to  
20 do exactly what you suggested. Make sure they  
21 have the data for their decisions. We're trying  
22 to work with them so that we have the right data

1 for our decisions.

2 We will make mistakes. We're all  
3 trying to learn together. It is critically  
4 important though that we figure out how to do  
5 this. Because we need to do this as a country.

6 And so we'll go forward with it in  
7 some manner. But we have a lot of learning and a  
8 lot of trial and error to go through.

9 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Sam. I know  
10 we're going to have way more interests than we're  
11 going to have time, so folks can be as focused on  
12 their questions or comments to leadership that  
13 would be great.

14 I want to bring in a commercial voice  
15 next. Charlie, why don't you come in.

16 MR. BERGMANN: Well, good morning.  
17 Thank you for being here. Charlie Bergmann. I  
18 represent the folks in the Gulf of Mexico.

19 I agree wholeheartedly with Mr. Weber  
20 over there. This concept of reserving big chunks  
21 of the ocean for something that's going to stop  
22 access from, and potentially stop access for

1 recreational fishing.

2 I know they're attracted there, but if  
3 your main composure in fishing as the group in  
4 here, it's generally further offshore. They have  
5 to get to their area. And if they, for whatever  
6 reason, can't go through that field of turbines,  
7 they have to go around it.

8 And then when you go around it, then  
9 you may end up switching your locations to  
10 another area just to get around the fields. Then  
11 that particular port may end up dying. We've  
12 lost way too much infrastructure. And when  
13 something changes, it doesn't change back for the  
14 good.

15 One of my concerns, not only with the  
16 fishing access, is the survey access for the NOAA  
17 fleet. You can't, as much as you would like to  
18 be able to, you can't drag a net through those  
19 fields. And if you can't get in a net or a long  
20 line gear or a dredge through those fields,  
21 you're destroying your time sets. Your time  
22 series over decades.

1                   How do you address that?

2                   MS. COIT: Thank you, Charlie. So we  
3 have a fishery survey mitigation plan that is out  
4 right now for comment. Late to the party.

5                   I mean, the impacts on our surveys for  
6 those first couple of projects were not addressed  
7 adequately up front, which disrupts this  
8 longitudinal series of inputs that we base our  
9 fisheries management on. So I share your  
10 concern.

11                   We are now both trying to, and  
12 successful gaining funding, to do the work we're  
13 going to have to do to calibrate over time. To  
14 calibrate and address the fact that we won't be  
15 able to do the same kind of trial surveys in  
16 those areas.

17                   And we're working hard to try to  
18 prevent that from happening. And to lay out a  
19 mitigation plan. But we very much share the  
20 concern of the disruption of our surveys.

21                   And I also want to add that at least  
22 the projects to date have been one nautical mile

1       apart in terms of the turbine placement that had  
2       not been constructed yet. It really is a grand  
3       experiment.

4                 The thought is that there will be  
5       fishing and wind in the same area. And I think  
6       we are likely to see that with certain gear types  
7       and with recreation, but with other gear types,  
8       as you mentioned.

9                 There is not any place in the world  
10       where you're having active commercial trolling,  
11       for instance, in and around these wind farms. So  
12       I think that's the hope. But it really is an  
13       experiment.

14                Disrupting our science, as John here  
15       is now leading that effort, he is acting as our  
16       chief scientist and working on that mitigation,  
17       survey mitigation plan. So I commend that plan  
18       to you and ask for your input, but is intended to  
19       deal with the disruptions that are unfortunate to  
20       begin with, and we'd like to avoid.

21                MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Let's bring in  
22       one of the environmental members, so, Sandra,

1 Sonja, do you want to come up to the table here?

2 MS. FORDHAM: Good morning. Sonja  
3 Fordham, Sharks Advocate International. Nice to  
4 see you.

5 I was thinking back to the last  
6 meeting where unfortunately I didn't get called  
7 on to address you, so I'm very glad that you came  
8 back and I have this opportunity today. And I'm  
9 also happy to report that since that meeting  
10 there appears to be considerable progress on the  
11 concerns that I, at least my top concerns, that I  
12 had at that point.

13 Specifically, really glad to hear the  
14 other day that there are proposals underway to  
15 expand the protections for sharks and rays listed  
16 under the endangered species act. So  
17 particularly concerned about oceanic whitetips  
18 and hammerhead sharks. So I was very glad to get  
19 that report this week.

20 Also glad that last year at ICCAT the  
21 U.S. accepted the scientific advice for severely  
22 over fished sharks and mako sharks. The



1 resulting bans are, however, only set for two  
2 years for a population that is predicted to  
3 decline for another, at least another decade.  
4 And need about 50 years to fully recover.

5 So we've been asking, through this  
6 forum and others, through the ICCAT Advisory  
7 Committee, that the U.S. commit to extending that  
8 protection long term and committing to a similar  
9 strategy at ICCAT while we improve the measure  
10 through bycatch mitigation.

11 We think that that would allow, among  
12 other things, it could be good for the population  
13 but allow more efficient management of HMS. And  
14 one benefit would be the ability to shift some  
15 energy and resources to some other elasmobranch  
16 species that we think need attention.

17 I just want to highlight one. Take  
18 this opportunity to highlight the common thresher  
19 sharks. It seems to be increasingly apparent  
20 that our conservation measures are outdated, and  
21 we really don't have a handle on the current  
22 status of the population and exploitation trends

1 and so forth.

2 And there are people in this room that  
3 can explain better than I, that there appear to  
4 be some climate aspects particularly for this  
5 shark species. Still a lot of commercial and  
6 recreational valuable animal that we think really  
7 needs some immediate attention.

8 My last point is that because sharks  
9 and rays are probably more than another highly  
10 migratory species are seen and serve as both  
11 resources and wildlife. So, we ask the U.S.,  
12 like we ask of all fishing countries, to better  
13 integrate the tools we have under both fisheries  
14 and environment treaties and fora.

15 So, just an example request would be,  
16 that would allow for, we think, better and more  
17 comprehensive protection that covers all aspects  
18 of these very special animals. But the example I  
19 would say is just a request to have, through  
20 these meetings and perhaps ICCAT, to have more  
21 discussion of the Endangered Species Act, and  
22 also the Convention on International Trade and

1 Endangered Species.

2 So, a number of sharks proposed this  
3 year, we didn't discuss it this year. So just  
4 general integration that we ask of all countries.  
5 Thank you very much.

6 MS. COIT: Thank you, Sonja. I'll  
7 just offer, first, I think that the team at ICCAT  
8 did a -- you know this better than I, that any  
9 regional fisheries management organization, you  
10 know, you're dealing with many entities in trying  
11 to move forward directionally and gather support.  
12 So I think the team at ICCAT did a great job last  
13 time.

14 And I know many of you are getting to  
15 know Kelly Kryc, who is our deputy assistant  
16 secretary who is leading the head of delegation  
17 on that, working with Randy and others. And  
18 those I think those issues that you raised are  
19 very top of mind. And we're interacting with the  
20 Interior Department around preparing for CITES  
21 and those conversations. So I'll just say thank  
22 you for raising those and well put.

1 MR. BROOKS: Okay. Painfully we are  
2 at time. And I know that's going to be  
3 frustrating to those of you that wanted to weigh  
4 in.

5 I also know it's not the last time  
6 we'll see Janet. So we'll continue to make time  
7 for these conversations. And thank you for being  
8 able to weigh in.

9 And for those of you that didn't, I  
10 will keep in mind who didn't get to weigh in this  
11 time and try to make sure you get to the front of  
12 the queue next time. Thank you both for being  
13 here.

14 MS. COIT: Yes, thank you all. And  
15 all of you represent broader interests and  
16 broader constituencies. And I probably don't  
17 need to encourage you, but I will encourage you  
18 to keep speaking up on these issues that matter  
19 so much. Thank you.

20 MR. BROOKS: Okay, thanks. Okay, so  
21 next up we're going to hear from Sarah McLaughlin  
22 who is going to talk to us about equity and

1 environmental justice issues and as it relates to  
2 highly migratory species. I believe Deb Lambert  
3 will be on the Webex as well to support that  
4 conversation.

5 So once Sarah gets settled into her  
6 seat we will hand the mic over to her.

7 MS. MCLAUGHLIN: All right. Good  
8 morning. I'm Sarah McLaughlin, assistant to the  
9 division chief within the Atlantic HMS Management  
10 Division. And as Bennett said, Deb Lambert  
11 wasn't able to join me today, but the two of us  
12 represent the Office of Sustainable Fisheries on  
13 NOAA Fisheries Equity and Environmental Justice  
14 Working Group, and she is on the webinar today.

15 So, our session objectives here are to  
16 develop a shared understanding of equity and  
17 environmental justice, provide examples of  
18 existing efforts and ideas to integrate equity  
19 and environmental justice in fisheries  
20 management, including for Atlantic HMS, and to  
21 ask for your input on the recently released NOAA  
22 Fisheries draft EEJ Strategy document.

1                   So as far as key terms, we have,  
2                   environmental justice is the fair treatment and  
3                   meaningful involvement of all people, regardless  
4                   of race, color, gender, national origin or income  
5                   with respect to the development, implementation  
6                   and enforcement of environmental laws,  
7                   regulations and policies, including, but not  
8                   limited to, equitable protection from  
9                   environmental and health hazards, equitable  
10                  access to decision making processes, and  
11                  equitable opportunity for disadvantaged  
12                  communities that have been historically  
13                  marginalized.

14                   So as defined in Executive Order  
15                  13985, equity means the consistent and systematic  
16                  fair, just and impartial treatment of all  
17                  individuals, including individuals who belong to  
18                  underserved communities that have been denied  
19                  such treatment. And we'll define underserved  
20                  communities on the next slide.

21                   This image provides a simplified  
22                  illustration of the term. And I'm going to read

1 the captions because they're not quite in focus  
2 in the images. They're probably better in the  
3 PDF.

4 The caption at left says, this is not  
5 equity. Equal inputs equals unequal outcomes.  
6 So you see individuals of different height and  
7 age on boxes of the same size. And clearly they  
8 have unequal access, fishing opportunities and  
9 chance of success.

10 The caption at the right says, this is  
11 equity. Equity and inputs equals equality in  
12 outcomes. So here the individuals are able to  
13 have the same access, fishing opportunities and  
14 chance of success.

15 Underserved communities have been  
16 systematically denied a full opportunity to  
17 participate in aspects of economics, social and  
18 civic life. These include geographic  
19 communities, as well as population sharing a  
20 particular characteristic, such as women and  
21 girls, Black, Latino and Indigenous and Native  
22 American persons, Asian-Americans and Pacific

1 Islanders, and other persons of color.

2 Persons facing discrimination or  
3 barriers related to gender identity, members of  
4 religious minorities, lesbian, gay, bisexual,  
5 transgender and queer persons. Persons with  
6 disabilities. Persons who live in rural areas  
7 and persons otherwise adversely affected by  
8 persistent poverty or inequality.

9 And as Janet mentioned, our renewed  
10 interest in environmental justice and equity  
11 arises from new executive orders in 2021. But  
12 they go back to 1994. And they've been enacted  
13 to promote EEJ within the federal government and  
14 guide the way NOAA Fisheries and other federal  
15 agencies implement their missions.

16 So we have advanced rate, advancing  
17 racial equity and support for underserved  
18 communities through the federal government just  
19 last year. Also, tackling the climate crisis at  
20 home and abroad. And in '94 we have federal  
21 actions to address environment justice and  
22 minority populations and low-income populations.



1                   And we know from experience that  
2                   regardless of these executive orders it's the  
3                   right thing to do. Equity and environmental  
4                   justice and integral to responsible governance.  
5                   It's also supported by the Magnuson-Stevens Act  
6                   and other acts that guide our work.

7                   Barriers to equity and environmental  
8                   justice include unawareness of underserved  
9                   communities, structural barriers, such as  
10                  regulations, policies and organization priorities  
11                  that may inadvertently reinforce inequity.  
12                  Barriers to accessing service, such as language,  
13                  time or money.

14                  System complexity, gaps in expertise.  
15                  Putting environmental justice inequity into  
16                  practice requires expertise and outreach, social  
17                  science and language and cultural literacy. And  
18                  also gaps and representation. This can create  
19                  additional barriers to knowledge, recognition and  
20                  communication.

21                  So we've been, at NOAA Fisheries,  
22                  incorporating EEJ into our mission focused work

1 for decades. This image provides a few regional  
2 examples.

3 The greater Atlantic example is  
4 regarding a project to help climate vulnerable  
5 underserved communities in the Chesapeake Bay to  
6 prepared shovel ready green infrastructure  
7 projects that will increase equity and inclusion  
8 and restoration.

