

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
(NOAA)

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HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY PANEL MEETING

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TUESDAY
MAY 9, 2023

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

MEMBERS PRESENT

Academic Sector:

DEMIAN CHAPMAN, Mote Marine Lab
JEFF KNEEBONE, New England Aquarium
ZACH WHITENER, Gulf of Maine Research Institute

Commercial Sector:

CHARLIE BERGMANN
STEVEN GETTO, American Bluefin Tuna Association
JAMES HULL, Hull Seafood
MATT HUTH, Fresh Catch Seafood
AL MERCIER
CHINH NGUYEN, F/V St. Joseph & Peter
TIM PICKETT, Lindgren-Pitman, Inc.
GEORGE PURMONT
DAVID SCHALIT, American Bluefin Tuna Association
SCOTT VAETH
ALAN WEISS, Blue Water Fishing Tackle Co.

Environmental Sector:

JOHN BOHORQUEZ, The Ocean Foundation
 RAIMUNDO ESPINOZA, Concervación ConCiencia Inc.
 SONJA FORDHAM, Shark Advocates International
 JACKSON MARTINEZ, Environmental Defense Fund

Recreational Sector:

PETER CHAIBONGSAI, The Billfish Foundation
 WILLY GOLDSMITH, American Saltwater Guides
 Association
 MARTHA GUYAS, American Sportfishing Association
 EVAN HIPSLEY
 BOB HUMPHREY, Sport-Ventures Charters and Casco
 Bay Bluefin Bonanza
 ERIC JACOBSEN
 CHAD McINTYRE
 ROBERT NAVARRO, Fly Zone Fishing
 MICHAEL PIERDINOCK, CPF Charters "Perseverance";
 Recreational Fishing Alliance
 BRUCE POHLOT, International Game Fish
 Association
 MARK SAMPSON, Ocean City Charterboat Captains
 Association
 RICK WEBER, South Jersey Marina

Council Representatives:

TOM FRAZER, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management
 Council
 DEWEY HEMILRIGHT, Mid-Atlantic Fishery
 Management Council
 MARCOS HANKE, Caribbean Fishery Management
 Council

State Representatives:

JASON ADRIANCE, Louisiana Department of Wildlife
 and Fisheries
 AMY DUKES, South Carolina Department of
 Natural Resources
 YAMITZA RODRIGUEZ FERRER, Puerto Rico
 DNER/Recreational and Sport Fisheries
 Division
 GREG HINKS, New Jersey Department of
 Environmental Protection

CHRISTINE KITTLE, Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission
GREG SKOMAL, Massachusetts Marine Fisheries
PERRY TRIAL, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
ABBY VAUGHN, Mississippi State University
ANGEL WILLEY, Maryland Department of Natural
Resources

ICCAT Advisory Committee:
WALT GOLET, University of Maine School of
Marine Sciences and Gulf of Maine
Research Institute

NOAA NMFS STAFF PRESENT

RANDY BLANKINSHIP, Division Chief, Highly
Migratory Species Management Division
KELLY DENIT, Director, Office of Sustainable
Fisheries

C-O-N-T-E-N-T-S

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

2 (9:31 a.m.)

3 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Good morning, everybody.

4 It is very good to see -- it is great to be here in
5 person and to have actually several more people in the
6 room, I think, than we even had last time when we had
7 our hybrid meeting. That is not to say that we're not
8 glad to have the folks on line, because we are
9 extremely glad to have that and also thankful for the
10 technology that allows us to be able to facilitate
11 participation virtually as well.

12 We have a great agenda ahead of us that is
13 full of a lot of weighty subjects and we're looking
14 forward to hearing from all of you over the course of
15 the next three days.

16 To start us off though, I want to
17 introduce, for some opening comments, our Director of
18 the Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Kelly Denit, who
19 is located here in Silver Spring, Maryland. Kelly has
20 provided outstanding leadership to our office. The
21 HMS Management Division is one of the divisions within
22 the Office of Sustainable Fisheries here at

1 Headquarters and so Kelly is my boss and I will hand
2 it over to her.

3 MS. DENIT: Thank you, Randy. Good
4 morning, everybody. It's a pleasure to be here. I
5 thank all of you for taking the time to be here with
6 us over the next three days. I would like to express
7 my welcome to all of our new AP members and I think
8 we're going to go around and maybe do little intros
9 shortly and express my appreciation to those who have
10 cycled off and might be in the audience listening. We
11 have appreciated all of your input.

12 I would like to start by thanking Team
13 HMS. Pete, I'm getting an echo. I'll move back a
14 little bit and move my phone. I want to thank Pete
15 Cooper and his team, all this magic to be able to do
16 this hybrid and have wireless microphones that work
17 when you want them to, doesn't happen on accident, so
18 thanks to that team for getting this all squared away.

19 As Randy mentioned, this is a really big
20 meeting for the AP. There's a lot of substance that's
21 going to be covered in the next three days, Amendment
22 15, Amendment 16, the ANPR for Electronic Reporting

1 and several other topics, many of which I know you all
2 have been interested in, in some cases for multiple
3 years and many of which are controversial in a lot of
4 different ways and there's going to be a lot of
5 different perspectives around this table. Allergies,
6 despite the rain knocking down the pollen still exist.

7 So, really looking forward to candid
8 conversations over the next three days on these really
9 big topics. They have a lot of implications for the
10 future of our highly migratory species fisheries and
11 that's why you all are here to help us get that
12 feedback to inform our decision making as we move
13 forward.

14 I would highlight that tomorrow evening
15 after the session closes, there's going to be an
16 informal Q&A focused on Amendment 15, so we can make
17 sure that we answer your questions and folks leave
18 here with a really good understanding of what is or is
19 not in Amendment 15. I know the bulk of tomorrow is
20 devoted to that and I'm looking forward to being here
21 for the discussion. So, I just wanted to highlight
22 that.

1 I think the last thing I'll touch on is I
2 know there has been a lot of frustration on a number
3 of different topics, most recently around the A13
4 appeals process and just appreciate the feedback that
5 you all are providing to us. That helps us improve
6 our service and work with others to improve our
7 services to you.

8 I really want to thank Brad and his team,
9 who have been doing a ton of work behind the scenes to
10 try and address all of those issues that have been
11 coming up. I know that that has been an extremely
12 frustrating process for many of you. Know that we
13 continue to work and, at this point, my understanding
14 is that the appeals office has the information that
15 they need to make their decision, which I know some of
16 you have felt like you have heard before, so please
17 understand that I have heard the concerns and the
18 frustration and Randy and myself and Brad for sure
19 will be working with the Southeast Center and the
20 appeals office so that we can make sure that the
21 process next year is better and different than it went
22 this year.

1 With that, I'll just wrap up by saying;
2 again, this is a lot of substantive topics over the
3 next three days. Really encourage your questions. No
4 doubt there will be others in the room who have the
5 same question, so please speak up and raise issues or
6 concerns that you have. Ultimately, we're all trying
7 to make the best decisions that we possibly can and
8 your input is critical to our ability to do that.

9 With that, I'll stop. I'm happy to answer
10 questions if anyone has them; otherwise I think I'm
11 passing it to you. Okay, great. Thank you.

12 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thanks, Kelly, and
13 good morning again everybody. For those of you that
14 don't know me, my name is Bennett Brooks. I am a
15 senior mediator with the Consensus Building Institute
16 and have been facilitating the AP here for a number of
17 years. It's always a meeting I really enjoy coming to
18 and it's nice to see everyone.

19 There are a lot of new faces around the
20 room here. We've got a great turn out both in the
21 room and online. We have our usual mix of fishing
22 industry, commercial and rec. We've got

1 environmental, regional fishery management
2 organizations, academics, obviously HMS staffers are
3 here and it's that rich mix that makes for really good
4 conversations. It sort of makes sure we're all
5 learning a lot and getting the feedback that the HMS
6 team needs to move forward as wisely as possible.

7 I do want to pause and just give the new
8 folks around the table just a chance to say their name
9 and organization and give you all a chance to put a
10 face to some of these new names. I think all of our
11 new members are actually in the room and around the
12 table, which is great. So, I'll sort of call you out
13 and let you just again say your name, organization and
14 just wave a hand so folks know who you are. So, from
15 the commercial sector, Chinh, do you want to just --
16 this is also a test for you to learn how to use the
17 mics. You open your mic up and just say a quick.

18 MR. NGUYEN: Good morning, everyone. My
19 name is Chinh Nguyen. I'm from the Gulf of Mexico,
20 New Orleans area.

21 MR. BROOKS: Welcome and mic off. Yes,
22 Matt Huth.

1 MR. HUTH: I'm Matt Huth from Wanchese,
2 North Carolina, representing Fresh Catch Seafood.

3 MR. BROOKS: Great, nice to have you here.

4 I know you've been coming to these meetings and sort
5 of more in the back of the room so nice to have you at
6 the table. Ally.

7 MR. MERCIER: Yeah, Ally Mercier. I'm a
8 long liner, 42 years, and now I'm buoy fishing.

9 MR. BROOKS: Welcome.

10 MR. MERCIER: Thank you.

11 MR. BROOKS: In the environmental sector,
12 John.

13 MR. BOHORQUEZ: Hi, John Bohorquez here
14 from New York here with the Ocean Foundation's
15 International Fisheries Conservation Project.

16 MR. BROOKS: Great, welcome. Also with
17 the environmental sector, Jackson.

18 MR. MARTINEZ: Good morning, everyone.
19 Jackson Martinez representing the environmental sector
20 with the Environmental Defense Fund.

21 MR. BROOKS: Great and shifting over to
22 rec fishing, Bruce, I think at the corner there, yes.

1 MR. POHLOT: Good morning. Bruce Pohlot,
2 the Conservation Director at the International Game
3 Fish Association.

4 MR. BROOKS: Welcome. Eric.

5 MR. JACOBSON: Good morning, everyone.
6 Eric Jacobson, Massachusetts.

7 MR. BROOKS: At the head of the table
8 here, Martha.

9 MS. GUYAS: Good morning, everyone. I'm
10 Martha Guyas representing the American Sport Fishing
11 Association. I'm the Southeast Policy Director there
12 and I'm back around for another spin because I used to
13 be on this panel in a different capacity.

14 MR. BROOKS: That was what my memory was
15 telling me, so welcome back. And then we have a
16 couple of proxies here. We've got Scott Vaeth here
17 for Dave Campo. We've got Zac Whitener here for Lisa
18 Kerr and Abby Vaughn for Marcus Drymon. Welcome,
19 everybody and again to the new members, it's great to
20 have you in the mix and to everyone else, good to see
21 you.*

22 As we've already heard from Randy and from

1 Kelly, it is a busy week, well, it's not a week, it's
2 two and a half days, but I think it's going to feel
3 like a week because we have a lot to cover. Lots of
4 important topics to cover. Lots of important feedback
5 for HMS staff to be hearing.

6 Just a very high level look at the agenda
7 for today, we'll be going until 5:15 first of all. A
8 mix of discussions, we'll start with the usual
9 overviews, activities, rulemaking. We'll hear from
10 ICCAT about the 2022 annual meeting. We'll get an
11 update on climate vulnerability assessments. We'll
12 have the bluefin tuna fishery year in review and take
13 a look at 2023 management issues. We will be hearing
14 from leadership today, so Sam will be with us. Then,
15 we'll have an Offshore Wind update as well.

16 Tomorrow will be a 9:00 to 5:30 day, most
17 of the morning will be shark focused tomorrow, scoping
18 for Amendment 16 and then we'll hear about shark-
19 related activities at the CITES November '22 meeting.

20 Late morning and much of the afternoon will be
21 focused around Amendment 15 and then we'll have a late
22 afternoon conversation around Deepwater Horizon

1 restoration updates and, as has already been noted,
2 from 6:00 to 7:00 tomorrow, there will be an informal
3 Q&A around Amendment 15 tomorrow evening from, again,
4 6:00 to 7:00.

5 Day three will be a shorter day, 9:00 to
6 12:15. That will be on e-reporting, draft essential
7 fish habitat five-year review and then an enforcement
8 update.

9 Just to note, we take breaks in the
10 morning. We take breaks in the afternoon. Lunch
11 today is 12:00; lunch tomorrow is 12:30. I just like
12 to point that out because I know you all have other
13 lives and meetings and phone calls so that's the place
14 where I ask you to sort of steer that stuff to, so we
15 have you at the table and as focused as possible when
16 we are engaged in a conversation. We will take public
17 comment at the end of each day, so for any members of
18 the public who are here, please know that that time is
19 available for you to make comments.

20 Just a little bit more specifics on today.

21 Again, in a minute here we'll hand it off to Randy
22 and to Carol to give us the HMS updates. We will take

1 a break at 10:45 today. The rest of the morning will
2 be the ICCAT update and HMS Climate Vulnerability
3 Assessment. After lunch, we'll start with the bluefin
4 tuna year in review. We'll take a break at 2:45 and
5 then we'll hear from Sam Rauch, leadership update, for
6 about a half hour and then Offshore Wind.. Public
7 comment again at 4:45 and then wrap up.

8 Just a reminder, as is tradition here, no
9 host social hour will take place after this meeting,
10 at the bar downstairs. There's always a really good
11 turnout there and we always encourage a good turnout
12 because one of the real values of getting together is
13 being able to get together. I was chatting with Mike
14 beforehand and just talking about the importance of
15 building relationships, having the chance to talk
16 informally, having the chance to put a little bit more
17 flavor to some of the hard comments around the table
18 and it's really valuable. I really encourage all of
19 you to take advantage of being together and really
20 getting to connect with each other.