9 However, we recognize that our current  
10 efforts don't meet the scope, magnitude and  
11 duration of the challenges facing underserved  
12 communities. And efforts to date have been ad  
13 hoc and not well coordinated without a formal  
14 strategy or routine communications to guide their  
15 development and implementation.

16 So, Atlantic HMS related examples that  
17 some of you are probably already familiar with  
18 are things like to broaden engagement of minority  
19 fishing communities within the rulemaking process  
20 and improve compliance with new measures with  
21 translated certain materials, like compliance  
22 guides, species ID and safe handling cards, et

1 cetera, into Spanish and Vietnamese.

2 We've provided interpreters at public  
3 meetings. We've held HMS 101 educational  
4 workshops, et cetera.

5 Amendment 4 to the 2006 HMS FMP in  
6 2013 focused on U.S. Caribbean territories and  
7 made changes to the collection of dealer data and  
8 authorized gears to better match business and  
9 fishing practices in the U.S. Caribbean  
10 territories.

11 We actively considered diversity,  
12 whether ethnic, geographic, fishery, et cetera,  
13 as we consider nominations to the panel with a  
14 goal of achieving diverse input and advice on HMS  
15 fishery issues and management.

16 And since we have the time I wanted to  
17 raise two other recent efforts. We developed a  
18 Spanish, or in Spanish, a full-length feature  
19 article in the Puerto Rico Sea Grant magazine on  
20 recent shark and swordfish management changes to  
21 the HMS commercial Caribbean small boat permit.

22 We're also developing, for the first

1 time, a series of educational outreach videos in  
2 Spanish. This is happening now. And Delisse  
3 Ortiz, behind me, is heavily involved.

4 The videos are being developed in  
5 cooperation with staff from Puerto Rico Sea Grant  
6 and local NGO Conservacion ConCiencia. The  
7 videos are intended to highlight how to properly  
8 identify shark species and how to conduct careful  
9 catch and release. As well as new permit  
10 requirements.

11 These efforts and outreach will  
12 promote sustainable shark fishing and further  
13 increased stakeholder involvement, partnerships  
14 and education in the Caribbean region.

15 So, the Agency recently released its  
16 draft environmental justice and inequity strategy  
17 on May 4th. It provides a framework to  
18 incorporate environmental justice and equity into  
19 our daily activities. It requires a step-down  
20 implementation plans at the regional and  
21 programmatic levels.

22 It seeks to remove barriers to

1 environmental justice and equity and to promote  
2 equity in all that we do in the agency. The  
3 national strategy will guide NOAA fisheries to  
4 more equitably and effectively serve all  
5 communities. Which includes identifying and  
6 recognizing the underserved communities and  
7 addressing the barriers they face.

8 So here is some guiding questions that  
9 we ask you to consider as you look at the  
10 document over the summer and provide comments.

11 Who are our underserved communities?  
12 How can we better communicate with them? How can  
13 we better serve them?

14 How can we improve equity in our  
15 research and our monitoring programs? Does  
16 everyone have equal access to benefits?

17 Do some communities carry the weight  
18 of regulatory burdens more than others? And how  
19 can our governance and management be more  
20 inclusive?

21 This is the timeline of the process so  
22 far and what we anticipate. The working group

1 formed in Spring 2021. Last fall we solicited  
2 early input from federally and non-federally  
3 recognized tribes, territories and indigenous  
4 communities on the agency's role in environmental  
5 justice and equity.

6 Earlier this year the strategy  
7 document was shared widely among staff and NOAA  
8 Fisheries leadership. And it was released  
9 publicly on May 4th. And we're looking to get  
10 comment through August 19th.

11 From there the intent is to finalize  
12 the strategy later this year and follow-up with  
13 regional and programmatic implementation plans  
14 next spring. So the national program offices  
15 like our office of sustainable fisheries will  
16 coordinate with regional offices and science  
17 centers to establish ownership for shared goals.

18 So we need your input. We are looking  
19 into getting your help on reducing barriers to  
20 underserved communities and incorporate equity  
21 and environmental justice into all our daily  
22 activities.

1           We ask that you provide comment on the  
2 strategy via the website that is listed here.

3 We, in HMS, we recently put out a notice on our  
4 Listserv, so you may have received an email in  
5 the last couple weeks about this.

6           There are going to be four webinars  
7 starting next week. And in-person meeting dates  
8 will be announced. And venues on this same page  
9 soon. And like I said, we are looking for input  
10 by the 19th. And similar to this presentation,  
11 there will presentations being made at the  
12 council meetings in the coming weeks.

13           So in summary, we have a renewed focus  
14 on equity and environmental justice. As advisory  
15 panel members, you represent diverse fishing  
16 communities. And we look forward to working with  
17 you to continue efforts to advance EEJ in our  
18 fishery management. And I thank you.

19           And, Bennett, I know we have -- we do  
20 have time here, so I'm hoping in addition to just  
21 asking that people check out the website and fill  
22 out the response form, you know, there is a free

1 form answer area at the end and you can submit  
2 comments either anonymously or you can say who  
3 you are and where you live.

4 But I kind of like to open it up to  
5 some initial thoughts. Invite you to maybe give  
6 us some examples beyond the ones that I noted.  
7 And I know, John, yesterday you mentioned like  
8 the idea of bag limits as social justice tool.

9 MR. BROOKS: Great, thanks, Sarah.  
10 Yes, I'd love to hear people's, first of all, any  
11 questions you have for Sarah. This is a fair new  
12 topic for the Panel to be thinking and talking  
13 about. And then hearing your thoughts about  
14 what's resonating, how you see this playing out.

15 Let's start with the online folks  
16 first and then we'll go over to Shana and over to  
17 John. Tim, your hand is up. I think that might  
18 be left over from before, but I'm not sure. And  
19 then, let me just check, Tim, did you want to  
20 come in, and then if not, we'll go to Raimundo.  
21 Tim, you're there? All right, let's go to  
22 Raimundo Espinoza.



1 MR. ESPINOZA: All right, Mr. Brooks,  
2 is it --

3 MR. BROOKS: We can hear you,  
4 Raimundo.

5 MR. ESPINOZA: -- my turn?

6 MR. BROOKS: You're good.

7 MR. ESPINOZA: Yes?

8 MR. BROOKS: Yes. Good.

9 MR. ESPINOZA: Oh, okay. Sorry.  
10 Sorry, I wasn't able to hear. So, thank you very  
11 much for the presentation. It's really  
12 appreciated. So much really to take into  
13 consideration. And it's really, kind of this is  
14 just really the beginning of it. Of this  
15 process.

16 There is one portion of it that was  
17 missing in that long list of underserved  
18 communities. I noticed you have the ethnicities,  
19 the gender, you have orientation and preference,  
20 and so there is many, many geographies as well.  
21 But there is one that was left out and it's  
22 political situation.

1                   And so for example, when we see all of  
2 these, the territories are actually still  
3 underrepresented because, you know, it's  
4 geographic location. However, that's the  
5 situation as the islands.

6                   When you see Hawaii, we're not in the  
7 same situation. In that we're still a bit  
8 underrepresented in that a lot of these decisions  
9 are funding allocations and are taken from  
10 Congress. And so we don't have any authority or  
11 voting representation that has our voice.

12                   And that's including, that's  
13 nonprofit, that conservation, that's academia,  
14 that's fishing sectors in any of these. And so,  
15 anyway, so I just wanted to make sure that that's  
16 something that's also taken into the  
17 consideration, the political situation, of U.S.  
18 territories not actually having a representation  
19 directly in the U.S. government.

20                   So that does actually present also an  
21 opportunity, specifically with the agencies that  
22 agencies can communicate directly to folks on the

1 territories. And when I mean directly, it's  
2 really great when it's done through the Sea Grant  
3 program, through the councils.

4 But again, these are also some of the  
5 federal agencies and federal programs that are on  
6 the islands. And many times that is not kind of  
7 the best avenue to communicate directly to either  
8 academia, to the nonprofit sector, to research  
9 and to the commercial or recreational sectors.

10 So I do keep on voicing that there be  
11 a further expansion in the communications. And  
12 of course, I have been one of the ones that folks  
13 we've been continuing the communication with.  
14 Again, we're not the only ones on the  
15 territories.

16 And so, it's really appreciated. And  
17 we really do see the commitment, which is great.  
18 So I do see the progress in the right direction.  
19 But again, it's always, you know, we have to keep  
20 on voicing it because there are other folks in  
21 other territories that are in the same situation.  
22 And so this is great.

1           But we, again, really appreciate it.  
2 All of the effort that's been conducted and  
3 really put towards this initiative for equity  
4 injustice. And so just wanted to bring that up  
5 again. Make sure that we're very clear in that  
6 list of subjects that we're currently not under  
7 due to the political situation of territories and  
8 the relationship with the U.S. Government.

9           MR. BROOKS: Great. Thanks very much,  
10 Raimundo, appreciate it. Let's go over to Shana,  
11 then John and then over to Sonja. Shana.

12           MS. MILLER: Thanks, Sarah. It's  
13 great that you guys are working on this. I think  
14 it is a really important issue that has not been  
15 addressed. I mean, you look around this room and  
16 there is just not a lot of diversity.

17           And I think two areas that are  
18 important to look at are allocation of fishing  
19 rights and different permitting. Especially for  
20 limited access programs. That's a clear area  
21 where some groups, you know, if they weren't  
22 historically including it's hard for them to get

1 in. So I think allocation and permitting are  
2 really important.

3 And as far as indigenous communities  
4 go, with all due respect, I think Canada has done  
5 much better than the U.S. has on that. Their  
6 First Nations are represented, they have powerful  
7 voices in fisheries throughout. They have a  
8 dedicated ICCAT commissioner for First Nations  
9 for example. And so I think I could learn some  
10 things from Canada.

11 And along those lines, just a  
12 question. Is this for underrepresented people  
13 within the U.S. or more broadly?

14 Because I think if it's more broadly,  
15 which I would argue it should be, I think that  
16 has pretty significant consequences for U.S.  
17 ICCAT position, for example, again, on allocation  
18 and maybe not holding on so tightly to our  
19 historical shares and looking towards equity and  
20 environmental justice in more developing  
21 countries, for example. Which I know is not a  
22 popular idea, but I'm just, is this just domestic

1 or is it more broadly?

2 MR. BROOKS: That's a very interesting  
3 question, Shana. Sarah?

4 MS. MCLAUGHLIN: I think that this  
5 effort is specifically focused on the U.S.  
6 Government and U.S. executive orders. But I  
7 think your point is excellent. And I know that  
8 we do promote better, more thorough involvement  
9 from the developing countries that are regional,  
10 fishery management organizations and do support  
11 those efforts where we can.

12 So I think that that's a perfect  
13 comment for you to make that even though, even if  
14 this is more of a domestic focus, we have roles  
15 in the international fishery management  
16 organizations where we should be supportive of  
17 making sure that allocations consider more than  
18 maybe what's been considered in the past.

19 Thanks, Shana.

20 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Shana. John, why  
21 don't you jump in.

22 MR. DEPERSENAIRE: Yes, thank you. So

1 I actually see an opportunity here. And the one  
2 thing I feel like was missing in that list also  
3 could be socioeconomic standing.

4 And it seems that a common theme  
5 across many fisheries is that someone's  
6 socioeconomic standing really dictates, in a lot  
7 of cases, how they can access the fisheries due  
8 to regulations. So I think there is an  
9 opportunity to look at that broader theme, even  
10 outside of HMS.

11 But to this discussion today, I don't  
12 think we typically think about the recreational  
13 HMS fishery as something that includes the broad  
14 recreational fishing community. And it wasn't  
15 always that way.

16 And I think the bluefin tuna fishery  
17 is a perfect example. It's often been called the  
18 common man big games fishery. And in particular,  
19 the school fishery was something that just an  
20 average angler can really access and provide. A  
21 lot of times that was the only access to the HMS  
22 fisheries for him and his family.

1           So I do think there is an opportunity  
2 there to do something in that regard. And with  
3 that two percent possible increase in the angling  
4 category. Again, I think there is an opportunity  
5 to bring back some of those anglers and those  
6 boats that have been excluded from this fishery.

7           MR. BROOKS: John, what would that  
8 look like?

9           MR. DEPERSENAIRE: In terms of what?

10          MR. BROOKS: Accessing those  
11 communities, better reaching out to them,  
12 communicating. What does it --

13          MR. DEPERSENAIRE: And so, I think a  
14 lot of times the regulations -- so, in many cases  
15 the HMS fisheries have to be accessed by boat,  
16 right? So that means you have to either own your  
17 own boat, have a friend that has a boat or  
18 charter boat. And all those are very expensive  
19 options.