21 Ground rules, again, refresher for those
22 of you have been here many, many times and sort of new

1 for those of you that are first time at the table.
2 Usual rules that I really ask of everybody is first of
3 all, just to contribute. You are here because you all
4 have different perspectives and you all have different
5 perspectives and it's really important for Randy and
6 team to hear that from you, so please don't be shy.
7 At the same time, share the time, look around the
8 table. There's a lot of people here. We've got
9 another twice as many again online, so being succinct
10 in your comments is really appreciated so we can hear
11 from everybody.

12 Listen really hard to each other; try to
13 really understand what your fellow AP members are
14 saying. Try to integrate what they're saying into
15 what you're saying. Ask questions of each other.
16 This is not a consensus seeking body by design, but
17 it's really helpful to understand the perspectives and
18 see where there's alignment and where there's not.
19 Weighing in is really helpful.

20 A couple of other specifics as well.
21 These meetings always are about important topics.
22 They're important to each of you for different

1 reasons. They bring up passions. That is real and
2 appropriate and we expect to hear that, at the same
3 time, really ask people to be as focused in your
4 comments, as respectful in your comments as possible
5 because it will be heard better, it will be understood
6 better and it will just make for a better dialogue, so
7 acknowledge that these are tough conversations, but
8 really ask people to engage productively, which is
9 frankly how I think the AP does engage, which makes it
10 really valuable.

11 Just a reminder for members of the public
12 who are online or in the room, the conversation is
13 around the table or around the virtual table, but it's
14 just involving AP members to the extent that there are
15 others in the room that might be able to contribute,
16 I'd look to Randy and team to let me know if there's
17 anyone who's not an AP member to call into the
18 discussion.

19 A couple of points just on hybrid
20 environment. Pete and team are getting really good at
21 this and it's still challenging. So, just a couple of
22 things to keep in mind. If you are here in person,

1 just recognize that again there's another half of the
2 AP that's online and so, I'll be making space for them
3 and I want you to sort of mentally make space for them
4 too, acknowledge that I'm going to be bouncing back
5 and forth.

6 When you want to get in queue in the room,
7 you just turn your name tag on the side, so I'll be
8 able to see it and I'll just work it that way. Please
9 avoid side conversations. That's always important
10 when we're in person, but it's really important online
11 because the mics pick up stuff and it makes it super
12 hard for folks online to follow the conversations. If
13 you must have a side conversation, please just move
14 away from the table.

15 If you're joining online, AP members, if
16 you can keep your camera on, it's appreciated. It's
17 helpful to see you. It makes us feel like we're more
18 together, but I recognize that not everyone is in a
19 position to do that. To get into the conversation,
20 you should be able to raise your virtual hand, which
21 is at the bottom of the screen. If for some reason,
22 that does not work just throw into the chat that

1 you're trying to get into the conversation and we'll
2 do that.

3 Speaking of the chat, my strong
4 encouragement is to minimize use of the chat. When
5 we're all around the table, we have one conversation.

6 If we've got a conversation going on in the chat and
7 a conversation going around the table, I think it's
8 super confusing. It's hard for people to follow
9 everything and most importantly, it's really hard for
10 members of the public to track this. So, I would ask
11 for people online, a really good way to use the chat
12 is if someone said something and you can say, wow, I
13 really agree with what Angel just said. Throw that in
14 the chat then we know what you're thinking. It's a
15 useful way to hear it, but long diatribes not helpful,
16 please don't do that.

17 Chats will only go to the panelists, just
18 so you know, if you're chatting. We'll reflect them
19 back out if there is a substantive chat that comes out
20 or a reference for some sort of publication or
21 something. We'll make sure that gets back out to
22 everybody and the public and Pete will be monitoring

1 that.

2 For public attendees, the chat is not open
3 to you during the meeting just as during the meeting,
4 you're not going to stand up and start saying stuff,
5 but during public comment, it will be open so you'll
6 have an opportunity to comment either verbally or in a
7 chat, if you prefer.

8 Just to online members, last technical
9 note, is as you may recall, there's always a little
10 bit of a hiccup between when we recognize you and when
11 the mic comes open. So, if you can just sort of do a
12 two count beat, the mic should be open and then we'll
13 hear you. We just don't want to lose the start of
14 whatever your comment is. If everybody online or in
15 the room can just make sure you start with your name
16 and organization that is helpful for our court
17 reporter to be able to capture the comments.

18 Very last few comments and then I'm going
19 to stop talking here. Just again, particularly for
20 new members, the way I run the queue is mostly try to
21 honor the order in which cards go up. However, I need
22 to balance between who is in the room and who is

1 online and I also want to try to balance between the
2 different sectors and making sure we're hearing from
3 the quieter folks, so I like to give myself the
4 latitude to take some liberties with the queue so that
5 we're making sure we're hearing from everyone because
6 that's the point. If I'm not hitting it right, I'm
7 always interested to get your feedback. You guys are
8 always good about giving me feedback so you'll let me
9 know if it's working right or not.

10 If there are tech issues, chat or e-mail
11 Pete, right?

12 MR. COOPER: Yes.

13 MR. BROOKS: Okay, let him know and we
14 will be recording this meeting as is our want with
15 online. I think that's all I have to say, more than I
16 wanted to say, but hopefully it's helpful and gets you
17 all oriented. Any questions? Any questions about the
18 agenda, the day, the ground rules, technology, online,
19 in the room, anybody? Alan Weiss, I see your hand
20 raised. We can open up Alan Weiss. Okay, Alan, I
21 think your mic should be open. Okay, Alan, your line
22 is open. Maybe throw in the chat whether you're

1 trying to talk and we'll get on that. Okay, all
2 right, anything else? We'll figure that out. All
3 right, in that case, I think we're good and Randy,
4 over to you.

5 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Thank you, Bennett. All
6 right, we'll transition into our first presentation,
7 which is our HMS overview presentation.

8 In this presentation, we usually try to
9 touch on some things that have happened since the last
10 AP meeting, which was in September of last year, and
11 also touch on a few things that are happening outside
12 of Atlantic HMS Management Division that you might be
13 interested in or that may affect our HMS stakeholders
14 in some form or fashion.

15 We also provide an update on some staff
16 changes. So, just as an overview, we will touch in
17 this presentation on the statue of the pelagic
18 longline monitoring areas that were established by
19 rule a few years ago and also given an update on
20 operations activities within the division. We'll have
21 the links to a summary of catch reporting options and
22 then updates on several of those issues that are

1 outside of HMS Division, as I said.

2 Following my presentation and Sarah's,
3 Sarah will touch on a couple of things as well in a
4 moment, Karyl Brewster-Geisz will have our rulemaking
5 update so that will be the next presentation.

6 During this presentation, this overview,
7 we will not spend any time talking about some of the
8 things that we have the dedicated agenda items for,
9 which are listed on the right hand side of this slide.

10 Those discussions for those topics will be deferred
11 to that time on the agenda.

12 So, with staff changes within the Atlantic
13 HMS Management Division, we've got some new faces and
14 you will see some of them around here and I hope
15 you'll get to meet them. Dr. Lisa Crawford is our new
16 Knauss Fellow and I've lost track of Lisa. There she
17 is. Okay, still right here at the end of the table.
18 Lisa is with us this year during her fellowship. She
19 is working on the rule making branch which Karyl
20 Brewster-Geisz is the branch chief for that branch.

21 Also, Tyler Loughran, who is over there.
22 Wave your hand again, please, Tyler. Tyler is on our

1 products and services branch which is led by Pete
2 Cooper and Tyler is onboard as a contractor to do some
3 great assistance with our climate vulnerability
4 assessment process. She will be talking a little bit
5 later today about that.

6 We've also had some departures. Some
7 faces that you won't see around the table or in the
8 room at this meeting. Tom Warren, who was front and
9 center for and through the Amendment 13 process has
10 retired fully and is enjoying his time in the
11 retirement world.

12 Also, Craig Cockrell, a long time HMS-er
13 that's been integral to a lot of the things that we've
14 done including the EFH program, moved on to another
15 NOAA fisheries office.

16 Ben Duffin moved on to another agency.
17 Ben did a lot of statistical work for us.

18 Ian Miller, who has been around for quite
19 some time, particularly doing work with IBQ program
20 and electronic monitoring recently became the
21 operations branch chief within the Office of
22 Sustainable Fisheries, so we've still got him close

1 by, but he's not working just on HMS anymore.

2 Also, Nick Velseboer, who is a contractor
3 who has worked a lot on bluefin tuna topics,
4 especially data. Behind us, behind me. He will be
5 actually leaving. He has taken a job with a state
6 agency, Connecticut I believe.

7 And then, not on this list and initially
8 not included on this list because it's a little bit
9 further out in the time window, is Dan Crear, our
10 contractor that has been working with us on Amendment
11 15 and spatial management and the PRISM model, has
12 actually taken a job with IATTC, that's the Inter-
13 American Tropical Tuna Commission. But that is not
14 happening for a few months, so he will be around with
15 us for quite some time, which is why I actually
16 initially didn't put him on this slide, but we are
17 working on a transition plan to bring somebody on and
18 maintain continuity of operations with that work as
19 well.

20 So, related to status of monitoring areas
21 and these were areas that were created in the GRA-Weak
22 Hook rule a few years ago, the monitoring areas are

1 the Northeastern United States Pelagic Longline
2 Monitoring Area and the Spring Gulf of Mexico Pelagic
3 Longline Monitoring Areas. The areas were a three-
4 year period where catch of Bluefin or interactions
5 with bluefin were monitored against the threshold of
6 IBQ that was established for those areas. The
7 thresholds were never met over that three year
8 monitoring period and these areas have been open ever
9 since the conclusion of the monitoring areas and
10 continue to be open and will continue to be open. We
11 are considering next steps on this issue.

12 On operations, this is a slide that
13 summarizes several different -- just statistics
14 related to operations. So far this year, in 2023,
15 we've had 34 applications for exempted fishing permits
16 or scientific research permits or letters of
17 acknowledgment. Also, for shark fishery research
18 permits, we've issued three of those for the shark
19 research fishery this year. We've registered 117
20 tournaments so far. For shark ID and protected
21 species workshops, we've had seven in person workshops
22 in addition to the online training component which is

1 not limited in time to the scheduled in-person
2 workshops.

3 Of course, we've got the HMS News e-mail
4 list and we've got subscribes up to almost 9,000 at
5 this point. Open access vessel permits so far this
6 year we've issued approaching 13,000 and then there
7 are some statistics there about the percent that have
8 recreational shark endorsements and the Charter/Head
9 boat Commercial Sale Endorsements.

10 Then we also include in here, just as a
11 reminder, links to our HMS Landings pages, where you
12 can take a look at the summaries of landings over
13 different periods of time. Some of them are monthly,
14 some quarterly, and some annual and then also bluefin
15 tuna landings updates and tournament information as
16 well as summaries of minimum size and bag limits.

17 So, regarding HMS Catch Reporting Options,
18 this slide summarizes the details of what fishermen
19 should pay attention to depending upon the species
20 that they're landing or the dead discards in the case
21 of bluefin tuna and then also the permits that need to
22 pay attention to this.

1 So, for HMS Angling, Charter/Head boat,
2 and Tunas General and Harpoon category vessels, those
3 reporting requirements can be submitted and that's for
4 bluefin tuna, billfish and swordfish through the HMS
5 Permit Shop website. The HMS Catch Reporting
6 Smartphone app and the SAFIS eTrips mobile and online
7 versions that are available for those folks that are
8 submitting the state and federal vessel trip reports
9 through eTrips. That is important to note about the
10 eTrips aspect of that.

11 It is the case that under regulation, no
12 matter which of those methods is used that the reports
13 must be submitted within 24 hours of returning from a
14 trip. It is also the case that for North Carolina and
15 Maryland, that fishermen are still required to
16 complete the state catch card for those states and
17 abide by the regulations that apply for each of those
18 states.

19 A note that I want to make here is that
20 currently the commonly used GARFO FishOnline reporting
21 for eVTR, and the Bluefin Data, LLC "VESL" reporting
22 platforms, do not collect all of the data needed to

1 satisfy the HMS Catch Reporting Requirements. So,
2 those fishermen that are using those platforms will
3 need to submit separate HMS Catch Reports via the
4 Catch Reporting app and permit shop website mentioned
5 above on this slide.

6 Then for those vessels that are required
7 to submit HMS log books, those log books must be
8 submitted in paper form for the time being. We are
9 moving towards electronic reporting on that but it is
10 paper for now. We'll be talking more about the e-
11 reporting issues on Thursday.

12 There is a lot that's happening outside of
13 HMS Management Division and just to highlight a few
14 things to have on your radar, there was the Shortfin
15 Mako Endangered Species Act 12-month finding that was
16 released on November 14, 2022, that listing under the
17 ESA was not warranted.

18 Also, related to the Oceanic Whitetip
19 Shark draft recovery plan that was released January
20 25, 2023, comments were accepted through March 27. So
21 that closed not too long ago. There's more
22 information at the link that's available for all of

1 these if you look at the online version associated
2 with the agenda, you can see it there and actually get
3 to the links.