20          So traditionally we had inspected head  
21 boats where someone could go out, pay \$50 for the  
22 day, fish relatively close to shore. And again,



1 citing the bluefin tuna fishery, that was  
2 something you could catch within sight of New  
3 York City. Under the Verrazano Bridge or by the  
4 Statue of Liberty.

5 And the way the regulations are now,  
6 with fuel prices, insurance costs, you just can't  
7 sell trips with the current regulations. So I'm  
8 not exactly sure what those regulations need to  
9 be. I think a discussion with some of those  
10 participants that have some history with that  
11 fishery and finding out exactly what incentives,  
12 or what the regulations would be to provide that  
13 incentive to be able to sell a trip.

14 But that's really the only venue some  
15 of these people have to access any of these HMS  
16 fisheries. So I think that's something you guys  
17 should look at.

18 And I also think looking at the school  
19 tolerance. And maybe it's time that we think  
20 about doing an analysis and see if it's  
21 appropriate going back to the 15 percent. Which  
22 was, I don't know when that was done, in the late

1 '80s or something like that.

2 But again, providing some more and  
3 more opportunities for us to access some of those  
4 smaller fish, which are closer in shore and in  
5 higher abundance in the summer months when some  
6 of these folks can access them I think would be  
7 great. Thanks.

8 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Sonja, you are  
9 up.

10 MS. FORDHAM: Sonja Fordham, Shark  
11 Advocates International. Hi.

12 MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Hi.

13 (Laughter.)

14 MS. FORDHAM: I'm really grateful for  
15 this presentation. Thank you for giving it. I  
16 think all the comments have been excellent. I  
17 wanted to just mention, as a resident of the  
18 District of Columbia, my appreciation for  
19 Raimundo, shout out to U.S. citizens without  
20 representation in Congress.

21 But really wanted to echo everything  
22 that Shana said. I thought that was really

1 insightful.

2 I had a more selfish question, just  
3 based geographically. I'm just curious if NOAA  
4 Headquarters has any plans for maybe some sort of  
5 related activity, outreach activities with  
6 Chesapeake Bay office of NOAA that maybe local  
7 NGOs could be a part of and/or maybe NOAA  
8 Headquarter sort of D.C. area-based seminars or  
9 events to further highlight these issues that,  
10 again, people in this region could maybe get  
11 involved with? And if you don't have an answer  
12 now, just tell me as it happens. Thank you.

13 MS. MCLAUGHLIN: That's great. And I  
14 can pass back everything I'm hearing today, but I  
15 think that's a good example of a short comment  
16 you could leave on the web form that local, I  
17 mean, obviously this applies everywhere in the  
18 country, but specific ideas for local outreach.  
19 Maybe to specific groups, fishing groups.

20 Chesapeake Bay Office, where is that  
21 now, in Annapolis? Yes. Yes. And anything  
22 specific or tangible that you could give as an

1 example I think would be helpful.

2 And obviously we have working group  
3 members across the country, in Hawaii, and will  
4 be digging into the comments that we get over the  
5 next few months.

6 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Mike.

7 MR. PIERDINOCK: Thank you, Sarah. I  
8 think there is somewhat of a perception out  
9 there, whether it's from the international  
10 community as well as fear among many, that this  
11 consists of 65-foot Vikings with wealthy people  
12 that have the ability to access the fishery.  
13 Which isn't the case, and there's more examples  
14 every day, especially up in New England where  
15 with the climatic shift of stocks we're catching  
16 bluefin right off the beach. And there was,  
17 Wednesday there was a bluefin caught while they  
18 were stripe bass fishing in Elizabeth Island. So  
19 this is being encountered more and more.

20 The point that John made about the  
21 head boats, and the head boats are typically the  
22 boats that hold 30 to 50 people, and I constantly

1 get complaints from those vessels and those  
2 operators which have really been hit hard with  
3 reduced bag limits for a variety of species, and  
4 I know this is HMS, but from scup to stripe bass  
5 on up.

6 So that's where that head boat would  
7 have the ability, back in the day, to go out and  
8 catch bluefin in numbers that would bring people  
9 onto the boat. Those people can afford that  
10 boat. Let's say it's \$50 to \$75 or \$100 or so  
11 on. They can't afford to go on a six-pack vessel  
12 and take the trip.

13 So some thought for that process to  
14 keep that in mind. And as I said every day, and  
15 up and down the coast, I know there is other  
16 states where you're catching HMS species right  
17 off the beach.

18 So not necessarily those that have  
19 economic, socioeconomic standing that it's tough  
20 for them to be able to afford anything, and you  
21 can only do it from the beach. So we need to  
22 keep that in mind with our ceases and bag limits

1 to take that into consideration.

2 Now as far as indigenous communities,  
3 I wasn't sure how that worked and whether you  
4 actually, the department reached out to  
5 indigenous communities. Because I can say for  
6 example, the Wampanoags of Massachusetts that are  
7 on the Vineyard, there is quite a lot there that  
8 they fish, captains that fish or private citizens  
9 that fish.

10 And they quite often reach out to me  
11 with frustration. One of the frustrations is, is  
12 that the native, the indigenous communities of  
13 Alaska have a lot more rights with marine mammals  
14 and fishing and commercial fishing and so on that  
15 are not also granted to them since they, for  
16 whatever reason.

17 So they have a lot of frustration with  
18 that. But also, with outreach I would assume  
19 that, like the Wampanoags that are active in  
20 fishing or other indigenous communities up and  
21 down the coast, that I suspect they would want to  
22 be active and be on the AP or so on. So, I would

1 encourage there to be outreach to them to  
2 hopefully get this participation. Thank you.

3 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Jimmy Hull,  
4 let's bring you into the mix. Online.

5 MR. HULL: One thing I think that is  
6 being missed here is seafood consumers that are  
7 of low-income, disadvantaged communities that  
8 would like to be able to purchase HMS species.  
9 These are pricey items, except for possibly our  
10 shark species.

11 So I think there is some way that we  
12 may be able to provide better access if we could  
13 use shark as an example. It is pretty much  
14 affordable, but there is some, they don't know  
15 about shark as a sustainable seafood source, they  
16 need education on that.

17 We are currently harvesting nowhere  
18 near our quotas on sharks. So there needs to be  
19 more demand. And these low-income communities,  
20 disadvantaged people, should have access and  
21 knowledge about the seafood protein in HMS  
22 species such as shark. So, I just wanted to

1 bring that up. Thank you.

2 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Jimmy. Anybody  
3 else online or in the room want to get in on this  
4 conversation with any perspectives? Okay. If  
5 not, then thanks.

6 You know, some good ideas around  
7 outreach, indigenous, Chesapeake Bay. A number  
8 of issues around access. The last comment around  
9 consumers. But before that, thinking about  
10 allocation and permitting and who has been  
11 historically left out and excluded.

12 A number of comments around the  
13 accessibility to fishing, right, and bag limits  
14 and maybe rethinking school analysis, et cetera.  
15 And then this, comments around the political  
16 situation, the exclusion and needing to consider  
17 political situation for U.S. territory and are  
18 those voices as strong, are they  
19 underrepresented.

20 And then this larger sort of, beyond  
21 the scope of where you are right, but the  
22 question raised by Shana, around international



1 equity and what does that start to look like.  
2 And I know that's beyond where you are right now,  
3 but an interesting question to put on the table.

4 I think we have, we're a little ahead  
5 of schedule. I think we should probably go to  
6 break now and let's reconvene at 10:15. And grab  
7 the extra 15 minutes in case we need that for  
8 shark depredation. So let's come back at 10:15  
9 and then we'll reconvene.

10 Before folks go, I do want to say one  
11 last thing. And I may repeat this later because  
12 we don't have everyone in the room.

13 But I personally want to think about  
14 how we handle the question and answer when we  
15 have leadership here. I personally find it  
16 really painful because there is always way more  
17 folks who want to weigh in than we have time.  
18 And so I think about some way to structure that  
19 so it feels a little bit more logical and  
20 equitable.

21 Because I think it inevitably feels  
22 like, who got in and who didn't. And I think we

1 can come up with a better way. So I want to  
2 think about that with the HMS team. So that's  
3 it. Thanks. See you at 10:15.

4 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter  
5 went off the record at 10:02 a.m. and resumed at  
6 10:23 a.m.)

7 MR. BROOKS: All right. Let's get  
8 going. Last topic of this meeting is shark  
9 depredation, a subject we talked about, I think,  
10 for a number of meetings now. And Guy, I will  
11 hand it off to you. We should have plenty of  
12 time for this conversation.

13 MR. DUBECK: All right. Can everyone  
14 hear me all right? Great. Yeah, so last  
15 presentation, the AP. Appreciate everyone  
16 sticking around for this one.

17 So shark interactions has been  
18 increasing recently. And this is potentially due  
19 to learned behavior, increase in shark --  
20 different shark populations, increase in fishing  
21 efforts, and also increase in more fish being  
22 discarded because of more regulations. But shark

1 depredation is not a recent phenomenon.

2           It's been occurring for a long time.

3 There's been first photos been documented from  
4 the 1930s with Ernest Hemingway fishing in the  
5 Keys in Cuba. But it's impacting pretty much  
6 worldwide right now, and it's been increasing in  
7 state managed and federal managed fisheries.

8           So NOAA was directed to undertake a  
9 review and assess and better understand the  
10 conflicts between dolphins and sharks and  
11 commercial and for-hire and recreational fishing  
12 vessels in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic.  
13 So there's one report to be submitted to Congress  
14 for both shark and dolphin interaction issues.  
15 For sharks, we're going to focus on -- we focus  
16 on the fisheries, commercial, longline, gillnet,  
17 and trawl, recreational, and for-hire handgears.  
18 And for dolphins, there's folks on rod and reel  
19 fisheries across all sectors.

20           The report is currently in the final  
21 review and should be submitted soon. So the rest  
22 of my presentation is just going to focus on the

1 shark part of the report to Congress. And the  
2 major topics we considered were the types,  
3 quantification, and consequences of the shark  
4 interactions, recommendations for nonlethal  
5 deterrence, and research needs.

6 So there's two types of interactions  
7 as you're probably familiar with. So you've got  
8 depredation. You see in the picture is more  
9 where the damage to the fish before it can be  
10 brought on board. The shark is taking the bait  
11 or damaging the gear. For scavenging, it's the  
12 sharks are just eating the fish that have been  
13 discarded immediately after being thrown back.

14 So we'll start with recreational here.  
15 There's been increasing reports and social media  
16 posts by charter and private anglers. And  
17 there's a couple of examples here of great  
18 hammerhead and bull sharks affecting Atlantic  
19 tarpon in the Florida Keys and sharks feeding on  
20 undersized red snapper and other reef fish after  
21 being released. There's also shark depredation  
22 events of billfish in South Florida and tuna off

1 the coast of North Carolina.

2 In March 2021, Florida Fish and  
3 Wildlife Commission conducted an online survey.  
4 And approximately 80 percent of the charter and  
5 approximately 70 percent of the private anglers  
6 who responded reported some sort of interaction  
7 of sharks over the last year. And the majority  
8 of them occurred while the catch was still on the  
9 gear.

10 So moving on to the commercial  
11 fishery. Some of you might recognize this  
12 figure. We've also included this in our Atlantic  
13 Shark Fishery Review or SHARE documents. So this  
14 is the observed rates of shark depredation in  
15 proportion to the fishing sets over time. The  
16 green or pelagic longline is -- you can see it  
17 fluctuates over time, but it's kind of stable, at  
18 least steady while the red bottom longline and  
19 vertical line have increased over time.

20 So the pelagic longline fishery rates  
21 appear to be more seasonally driven, especially  
22 when you're in warmer regions. And the reef fish

1 fishery, higher depredation rates occur in the  
2 summer and fall. And then depending on what gear  
3 type you're using, the rates were higher in  
4 different parts of the Gulf. The highest rates  
5 were in the South Atlantic Bight consistently  
6 throughout the whole year and all seasons. And  
7 then there were lowest rates in the North Central  
8 Atlantic, Northeast Distant, and Sargasso Sea  
9 areas.

10 So consequences of these interactions,  
11 as you know, economic and social impacts on both  
12 commercial and recreational fisherman. We've got  
13 loss of catch, damaged gear, and also kind of  
14 extra expenses between fuel and time because  
15 fisherman have to pick up their gear, move to a  
16 different area to avoid some of the sharks. I  
17 got impacts to post-release survival of target  
18 species.

19 And then a big one for a lot of the  
20 for-hire fisherman is degrading fishing  
21 experience because they're driven on business  
22 where they're out catching the fish and to be

1 able to land the fish. But if a lot of shark  
2 depredation issues occur, it could impact client  
3 return and future profit revenues. There's also  
4 increased mortality and serious injury of the  
5 sharks being tangled in shrimp trawl nets, gill  
6 nets, hooks, incidentally hooked by different  
7 fisheries or ingesting the gear.