4 Related to right whales and the Take
5 Reduction Plan proposed rule, there's a bit of an
6 update on information related to this. A proposed
7 rule published in August 2022, the comment period
8 ended in October and that was for issues related to
9 the vessel strike reduction rule on speed limits and
10 those kind of things. So, the link is there to get to
11 appropriate information.

12 Also related to Hudson Canyon Sanctuary
13 and the proposal for creation of this Hudson Canyon
14 Sanctuary, you may remember that we had agenda items
15 for this last year during the AP meetings and the
16 Office of National Marine Sanctuaries actually came
17 and presented to this AP about that. So, there was
18 the notice of intent to conduct scoping and prepare an
19 EIS for that. The presentation last year and then
20 also the request from the Office of National Marine
21 Sanctuaries for Atlantic HMS Management Division to
22 provide input on whether it would be necessary to

1 prepare regulations for fishing within the EEZ
2 associated with that sanctuary.

3 HMS Management Division did respond to
4 that. The summary of that response is included at the
5 bottom of this slide. Basically, additional fishing
6 regulations are not needed, in our opinion, that the
7 current HMS regulations in the area support the goals
8 and objectives of the proposed sanctuary. That's the
9 status of that for this time.

10 Additionally, related to the Northeast
11 Canyons Monument, which was established by the
12 President under the Antiquities Act Authority. The
13 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries are
14 working on a Monument management plan and codifying
15 the commercial fishing regulations in the Magnuson-
16 Stevens Act-related regulations. It is the case that
17 NOAA Fisheries is looking to maintain all permitting
18 authorities for activities within the Monument
19 boundary area. You should stay tuned for this for
20 more information as progress continues.

21 Then also, the Shark Fin Sales Elimination
22 Act language that was included in the 2023 National

1 Defense Authorization Act was signed into law December
2 23, 2022, so just before Christmas. That language
3 makes it unlawful to possess, buy, sell or transport
4 shark fins or any product containing shark fins with
5 the exception of smooth or spiny dogfish and some
6 other limited exceptions. The agency is currently
7 working on draft regulations to implement that law and
8 anticipates a proposed rule later this year, but even
9 though that proposed rule is still being worked on and
10 will be coming out later this year, this is the law of
11 the land currently.

12 A little bit of an update on a couple of
13 different aspects of the MRIP, Marine Recreational
14 Information Program, and the HMS Regional
15 Implementation Plan, which you may remember has been
16 presented to this group multiple times. Last year it
17 was presented and discussed and we got input from you
18 all as well as from the ICCAT Advisory Committee and
19 that plan is undergoing internal review.

20 On a related note and project that is
21 included in that plan is the Office of Science and
22 Technology's lead of the Large Pelagic Survey

1 Redesign. There will be an extra year of pilot
2 testing that will be taking place this year in New
3 York and New Jersey due to the low sampling
4 productivity in those states last summer. That delay
5 is expected to actually delay the overall
6 implementation of the new design until at least 2025.

7 Additionally, we had a contractor that was
8 working on the HMS Angling Expenditure Survey last
9 year. Surveys have been completed for that and we are
10 over 1,800, actually approaching 2,000, surveys that
11 were accomplished for that and we are awaiting the
12 delivery of that data and the analysis that will take
13 place of that data after that.

14 Also, just as a heads up is the Atlantic
15 Mackerel/Vessel Trip Report issue, vessel trips
16 through GARFO and state permitting requirements
17 related to this new requirement for Atlantic mackerel
18 and recreational possession limit of up to 20 fish per
19 person per trip. With that, I'm going to transfer
20 over and let Sarah talk about the next three slides.

21 MS. McLAUGHLIN: All right, I'm Sarah
22 McLaughlin. I'm in the HMS Division up in Gloucester

1 and those of you who were at the spring 2022 AP
2 Meeting will recall my presentation on NOAA Fisheries'
3 development of a national equity and environmental
4 justice strategy.

5 Equity and environmental justice is a top
6 priority for the administration with several related
7 executive orders being issued over the last few years
8 and NOAA Fisheries has committed to advancing equity
9 and environmental justice or EEJ including equal
10 treatment opportunities and environmental benefits for
11 all people and communities and I'm now co-chairing the
12 agency's national EEJ working group.

13 This is a time line of the development of
14 the national EEJ strategy and implementation plans.
15 So, about a third of the way over in 2022, we
16 appreciated your input at the Spring 2022 AP meeting
17 on the draft strategy document and our working group
18 has been looking at all of the input including from
19 councils, individuals, various organizations and is
20 now putting the finishing touches on the final
21 strategy document, about two-thirds of the way over on
22 this time line. We hope to have it rolled out very

1 soon so please watch for it.

2 This strategy will be our framework to
3 incorporate EEJ into our daily activities. Regional
4 and program offices like the Office of Sustainable
5 Fisheries, which the HMS Division is part of, are
6 planning engagement and will be developing
7 implementation plans by the end of this year.

8 Collectively, we're going to need your
9 help to create a more inclusive fishery management
10 system, reducing barriers for and meaningfully
11 engaging with underrepresented communities.

12 This graphic shows the six core and
13 interrelated areas of the strategy. In the middle, we
14 have Empowering Environment. This is the foundation
15 to long-term EEJ institutionalization and includes
16 leadership support and support for a trained and
17 diverse work force.

18 Up top, we have Policy and Plans. This is
19 about removing structural barriers to equity that may
20 perpetuate inequality through disparities and access
21 to resources or regulatory burdens. Research and
22 Monitoring is about diversifying the research methods

1 and knowledge sources that we use to collect data used
2 in decision making, to more accurately assess the
3 impacts of management decisions.

4 Outreach and engagement is about building
5 relationships to improve information sharing both to
6 and from communities.

7 Benefits is about ensuring fisheries and
8 financial benefits are distributed equitably.
9 Inclusive governance is about supporting the
10 meaningful involvement of underserved communities in
11 decision making processes.

12 Throughout the development of the national
13 strategy, we've created a web page and a podcast and
14 we've also developed internal guidance for the
15 engagement and the implementation plans that the
16 regions and the program offices are going to be
17 putting together by the end of the year.

18 When the national strategy is finalized,
19 which I said we hope is soon, we're going to make it
20 available in English and Spanish and translate the
21 executive summary into over 50 languages. Thank you.

22 MR. BLANKINSHIP: All right and then to

1 kind of bring us to a close with this presentation,
2 just a summary of the goals of our discussions with
3 you all. The goals are the same for you as AP members
4 and also for us as staff members of the agency and
5 that is to be aware of issues, to strive to be
6 informed through this discussion and to be engaged
7 through it as we move through the agenda. In all
8 aspects of the discussion that we have, as Bennett
9 also has said, is to maintain respect among our
10 different individuals and different stakeholders,
11 different perspectives as the discussion continues.

12 As AP members, your role is to listen and
13 engage in the discussions, share with your
14 constituents, be a conduit of information to the folks
15 that you represent, but then also bring ideas from
16 yourself and your stakeholders, people that you
17 represent back to us.

18 We will be working on our end to ensure,
19 of course, compliance with all applicable domestic and
20 international requirement, raise issues that are going
21 to be pertinent to you all and to the public. Listen
22 and engage and then, of course, make the decisions and

1 incorporate that feedback that we get from you all.

2 Bennett has already covered a lot of this
3 ground and the one thing I will highlight here is that
4 the work that we do is limited, of course, as almost
5 all of our activities are limited by resources, so we
6 have to keep that in mind. We always get a lot of
7 suggestions and we appreciate the suggestions of
8 different things that we need to think about and do as
9 initiatives for managing HMS. We take those seriously
10 and we will also balance those against other things
11 that we have going on and prioritize to fit them all
12 within the resources that we have.

13 With that, I'll hand it back over to
14 Bennett, unless there are any questions.

15 MR. BROOKS: Great, thanks Randy. We have
16 a minute for a couple of questions. Any questions for
17 Randy based on anything so far? I've got two hands up
18 online so why don't we start there. We'll go first to
19 Charlie Bergmann and then to Christine Kittle. If we
20 can open up Charlie's line.

21 MS. CRAWFORD: It's open.

22 MR. BROOKS: Okay, Charlie, your line

1 should be open. Give us a sec.

2 MR. BERGMANN: Can you hear me?

3 MR. BROOKS: Okay, we got you now,
4 Charlie, yep.

5 MR. BERGMANN: I'd like Randy to go back
6 to slide number nine, where it talks about the
7 Northeast Canyon Monument. I think this is probably
8 the first time I've noticed this, but are all
9 commercial fisheries closed in this or prohibited in
10 the sanctuary area or the monument, the Northeast
11 Canyon Monument?

12 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Yes, that is the case.

13 MR. BERGMANN: Okay, I was under the
14 impression that the lobster fishery had gotten an
15 exemption in that. Okay, that's it. Thank you.

16 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Dewey, you want to
17 turn your mic on?

18 MR. HEMILRIGHT: It's my understanding
19 that lobsters and red crab have an exemption for seven
20 years. At what date that started, I can't remember.

21 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Dewey. Christine,
22 why don't we bring you into the conversation here.

1 MS. KITTLE: Can you hear me?

2 MR. BROOKS: Yes, we can. Thanks.

3 MS. KITTLE: So, I have a question about
4 this Spring Gulf of Mexico Pelagic Longline Monitoring
5 Area. Is that going to have a three-year review and
6 when will that be available?

7 MR. BLANKINSHIP: So, related to the
8 Spring Gulf of Mexico Pelagic Longline Monitoring Area
9 and the Northeast United States Monitoring Area, the
10 monitoring period for both of those areas has taken
11 place. It is concluded. In the rule we had indicated
12 that we would consider next steps and provide a report
13 and that is part of the next steps that we are
14 considering. So, that is where things stand right
15 now.

16 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, let's go to Dewey in
17 the room and then we'll go to Raimundo and then we
18 will switch, I think, over to Karyl. Go ahead.

19 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yeah, I'm hoping that
20 there's going to be, and I believe that Kelly alluded
21 to this, some more extensive conversation about the
22 IBQ Quota Appeals Process. There's two different

1 parts of it. There's the part that the agency rolled
2 out and then there's the appeals process. Hopefully,
3 we can get somewhere to where there's not so many
4 appeals that are happening and we can do some quality
5 control before it ever leaves there. So, there's some
6 extensive work that needs to be talked about and done
7 here because having to still wait four or five months
8 of not getting no quota through appeals process is a
9 failure that should've never happened.

10 So, there's two parts of it. It's one
11 this HMS' part and then if it has to go to the appeals
12 process is another part.

13 MR. BROOKS: Dewey, I'm going to put you
14 on hold for one second just because we're not being
15 heard online. Okay, I think we're okay now.

16 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Well, we can follow up
17 when we're having the discussion --

18 MR. BROOKS: Yeah.

19 MR. HEMILRIGHT: But I just want to make
20 sure that there's two parts of this. The one part it
21 could have been handled before it ever -- we got
22 shoved out to the appeals process that's taking four

1 or five months and we still don't have our quota. So,
2 hopefully we can discuss that further. Thank you.

3 MR. BROOKS: Yeah and for sure we will be
4 talking about that. Randy?

5 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Yeah, just briefly, just
6 to say that, Dewey, loud and clear, we hear that
7 concern and understand the frustration associated with
8 that. Kelly made some comments about that at the
9 beginning, of course, and the process that's playing
10 out right now is taking longer than we hoped that it
11 would. As Kelly said, we are supporting the Appeals
12 Office. The Appeals Office process is one that
13 supplies a degree of independence in evaluating and it
14 is something that we intend to use annually.

15 We will be looking along with the Appeals
16 Office and the Southeast Fishery Science Center for
17 ways that we can work towards streamlining that
18 process so that it doesn't take as long in the future.

19 We'll be making all efforts that we can to make that
20 work a little bit better and faster.

21 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Super-fast.

22 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Well, we should never

1 have to get to the appeals process because the agency
2 and what's in y'all's ball park should have been
3 looked at. The appeals process should be something
4 that is a total exception because it's not working.
5 So, let's don't put all our eggs in the basket of
6 having to make the appeals process work when y'all
7 have the ability and the data, both the log book and
8 BMS, to do quality control to never send it to the
9 appeals process. While you understand our pain, it's
10 our financial dollars, our livelihoods being tied to
11 the dock is happening because somebody didn't do their
12 job at the beginning and we'll follow up with some
13 more on that. Thank you.

14 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Dewey.

15 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Yeah, and thank you for
16 that, I appreciate it and I'll just say that we can
17 continue that discussion. It's intended to actually
18 be -- the appropriate time would be during the bluefin
19 tuna season in review. That's a little bit later, I
20 think after lunch.

21 MR. BROOKS: Yeah, after lunch, so we'll
22 come back to that. Okay, let me bring in Raimundo and

1 then I see, Jeff, your card in the corner there and
2 then we'll -- oh is it? Oh, it's Amy, okay, all
3 right. Let's go to Raimundo in the room and then
4 we'll shift here. Your line is open, Raimundo.

5 MR. ESPINOZA: Yes, hi, thanks, Bennett.

6 I just wanted to comment on the -- can you hear me?

7 MR. BROOKS: Yes, it's just very low, but
8 keep going.

9 MR. ESPINOZA: Can you hear me?

10 MR. BROOKS: Yes, we can.

11 MR. ESPINOZA: All right, perfect. Thank
12 you. Thank you, Bennett. So, I just wanted to make
13 sure that the comment on the section of the EEJ aspect
14 of it to ensure, specifically for the applicants from
15 the territories. A lot of the coastal communities
16 that we work with here, that we have throughout the US
17 territories and US Caribbean and the Pacific
18 territories, have usually not been included in lot of
19 work, to include a lot of industries, a lot of
20 offshore or mainland researchers. We just want to
21 make sure that we continue to further research and
22 work on HMS aspects. Continue to include and further

1 promote inclusion from coastal communities and the
2 local small scale fisheries as has been recently done.