8 I got increased predation and  
9 decreased survival of sharks interfering with  
10 fisheries. And then the last one is increased  
11 retaliation against sharks. A lot of fisherman  
12 feel sharks are a nuisance. So they're using  
13 firearms, fireworks to scare away the sharks from  
14 their target catch. We've actually gotten  
15 requests to do shark calls during certain times  
16 of the year when shark populations are higher and  
17 it's impacting other fisheries.

18 So some recommendations in the report  
19 for non-lethal deterrents. So there's mixed  
20 reviews on using different metals and magnets  
21 attached to the gears to reduce the bycatch and  
22 depredation. For chemical compounds, none has

1 yet been identified as effective across a variety  
2 of shark species without impacting the target  
3 catch species.

4 Avoidance, some of the ones we threw  
5 in there were changing fishing behavior, whether  
6 it's time, seasonal, location. You've got to  
7 move spots. And the other one is reducing the  
8 sound of boat motors. Usually, we're all hearing  
9 is that as soon as they hear the engines rev up  
10 or they stop, they just think it's a dinner bell.  
11 And sharks are kind of attracted to that, the  
12 noise.

13 So for research, I know this is just  
14 kind of a small snippet of what's going on. I  
15 know there's a lot more current research being  
16 done by AP members. But a few that were here  
17 that was included in the report were some  
18 Deepwater Horizon projects to focus on descender  
19 device, post-release survival/mortality of reef  
20 fish, depredation rates, identifying -- and then  
21 trying to identify the shark species that's  
22 causing the issue.



1           The bycatch reduction, similar,  
2           they're trying to look at the post-release and  
3           other indirect mortality associated with the  
4           longline fishery. And then the RESTORE Act  
5           projects identify potential depredation  
6           deterrents favored by fisherman to direct future  
7           research priorities for testing. So kind of the  
8           research priorities and the management needs.

9           We need to quantify the level of  
10          depredation and scope of the issue, especially in  
11          the recreational fishery. I know some potential  
12          options are -- and currently right now, there's  
13          been a lot of apps being developed or are  
14          developed, trying to gather information on it,  
15          doing online surveys, observers on charter and  
16          headboats, increased data collection through  
17          interviews, adding depredation fields or  
18          questions in the logbooks. We need to determine  
19          what level of learned behavior is acquired or how  
20          prevalent it is, whether it's by area, by certain  
21          shark species.

22                 We need to identify then which species

1 is primarily responsible because most of the  
2 things we're getting is, oh, sharks eat my catch.  
3 Well, that's great. There's so many shark  
4 species. Which one are you talking about? And  
5 they're, like, it's a brown one. Narrows down a  
6 little bit, but it's not quite what we need. You  
7 talk about sandbar, dusk, what. And most  
8 fisherman don't know unless it's a hammerhead.  
9 They kind of know that one.

10 But we need to know exactly what shark  
11 species is causing the issue. And then  
12 definitely citizen science approach to  
13 characterize shark depredation in the recreation  
14 fishery throughout the southeast. Between social  
15 media posts, collecting the data, videos,  
16 pictures, things like that, that I think need to  
17 improve for us to better understand this issue.

18 So in conclusion, reducing shark  
19 interactions with fisheries is complex and  
20 challenging. Fisherman experience the loss of  
21 catch, damaged gear, degraded fishing  
22 experiences. Data is limited in our ability to

1 fully understand this nature, whether -- like I  
2 said, it's whether geographic location, time of  
3 year, what kind of gear they used.

4 So we need more information to fully  
5 understand this shark-fishery interactions.

6 There's limited tools, like I said. But there's  
7 been more development of apps and online stuff.  
8 Official studies are needed to determine the  
9 long-term effectiveness of non-lethal deterrence.

10 And also as apex predator populations  
11 recover, the interaction rates between sharks and  
12 humans are expected to increase. So that's my  
13 presentation. So if you have questions, and I  
14 threw this last slide in too where it's not just  
15 sharks eating other fish. They're eating other  
16 shark species too.

17 So it's kind of a growing thing. But  
18 if you have any more questions beyond today, I  
19 have myself here and then Karyl. And we'll  
20 gladly answer any questions you have. Thank you.

21 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Guy. Let's open  
22 it up for any discussion, both again in the room

1 and online. And take it where you will, but any  
2 feedback you have or other questions or insights  
3 around interactions, consequences, deterrents,  
4 research needs would be great. All right. Let's  
5 start here in the room and we'll go with Dewey  
6 first.

7 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Thank you, and thank  
8 you, Guy, for the presentation. I have two  
9 questions. I got a lot of thoughts, but I got  
10 two questions.

11 MR. BROOKS: Hey, Dewey, can you get  
12 a tiny --

13 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Is that better?

14 MR. BROOKS: Yeah.

15 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yeah, so my thought  
16 that there's only one way for the quota to get  
17 increased and that would be through a stock  
18 assessment. Is there any other way plausible by  
19 a favorable result from a stock assessment that  
20 would increase the quota for the catch of fish?  
21 I'm not aware of any other besides a stock  
22 assessment. Is that correct?

1                   MR. DUBECK: Correct. However, as  
2 we're -- as Karyl mentioned we're working on  
3 Amendment 14 and that's going to change all the  
4 shark ACLs and quotas and stuff like that. So  
5 we're going to be actively managing those things.  
6 So there could be a fluctuation from year to year  
7 with more commercial quota or recreational quota  
8 depending on the dead discard amount too. So  
9 we're going to be actively managing that on a  
10 year-to-year basis. So that could be increased  
11 potential for quotas too.

12                   MR. HEMILRIGHT: But is that going to  
13 come from a stock assessment that says you can  
14 increase to catch a shark? What I'm getting to  
15 there's nothing that's going to take place that I  
16 know of, apps, all this other stuff, for sharks -  
17 - to catch more sharks without a stock assessment  
18 to show an increase. And so therefore, it's kind  
19 of trivial, anything we do until the data will  
20 show that the increase through the stock  
21 assessment that allows the agency to increase the  
22 ACLs for the stock.

1                   And so it'll just continue to get  
2 worse until you have a favorable stock  
3 assessment. My second question would be there's  
4 surveys that's done, I believe, through some  
5 commercial boats, not the guinea pig -- I mean,  
6 the research fishery that that takes place but  
7 the other fishery that's done by maybe the  
8 northeast or something. And there was a survey  
9 done a year ago, I believe, and I was curious  
10 about the results of that.

11                   It's the one done on the longline  
12 vessel that goes up and down the coast, the  
13 northeast survey. And I was curious when that  
14 data would be available. It's been a year since  
15 it's been done, and what's the status of looking  
16 at that? Thank you.

17                   MR. DUBECK: So that report, they're  
18 working on that report. And hopefully that will  
19 come out soon, but I'm not sure exactly when.  
20 But they are working on that to get it out there.

21                   MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Bob, why don't  
22 you jump in.

1                   MR. HUMPHREY: Thank you, Guy. Our  
2 problems in the northeast aren't quite the same  
3 level of magnitude as the southeast and the Gulf.  
4 But they're definitely on the uptick as a  
5 handgear, rod and reel fisherman for bluefin and  
6 also as a charter head boat operator. We're  
7 seeing a significant increase in interactions  
8 with porbeagle sharks.

9                   Given that there's consideration  
10 within ICCAT to list the species, I see a  
11 potential conflict in the near future there. If  
12 there's not -- if there's research now, we need  
13 more certainly to document that because it's --  
14 as I said, it's a growing issue. It's the  
15 exception rather than the rule when we don't have  
16 an interaction on a trip with a porbeagle.

17                   MR. BROOKS: Thanks, let's take one  
18 more in the room, then we'll go online, and then  
19 come back. Peter?

20                   MR. CHAIBONGSAI: Thanks, Guy, for the  
21 presentation. I've got a couple questions and a  
22 comment as well. You had mentioned that there's

1 a final report coming out, and you said soon.  
2 Soon as in June like a lot of things are  
3 happening, or, like, end of the year, next year,  
4 two years? When should we be expecting this  
5 report?

6 MR. DUBECK: I'm not sure. It's still  
7 in review. I mean --

8 MR. CHAIBONGSAI: Okay.

9 MR. DUBECK: -- it's kind of outside  
10 of our control. But I mean, they're shooting for  
11 soon. So soon, I don't know, you know.

12 MR. CHAIBONGSAI: Okay.

13 MR. DUBECK: Yeah.

14 MR. CHAIBONGSAI: Next question is --  
15 it's actually a comment and a question. I want  
16 to applaud a colleague from Florida Fish and  
17 Wildlife for doing that survey -- that online  
18 survey last year. And you guys had said within  
19 your recommendations that you guys were planning  
20 on potentially doing some of these intercepts as  
21 well.

22 My guess is going to be potentially



1 through what was mentioned. I think that was  
2 yesterday through MRIP potentially. But were  
3 there any things outside of that, any other  
4 intercepts that would be considered, meaning,  
5 like, another avenue of specifically dedicated to  
6 just this problem as well.

7 MR. DUBECK: As I mentioned, we're  
8 going to be adding fields to logbooks too. So  
9 then it's kind of including that for some  
10 commercial recreational fisherman to kind of  
11 quantify exactly where, when, number of  
12 instances, things like that too.

13 MR. CHAIBONGSAI: Okay. And then my  
14 last is just a comment. I do want to say that  
15 after a long time I feel like from multiple  
16 sectors that NOAA -- the agency is taking some  
17 steps, albeit small, forward steps towards  
18 addressing this problem. I know it's going to  
19 take some time, and I know this is a first step.

20 But this is a major problem as you can  
21 see from this online survey as well as what  
22 everyone has been saying in that region. I want

1 to stress the recommendations given I think you  
2 would probably agree are pretty weak. To avoid a  
3 certain area or to turn off your boat, I forget  
4 what the other recommendations are, seem a little  
5 weak to me for a lot of these anglers as well as  
6 commercial fisherman, not to mention the other  
7 non-lethal recommendation were not proven right  
8 now which I understand you're doing research on  
9 that.

10 But the problem is happening right now  
11 and it's been happening for several years. So I  
12 just want to stress the importance of trying to  
13 find a solution -- a management solution as  
14 quickly as possible. And one of those solutions  
15 that we had brought up in comments before was the  
16 fact at looking and exploring the revitalization  
17 of the bottom longline and to market that.

18 I think Jimmy was mentioning actually  
19 before in the prior conversation market that  
20 species. Market that species out there so there  
21 is a demand that can meet that quota. Revitalize  
22 that to where you can start to see a legal

1 fishery that can also help to reduce all of these  
2 negative aspects that are happening in multiple  
3 sectors. Thank you.

4 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thanks, Peter.  
5 Let's go online. I've got Jimmy Hull, Marcus  
6 Drymon, and Greg. And then we'll get back to the  
7 room where I've got Marty, Jeff, Mike, and Jason.  
8 So let's bring in Jimmy Hull. And Jimmy, just  
9 wait a beat before you start talking so we make  
10 sure your microphone is on.

11 MR. HULL: Yeah, thank you, Bennett.  
12 This is a -- we got to face it. We have huge  
13 coastal shark populations of all species, and  
14 sharks eat sharks. The more sharks you have, the  
15 more sharks you have.

16 We do need to revitalize the demand  
17 for shark products, shark need. We are not  
18 catching our quota. The effort is not there. We  
19 have actually developed a nice meat market here  
20 in my community in northeast Florida, and it  
21 takes some work.

22 But we need some help from the agency

1 to get rid of the stigma from the consumers that  
2 sharks are not a good choice. I know the last  
3 time that the agency did something was in 2019,  
4 and they put out a nice pamphlet saying that  
5 sharks are a good sustainable seafood choice  
6 because they're managed sustainably,  
7 domestically. And it all depends on where you  
8 get your shark from, where it comes from.

9 Domestically, it's sustainable. So  
10 those are the things we need some help with from  
11 the agency and also in management to attest these  
12 trip limits on some of these species so that the  
13 effort will increase. So if we can do that, we  
14 can probably decrease some of this depredation  
15 locally at least. I mean, off of my inlet, it's  
16 the sandbars. And of course, we're not going to  
17 get to them until the science catches up and lets  
18 us open that back up.

19 So the other thing is on the large  
20 coastal, the impending fin sales bans. I mean,  
21 it's hard to go do all that work and catch a  
22 limit of large coastals if you can't sell the

1 fins along with the meat. And that's why you see  
2 a big decrease in effort there.

3 So there's lots of things that have  
4 been affecting the shark fishery. But I think  
5 there are some things that can be done to help  
6 bring it back if you do it on several different  
7 levels. And you obviously need to create demand  
8 for the product, and we need to do that ourselves  
9 but also with some help from the agency that they  
10 have done some.