3 So, that's one of the things I want to
4 make sure for this AP to continue to have kind of in
5 perspective, specifically for these regions and in
6 relation to the work that's being done with EEJ.

7 Thank you.

8 MR. BROOKS: Thanks so much. Amy?

9 MS. DUKES: Thank you, Bennett. I just
10 wanted to give a quick little update to the AP in
11 regards to the HMS catch reporting options. Randy
12 went over the fact that the Bluefin Data LLC VESL
13 platform currently does not have all the HMS data
14 requirements. And in South Carolina DNR along with
15 Maine DNR submitted a proposal to the Atlantic Coastal
16 Cooperative Statistics Program to include those data
17 elements in the VESL platform, hopefully that proposal
18 is going to see some action here in June and maybe
19 actually be able to get those HMS data reporting
20 requirements into VESL so that is, in fact, a one-stop
21 shop. I thank Brad and Jackie for helping South
22 Carolina be able to get that in.

1 MR. BROOKS: Thanks so much. Let's shift
2 to our next presentation, Karyl Brewster-Geisz is
3 going to come and talk to us about rulemaking past,
4 present, future, status on various rules the agency is
5 working on. And, Pete, I don't know what can be done
6 to sort of get online folks' voices a little bit
7 louder, but it's a little weak right now.

8 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: All right. Hello,
9 everybody. It is so good to see all your faces around
10 the table and hello to everybody in virtual land. For
11 those of you who don't know me, my name is Karyl
12 Brewster-Geisz. I am the Branch Chief for the
13 rulemaking part of HMS.

14 If you have any questions about anything
15 and how it gets into the Federal Register, my team can
16 handle that. It is, however, a team and we work
17 closely with the rest of the division, so while my
18 team does work on all the rules and all of the
19 regulatory aspects, we do count on other members
20 throughout the division to help us. Sort of like we
21 rely on all of you to help us form the best rule
22 makings that we can.

1 With that, I am here today to talk about
2 some of the actions we've finished in the last few
3 months along with asking for your thoughts and ideas
4 on particular actions that might be coming up.

5 Since 2021, we've done a lot of actions.
6 These pie charts show you how many proposed actions
7 we've done in each year, how many final actions, but
8 then also how many in season actions. In seasons are
9 things like fishery closures or retention limit
10 adjustments and then how many notices we've done, such
11 as notices for this meeting or notices for the
12 workshops that longliners and dealers need to attend
13 or possibly notices for documents such as our shark
14 fishery review or Share document.

15 So, in 2021, we completed 44 actions.
16 Some of those final rules you might remember were
17 Amendment 12. Amendment 12 looked at all the FMP
18 objectives along with allocation policy. We also
19 completed in 2021 changes to our swordfish and shark
20 retention limits, so there were a lot of actions in
21 2021. It seems like a long time ago. We were all
22 stuck at home at that time, the world has changed a

1 lot since then.

2 In 2022, we did 42 actions, so about the
3 same number. Some of those final actions included
4 what Dewey was just talking about, Amendment 13, and
5 all of the changes there. 2022 also included the
6 Shortfin Mako Retention Ban. So, again, a lot
7 happened last year.

8 This year, we are quickly coming up to par
9 on the same types of actions and the same numbering.
10 We have three proposed rules out, which I'll talk
11 about later on. We have one final action that is
12 Amendment 14. This was our framework for the Shark
13 ABC Control Rule. You'll hear more about that when
14 Guy talks about Amendment 16 later in the meeting.

15 I just wanted to show you generally what
16 we've done. This pie chart for 2023 I said to date,
17 but that was before we actually ended up closing the
18 Gulf Angling Trophy category today. So, it's not
19 quite to date, it was at the end of last week. Things
20 change fast around here.

21 Since our last advisory panel meeting last
22 fall, we've done quite a number of in season actions.

1 As you can see, most of those in season actions are
2 bluefin tuna related, though we did have one quota
3 transfer for large coastal sharks in the Gulf of
4 Mexico. We've also done three final actions since the
5 last advisory panel meeting, Amendment 13, our 2023
6 Shark Specifications and then Amendment 14.

7 Moving on to where we are in terms of
8 proposed actions that we have not yet finalized, I'm
9 going to be focusing on ones that we're not talking
10 about later on in this meeting. So, this includes our
11 bluefin tuna general category restricted fishing day
12 proposed rule. The proposed rule published in early
13 March, comment period ended in early April. We are
14 working on that final rule right now.

15 As in past years, we proposed a restricted
16 fishing day schedule of every Tuesday, Friday and
17 Saturday from July to November 30th, but we changed
18 the rule this year and we also proposed every Tuesday
19 and Friday from December 1st through March 31st.

20 On a restricted fishing day what that
21 means is general category permitted vessels could not
22 fish for, possess, retain, land or sell bluefin tuna.

1 We have done this rule over the past few years in
2 order to extend the length of the sub quota time
3 periods so people can continue fishing for bluefin
4 tuna throughout that time period and not have the
5 fishery close pretty quickly as soon as the time
6 period starts.

7 Restricted fishing days also apply to the
8 Charter Head Boat vessels when they are fishing
9 commercially. It does not apply to them when they are
10 fishing recreationally. So, we received a number of
11 comments on this, a number of them were in support of
12 what we did and what we proposed, some of them
13 suggested additional days or different days or
14 consecutive days. A lot of the comments were against
15 having restricted fishing days in those December,
16 January through March time periods, concern mainly
17 about safety and people feeling like they need to go
18 fishing during the middle of the blizzard in the
19 middle of December, which is not exactly what we want.

20 But those were the types of comments that we
21 received.

22 We're looking at all of those comments and

1 we will release a final rule to be effective on or
2 about July 1, at least that's our goals.

3 The next proposed rule I wanted to talk
4 about is one that is still in the comment period. We
5 released this towards the end of March, comment period
6 ends on May 22nd. This proposed rule is responsive to
7 both of our HMS biological opinions. Biological
8 opinions are required under section seven of the
9 Endangered Species Act. And in these biological
10 opinions, because Oceanic Whitetip throughout its
11 range is listed as threatened under the Endangered
12 Species Act, and scalloped hammerhead sharks are
13 listed as threatened only within the central and
14 southwest Atlantic distinct population segment, which
15 overlaps US waters in the Caribbean, those biological
16 opinions encouraged us to prohibit the retention of
17 those species.

18 The proposed rule prohibits the retention
19 of Oceanic Whitetip everywhere and that would be
20 adding Oceanic Whitetip to our prohibited shark
21 species list. Most people already do not retain
22 Oceanic Whitetip, if you were using pelagic longline

1 for example, under ICCAT regulations, you are not
2 allowed to retain Oceanic Whitetip.

3 If you are a recreational fisherman and
4 you have swordfish, billfish or tuna on board, you're
5 not allowed to retain Oceanic Whitetip. So, what this
6 proposed rule would do is close the loophole for
7 everyone else.

8 We are also proposing to prohibit the
9 retention, so not adding it to the prohibited species
10 list, but prohibiting the retention of great, smooth
11 and scalloped hammerhead only within the Caribbean and
12 that would be commercially and recreationally.

13 Hammerhead sharks are similar to Oceanic
14 Whitetip, they are already prohibited through ICCAT
15 regulations and we do not allow it with our Caribbean
16 small boat permits. This would close the loophole for
17 the rest of the people in the Caribbean would not be
18 able to retain any of the hammerhead sharks.

19 We have received quite a number of
20 comments already on this rule. Many of the comments
21 are in support. We have also received comments
22 requesting us to prohibit hammerhead sharks throughout

1 their range just like we have for Oceanic Whitetip.
2 So, we are still in comment period so if you haven't
3 sent in a comment, I certainly welcome them and we
4 hope to issue a final rule sometime later this year.

5 The next section is going to focus on some
6 of the requests we have gotten from all of you and
7 others to do rule making and then moving on to the
8 schedule of what we're thinking of.

9 So, the first request I'd like to talk to
10 you about is commercial spearfishing for tunas. Right
11 now, we do allow recreational spearfishing for BAYS
12 tunas, so the bigeye, albacore, yellowfin and
13 skipjack. It is not allowed for bluefin. It is not
14 allowed for swordfish or sharks or any of the
15 billfish.

16 The request is specific to allowing
17 commercial spearfishing for tunas, so I have included
18 in the slide the definition for what a speargun is and
19 so what that would mean, I'm not going to repeat what
20 the definition is. If you're interested, you can read
21 it.

22 I will point out that recreationally in

1 order to use a speargun, you must be physically in the
2 water and you can only take free-swimming BAYS tunas,
3 so it can't be a tuna that's been caught by a vessel
4 or anything like that. You have to be in the water
5 with them.

6 We would just welcome any thoughts any of
7 you have about this topic and whether or not we should
8 allow commercial spearfishing for tunas or if you
9 would like, even expand it to other HMS.

10 The next request we have is one that we've
11 responded to in the past and this is to ban harpoon
12 fishing around trawl vessels, such as groundfish,
13 scalloped or clam dredge vessels. We received an
14 original petition for rule making back during the
15 pandemic and we denied that petition, but since then,
16 the requesters and others have come forward
17 reiterating that request so we wanted to have the
18 conversation with all of you on what you think about
19 the request.

20 They are concerned that harpoon fishing
21 for bluefin around trawl vessels really goes against
22 the intent of the harpoon category fishery and the

1 traditional practices. They feel it will cause the
2 harpoon category quota, which is pretty small, to be
3 harvested very quickly and could bring in larger
4 vessels into the fishery.

5 They are also concerned about the safety
6 of different vessels and different peer types
7 interacting and feel that if this continues to be
8 allowed because it's not banned yet, it would increase
9 the number of vessels participating in this behavior
10 and exacerbate all of their concerns.

11 MR. BROOKS: And just FYI, I see a card
12 has gone up. We'll just grab that at the end of the
13 presentation.

14 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Yes. Under the
15 current regulations, harpoon gear is allowed in both
16 the harpoon category for bluefin tuna along with the
17 general category. Both of them can use harpoon gear.

18 They have different regulations. Harpoon
19 category permit holders have very specific quota.
20 They now have trip limits under Amendment 13. Their
21 season opens June 1st and closes November 15th, unless
22 they catch the quota and we close them early.

1 General category permit holders have to
2 abide by the general category regulations. So that
3 would include restricted fishing bays days and all of
4 those retention limits.

5 Once again, I would welcome any of your
6 thoughts about this issue and whether we should ban
7 bluefin tuna harpoon fishing around trawl vessels.
8 And how would we do that, and how would we even define
9 that activity? How would you define a harpoon vessel
10 around a trawl vessel?

11 We have a number of open comment periods.

12 I mentioned the oceanic whitetip and the hammerhead
13 shark rule. That comment period closes May 22nd. All
14 the other bulleted actions on this slide we're going
15 to be talking about later in this meeting, so I'm
16 going to skip over them for now.

17 We have a number of upcoming rulemakings,
18 so both the first bullet and the last bullet regarding
19 restricted fishing days. And the oceanic whitetip and
20 scalloped hammerheads I've already talked about.

21 The second and third bullets are our usual
22 annual rulemakings. So this is adjusting the quota

1 for swordfish, bluefin tuna, northern albacore, and
2 also setting the shark specifications, quotas,
3 adjustments, and all that for the 2024 season. Those
4 rules are expected later this summer, so keep an eye
5 out.

6 We are still working on our Sea Turtle
7 Safe Handling and Requirements to bring those
8 regulations up to be consistent with the technical
9 memorandum. We've been working on this for a while.
10 It's low on our priority list, but we will get there.

11 I'm hoping later this year.

12 For those of you who have been in and on
13 the Advisory Panel for a long time, you will notice
14 two other rulemakings that a number of you have been
15 requesting that I am really hoping we'll get out later
16 this year.

17 One is a proposed rule to address the
18 concerns raised regarding the pelagic and bottom
19 longline indicator species list. So keep an eye out.

20 Knocking on wood, hopefully we'll get it out by the
21 next Advisory Panel meeting.

22 We are also working on a scoping document

1 regarding various gear changes we have presented to
2 the Advisory Panel in the past. We're consolidating
3 what those changes might be. And we are working on a
4 scoping document. Again knocking on lots of wood,
5 that will be out by the next Advisory Panel meeting.

6 So the next slide has webpages and links
7 to pretty much all the open comment periods and
8 regulatory documents we're working on now. If you
9 have any questions about any rulemaking, feel free to
10 reach out to me or any member of my team. I've listed
11 them all.

12 I don't know what just happened there.
13 The computer seems to have acted strangely. It's on
14 one screen but not the other.

15 And then I just wanted to remind you I
16 will take your questions and comments on anything, but
17 I am looking specifically for any thoughts you might
18 have on commercial speargun fishing for bays and
19 harpoon gear fishing around trawl vessels.

20 MR. BROOKS: Great. If you would hit the
21 mic, Karyl.

22 We've got several cards up in the room, a

1 couple of folks online, and clearly not enough time.
2 We've got about six minutes so I think we'll go a
3 touch long here, maybe go to ten and go to break a
4 little bit later. So I just ask commenters to be as
5 succinct as you can.

6 Steve, let's start off with you. Then
7 we'll go over to David Schalit.

8 MR. GETTO: Thanks, Bennett.

9 I'd like to comment on the harpooning
10 around trawl vessels. This sounds like wading into
11 the airplane issue once again, which failed miserably.

12 I've been a harpoon fisherman for a long
13 time. We're out there. We're looking for fish on the
14 surface whichever way they present themselves.
15 Environments change, fish behavior changes.

16 As for traditional harpooning, I really
17 don't know how to define that. Sometimes we see fish
18 from the tower and we harpoon them. Sometimes we go
19 behind a gillnetter that's steaming home, throwing
20 over guts. The fish are eating those, and we go up
21 and harpoon them.

22 We get them when they're eating sand eels

1 or pogies on the surface. So traditional harpooning
2 is sort of a really weird term because traditional
3 harpooning is basically spearing a fish on the surface
4 however that fish presents itself to be caught.

5 A couple of these comments here; it could
6 cause a harpoon fishery to be closed prematurely. The
7 harpoon fishery is an early season fishery. We're
8 highly dependent on cold water. With global warming,
9 this is a problem for the fishery.

10 Personally, I'd like to see the fishery
11 open in the next two weeks. We're already at 48-
12 degree water. We've typically harvested this quarter
13 very quickly. It's been lingering in past years
14 because of warm water issues.

15 Larger vessels coming into the fishery;
16 that just sounds to me like a lot of jealousy. This
17 is an open access fishery. Fishermen can go at it any
18 way they want. The only restriction is they throw a
19 harpoon by hand.

20 As for danger, I've got a 32-foot boat
21 with an aluminum pulpit, pretty fragile. And I'm
22 going to be very careful with that equipment. We

1 don't go out in rough weather because the boats are
2 fairly tender and our boat is our livelihood. So as
3 for danger, I don't see much of an issue there.

4 That's it in a nutshell. I just see this
5 as another airplane battle that if engaged in, the
6 agency would probably lose like they did with the
7 airplanes. Thank you.

8 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Steve.

9 Let's go to Dave. And to all the speakers
10 to come, again, be mindful of time. If there is an
11 opportunity to say ditto to what somebody said, that's
12 always appreciated.

13 David?

14 MR. SCHALIT: Thanks, Karyl. This was
15 very comprehensive. I appreciate it, all these
16 wonderful controversial issues we've brought up here.

17 I'm just confirming my understanding from
18 the slide that the issue in connection with
19 spearfishing is strictly related to bays. If that's
20 the case, then I'll move on to this issue of
21 harpooning behind vessels.

22 It strikes me as sort of what we

1 generically refer to as a user conflict issue, user
2 conflict being defined as some fishermen having an
3 idea about how harpooning should be prosecuted and
4 imposing that upon others.

5 As you pointed out, here's your
6 enforcement problems. I think this is a classic
7 rabbit hole situation, the way I see it.

8 I just want to point out a few things. It
9 does spill over into other species, other HMS-
10 controlled species. We are used to fishing under
11 floating bits of sargassum. We are used to fishing
12 under floating logs. We are also used to fishing very
13 commonly under poly balls that are connected to off-
14 shore lobster pots.

15 Any species of fish that will aggregate
16 under a floating object -- and that includes boats, by
17 the way, because they do float -- is potentially a
18 fish that can be targeted by fishermen because it's
19 under that floating object.

20 I need only remind that when we were
21 fishing very frequently at Georges Bank we were
22 sometimes, not all the time, once in a while fishing

1 under scallop vessels, behind scallop vessels while
2 they were shucking. This is so common, not just in
3 the HMS fisheries but everywhere. So I just wanted to
4 give you that perspective.

5 And the other thing I wanted to just
6 briefly mention is this notion that doing this fishing
7 behind vessels that are using other gear types would
8 result in quota being harvested very quickly. I can't
9 recall ever having seen any statistics tabled that
10 would support that notion.

11 The same thing would be true when we look
12 at the statement that continuing to allow this
13 activity would increase the number of vessels in the
14 harpoon category. I have never seen any statistics
15 tabled that supports that notion either. Thank you.

16 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, David.

17 Let me go online. If we can open up
18 Charlie Bergmann and then Raimundo.

19 Charlie, I think your line is open. No,
20 not yet.

21 PARTICIPANT: Did Charlie put his hand
22 down?

1 MR. BROOKS: Okay. He put it down. Let's
2 go to Raimundo.

3 MR. ESPINOZA: Thank you.

4 I want to ask you a question about the
5 hammerheads. So right now under the current HMS,
6 small boat vessels are already prohibited. What's
7 being proposed is for the rest of the HMS fisheries in
8 federal waters for all hammers?

9 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Yes. You're
10 clarifying that the proposed rule regarding
11 hammerheads would prohibit hammerheads on federal
12 vessels using other permit types, and that is correct.

13 So if you have another HMS federal permit, you would
14 not be allowed to land any of the hammerheads in the
15 Caribbean region under our proposed rule.

16 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thanks.

17 MR. ESPINOZA: Thanks very much. I just
18 wanted to make sure that was clear because most of the
19 landings are not occurring in federal waters. So
20 that's important that this would be followed.

21 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thank you.

22 MR. ESPINOZA: And also taking action

1 following up on these actions. Thank you.

2 MR. BROOKS: Thanks.

3 All right. Let's come back into the room.

4 I've got, I think, four people who want to jump in
5 here. Let's see if we can squeeze them in before we
6 go to break.

7 Willy, Jeff, Marcos, and Mike.

8 No, Willy? Okay.

9 Jeff?

10 DR. KNEEBONE: I can follow up at break.

11 MR. BROOKS: At break? Okay. Great.

12 Marcos?

13 MR. HANKE: Yes. Following up on Ray's
14 comment, hammerheads in the Caribbean, there's
15 basically two kinds of interactions.

16 One is that you're looking for them
17 commercially, specifically looking for the bigger
18 ones, any interruptions that happen on the shoreline
19 with the juveniles or different species of them. I
20 highly recommend to coordinate with the state agencies
21 to make all this management of the hammerheads make
22 sense.

1 The other comment about the BAYS and the
2 spearfishing, that's important. It's mostly yellowfin
3 tuna in our area. The only concern you have to have
4 is that we will have an increased amount of
5 recreational fishermen that are spearfishing for
6 pelagic and coastal pelagics.

7 That is something that is happening.
8 We're going to have to deal with that once we design
9 the regulation in terms of spearfishing for HMS.

10 The other important comment I want to
11 make, I was talking to Steve. It seems to me that
12 there is no measured problems between vessels once
13 they are harpooning in relation to another vessel for
14 the bluefin tuna.

15 This is what I heard before too. I just
16 want the record to be very clear that that's the case.

17 Thank you.

18 MR. BROOKS: Thanks so much.

19 Mike?

20 MR. PIERDINOCK: Thank you.

21 And thank you, Karyl, for your
22 presentation. I'm going to wear my charter boat hat

1 here. My comments have to do first with the harpoon
2 discussion.

3 I had reached out to the commercial fleet
4 because it's not clear to me who is making the
5 complaint here, whether it's the harpooners or whether
6 it's the groundfish, scallop, or clam dredge vessels.

7 As a result, I reached out to New Bedford
8 as well as Gloucester, which are the two biggest ports
9 on the East Coast. They haven't indicated that the
10 groundfish, scallop, or clam dredge vessels have any
11 complaints.

12 Naturally there's periodic user conflicts,
13 whether it's REC4, high or commercially. So I'm not
14 sure exactly where that's coming from.

15 Do you want comments on RFDs or are we set
16 with that?

17 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: The comment period is
18 closed on RFDs.

19 MR. PIERDINOCK: Okay.

20 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: I do not need any
21 comments --

22 MR. PIERDINOCK: So you can comment but it

1 -- all right. I'll leave it be, then.

2 I guess as a father, a grandfather, and so
3 on, those that go spearfishing for these tunas, God
4 bless them. I'd be terrified with the sharks that are
5 out there, but I'll leave that be as a comment. I
6 hope nothing happens to anybody. Thank you.

7 MR. BROOKS: Thanks.

8 All right. I don't think I see any other
9 cards.

10 So Karyl, what I'm hearing is not a lot of
11 support for a ban on the harpoon fishing. Just a
12 comment or two on allowing the commercial
13 spearfishing. More just sort of context or some
14 cautions, but not any strong support or opposition.
15 And then a bit of coordinating with states on the
16 shark prohibition stuff.

17 MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Thank you.

18 MR. BROOKS: Anything you want to say
19 before you go?

20 (No audible response.)

21 MR. BROOKS: All right. We are at 10:50.
22 We're about five minutes off. Let's take our full

1 15-minute break and come back at 11:05. We will start
2 sharp at 11:05 and hear from Walt on the 2022 ICCAT
3 meeting. Thanks, everybody.

4 MR. BLANKINSHIP: One shout out that we
5 have some shortbread cookies that are over here by the
6 water dispenser that Tyler Loughran brought from
7 Hawaii. So a big shout out to her for bringing those
8 cookies.

9 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went
10 off the record at 10:51 a.m. and resumed at 11:09
11 a.m.)

12 MR. BROOKS: Okay. We want to dive into
13 the next presentation. I'll hand it off to Walt to
14 talk to us about the 2022 ICCAT annual meeting.

15 Walt, over to you.

16 DR. GOLET: All right. Great. Thanks,
17 Bennett.

18 Thanks to everybody in the room. It's
19 great to see some faces. Unfortunately, I was not
20 able to give this update last year in person because
21 of some family emergencies. So it's nice to be here
22 in person, be able to see some people, and catch up.

1 For those of you who do not know who I am,
2 my name is Walt Golet. I'm an assistant professor in
3 the School of Marine Sciences at the University of
4 Maine, and also currently serving as the Chair of the
5 U.S. ICCAT Advisory Committee, which I'll probably
6 call the IAC as I go through this presentation.

7 Part of the responsibilities of that is to
8 come to the Advisory Panel meeting as an ex officio
9 member and provide an update of what happened at the
10 annual ICCAT Commission meeting this year. This is
11 going to be a little bit about how the sausage was
12 made and what sausage we ended up with, so bear with
13 me here.

14 Just a real quick primer on international
15 fisheries management, especially as it pertains to
16 highly migratory species. If you're not familiar, we
17 have five regional fishery management organizations
18 around the globe.

19 We basically divide up those ocean basins
20 into five regions or five convention areas. Each one
21 of those RFMOs is responsible for the conservation
22 assessment and management plans for HMS within each of

1 those convention areas.

2 The one that we're concerned with, of
3 course, here on the AP is the International Commission
4 for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, which is
5 ICCAT.

6 ICCAT's directive is conservation and
7 management recommendations for tunas, which are the
8 largest in terms of volume-directed fisheries,
9 billfish, swordfish, as well as bycatch species.

10 So some of the things that are in the
11 convention that you might not think of are things like
12 sea turtles, seabirds, and so forth, marine mammals,
13 sharks, because we all know you put a hook in the
14 water, you put a net in the water, you're not just
15 going to catch the only thing that you're directed to
16 catch. You're going to catch some bycatch as well.

17 A little bit about ICCAT and its language,
18 which can sometimes be a little bit confusing, is that
19 in ICCAT speak a recommendation is binding. So that's
20 accepted. If you recommend something, you'd better do
21 it type of a thing.

22 A resolution is non-binding. That might

1 be something that's brought in and that people might
2 agree on is a good thing to pursue perhaps at a later
3 date, but the contracting parties are not obligated to
4 abide by those terms and conditions.

5 Opposite of the HMS AP, ICCAT is a
6 consensus body, which means that anything that goes
7 through ICCAT is done generally by consensus. ICCAT
8 can vote but it very seldom does.

9 To give you an example, if I presented a
10 topic to all of you at the table with all the
11 different viewpoints and so forth, we would all have
12 to agree in order for that to go through. If someone
13 was to not agree, of course, the measure would fail.
14 So let's just say it's challenging.

15 Adding to that and just to give you an
16 idea of what ICCAT is comprised of, currently we have
17 52 what we call contracting parties, countries that
18 have signed on to ICCAT. That includes the 27 member
19 states that represent the EU.

20 So in total it's right around 80 countries
21 that represent ICCAT. They're from all over the globe
22 and all of the continents.

1 So the membership is diverse, the
2 fisheries are diverse, and the complications are
3 exceptionally challenging. This creates some big
4 challenges. I'll get into those in just a second.

5 And just so everybody is clear, the
6 assessments, the TACs, quota allocations, et cetera,
7 all of that is done at ICCAT by participating CPC
8 scientists. For example, NOAA is not doing
9 unilaterally the Atlantic bluefin assessment in the
10 western Atlantic.

11 However, once that assessment is done, the
12 management advice is accepted by the Commission and
13 that TAC is allocated to the US, then the NOAA
14 Fisheries Highly Migratory Species Management Division
15 will implement whatever those recommendations are
16 domestically.

17 Okay. So the 2022 annual meeting took
18 place in Portugal in November of 2022. It was what I
19 guess we could call a successful hybrid meeting.

20 The annual Commission meeting is generally
21 pretty big. The last one I went to in person in 2019
22 was, I think, around 800 or 900 people. I'm not sure

1 if someone remembers it, but it was pretty big.