11 The Fish Watch, the NOAA Fish Watch,  
12 I was talking to some others saying, hey, they  
13 don't have the sharks on there, all the  
14 populations of sharks listed there and that  
15 they're sustainable and that they're good.  
16 They're a good choice. So things like that that  
17 this AP doesn't really have control over.

18 But they are a part of advising the  
19 agency. So I do think there's a lot that can be  
20 done, and it may help. It may help if we can  
21 revitalize the bottom longline shark fishery to  
22 decrease depredation locally, especially where

1 you have a tight reef line in South Florida, for  
2 instance, and some of the areas off of -- for  
3 snapper/grouper fisheries, if we can reduce some  
4 of the shark populations locally.

5 It's not going to do it over the  
6 range. But we need to work on this. I see a big  
7 future for the shark fishery. I see where it's  
8 going to provide valuable, affordable protein and  
9 jobs because we have -- these stocks are back. I  
10 mean, and they are -- there's no sign that  
11 they're going away. So hopefully, we can get  
12 something done. Thank you.

13 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Jimmy. Thanks.  
14 Marcus Drymon, let's bring you in. Okay. I  
15 think we should have your mic open.

16 MR. DRYMON: You guys hear me? Can  
17 you hear me, Bennett?

18 MR. BROOKS: Yes, we can.

19 MR. DRYMON: All right. Great. Well,  
20 first of all, sorry I can't be there. I really  
21 hate missing these meetings. So jealous that you  
22 guys are there in person.

1                   But just briefly, I wanted to respond  
2 to Jimmy's comment, just kind of reiterate his  
3 sentiment that what we're hearing from the  
4 fisherman is they need help with the public  
5 perception that sharks are a bad choice or that  
6 every shark needs to be protected. We just  
7 finished a workshop with charter for hire  
8 fishermen across the Gulf of Mexico. And that  
9 was something we heard from them loud and clear  
10 is that they get villainized if they have any  
11 dead sharks on their boat, if they land a shark,  
12 that they become kind of a public enemy number  
13 one.

14                   So I just want to reiterate that I see  
15 that as a very clear way forward for NOAA  
16 fisheries to continue to promote the fact that  
17 our shark fisheries are executed in a very  
18 sustainable way and that we have highly  
19 sustainable shark fisheries that should be used.  
20 So I just wanted to echo that comment. And  
21 again, just to reiterate, that we've heard that  
22 from a lot of the charter fisherman in the Gulf

1 of Mexico.

2 Second thing real quick and this is to  
3 Peter's question about additional surveys. My  
4 group has been doing a lot of those surveys, just  
5 trying to cast as wide a net as possible. We're  
6 currently analyzing results from 1,000 digital  
7 surveys, online, electronic surveys of anglers  
8 across the Gulf of Mexico just trying to get at  
9 some of these current trends, rates, locations,  
10 hot spots.

11 And to your question, Peter, we will  
12 have those data examined soon. And by soon, I  
13 mean August. Our report is due in August. So  
14 I'll be sure to share that. That's some of the  
15 NOAA RESTORE work that Guy mentioned in his  
16 proposal. So yeah, that's all for me.

17 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thanks, Marcus.  
18 And even though you're not in the room, you  
19 perfectly anticipated Peter's follow-up question.  
20 And he actually put his placard up, and you stuck  
21 your landing on that. So thank you. All right.  
22 Let's go last person online right now, Greg



1 Skomal.

2 MR. SKOMAL: Thank you. Just really  
3 building on what Marcus is saying, making you  
4 aware of the fact that at the University of  
5 Massachusetts, we conducted a study a couple of  
6 years ago a survey over the last couple of years.  
7 And it was published earlier this year with over  
8 500 respondents and high 70-plus percent  
9 depredation rate reported and some regional  
10 results as well as angler attitudes from fishing  
11 guides and the private sector.

12 So I believe we sent that to Karyl.  
13 But if we haven't, we're happy to do that. And I  
14 think it should be probably circulated to the  
15 fully advisory panel. Thank you.

16 MR. BROOKS: Thanks very much. Let's  
17 come back into the room. And I've got Marty,  
18 Jeff, Mike, Jason, John. Marty, you are up.

19 MR. SCANLON: Yeah, Guy, can you  
20 clarify how NMFS collects the data on depredation  
21 in the PLL industry. And do you think the  
22 covered method is sufficient to fully document

1 those depredations? And if not, what would be  
2 your suggestion to do that better?

3 MR. DUBECK: So currently right now,  
4 the figure I put out there was more from observer  
5 rates, observed sets, and depredation rates. So  
6 I think in the future there's going to be more  
7 fields added to logbooks to kind of get more  
8 information on those events.

9 MR. BROOKS: That it, Marty? Okay.  
10 Jeff Oden?

11 MR. ODEN: Thank you. I find it  
12 pretty amazing that after a year, we still  
13 haven't got a last New England longline survey  
14 statistics. But for our review, let's see, three  
15 of the last four surveys were all-time high  
16 starting back in 2009.

17 And then 2018 was not because the  
18 previous one in 2012 was probably a 56 percent  
19 increase over the previous all-time high. So  
20 depredation is not in our imagination. It's  
21 happening.

22 In our area, we have a green-stick --

1 had a green-stick fishery. Guys would go out in  
2 the spring and early summer and the guys quit  
3 bothering with it, primarily because they can't  
4 get a fish to the boat. It's not their  
5 imagination, nor are these stocks our imagination  
6 that are growing.

7 And I just can't wait to see the most  
8 recent 2021 survey. With that said, I'd just  
9 like to offer a comment of our former esteemed  
10 colleague, Bob Hueter. And his comment was in  
11 reference to a pelagic longline catch mortality  
12 study by Dewey and myself where we ended up  
13 catching in one day more than he actually had  
14 deemed still swimming in the Atlantic.

15 His comment was, I may have missed the  
16 recovery. I too think the agency is missing the  
17 recovery. And it's well past time for a review,  
18 a stock assessment, or whatever and to open these  
19 fisheries up.

20 It's not our imagination, this  
21 depredation. It's new. And I mean, it goes back  
22 to the beginning of the shark fishery. It wasn't

1 this bad then. I don't know what's changed. But  
2 I don't think it's learned behavior. It's just  
3 an abundance of sharks.

4 In our area, it's duskies. And  
5 primarily -- well, it's all species. But duskies  
6 predominate, and that seems to be your big worry.  
7 I mean, the advent of all the concern, it was  
8 going to take 400 years for them to rebuild.

9 Dewey and myself had a survey through  
10 the Pascagoula lab. And they allocated  
11 considerable funds to get this survey done in  
12 probably five or six trips. We did it in 18  
13 hours and had all that we needed. And anyhow, I  
14 could go on. As I said, you missed the recovery.

15 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Jeff. Let's go  
16 over to Mike P.

17 MR. PIERDINOCK: Well, thank you. I  
18 mean, some of the comments I've noted, this is  
19 not restricted to the southeast or the Gulf  
20 states. We have the same problem in New England.  
21 I'm happy that Dr. Skomal called in and shared  
22 with you the observations with the great white

1 shark interactions that are quite terrifying if  
2 you encounter them, especially near shore where  
3 the juveniles hang out.

4 But this is -- and with the  
5 observation of Bob Humphrey with the porbeagles,  
6 there's no lack of porbeagles. We have them in  
7 tremendous numbers. And as the temperature  
8 increases, they go up Bob's way and into Maine.

9 We have them earlier in the season.  
10 But whether it's porbeagles, great whites, blue  
11 sharks, and now makos which the U.S. implemented  
12 its measures a few years ago with circle hooks  
13 and so on and achieved 90 percent reduction,  
14 we've seen greater numbers of them south of the  
15 Vineyard and the Cape as well as north. And we  
16 have more interactions with them. And as you can  
17 see, many of these are examples of protected  
18 species that we now see them in tremendous  
19 numbers.

20 When we see this disconnect with our  
21 bag limits, where prohibitions and so one that  
22 are inconsistent with what we see on the water,

1 that's where those in the community, the fishers  
2 out in the water lose confidence in the system.  
3 As Dewey pointed out, do we need to conduct stock  
4 assessments? Do we need to do that as the first  
5 step in order to then address the ACLs?

6 And it's Peter's recommendation was  
7 shot on at what needs then to be done to  
8 selectively have the commercial fleet going to  
9 these areas as well as change any recreational  
10 for-hire bag limits to try to address this  
11 inconsistency. There's no doubt there's  
12 predation up by us, and this measure is to  
13 address what's in the southeast. But we do have  
14 the same problem, and we've had it for some time  
15 now. And it's only getting worse. Thank you.

16 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Jason, let's go  
17 over to you.

18 MR. ADRIANCE: Thanks, Bennett. And  
19 a lot of folks have already touched on stock  
20 assessments which is what I wanted to comment on.  
21 And obviously you can drive up demand all you  
22 want. You can potentially deal with these fin

1 bans.

2 But unless you have stock assessments  
3 on what you've identified as these problem sharks  
4 or these rebuilding sharks, it doesn't matter. I  
5 understand Amendment 14. They help somewhat with  
6 that in getting some realistic harvest numbers  
7 for more sustainable species.

8 But the fact of the matter is right  
9 now we're stuck in single species management.  
10 And until we have more holistic ecosystem-based  
11 management, we're going to end up in these  
12 situations where the time between the single  
13 stock assessments. You can have things like a  
14 missed recovery or even a missed decline.

15 But something needs to be done faster.  
16 I'm happy to see bull sharks in the Gulf of  
17 Mexico might actually get an assessment. But  
18 that still puts us years away from any adjusted  
19 quotas. It just moves too slow. Thank you.

20 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Let's go over to  
21 John, then Jeff Kneebone. And then Charlie, I've  
22 seen your card go up and down. So you'll let me

1 know by the time we get around. Let's go to  
2 John.

3 MR. DEPERSENAIRE: Yeah, thank you.  
4 I was just thinking back to the equity  
5 environmental justice presentation we had before.  
6 And I really have to contend in my mind that a  
7 lot of these shark fin bans are really  
8 inconsistent with that policy. So the only  
9 comment I'd like to make is I'd really like to  
10 see the agency encourage full utilization of  
11 legally harvested dead fish. I think that would  
12 be helpful to help with a lot of these state and  
13 federal fin ban agendas. Thanks.

14 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, John. Jeff  
15 Kneebone?

16 DR. KNEEBONE: Thank you, Bennett.  
17 And I'll preface this by saying that I know that  
18 this comment may seem nepotistic as someone who  
19 applies for federal funding for things like this.  
20 But I do mean it in an objective sense, as  
21 objectively as I can.

22 So as someone who's actively tried to



1 work with industry to look at the tuna  
2 depredation problem in North Carolina and sought  
3 funding to do so for the last three to four  
4 cycles for some grants and consistently received  
5 high scores yet no funding, it's just a little  
6 bit frustrating as someone who's trying to be  
7 active to trying to push and not getting any  
8 return, even though this issue is of growing  
9 importance. So don't mean to -- I mean, it seems  
10 a little self-serving. But it's definitely  
11 trying to be an objective comment.

12 And then the other thing is just  
13 relating to the funding cycles. For grant  
14 proposals that we've put in, we're looking one  
15 season down the road before we even can commence  
16 work. And that's, of course, delaying the  
17 delivery of data, one, two, three years from now.

18 So it's this kind of timing problem  
19 where we have where the science, even if it's  
20 commissioned next year, we won't have information  
21 for two, three years down the line. And  
22 obviously, this problem is not going away as

1 evidenced by the fact that it's been pretty  
2 consistent and getting worse. So I just  
3 encourage the agency to maybe explore ways to  
4 collect information more proactively and maybe  
5 work to free up some internal funds to get things  
6 going on the ground, not necessarily with me but  
7 with the academic community in general. Thank  
8 you very much.

9 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Jeff. And  
10 actually, I think what you're wrestling with is  
11 what we around the table call expertise. You're  
12 here because you have that expertise as does  
13 everybody. So I appreciate the care you take,  
14 but your perspective is really important on those  
15 things that you know. Let's go over to Rick  
16 Weber.

17 MR. WEBER: Thank you. I've said this  
18 before, but now we're face to face. I'll say it  
19 one more time and that is that I have two groups  
20 that I like and trust who I think are trying to  
21 do their very best. And the data is pointing in  
22 different directions.

1           You've got all of this data that says  
2           we may be recovered and yet when we do the other  
3           surveys, you're like, no, we're not recovered  
4           yet. When I look at that in IAC, when we talk  
5           about data streams that don't fit, there's a  
6           temptation to say, well, then one of them must be  
7           an error. But there's also a possibility that  
8           there's a piece that we either don't know or  
9           haven't taken into account yet.