2 Of course, the in-person meetings got
3 derailed by COVID and we've been doing things in a
4 hybrid version or through correspondence, which has
5 been exceptionally difficult. So this was a welcome
6 change to have an in-person meeting, but we also had
7 online attendance.

8 The big sort of take-home, I guess, or the
9 thing I would highlight is none of the recommendations
10 in ICCAT this year are going to result in changes to
11 U.S. fishing regulations in the upcoming season.

12 That doesn't give you permission to sleep
13 or ignore me because this was actually a big year at
14 ICCAT. We had some really big things. So wake up.
15 Don't fall asleep after this. We have some really big
16 things on the table. That said, a lot happened.

17 Okay. I'll start with the slide where not
18 much happened. As I said before, things in ICCAT can
19 be exceptionally challenging with different
20 viewpoints, countries, and so forth.

21 What we refer to as Panel 1, which
22 includes our tropical tunas so skipjack, yellowfin,

1 and bigeye tuna, that has been exceptionally
2 challenging over the last several years.

3 So Recommendation 22-01 is a one-year
4 extension of the 2019 Conservation and Management Plan
5 for Tropical Tunas. Basically, we're kind of just on
6 cruise control from the 2019 recommendation.

7 And the provisions for 2023, the upcoming
8 season included TAC for bigeye tuna at 62,000 metric
9 tons. Yellowfin is going to be set at 110,000 metric
10 tons.

11 The fish aggregating devices, the drifting
12 FAD closure period I think is going to remain. I
13 believe it's at 72 days, Larry, right? We have a big
14 discussion of what 72 days means, but nonetheless it's
15 72 days.

16 Efforts are continuing to develop new
17 conservation and management measures for adoption in
18 2023. We do have some intersessional meetings, some
19 of which already took place, others which are upcoming
20 in June. But suffice to say that for the most part,
21 tropical tunas as it relates to bigeye and yellowfin
22 is pretty much a rollover of things that were already

1 adopted previously.

2 I guess I would say from a more historic
3 perspective, we did actually get Bluefin tuna
4 management strategy evaluation implemented this year.

5 Prior to this, the only ICCAT species that had it was
6 northern albacore, so this was by all accounts a
7 welcome adoption by ICCAT. It adopted its first
8 management procedure for both eastern and western
9 stocks, so we're managing the entire Atlantic Ocean.

10 Recommendation 22-09 applies what we call
11 a pre-agreed framework for actions, such as setting
12 your catch limits, designed to achieve specific
13 management objectives. These were decision points
14 that the Commission had to agree upon.

15 So stock status, where do you fall in the
16 Kobe matrix in terms of your probability of being in
17 the green zone; safety, how much do you want, what
18 probability do you want for being below a particular
19 biomass limit;
20 stability, how much do you want to change the TAC:
21 plus 20 percent, minus 30 percent for example; and
22 then maximizing yield. So there was a lot of things

1 to decide with MSE implementation.

2 It established its total allowable catches
3 for 2023 through 2025. So '23, '24, '25 is
4 essentially set, although I will come back to that
5 with exceptional circumstances at the end of the talk.

6 So it's going to maintain the 2022 TAC of
7 2,726 metric tons for the western area. And the
8 western area is inclusive of the three primary fishing
9 countries, which are the United States, Japan, and
10 Canada. Those three countries hold the vast majority
11 of the quota. There are some very minor players but
12 it's a very, very small fraction.

13 Recommendation 22-10 for the west
14 establishes that 2,726 metric tons of bluefin under
15 the management procedure. The US will maintain its
16 1,341 metric tons for our allocation.

17 And then within this recommendation, there
18 was also support for research provisions that are in
19 line with what the SCRS and others have identified, to
20 include supporting priority work for facilitating
21 future reconditioning of the management strategy
22 evaluation and the operating models.

1 And the operating models are basically a
2 simulation of what the population is doing. They're
3 very data hungry. They require a lot of stuff. So
4 everything from micro-chemistry to stock mixing,
5 electronic tagging, and so forth is all part of that.

6 And then this will be revisited. The
7 management procedure will be revisited by 2028.

8 Another key outcome was mitigating bycatch
9 of endangered and threatened sea turtles. So
10 Recommendation 22-12, led by the United States.

11 And good news, ICCAT adopted its first
12 measure on gear and bait modifications to mitigate the
13 impacts of fishing interactions on sea turtles. So as
14 I said, this doesn't necessarily affect us
15 domestically but this was a big deal.

16 And then the adoption of this agreement is
17 a welcome breakthrough that the United States has been
18 promoting at ICCAT for years. I won't call Glenn out
19 or others in the room, but I think John Graves and
20 others have said circle hooks have been at ICCAT for
21 about 20 years now roughly. I'm getting some nods.

22 So as I said, moving stuff through ICCAT

1 can be challenging but it does happen. We have to
2 have faith and, I guess, longevity.

3 So 22-12 also requires science-based
4 mitigation measures. We have the use of circle hooks
5 in shallow-set pelagic longline fisheries in the
6 Atlantic Ocean. The intention here is that hopefully
7 this is going to not only reduce bycatch, but it also
8 will increase post-release survival.

9 As you know, the circle hooks, the
10 intention there is that they will lodge in the mouth
11 as opposed to deeper in the throat or in the stomach.

12 And there's some provisions on offsets that are
13 similar to what we have domestically and so forth.

14 Mitigation of endangered and threatened
15 sea turtles continued. The measure is considered to
16 be a measure that will level the playing field.

17 We have domestically had circle hook
18 requirements here in the United States for quite some
19 time. The rest of the CPCs have not. So hopefully,
20 this will be an opportunity where the rest of the
21 fleets in the Atlantic are using similar gear types,
22 not identical but similar.

1 The measure requires specific reporting on
2 mitigation measures used. So we'll be able to better
3 understand the dynamics of what the other CPCs are
4 doing.

5 It wasn't all-inclusive for the entirety
6 of ICCAT's convention area. We did have to make some
7 concessions on the Mediterranean. So there will be a
8 delayed implementation for the Mediterranean, but
9 certainly getting this Atlantic-wide is a big win.

10 There's some provisions in there for deep-
11 set longlines and other fisheries, just looking at
12 some research priorities. And then of course, there's
13 a lot more work to be done on hook size and other
14 provisions of the measures.

15 As far as I know, we still don't have
16 standardization of what exactly a particular size
17 circle hook is, et cetera. So there's a lot of work
18 there to do but this was a big one, in my opinion.

19 Sharks, key outcomes, South Atlantic mako,
20 which doesn't impact most people here. The total
21 retention allowance is at 1,295 for 2023 and 2024 with
22 individual CPC allowances. Total mortality levels to

1 be established following the 2024 assessment, which is
2 also coming for North Atlantic shortfin, to maintain
3 healthy status.

4 Many provisions in the south mirror North
5 Atlantic shortfin. So Recommendation 21-09, including
6 establishing a process to evaluate future retention
7 allowances.

8 And again, the United States introduced
9 with other parties and advocated for the adoption of
10 fins attached, but that proposal was blocked again. I
11 don't know how many years that's been going on, but
12 it's been going on for quite a while. So that one
13 unfortunately did not go through.

14 North Atlantic shortfin mako, a couple of
15 recommendations here. One is the previous one. The
16 other is more recent.

17 So 21-09 and 22-11 call for a 2023
18 intersessional meeting of Panel 4, which is the panel
19 that has sharks, to share best practices for reducing
20 shortfin mako encounters.

21 The SCRS is charged with advising the
22 Commission on the most effective measures to reduce

1 fishing mortality on shortfin makos. Unfortunately, I
2 think that meeting is going to be postponed to early
3 2024.

4 ICCAT's calendar has absolutely exploded,
5 and ICCAT's workload is absolutely ridiculous now in
6 terms of the number of species that they're doing and
7 all of the different things. Some things
8 unfortunately have to get pushed or bumped.

9 And then finally, under a separate
10 requirement, the US is submitting its information in a
11 paper describing domestic efforts, which I'm assuming
12 has already been submitted.

13 PARTICIPANT: It's in the works.

14 DR. GOLET: It's in the works. Okay. So
15 it's close.

16 PARTICIPANT: It was submitted.

17 DR. GOLET: Yes. Okay.

18 North Atlantic swordfish, 22-03, this is
19 also a one-year rollover recommendation. It extends
20 the current management measures from 17-02 through
21 2023, including the North Atlantic TAC of 13,200
22 metric tons.

1 Good news: the United States maintains its
2 US quota of 3,907 metric tons. So that is still in
3 place.

4 And then as with North Atlantic albacore
5 and Atlantic bluefin, there is a management strategy
6 evaluation in place -- well, the development is in
7 place for North Atlantic swordfish.

8 There's going to be three Panel 4
9 intersessional meetings in 2023 on MSE. Those are for
10 March, June, and I believe October. So some good news
11 on swordfish.

12 Recommendation 22-13, ICCAT adopted a US-
13 led proposal that calls on the Commission to account
14 for -- just so you know, this is resolution; this
15 isn't a recommendation -- calls for the impacts of
16 climate change on ICCAT-managed species and related
17 ecosystems.

18 The proposal kickstarts a process to
19 identify information, data gaps, and research needed
20 that will be used to better inform the Commission's
21 future management actions for ICCAT species. And in
22 July of this year, 2023, ICCAT will convene a joint

1 meeting of scientists and managers, chaired by the
2 United States, to begin this important conversation.

3 Mike Pierdinock and others through the
4 years have talked about how the oceans are changing.
5 This is a big deal, especially when your fisheries in
6 some cases are in close proximity to international
7 borders.

8 So this is not something to be taken
9 lightly. It's good that ICCAT is actually taking it
10 up, at least as far as a resolution is concerned.

11 Improvements to fishery monitoring,
12 control, and surveillance to combat IUU fishing.
13 ICCAT adopted several proposals that will require
14 ICCAT parties to investigate and take action to
15 address allegations of IUU fishing. That will cover
16 those benefiting from or supporting IUU fishing
17 activities.

18 We have some common standards, what we
19 call Schedule of Compliance Actions, for evaluating
20 the severity of noncompliance incidents and applying
21 responsive actions in a fair and transparent manner.

22 And then finally, require electronic

1 reporting for certain scientific and compliance-
2 related data with the intent to improve efficiency of
3 operations and accessibility of the information that's
4 coming in.

5 High Seas Boarding and Inspection, I guess
6 I would categorize this under progress. So progress
7 on developing a joint High Seas Boarding and
8 Inspection Team for the ICCAT eConvention Area.

9 We didn't get a consensus that was
10 reached, but the discussions represented a significant
11 step forward in efforts to adopt what we consider to
12 be a crucial tool to combat IUU fishing and monitor
13 compliance with ICCAT rules in international waters.

14 There will be further discussions upcoming
15 this year at the Integrated Monitoring Measures
16 meeting in Japan.

17 On the table among a lot of things, but
18 just a few things that I'll highlight, obviously the
19 United States will continue to push ICCAT and its
20 parties to be forward leaning and prioritize the
21 implementation of measures to conserve and manage
22 ICCAT species. That goes without saying.

1 For key intersessional meetings, Panel 1
2 has been very challenging, the tropical tunas. There
3 will be talks on TAC, talks on allocation, and other
4 management measures. And we also have a western
5 skipjack management strategy evaluation that's
6 currently in development as well.

7 Panel 2, I referred to the fact that the
8 TAC for bluefin is set for the next three years.
9 ICCAT is still having to work out what they call
10 exceptional circumstances protocol.

11 So in the event of something dramatically
12 changing with the stock, there is the opportunity to
13 go back and to reevaluate that, but that has not been
14 developed yet. It's still in the works.

15 Panel 4, North Atlantic swordfish MSE is
16 going to be a big part of ICCAT meetings this year.
17 And then finally, a Climate Change Joint Experts
18 Meeting.

19 The final thing that I will say and
20 emphasize is that behind the scenes, so to speak, for
21 many of us, you have a tremendous federal staff that
22 works ridiculously tirelessly at these meetings.

1 Having only participated in that last one,
2 I can just say that it is absolutely incredible the
3 work ethic that goes into keeping track of all of the
4 different proposals from all of the different
5 countries and what's going on in the different panels
6 and discussions.

7 So I just want to say a thank you to the
8 federal folks, some of who are in this room and some
9 of whom are not.

10 With that, I'll take any questions.
11 Thanks.

12 MR. BROOKS: Great presentation, Walt.
13 Thank you so much. Let's see if there are any
14 questions for you. I am not seeing anything at the
15 moment online or in the room.

16 I'm going to ask you a question, just
17 wondering. When you see changes in progress in areas
18 that have been long under discussion, is it because
19 over time the case has been made better? Is it
20 because there are changing domestic pressures in
21 certain countries?

22 DR. GOLET: Yes. That one right there.

1 MR. BROOKS: That one right there? Okay.

2 DR. GOLET: I would say all of them
3 probably. It's just really complicated. Not
4 everybody shares the same view point in terms of
5 conservation or management.

6 There can be disagreement on the
7 assessment, disagreement on the data and the SCRS. So
8 there's a lot of layers where this can be stalled.

9 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Last chance for
10 questions. I don't think I'm seeing anybody. I think
11 you just did a really comprehensive presentation.
12 Thanks so much.

13 DR. GOLET: Thanks, Bennett.

14 Thanks, everybody.

15 MR. BROOKS: All right. While Walt's
16 stepping away, we can bring up our next presenter.
17 Tyler Loughran is going to come talk to us about --
18 give us an update on HMS' Climate Vulnerability
19 Assessment.

20 And again, thank you, Tyler, for the
21 cookies. I had one and it was really appreciated.
22 They're over on the back table in case you didn't get

1 one yet. Head towards Glen Delaney and make a right.

2 MR. DELANEY: I ate them all.

3 MR. BROOKS: You've got the best seat in
4 the house there, Glen.

5 MS. LOUGHRAN: Okay. Thank you, everyone.

6 My name is Tyler Loughran. I'm a Climate Policy
7 Analyst with the Atlantic HMS Division. Today I'm
8 going to be updating you on project developments for
9 the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Climate
10 Vulnerability Assessment, or HMS CVA for short.

11 The planning process for the HMS CVA began
12 last summer and has since developed into a
13 collaborative, multi-disciplinary project encompassing
14 over 40 experts and support staff dedicated to
15 evaluating the vulnerability of 58 species in stocks.

16 So fundamentally, a climate vulnerability
17 assessment is a rapid assessment that identifies what
18 species may be most vulnerable to changing climate
19 conditions and why. Each species is evaluated for
20 relative exposure to projected change or sensitivity
21 to handle change based on life history
22 characteristics.

1 This approach is widely used in
2 terrestrial environments. A few examples from marine
3 systems existed previously. The CVA process takes
4 advantage of existing knowledge and expert opinion
5 using quantitative and qualitative data throughout the
6 assessment.

7 We've dedicated time to tailoring the CVA
8 to HMS species, making sure their long-distance
9 migrations and mobility is taken into account. These
10 results can help us identify research gaps and
11 understand climate vulnerabilities of species.

12 So our CVA framework is fundamentally
13 based on previous efforts from around the United
14 States encompassing protected species, particularly
15 marine mammals, and fish stocks.

16 The CVAs completed by other offices
17 throughout NOAA have ranged from analyzing specific
18 species groups like salmon up to entire regions like
19 the Northeast, which evaluated shellfish and fish
20 stocks. For this CVA we are referencing the
21 Northeast, South Atlantic, and Gulf of Mexico fish
22 stock CVAs.

1 We also have overlap between this CVA and
2 our Core Plan team experts. We have also discussed
3 the marine mammal approach with Matt Lettrich in the
4 Office of Science and Technology.

5 The marine mammal CVA has been
6 particularly useful in our HMS CVA design because they
7 have similarities to our HMS species in terms of long-
8 distance migrations.

9 They also have a unique approach to
10 addressing different stocks within species. And they
11 also redefine certain attributes to account for those
12 long-distance migrations and the mobility of their
13 species.

14 We've worked to find a happy balance
15 between retaining features of the Northeast and other
16 CVAs while building in those specific life history
17 traits we have in common with the marine mammal CVA.

18 So these are the various components of the
19 CVA process. While this is presented here as a time
20 line, many of these steps have been conducted
21 concurrently.

22 For example, right now we are in the

1 scoring and workshop phase. However, previously we
2 were in the info gathering and climate change exposure
3 phase, which were conducted concurrently.

4 So our CVA is made up of two analysis
5 steps, one qualitative and one quantitative. Our
6 exposure factor analysis is our quantitative step, and
7 this step is completed internally by NMFS.

8 Our exposure factor analysis takes
9 advantage of the most recent climate model, CMIP6, and
10 that stands for Coupled Model Intercomparison Project.

11 This model tells us the standardized magnitude of
12 change projected throughout the world's oceans.

13 This is coupled with species distributions
14 to determine the magnitude of the change a species
15 might experience throughout its range in a defined
16 future period.

17 This creates an overlap, which we convert
18 into a histogram. The distribution of this histogram
19 gives us an exposure factor score, which is then
20 multiplied by a sensitivity score to produce a climate
21 vulnerability rank.

22 So as you can see here, we have our CMIP6

1 model that is evaluating throughout the world's
2 oceans. That is overlaid with the species
3 distribution, which creates that overlap, and then is
4 formed into a histogram of that overlap.

5 From there, the distribution of that
6 histogram gives an exposure factor score. And that
7 exposure factor score is then multiplied by a
8 sensitivity analysis score, which I will go into in a
9 later slide. Those two scores multiplied together
10 produce a final climate vulnerability rank.

11 For a sensitivity scoring, this is the
12 qualitative portion of the CVA. This is a multi-step
13 process that involves expert scoring. We do expert
14 trainings and orientation webinars so experts
15 understand the process.

16 From there, our expert panel does rank
17 species and score them individually. We also hold a
18 workshop to discuss these scores and give experts the
19 opportunity to re-rank species depending on those
20 discussions that come out of the workshop.

21 Experts use a variety of materials in
22 their scoring efforts. One of these materials is a

1 species-specific profile. So each species or stock
2 has an assigned profile that is provided to experts to
3 score.

4 These profiles go over a series of 13
5 different life history characteristics, which are
6 labeled as sensitivity attributes. For example, as
7 you can see in this slide, the very first sensitivity
8 attribute evaluated in the species profile is habitat
9 specificity.

10 These profiles are meant to inform expert
11 scoring of the vulnerability attributes and are
12 tailored to HMS characteristics.

13 The design of the CVA and the species
14 profiles were informed by our Core Plan team, which
15 includes managers and participants from past CVAs, and
16 also aids in the decision making of the HMS CVA
17 design.

18 We've been working to define our CVA
19 through a scoping document. The scoping document will
20 have a definition for each of the project elements, as
21 well as options discussed for each project element, so
22 what was considered in our discussion with the Core

1 Plan team as well as any related items.

2 Any overlapping or cross-applicable
3 project elements are highlighted. And then finally, a
4 rationale and description of the final decision.

5 Our scoping document contains several
6 project elements, as you can see here. The very first
7 one, the species or stock question, we determined that
8 we will be evaluating 58 species in stocks based on
9 ICCAT and SEDAR assessments. However, we also built
10 in the flexibility to determine those species and
11 stocks included on a species by species basis.

12 I do want to also call out the temporal
13 scale and sensitivity attribute project elements.
14 Those were decided using a pilot project, which we'll
15 go into in the next couple of slides.

16 In addition to that, you can also see
17 things like species distribution. We began with IUCN
18 distributions and refined those based on EFH and
19 further information including tagging studies, et
20 cetera.

21 Our pilot project started off with a
22 Sensitivity Attribute Pilot Project. The purpose of

1 this pilot project was to evaluate the effects of
2 sensitivity attribute definition modifications that
3 better reflect HMS life history.

4 Essentially, we started off in the
5 Northeast CVA attribute definitions. However, the
6 Northeast CVA did cover shellfish species in addition
7 to fish stocks.

8 The attributes that we saw that concerned
9 shellfish were less applicable to highly migratory
10 species due to the differences in mobility, which we
11 thought it might be appropriate to modify some of
12 these attribute definitions to really hone in on what
13 makes our species different.

14 So the design of this pilot project
15 centered around four experts scoring ten pilot species
16 twice, once using the Northeast CVA attribute
17 definitions and again using attributes that our team
18 modified to better reflect HMS characteristics.

19 From there we determined pilot rankings,
20 so pilot vulnerability rankings from low to very high,
21 using both of those definitions and landed on a final
22 decision.

1 This was paired with a Temporal Scale
2 Pilot Project. This was to evaluate future periods
3 for differences in exposure scores.

4 We began with species distribution
5 refinement using IUCN distributions as a first step
6 and then moving onto EFH, literature and tagging
7 studies, as well as expert opinion.

8 From there we conducted exposure factor
9 analysis for two future periods. That was 2030-2059
10 and 2020-2049. Again depending on those vulnerability
11 rankings, we landed on a final temporal scale.
12 Ultimately we decided to use our HMS specific
13 attributes and our 2020-2049 future period.

14 The sensitivity attribute pilot results
15 showcase the differences in vulnerability rankings
16 that we saw during our pilot. I do want to emphasize
17 that these rankings are not part of the final CVA
18 results. These are purely just for pilot purposes.

19 On the left-hand column, you'll see all of
20 the different species that we included in our initial
21 pilot. In the middle column, you'll see the scores
22 from the original attributes scoring. And in the

1 right-hand column, you'll see the HMS attributes
2 scores.

3 So we did have three species change ranks.

4 Those are West Atlantic skipjack tuna, yellowfin
5 tuna, and lemon shark. We had skipjack tuna and
6 yellowfin tuna actually decrease by one vulnerability
7 bin, and we did have lemon shark increase by two
8 vulnerability bins.

9 The influencing attributes that we found
10 were habitat specificity, sensitivity to temperature,
11 other stressors, and reproductive strategy
12 sensitivity.

13 I do want to call out habitat specificity
14 as one of the most influential sensitivity attribute
15 changes that we made. We actually expanded the
16 definition of habitat specificity to include more of
17 an availability of habitat as compared to the
18 Northeast CVA where they really focused in on
19 generalist versus specialist nature of species.

20 Ultimately, based on these results, we did
21 decide to go with our HMS-specific attributes to use
22 in our actual CVA design.

1 These are our temporal scale pilot
2 results. Similar to the sensitivity attribute pilot,
3 these are simply pilot results. These have no bearing
4 on our final results of the CVA.

5 We do see many very high outcomes from
6 this analysis. This is in line with other CVA results
7 that we have seen in the past.

8 And I do want to call out three
9 influencing factors which are pH, surface oxygen, and
10 sea surface temperature. These three exposure factors
11 generally do push our species into that very high or
12 high category. Like I said, this has been seen
13 throughout other CVAs as well.

14 We did have two species change rank
15 between the future periods. Those were West Atlantic
16 skipjack tuna as well as white shark.

17 We did decide to go with the 2020-2049
18 future period because this is more relevant to
19 management and generally shows a greater spread of
20 results.

21 You'll see Caribbean sharpnose shark, it
22 does not have an exposure factor result. This is

1 simply because we were so uncertain about the species
2 distribution that we didn't feel comfortable running
3 an exposure analysis on this. These species will be
4 called out in any future CVA projects.

5 We did calculate a sensitivity attribute
6 score for them. However, it did not feel like we had
7 a certain enough picture of their distribution to move
8 forward.

9 So the steps of calculating final
10 vulnerability rankings begins with the sensitivity
11 attribute scores, as you'll see here. Each of these
12 vulnerability bins is assigned a number, which is then
13 multiplied to the exposure factor score, and then
14 determines the final climate vulnerability ranking.

15 So these are the results of our pilot
16 project. As you can see, we have Caribbean sharpnose
17 shark grayed out in our final assessment just because
18 of the absence of an exposure factor score.

19 So that process is going to be repeated at
20 an expert scoring workshop, during the expert workshop
21 and after the expert workshop. It is a three-day
22 workshop. It is being held next week in San Juan,

1 Puerto Rico. It's going from May 16th to the 18th.

2 We welcome observers, virtual or
3 otherwise. There is a registration link available on
4 this presentation that I'm also happy to provide to
5 you.

6 We are planning on having presentations
7 for our 15 scoring experts. These are really to
8 increase the information available to our experts as
9 they move through the scoring process.

10 Our presentations are going to center on
11 oceanography and climate throughout the Atlantic and
12 Caribbean, as well as climate change work that is
13 ongoing in Puerto Rico and the Greater Caribbean
14 region.

15 In terms of next steps and time line, by
16 the spring AP, as you can see, we've completed these
17 series of tasks. That includes species profiles for
18 all 58 species and stocks, as well as finalizing our
19 temporal scales, finalizing expert training, as well
20 as beginning our scoring period, which is currently in
21 progress.

22 After the scoring and workshop we're going

1 to be working on a series of CVA-related products,
2 which includes post-workshop species narratives.

3 Finalizing our results. Our scoring
4 period is open until May 30th. So we will begin
5 working on those after that May 30th deadline, as well
6 as creating manuscripts, story maps, a CVA website
7 that is available through the Office of Science and
8 Technology, as well as future AP presentations so we
9 can inform you of those results.

10 I'm happy to answer any questions. Thank
11 you.

12 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thank you so much,
13 Tyler. If you wouldn't mind hitting that mic just for
14 a sec. Great.

15 Let's see what questions there are from
16 the AP. We'll look to folks online and in the room as
17 well.

18 I'm seeing Dewey, Marcos, David, and Mike.

19 Let's start online though. I've got Alan Weiss
20 there.

21 Alan, we missed you earlier, so let's
22 bring you in on this one.

1 MR. WEISS: Can you hear me this time?

2 MR. BROOKS: Yes, we can.

3 MR. WEISS: Bennett, can you hear me now?

4 MR. BROOKS: Yes, we can. Thank you.

5 MR. WEISS: Good. Thanks.

6 I have a couple of questions. One is it
7 seems like this vulnerability analysis is being done
8 on the species populations, not on the fisheries. Is
9 that correct?

10 MS. LOUGHRAN: Yes, that is correct.

11 MR. BROOKS: You heard that that was a
12 yes?

13 MR. WEISS: Okay. What will the results
14 of these analyses be used for? How will it be
15 applied?

16 MS. LOUGHRAN: Thank you for your
17 question. So the results of this CVA are primarily
18 going to be used to identify and learn more about the
19 vulnerabilities that the HMS species that we're
20 conducting the CVA for are. And really honing in on
21 the why of vulnerabilities in terms of life history
22 characteristics of our species.