10           And I'm going to give you Rick Weber's  
11           lay theory of sharks. And that is I'm wondering  
12           if they are not like pouring cold molasses on a  
13           plate. They're piling up over here.

14           And if you wait until they spread to  
15           all the places you're wanting them to spread, you  
16           will overfill the plate because cold molasses  
17           takes too long to reach the edge of the plate.  
18           And so I would call it a shortcoming of the model  
19           that we look -- as we do with so many species, we  
20           look for homogeneity. But no one tells the  
21           sharks where they're supposed to go as they  
22           recover.

1           You're going to be a Maryland shark,  
2           and you're going to be a Virginia shark. They  
3           have to go through the natural process of  
4           fighting for territory. And when they fight for  
5           territory, they move a little bit down the beach  
6           or up the beach.

7           And then the next time, they fight for  
8           territory. It's -- they're cold molasses.  
9           They're not simply going to run to where we want  
10          them to go. And I find it to be a shortcoming of  
11          the model that we look at almost as I say, a  
12          homogeneous stock that is if they are not  
13          everywhere, then they are not recovered. It is  
14          conceivable that they are over-recovered at one  
15          point and under-recovered in a different area.  
16          Thank you.

17                 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Rick. Let's go  
18                 to Charlie in this room and then we'll go back  
19                 online to Tim Pickett. Charlie?

20                 MR. BERGMANN: I was hesitant to get  
21                 into this. But every time I start talking about  
22                 sharks or hear about sharks, something is being

1 eaten that doesn't need to be eaten. I'm  
2 reminiscent of the movie Jaws when the big shark  
3 craze came into the U.S., and everyone was  
4 actively fishing for the big one.

5           They did a survey down the east coast  
6 to Florida down from Ormand Beach down to Ponce  
7 Inlet and they may even gone through New Severna  
8 Beach when they flew over the beach with  
9 helicopters and they were counting sharks. And  
10 unbeknownst to all the bathers in the surf, the  
11 spring breakers and all that were there, there  
12 were hundreds of sharks between the bathers and  
13 the beach. But folks didn't know they were  
14 there.

15           We only have to look at national TV of  
16 the acres and acres of sharks cruising the coast  
17 in the spring migration from starting at the  
18 lower end of Florida and work up all the way  
19 through the Gulf. Fisherman, you've got a big  
20 source with the pelagic longline folks for shark  
21 information. You've got video cameras on the  
22 boats.

1                   You ought to be able to see what's  
2 coming on board the boat of stuff that's been  
3 eaten up. That may not help you with the exact  
4 species that's doing the eating. But it's  
5 prevalent. It happens. It's happening more and  
6 more often.

7                   There were boats that came out of the  
8 Gulf unloading in Venice that lost half of their  
9 catch to sharks. It's a problem. And as Dewey  
10 says, until we get stock assessments, we can't  
11 address the problem. But every year that we  
12 don't have the information, the problem is  
13 multiplied. So at some point, we've got to start  
14 dividing instead of multiplying. Thank you.

15                   MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Charlie. Let's  
16 go online now to Tim Pickett. Tim, we'll get  
17 your line open here in one sec. Okay. You're  
18 good.

19                   MR. PICKETT: Hi, can you hear me?

20                   MR. BROOKS: Yes, we can.

21                   MR. PICKETT: Okay. I'm kind of going  
22 to put the recreational hat on right now because

1 of where I'm located here in South Florida. It's  
2 a dumpster fire here with no better way of  
3 putting it. And the biggest input I get from  
4 people down here is they're frustrated with how  
5 to move the needle.

6 And I kind of understand it a little  
7 deeper in terms of the need for stock assessments  
8 and the need for additional science. And the  
9 blockade to that always seems to be funding. And  
10 so I guess this is a very lucrative business down  
11 here.

12 The recreational fishing business, I  
13 mean, not just in south Florida either. I mean,  
14 you look at North Carolina. It's the areas where  
15 these problems are really, really bad, North  
16 Carolina.

17 Like, Charlie was just saying in  
18 Venice, massive amount of funds go through there  
19 in terms of rec fishery. South Florida, I mean,  
20 it's a booming, booming industry. I would be  
21 interested to see with these guys, they're asking  
22 for a way to shift what's going on in terms of

1 having an end game or having when do we open the  
2 fishery up, all that stuff.

3 And if it's money that's slowing the  
4 process down, I'd like to know what the money  
5 would be. And this is an industry that's got  
6 quite a bit of money in it. It'd be neat to see  
7 if there could be maybe privately raised funds  
8 through tournaments, fundraisers, whatever  
9 throughout the recreational community to get  
10 things moving.

11 Or if there is even a mechanism for  
12 that, I'd be curious to see. I'd implore you  
13 guys to look into that. See if there's a  
14 mechanism for private funding to speed some of  
15 this stuff up. That's it.

16 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Tim. Let's just  
17 see if anyone else wants to get in on those  
18 conversation, either online or in the room. I  
19 feel like we've had a good go round on this. All  
20 right. I think we're good. Thank you, all, for  
21 all the feedback.

22 I'm hearing a few key things. One,



1 just affirming that the uptick that's being seen  
2 up and down the coast, the focus on the need for  
3 continuing to survey on interactions and tracking  
4 that as well as obviously the key role that  
5 assessments are going to play here. And Tim's  
6 point at the end here, is there a creative way to  
7 move all of it faster, which is another thing.  
8 Just everything needs to move quicker here, any  
9 way to push this forward.

10 And then a number of comments around  
11 so what to do about this. There were a number of  
12 comments there. But I think the one that really  
13 seemed to pop most around the table was the need  
14 to revitalize the fishery, the bottom longline,  
15 addressing the marketing, public perception  
16 issues. So a number of comments there. So thank  
17 you all for that conversation. Guy, anything you  
18 want to say here at the end?

19 MR. DUBECK: No.

20 MR. BROOKS: Good. All right then.  
21 Thanks, everyone, very much. If there are no  
22 other topics we need to cover, I think what we

1 should be doing is getting to public comment a  
2 little bit early. Let's see if there's anyone in  
3 the room who would like to make a public comment  
4 or anyone online who would like to make a public  
5 comment.

6 And for those of you who are online,  
7 just raise a virtual hand which you should find  
8 at the bottom of your screen or just throw  
9 something in the chat as well if you're not  
10 finding the virtual hand. And for those who are  
11 making public comments, just if you can start off  
12 with just your name and affiliation so folks know  
13 who you are. And just keep it focused for just  
14 two to three minutes. Thanks. All yours.

15 MR. HOUTH: Thank you. My name is  
16 Matt Houth and former shark fisherman. And I'm a  
17 fisherman and talking about the -- we definitely  
18 have as everyone said and I think people are  
19 starting to realize we do have a shark problem in  
20 this country.

21 And what was touched upon, the  
22 marketing of the sharks -- and I do handle fish,

1 Wanchese -- and that definitely needs to be  
2 addressed. And really as far as the sale of fins  
3 which as a dealer I wouldn't even know. I'd have  
4 to do some research before I even tried to sell  
5 some fins.

6 And in the shark market, it's like  
7 selling chickens without selling the breast.  
8 It's a valuable part of the shark. And I don't  
9 think we're doing the resource justice without  
10 being able to sell the fins if we're looking to  
11 rebuild the fishery.

12 But people have touched on this  
13 before. As an industry, we're losing ground  
14 because our infrastructure, fisherman are -- the  
15 commercial fishing industry are losing fisherman  
16 for a variety of different reasons. But the  
17 infrastructure of the commercial fishing  
18 industry, if we lose that which we're losing  
19 ground, there's down in Beaufort, North Carolina,  
20 I don't know there's a pack house there left.

21 Where Jeff is located in Hatteras,  
22 they lost a fish house this year. And in

1       Wanchese, we're hanging on by a thread. We're  
2       losing some of our trucking routes because of not  
3       enough product.

4                   And you've got to take that in  
5       consideration if the United States wants to  
6       produce seafood in this country. And things  
7       aren't happening fast enough. So once the  
8       infrastructure is gone, I don't see it ever  
9       coming back. So anyway, but I appreciate you  
10      guys the last three days. Thank you.

11                   MR. BROOKS: Thanks for those  
12      comments. Anyone else in the room have any  
13      public comments? Okay. If not, let's go online.  
14      Christina and then Alana. So let's open up  
15      Christina's line first if we can. And hang on,  
16      Christina. I'll let you know when it's open.  
17      Okay. You're good.

18                   MS. VAETH: You're talking to me,  
19      right?

20                   MR. BROOKS: I am talking to you,  
21      right.

22                   MS. VAETH: Okay, very good. I hear

1 some people commenting about stock assessments  
2 for quotas. But I don't want to talk about that  
3 because there is quota still currently that's not  
4 being harvested.

5 So it really is the public perception  
6 that is the problem. I was just wondering if  
7 there was something that NOAA could do to help  
8 promote the public perception. One thing could  
9 be to place the species on the Fish Watch site  
10 because it is the nation's database for  
11 sustainable seafood.

12 Another thing could be to support,  
13 like, the Sustainable Fisheries and Trade Act  
14 because that accomplishes the dual purpose of  
15 improving global management while also leveling  
16 the playing field for U.S. commercial fisherman  
17 which is consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens  
18 Act. But I mostly just wanted to say it really  
19 is public perception because there is quota  
20 available and it hasn't been harvested. And the  
21 reason why is because commercial fishermen are  
22 having a hard time marketing their product.

1 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thank you very  
2 much, Christina. Let's go to the next speaker,  
3 Alana. And Alana, if you wouldn't mind just  
4 starting with your full name and any kind of  
5 affiliation, that'd be great. Thank you.

6 MS. HARRISON: Yes, can you hear me?

7 MR. BROOKS: Actually, if you can get  
8 a little bit closer to the mic or speak up a  
9 little bit. That would be helpful.

10 MS. HARRISON: Sure. I'm Alana. I  
11 have a seafood market in Hatteras. And I hold  
12 some federal dealer's permits. And I wanted to  
13 share with you my perspective and hope you take  
14 it into consideration when developing your draft  
15 plans.

16 I think perhaps it's easy for you all  
17 to get a picture of us in your head that is never  
18 challenged. The other banks are no longer sleepy  
19 fishing towns. We've been exploited into tourist  
20 towns, and our fish stocks are being used up in  
21 the name of fun.

22 Commercial fishermen and people

1 selling local fish like myself are a subculture.  
2 Once everyone was in the fishing family. Now  
3 we're a minority, the hidden working class.

4 My family opened our seafood market in  
5 2007 when we saw snapper/grouper getting cut  
6 back. At that time, we could still fish large  
7 mesh gillnets in the state waters. So 100 pounds  
8 of grouper was okay for us.

9 Now we have a two-week season in  
10 October and a fill the void with tuna. It used  
11 to be easy to get because longliners would come  
12 into Hatteras Village. But now our channel is  
13 too shallow and unreliable.

14 Now I have to compete with companies  
15 across the East Coast for fish I used to be able  
16 to get one mile down the road. I can't move  
17 5,000 pounds of tuna a week in my retail store.  
18 So I'm put on the bottom of the list.

19 I have morals, so I'm not able to sell  
20 imported tuna. So I tell my customers I can't  
21 get it. Right now, I'm trying to figure out how  
22 to market Spanish mackerel instead.

1                   But the places who don't share my  
2 ethics have to have it. So they buy low quality  
3 imports and pass them off as the same local  
4 product. It frustrates me because it's a scam,  
5 straight up fraud and no one cares.

6                   And the thing is it's so easy and  
7 cheap that I can't necessarily blame them. I can  
8 go online every day, click a few buttons, add  
9 Brazilian tuna, Indonesian mahi to my food  
10 service order, and have it delivered in 12 hours  
11 filleted for half the price. But I don't support  
12 wire leaders and J hooks, so I don't want that  
13 fish.

14                   I want high quality fish caught by my  
15 longliners down the road. The local tuna is a  
16 nightmare to get. For example, last week, I  
17 ordered fish when the boat left the dock.

18                   I waited five days for them to get in,  
19 taking orders for tuna the entire time just to  
20 have the dealer tell me he didn't have enough.  
21 So the people who get hurt here are the domestic  
22 consumers that want local fish because it's



1 sustainably caught. Shouldn't that be respected?

2           Shouldn't NOAA have the backs of the  
3 citizens that are paying taxes to manage this  
4 public trust resource and ensure their access? I  
5 have customers come in all the time asking me to  
6 buy their bag limit fish they caught on a private  
7 boat. I have to take time out of my day to  
8 educate them when I could be doing something  
9 productive and making money.

10           I'm standing there telling people from  
11 Ohio why I can't buy their Mahi. And then I  
12 spend my evenings working on articles and videos  
13 to educate people on why imports are killing our  
14 industry. And yeah, it feels like a waste of  
15 time because nobody cares and there's no  
16 repercussions for selling mislabeled fish. So  
17 you all just are going to let us all go out of  
18 business.

19           And so before I get kicked off, I want  
20 to add on the Outer Banks you might've seen us in  
21 the national news last week when we had two  
22 houses collapse near the nor'easter. In

1 February, the first house collapsed. And within  
2 a day, debris scattered 15 miles down the island.

3 Park rangers rallied volunteers to  
4 clean it up the best they could. Afterwards,  
5 they asked eight homeowners to remove their  
6 houses. They're going to fall into the ocean  
7 next. We need them off the park.

8 The homeowners decided not to move  
9 their second homes because insurance would not  
10 pay for relocating. But it turned out the  
11 insurance would pay if the house fell into the  
12 ocean. So the homeowners are waiting the tide  
13 out. Now we must suffer the consequences.  
14 Fishermen, fish markets, restaurants, and most  
15 greatly the marine ecosystem because offshore  
16 Rodanthe where those three houses collapsed are  
17 prime pelagic fishing grounds.

18 So should we look at it as an upside  
19 that floating debris attracts mahi? Or should we  
20 look at it as unfair that they can throw their  
21 entire houses away in the ocean. But if  
22 longliners lose a piece of mano, they get

1 attacked. So when you're drafting your  
2 environmental justice plan, keep in mind that the  
3 commercial fishermen are on that list of  
4 minorities too. And I appreciate your time  
5 listening to me.

6 MR. BROOKS: Thanks very much, Alana.  
7 Appreciate it. Let me just check and see if  
8 there are any other commenters in the room or  
9 online. Yeah, please. Again, if you could just  
10 get to a mic and start with name and affiliation.  
11 Thanks.

12 MR. HOPKINS: Glen Hopkins, commercial  
13 fisherman. I don't want to say much. I wasn't  
14 going to say anything. But somebody said  
15 something as far as the quotas, I think what a  
16 lot of people don't understand is that primary  
17 target species was the sandbar shark. And  
18 they're the most edible, best fin ratio.

19 And I think it was -- if I remember  
20 properly, it made up, like, 60, 70 percent of our  
21 catch. And the other was dusky. And as a  
22 fisherman, there's so many of these things, you

1 can't go fish and weed through them. So that's  
2 part of the problem why people aren't target them  
3 or shark fishing. There's just too many of those  
4 species to make it worthwhile. Thanks.

5 MR. BROOKS: Thanks very much. Let me  
6 check again and see if there's anyone else. I've  
7 got somebody online. If we can open up Tom  
8 Twyford's line, that would be great. Okay. Tom,  
9 you should be able to weigh in now.

10 MR. TWYFORD: Yeah, thank you.  
11 Appreciate you guys addressing the shark  
12 depredation issue. I'm Tom Twyford. I'm the  
13 president of the West Palm Beach Fishing Club.

14 It dates back to 1934 over in Palm  
15 Beach County. Got a really long history of  
16 conservation legacy. And I want to preface my  
17 comments by saying we've always stepped up when  
18 sharks needed help.

19 Gosh, we helped Dr. Sam Gruber when he  
20 was doing his lemon shark stuff. We hosted Peter  
21 Benchley on multiple occasions promoting shark  
22 conservation. So we're all about a good balance.

1           In fact, we closed all of our shark  
2 categories in our club years ago to signal that  
3 we cared about that resource. But there is  
4 definitely an imbalance now. My comments are  
5 related to what we see off of Palm Beach County  
6 and the recreational industry.

7           It's mostly bull sharks and sandbar  
8 sharks. There's no shortage of them. It was a  
9 very, very rare day when a shark would eat a  
10 sailfish. And sailfish is our premier fish.

11           Our organization has been at the  
12 forefront of sailfish conservation since the  
13 1930s. And it never used to happen. I mean, it  
14 was a very rare occurrence when a sailfish on the  
15 end of the line got eaten by a shark. And now it  
16 happens all the time.

17           And so we concur with a lot of the  
18 comments that have been made with regarding to  
19 creating markets, reinvigorating a shark  
20 commercial market. I know sandbars are  
21 protected. But if you come off the coast of Palm  
22 Beach County, it sure doesn't look that way.

1                   And one of the things that I don't  
2 know has come up, but one of the things that's  
3 proliferated in our area is in the popularity of  
4 shark dives. And so we have had an explosion of  
5 dive operators, mostly operating out of Jupiter.  
6 Just google shark dive Jupiter. You'll see what  
7 I'm talking about with these interactive dives  
8 with sharks which I'll admit is really cool.

9                   I used to go to Walker's Cay in the  
10 1990s and I did the shark rodeo over there for  
11 multiple times. Prior to them doing that, there  
12 was never a lot of sharks on the reefs over  
13 there. Once they started that shark rodeo, all  
14 you had to do was drive your boat to that area  
15 and rev your motors and they'd come like a wild  
16 pack of dogs.

17                   And now we have the same thing  
18 occurring off of Jupiter. And it's very  
19 difficult and hard to understand when this  
20 activity is prohibited in state waters and it's  
21 perfectly legal in federal waters. And of  
22 course, it's just three miles off the beach.

1           We have really great visibility. And  
2           so we totally understand why there's an interest  
3           in this activity. My question to the panel would  
4           be, is altering shark behavior a good thing by  
5           going to the same spot day in, day out, feeding  
6           sharks and putting people in the water with them?

7           Are we okay with that? Does that have  
8           an impact on what we're seeing locally with this  
9           proliferation of sharks? And so I know there's  
10          ethics involved with that. And it's more of  
11          probably a South Atlantic Council management  
12          issue.

13          But we have definitely altered the  
14          behavior of these animals with this particular  
15          activity. And I'm not suggesting for a minute  
16          that's going to solve all of our shark  
17          depredation problems. Clearly, there's a lot of  
18          other things going on here.

19          But this, to me, seems like low  
20          hanging fruit. And it's a thing. And I mean, if  
21          we're okay with it, that's fine. If we think  
22          altering the animals' behavior is okay to do,

1 then so be it. But I wanted to bring it to the  
2 panel's attention because it's something that's  
3 more localized to our area because of our great  
4 visibility and close proximity to the ledge  
5 there.

6 But just wanted to make those  
7 comments. And I have said in previous letters to  
8 the panel and the council that if there's any way  
9 the West Palm Beach Fishing Club can assist in  
10 collecting data, we're real involved with  
11 acoustical telemetry work. We're willing to  
12 help. An to the previous commenters, comments  
13 about fundraising, we're pretty good at that too.  
14 So --

15 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Tom.

16 MR. TWYFORD: If there's a financial  
17 need or a need for boots on the ground to help  
18 collect data, you can count on the West Palm  
19 Beach Fishing Club. Thank you.

20 MR. BROOKS: Thanks very much, Tom.  
21 I've got one more public comment. Christina, you  
22 wanted to come back into the -- okay. Actually,



1 I've got three new commenters.

2 So Christina, I'm going to put you on  
3 hold for a second because you've gotten to jump  
4 in once. Let's bring in Bob Hueter and then  
5 Steven Trbovich and then back to Christina. Bob,  
6 welcome. Nice to see you-ish.

7 MR. HUETER: Well, hello, everyone.  
8 This is Bob Hueter of OSEARCH and former AP  
9 member. I miss going to those meetings there,  
10 seeing all of you. I'm glad to see I'm still  
11 being quoted a year or more after I've gone off  
12 the committee or perhaps I should say misquoted,  
13 Jeff. We can talk about that offline.

14 But I just want to offer some  
15 perspective. I don't like seeing this issue of  
16 shark depredation portrayed as a shark problem.  
17 We had a shark problem. We've been through a  
18 shark problem. That was back in 1990 about 30  
19 years ago when we had tremendous declines in our  
20 shark populations.

21 This is not a shark problem. Today  
22 what we have is a conservation success story.

1 This is a shark success. And now we have to  
2 adapt to that success.

3 And we would be naive if we didn't  
4 look at adapting. And the adaptations are going  
5 to fall on a number of places, not just shark  
6 depredation but short-term imbalances between  
7 sharks and their prey, sharks feeding on things  
8 like endangered species. The need for -- I just  
9 heard somebody mention ecotourism, use of sharks,  
10 and how that can help the economy.

11 And yes, in fact, we do have to keep  
12 an eye on public safety issues with an increase  
13 in shark population. But keep in mind, everyone,  
14 very few of us were alive or certainly not  
15 fishing in the 1950s. I remember fishing off of  
16 Delray Beach with my grandfather back then and  
17 having sharks eat a shellfish every once in a  
18 while and certainly barracuda when we were  
19 trawling.

20 And I saw something about great  
21 hammerheads and bull sharks eating or being a  
22 problem now in the Keys on tarpin. Well, for

1 goodness sakes. They've been a problem. You can  
2 go back 100 years or more in some of the reports  
3 from Boca Grande and read about sharks being a  
4 problem there.

5 So let's celebrate this. I know it's  
6 a matter of perspective. But let's remember that  
7 this is a conservation success and let's adapt to  
8 it. Let's not call it, please, a shark problem.

9 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Thanks, Bob.  
10 And for the record, your name was only called in  
11 once. So just so you know. But it's nice to  
12 have you in the mix. Let's open up Steven  
13 Trbovich's line, please.

14 MR. TRBOVICH: Thank you. I'm just  
15 here commenting as a member of the public here.  
16 Bob made a number of good points just now about  
17 the -- I think I mentioned them in the HMS  
18 meeting last year.

19 This is a sense of I'm getting with  
20 all the talk about pushing for more utilization  
21 of this fishery, more -- I mean, I know back in  
22 2019 when the last time when NOAA tried to drum

1 up the demand with press statements and such, I  
2 mean, I honestly looked at some of those things  
3 and I have thought you were going to take out the  
4 Chick-Fil-A style billboards with a tune to say  
5 eat more shark. That is kind of how we got into  
6 that situation that Bob was mentioning back in  
7 the early '90s. Shark got pushed as a, quote-  
8 unquote, sustainable alternative.

9           And we turned the taps open -- wide  
10 open for about ten years or so and crashed it.  
11 So those were good points there. Another point I  
12 would want to make out and it sort of relates to  
13 what Tom was just talking about because he and I  
14 are both up in the same stretch of water, albeit  
15 he's fishing and I'm diving.

16           And I hear a lot of talk about -- I've  
17 heard a lot of talk about, oh, this species is  
18 such a problem, where we are. There's one  
19 comment about it's like molasses. They all pile  
20 up in one area.

21           To address the molasses comment, I  
22 would point to the fact that this is the highly

1 migratory species panel. And we know that some  
2 of these species have very wide ranges. And I  
3 think there was just a sighting of a satellite  
4 tagged silky by divers up in Palm Beach that in  
5 the last year was tracked going all the way up  
6 into the Gulf of Mexico and then coming around  
7 back to Palm Beach.

8 A lot of these things are migratory  
9 and seasonal. Like, Tom was complaining about  
10 the sandbars. I can tell you as a diver that in  
11 the ledge on the deep ledge off Jupiter, we  
12 generally only see sandbars in the late spring  
13 and summer months.

14 Aside from that, they're gone. About  
15 the same time of year is when we see silky sharks  
16 show up which to be honest, I do have to wonder  
17 if that's one of the factors. I haven't heard  
18 them mentioned on this call. But I know as a  
19 diver that for a number of years largely because  
20 we were seeing so few dusky sharks people were  
21 getting silkies and duskies confused.

22 And there was the one comment that,

1 oh, it was a brown shark. That the species ID is  
2 not always that great. So I suppose to sum up  
3 that we do have to remember that this management  
4 process is based on science.

5 We do have a lot of people yelling for  
6 when's the stock assessment coming, is that  
7 necessary. That is the process we have to  
8 follow. It needs to be good data that we can  
9 actually base a fishery off of.

10 But I can't just short circuit this.  
11 We just actually -- we just had that happen here  
12 in Florida with goliath grouper. We have a  
13 limited reopening starting next year which  
14 thankfully that got busted down to just  
15 juveniles.

16 But that was pretty much entirely  
17 driven by depredation complaints. And a lot of  
18 that was not based on science. So I'm not eager  
19 to see NOAA go down that route on the federal  
20 level.

21 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Steven.

22 MR. TRBOVICH: Anyway, thank you for

1 your time.

2 MR. BROOKS: Thank you very much.  
3 Appreciate it. I've got two more people in the  
4 queue, maybe a third. Let's go to Hannah Medd  
5 and then we'll go to another former AP member,  
6 Rusty Hudson. Hannah?

7 MS. MEDD: Hi, are you guys able to  
8 hear me?

9 MR. BROOKS: Yes, but if you could  
10 speak a little louder, that would be helpful.

11 MS. MEDD: Okay. I'll lean in. Hi,  
12 yeah, my name is Hannah and I'm a scientist with  
13 a local nonprofit here in the Palm Beach area.  
14 And I just wanted to quickly mention we come up  
15 against the conversation about in our local area  
16 about depredation being linked to the diving.

17 But I just wanted to let people know  
18 that we have been working with the operators for  
19 about five or six years now. And it is -- we  
20 have found that it's very species-specific. And  
21 often on those days when we're out there  
22 collecting data, basically looking at the amount

1 of bait that's used, the amount of time in the  
2 water, just really detailed information of the  
3 interactions between the recreational divers and  
4 the sharks themselves and then some of their  
5 movements and possible impacts, we do notice that  
6 at that time there's two to three shark diving  
7 boats that are typically surrounded by up to 100  
8 fishing boats that are within line of sight.

9 So just want to put a little  
10 perspective on that little corner of the world  
11 knowing obviously that depredation is an issue  
12 that's global pretty much. And also just let  
13 everyone know that there is research being done,  
14 looking at the individual species and the impacts  
15 on their movement and behaviors in that area as  
16 well. So yeah, that's all I wanted to say.  
17 Thank you.

18 MR. BROOKS: Thanks very much. And  
19 I'm just going to note I'm really glad we were  
20 able to get the public comment about 15 minutes  
21 early today given the number of people who are  
22 wanting to weigh in. I will also note that we



1 are now starting to get closer to actual closing  
2 time.

3 So let's just keep working through the  
4 queue. Let's go to Rusty and then we will go to  
5 someone who's by the name of A.D. And again, if  
6 folks can just start with your full name and  
7 affiliation. Rusty, welcome back. Rusty, are  
8 you there?

9 MR. HUDSON: Can you hear me?

10 MR. BROOKS: Yeah, we got you now.

11 MR. HUDSON: Okay. Sorry about that.  
12 I'm trying to work with this iPad. Historically,  
13 the Magnuson Act, 1976. A couple years after  
14 that, the pre-management plan for sharks and  
15 other highly migratory species. And then the  
16 encouragement to develop the fishery which  
17 occurred slowly in the early '80s.

18 By mid-1985 thereabouts, it started  
19 getting a lot better with people like Chris  
20 Branton out of Alabama and some of the Fort  
21 Pierce and Daytona Beach guys and some of the  
22 North Carolina people. All of them started

1 developing the fishery. Never was there a pound  
2 of shark really monitored properly.

3 Florida didn't even do species-  
4 specific until '86. Once you start getting into  
5 all this impact on the sandbars, their migrations  
6 going to Mexico and back. They migrate up from  
7 Mexico in the spring. We have a lot of females  
8 and males that come together, then they do their  
9 thing, then they separate.

10 Then they get up to North Carolina.  
11 The pregnant females from the year before wind up  
12 dumping their pups. The duskies, same deal.  
13 Massive amount of adults in Mexico. How much has  
14 Mexico helped us? None, zero, over all these  
15 years. They listened in, in the early '90s.

16 Now we have a huge population of  
17 duskies and of sandbars. And we have rebuilt  
18 populations of Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic  
19 blacktip as well as some other species I won't  
20 get into. But our commercial fishermen have to  
21 be 100 percent on their ID.

22 And that ID is important. It was not

1 in existence in the management plans and efforts  
2 of the states and the feds back then. Then the  
3 five councils, New England, Mid-Atlantic, South  
4 Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean, those five  
5 councils handed off the sharks to the feds.

6 HMS was born to be in charge. But  
7 then they got caught in budgets and other stuff  
8 and couldn't do what John Carmichael who was  
9 leading SEDAR once we morphed from just doing  
10 stock assessments in Miami with NEFSC. We did  
11 the SEDAR. And the SEDAR was where John  
12 Carmichael who has been on point with that from  
13 early on pointed out that we need to do two or  
14 three species of sharks every year. We haven't  
15 done it. And now --

16 (Simultaneous speaking.)

17 MR. BROOKS: Hey, Rusty. I'm going to  
18 need you to start to wind it down. Okay?

19 MR. HUDSON: -- sharks we haven't  
20 done, these bull sharks and other types of stocks  
21 that you're talking about that haven't been  
22 assessed. Oh, they're in the queue. We're just

1 finishing up hammerheads.

2 But we're not doing the stock  
3 assessments the way we used to. We're doing  
4 research tracks and operational assessments.  
5 It's different from the way we did it before.

6 So I'm saying that we're not going to  
7 catch up at this rate with the science. And it's  
8 only going to get worse with the depredation.  
9 And I believe a lot of people on both sides of  
10 the aisle when it comes to fishing, whether it's  
11 recreational or commercial and/or the non-fishing  
12 environmental community, they have to come to  
13 terms with the predator rich environment they've  
14 created and it's a quarter century, 30 years of  
15 it. So --

16 MR. BROOKS: Thanks.

17 MR. HUDSON: -- that's the reality.  
18 You need to find a way not increase as much as  
19 like Jimmy Hull pointed out be able to catch the  
20 allocation.

21 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Rusty.

22 (Simultaneous speaking.)

1 MR. HUDSON: Thank you.

2 MR. BROOKS: Thank you. I've got two  
3 more speakers and four more minutes. So let's do  
4 the math. A.D., let's bring you in. And if you  
5 could start again with name and affiliation.

6 MS. DEGRUCHY: I'll make this quick.  
7 My name is Astrid DeGruchy. I live here in  
8 Islamorada. I am a recreational angler, and my  
9 fianc, is a charter captain out at Bud N Marys.

10 And I'm so happy that you're  
11 addressing the shark problem. But to Christina's  
12 point, if we wanted to kill bull shark down here  
13 in the Florida Keys, we could. It's just it's so  
14 frowned upon, and we also have a show on WAYPOINT  
15 TV. And there's a lot of influential people like  
16 YouTubers and people who have bigger shows like  
17 Into the Blue.

18 And I think that the exposure of maybe  
19 doing a partnership with you guys if we do a  
20 video, just a partnership with NOAA and just  
21 educating the people would go a really long way  
22 because it's just now if we wanted to do a video

1 and killing a shark, the comments are just, like,  
2 save the sharks. They don't understand that  
3 they're a problem. So maybe that's something to  
4 look into is to maybe collaborate with highly  
5 influential shows and people to educate and move  
6 things to that direction.

7 MR. BROOKS: Thank you very much.  
8 Appreciate it. And Christina, we'll give you a  
9 last quick second bite here. If we can open up  
10 Christina's line, please.

11 MS. VAETH: Hi, thank you. I just  
12 wanted to go to Bob Hueter's comments. This  
13 really is a success story. And I just wish that  
14 there'd be more to promote and educate the public  
15 about we have a model of successful fishery  
16 management. And that full utilization is  
17 important because without the value of the fin  
18 sales and the only way to promote the fishery is  
19 to increase retention limits.

20 But that is just putting more work on  
21 the fisherman in order to receive the same amount  
22 of pay. So that would essentially be, like,

1 suggesting that we put more work and more hours  
2 on people but give them the same amount of pay  
3 which is not a good solution. But a good  
4 solution would be to promote and educate the  
5 public so that there would be more focus on  
6 legislation like the Sustainable Shark Fisheries  
7 and Trade Act.

8 MR. BROOKS: Thank you so much,  
9 Christina. And thanks to all the members of the  
10 public who have hung in here. I can't recall the  
11 last time we had so many public comments, and  
12 it's really good to hear. So thank you, all, for  
13 hanging in there and folding in these  
14 perspectives.

15 At this point, let's move to close.  
16 It's been two and a half days and I know everyone  
17 probably has places to get to. Before I hand it  
18 off to Randy, let me just say from here, first of  
19 all, thank you all for what I thought was a  
20 really good meeting and discussion.

21 And we navigated the very treacherous  
22 shoals of a hybrid meeting. And I think we did

1 it reasonably well. So huge props to Pete and  
2 everyone on the HMS staff for putting this  
3 together and to all the AP members and public who  
4 went through it with us.

5 Thank you. With any luck in  
6 September, we'll all just be around the table.  
7 So fingers crossed. I want to -- a lot of good  
8 conversations I just want to sort of call out in  
9 particular. I thought the A-13 conversation  
10 really demonstrated the value of these meetings  
11 and the opportunity for feedback for the agency  
12 to hear your perspectives and respond.

13 So I think it's really a -- it's a  
14 great example of why you all come together. So  
15 thanks to everyone for that and we'll just keep  
16 them going. There's never a lack of  
17 conversations to talk about.

18 Just in terms of a couple of  
19 specifics, next steps from today. Just noted  
20 that there were a couple of -- Greg Skomal, you  
21 said you've got some survey results that you  
22 could share. So maybe we can follow on that.



1 And it sounded like Marcus Drymon will have some  
2 soon. I think maybe he said August or so. So  
3 those seem like some specific next steps.

4 And then I also noted when some of you  
5 were out of the room I would like to think about  
6 how we handle the question period when leadership  
7 is here. There's always so many more questions  
8 and comments than we can accommodate. And I  
9 don't think the amount of time we're going to get  
10 is going to ever change.

11 So just thinking about how we do that  
12 in a way that is balanced. Something I like to  
13 think about. So with that, Randy, I hand it over  
14 to you to close us out.

15 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Thanks, Bennett.  
16 And I also appreciate you constantly thinking  
17 about ways to improve the way that our meeting  
18 flows and is operated. Thank you very much for  
19 your work.

20 I wanted to just let you all know that  
21 the summary -- the high level summary that we  
22 usually put together for the meeting will be

1 prepared and will be posted online in the coming  
2 weeks. So you can look for that. It is posted  
3 when it is available on the HMS advisory panel  
4 web page for this meeting right there with the  
5 agenda, usually right up at the top. So feel  
6 free to keep an eye out for that.

7 Remember for your travel documents for  
8 those of you that travel, please try to get those  
9 done as soon as you can. And Pete Cooper will be  
10 sending or has sent an email, one of the two,  
11 just to remind you about that. And certainly  
12 follow the instructions that are provided there.

13 Bennett mentioned a September meeting.  
14 And we don't have the dates locked in. But I  
15 will just share with you that we are eyeballing  
16 our usual week which is the week of Labor Day.  
17 So you can kind of keep that in mind.

18 We certainly will announce through  
19 email to you all when we kind of get that locked  
20 in. But kind of keep that in mind. That meeting  
21 week obviously is not necessarily always the best  
22 for everybody, but it is one that avoids a lot of

1 other conflicts with council meetings and various  
2 other things. So it is kind of traditionally  
3 been a week that we eyeball.

4 I want to thank HMS management  
5 division staff for all of the work that you've  
6 done to prepare for this meeting, both on the  
7 technical side which has already been mentioned,  
8 but also on all the other work that went into it  
9 to prepare presentations, the data analysis, and  
10 everything that went into it. Thank you very  
11 much. You're a great group to lead.

12 I also want to thank all of you for  
13 spending your time with us over the last three  
14 days. For those of you that traveled here in  
15 person, thanks for your time and coming. And for  
16 everybody online, thank you very much for your  
17 time as well.

18 It is great to be moving back in this  
19 direction. I hope that we will be able to  
20 continue to move in this direction, either  
21 through hybrid or in-person meetings. Hopefully  
22 the pandemic allows us to continue to move in

1 this direction.

2 So thank you very much for your time.

3 I wish you all the best and safe travels as you  
4 head back to your homes or wherever you're headed  
5 from here. And we look forward to seeing you at  
6 the next meeting. Thanks.

7 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter  
8 went off the record at 11:48 a.m.)

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**50** 33:4 56:21 60:22  
 61:10  
**500** 89:8  
**56** 90:18

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**6**

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**60** 115:20  
**65-foot** 60:11  
**66** 4:12

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**7**

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**7** 4:6  
**70** 69:5 115:20  
**70-plus** 89:8  
**75** 61:10

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**8**

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**8** 4:8  
**8:45** 1:12  
**8:54** 5:2  
**80** 69:4  
**80s** 58:1 129:17  
**86** 130:4  
**8777** 1:12

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**9**

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**9:00** 22:9  
**9:30** 7:7  
**90** 93:13  
**90s** 124:7 130:15  
**94** 40:20

C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Panel Meeting

Before: Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Adv. Panel

Date: 05-20-22

Place: Silver Spring, MD

was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under my direction; further, that said transcript is a true and accurate complete record of the proceedings.

  
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Court Reporter

**NEAL R. GROSS**

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