1 I do want to say that past CVAs have not
2 been used for regulatory purposes. And at this time,
3 we are looking at this as more of an informational
4 CVA.

5 MS. CUDNEY: Hey. So I want to point out
6 that this is going to produce a pretty big volume of
7 information for us that we can reference in things
8 like our ecosystem-based fishery management plan.

9 There are integrated ecosystem assessments
10 that are happening across the regions, ecosystem
11 status reports. And this information can be fed into
12 a lot of those ecosystem-based products that the
13 agency is developing.

14 So while we don't expect to produce a
15 rulemaking that's going to implement a direct
16 management measure as a result of this, there are ways
17 that we can amplify the things that we're finding out
18 through this process in other products that the agency
19 is developing.

20 MR. BROOKS: David, are you done?

21 Sorry. Alan? David's there. Forgive me.

22 Alan?

1 Okay. Let's go to Raimundo and then we'll
2 come back into the room.

3 Raimundo, is that a leftover hand? I
4 don't think so. I think it's new.

5 Have we lost our online people? Okay.
6 Let's come back in the room, and then we'll go back
7 online and see if we can pick up folks.

8 Dewey?

9 MR. HEMILRIGHT: I was curious about your
10 reference to your experts. Is there a list of your
11 experts that you keep referring to and who they will
12 be?

13 MS. LOUGHRAN: Yes. There is a list of
14 experts. We do have 15 scoring experts.

15 We have involved over 40 experts in the
16 entirety of the CVA process, whether that's refining
17 species distribution or reviewing species profiles,
18 getting their input on other CVA project elements.
19 I'm happy to provide that list to you after the
20 presentation.

21 MR. HEMILRIGHT: It might be good in the
22 future to include that in your presentation so that

1 way somebody doesn't have to ask it all the time.

2 Thank you.

3 MS. LOUGHRAN: All right. Thank you.

4 MR. BROOKS: Yes. We'll make that
5 available to everybody, of course.

6 Marcos?

7 MR. HANKE: Thank you for the opportunity,
8 first of all. Thank you for making the meeting in
9 Puerto Rico. Everybody is very welcome.

10 I have a question first and then a follow-
11 up. I'm a little concerned with the fact of using
12 IUCN because I had an experience in the past in which
13 we have an international evaluation of the species on
14 the status and so on brought to the US management
15 regime.

16 And to follow that is not necessarily
17 great. They almost on some species in the local areas
18 closed the whole fishery by using IUCN in the past.
19 That's really a concerning aspect for me.

20 The specific question is IUCN is used for
21 what, for status determination, just to make the map
22 of your graphic distribution? For what are you guys

1 using IUCN?

2 MS. LOUGHRAN: Thank you for that
3 question. I am going to initially respond and then
4 I'm going to invite Dan Crear, who is our species
5 distribution specialist and exposure factor analysis
6 specialist on our team, to also respond.

7 I do want to say that IUCN is usually used
8 as a starting point in our species distributions. By
9 no means is it the end all for a species distribution.
10 We use a variety of information including EFH,
11 including expert opinion. And we did see some changes
12 from the IUCN distributions.

13 Dan, do you want to add on? Okay. All
14 right.

15 MR. HANKE: My point, to be very clear --
16 let's say you have a number six, a number ten status.

17 If the discussion starts there or it starts with the
18 raw science analysis for an US situation, not an
19 international situation, most of the time it's very
20 different from the IUCN purpose and for the US
21 management regimes.

22 MS. LOUGHRAN: Yes. We definitely hear

1 the concerns there. We had to start somewhere.

2 And for many of our species we've got
3 Atlantic Basin coverage that we had to think about.
4 If we were to do an analysis that was just focused on
5 the EEZ, then we would possibly be missing climate
6 factors that were influencing the population outside
7 of the EEZ.

8 So for all of its strengths and
9 weaknesses, IUCN gives us the big starting point. And
10 then we can whittle down what we think is an
11 appropriate area for analysis using things like our
12 EFH distributions that we used to refine our EFH last
13 time in Amendment 10.

14 Those were very, very specific and they
15 actually filled in a lot of the gaps that were in the
16 IUCN data, at least in our region.

17 MR. HANKE: Thank you, Chairman, for
18 allowing me to make the questions because it's helpful
19 for me to take my point.

20 Now I'm going to address my last comment.

21 I think with habitat specificity it's very important
22 to recognize the Caribbean. I'm going to use the

1 Caribbean as a specific example.

2 It's super different than Florida and than
3 the Gulf of Mexico in many aspects because of the
4 habitat characteristics of the species, the depth in
5 which they are, what they feed on, and so on and so
6 forth.

7 This is related to IUCN utilization of
8 that because you should pursue in the future for any
9 approach that you do with climate change or any
10 vulnerability a region-specific approach more than a
11 generic approach. Otherwise, we're going to be
12 misjudging or misutilizing the advice and the tools.
13 Thank you.

14 MS. LOUGHRAN: Thank you.

15 MR. BROOKS: Great. Let's go over to
16 David. Then we'll go to Mike, then Rick, then Tim.

17 MR. SCHALIT: Thanks, Tyler, for this
18 really good presentation. I saw the announcement that
19 was sent out a few days ago on the meeting in Puerto
20 Rico.

21 It was kind of a little vague to me. I
22 didn't really understand it. I believe that there are

1 some panelists that have been selected -- correct me
2 if I'm wrong -- that will be attending this meeting.

3 What I'm wondering is will HMS be
4 represented at the meeting? If so, will that be
5 physically, only by Zoom, or how is it going to work?

6 Thanks.

7 MS. LOUGHRAN: Absolutely. Thank you.
8 The expert panel that we referred to in the Federal
9 Register notice and the GovDelivery notice, that is
10 essentially the same group I'm talking about as our
11 scoring experts.

12 I'm just using a different name. My
13 apologies. It is that same core group of 15 experts
14 that is scoring each species. And in terms of HMS, we
15 do have six supporting staff that will be attending in
16 person and facilitating the workshop.

17 MR. BROOKS: Mike, over to you.

18 MR. PIERDINOCK: Thank you, Tyler. Thank
19 you for your presentation.

20 For one that's located in Massachusetts
21 and fishing in New England, it's evident with the
22 increased temperatures and what we observe through

1 several years that there's shifting stocks and
2 increased temperatures. It's positive to see this
3 work.

4 I have a few questions. I'm just curious
5 for the data set through what date you're using for
6 your vulnerability assessment.

7 We've had a cycle going on for years, but
8 I'd say roughly in my terms about 2010 is when
9 indications of increased temperatures and climatic
10 shift occurred with the most significant increases
11 being observed since 2015 onward. So that's why I was
12 wondering where that data set started. That's the
13 first thing.

14 The second thing is I'm curious with your
15 vulnerability assessment, as these stocks move farther
16 north, you can kind of look at Cape Cod and the 42
17 latitude line.

18 That's typically the northern fringe of
19 southerly stocks, but that's no longer the case. It's
20 almost Maine and farther north into Canada with many
21 of these southerly species that are being found, so
22 significantly farther north.

1 So as part of your assessment, when you
2 look at a certain species -- let's just say bluefin,
3 for example. They're now going into areas, and
4 they're relying on a different type of forage fish and
5 competing with other species that are present in those
6 areas.

7 Does this model look at the balance
8 between the forage and the temperature? That's one of
9 the biggest things that's been observed the past
10 several years in our waters.

11 With increased temperatures and select
12 forage that's now available for these fish, we have
13 these fish closer to shore. So does your
14 vulnerability assessment tie that together, number
15 one.

16 And then number two, does it take into
17 consideration how now that there's fish competing with
18 one another that weren't there before? And then how
19 does that impact the predator-prey relationships in
20 balance?

21 The last thing too from a management
22 standpoint, we see this at the New England Fisheries

1 Management Council with managing the stocks with
2 Canada and groundfish. We also now have this with the
3 HMS and ICCAT issues.

4 These stocks are moving farther north into
5 Canada. If you look at the historical trends of what
6 they're catching up there with different species that
7 are increasing in numbers, especially these more
8 southerly species that you would typically see south
9 of the 42, they're going up.

10 So I'm curious if that's being looked at
11 and considered when we go to the table with Canada
12 internationally, with ICCAT, or potentially how that
13 may be impacting our quota because it's moving farther
14 north.

15 Whether that's been looked at, that's some
16 food for thought and for consideration that I'm just
17 interested in if we're taking it to that standpoint to
18 look at if that's the case.

19 I have several questions there. I hope
20 you caught them all. Thank you for your work. I
21 appreciate it.

22 MS. LOUGHRAN: Thank you so much. I'm

1 going to pass it on to Dan regarding the time periods
2 since he is our exposure analysis specialist.

3 MR. CREAR: Mike, for the exposure
4 analysis, as Tyler mentioned, we're looking at the
5 difference between two different time periods. The
6 historical time period we used was basically average
7 conditions from 1985 to 2014. And then as Tyler
8 mentioned, the future period is the 2020 to 2049 time
9 period.

10 MS. LOUGHRAN: All right. Thank you, Dan.

11 And then your question about forage and
12 temperature. We are looking at the interactions
13 between forage and temperature. We do have a
14 sensitivity attribute solely dedicated to prey and
15 prey availability that generally looks at the
16 generalist or specialist nature of species.

17 We also call certain prey items into it
18 and do our best to provide a comprehensive idea of the
19 current status of forage, and if that is shifting or
20 if they have shifted in the past essentially.

21 And then your second question -- sorry.
22 I've got to refer to my notes.

1 MR. BROOKS: How is the international
2 conversation pulled in?

3 MS. LOUGHRAN: Yes. Thank you for that
4 question. Unfortunately, I can't answer in terms of
5 ICCAT or regulatory at this point. Apologies.

6 MR. BROOKS: Randy seems prepared to weigh
7 in.

8 MR. BLANKINSHIP: Well, not prepared for
9 the perfect answer.

10 I'll just say, Mike, I think you're aware
11 that the United States -- as Walt presented, one of
12 the things that happened there was a resolution was
13 adopted related to climate and setting up a climate
14 workshop.

15 That work towards organizing that workshop
16 is still in process right now, to happen this summer.

17 That is a starting point for consideration of
18 climate-related subjects and effects within ICCAT
19 negotiation. So that's a beginning point.

20 MR. BROOKS: Quick, quick.

21 MR. PIERDINOCK: Just to point out with
22 the Canadians, which I guess is a lot better than the

1 Pacific dealing with Russia, China, and international
2 -- the experience with the groundfish stocks, it's
3 interesting.

4 Those species that are not co-managed
5 collectively between the US and Canada, if we are the
6 have-nots, Canada has no motivation to address it or
7 vice versa, such as with mackerel, such as with
8 halibut as a few different examples.

9 So just to keep that in mind because I'm
10 curious whether there would be motivation at their end
11 if we did reach out to them to try to address
12 something that was negatively impacting the United
13 States but is positively impacting them. Just some
14 food for thought. Thank you.

15 MS. LOUGHRAN: Yes. I just want to say
16 that we have a pretty robust plan around how to push
17 the results out. Part of that is going to be
18 leveraging the partnerships that we have.

19 We have plenty of staff in HMS that are
20 working on international issues. So of course we're
21 going to be talking internally about the results,
22 hoping that they would be useful for many different

1 projects.

2 I think part of the reason why we are
3 trying to figure out now the products that we want to
4 develop is that there are many different ways this
5 information can be used. We want to at least make
6 people aware that it's out there.

7 MR. BROOKS: Great. We are just about at
8 time for the lunch break, but I want to see if we can
9 just squeeze in the last couple of speakers here.
10 I've got Rick, then over to Tim.

11 Dewey, I've seen your card go up. And
12 then I want to go back online and see if we have
13 anyone there.

14 Rick, over to you.

15 MR. WEBER: I'm basically going to take it
16 down, but I'm going to repeat what Mike said about
17 forage and the importance of the -- you predict where
18 a fish might be, but where it's really going to be is
19 where there's food. So keep the forage in mind.
20 Thank you.

21 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Rick.

22 Tim?

1 MR. PICKETT: Okay. It was an interesting
2 presentation. I'd like to bring it up, and I know
3 it'll be discussed later in the meeting, to see if
4 you've considered the input of what I'll call the
5 climate industry that's been developed here recently.

6 The Offshore Wind energy industry has
7 become an industry, and it's motivated solely by the
8 interest in climate. I was just wondering if you've
9 considered in this the input from that industry on
10 changes in fish behavior and everything like that.

11 This evidence that you're presenting is
12 compelling to that industry and compelling the
13 expansion of that industry. So whether that was taken
14 into consideration in terms of an input in this or
15 will be taken into consideration as an input for this?

16 MS. LOUGHRAN: So we did not consult
17 directly with wind energy folks. We're making the
18 results available once they're finished. I imagine
19 that there might be some folks interested in it, but
20 this is a science-driven product and it is based on
21 the scientific literature that's out there.

22 MR. CREAR: I will add we do have in one

1 of the sensitivity attributes other stressors which
2 could be considered when experts go through and
3 examine other stressors. There could be a handful of
4 different stressors that could be put under that.

5 Basically, stressors that are not
6 temperature or some of the more major ones. So there
7 is room for that to be discussed and taken into
8 account.

9 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thanks, Dan.

10 Dewey?

11 MR. HEMILRIGHT: How does your climate
12 vulnerability assessment take into effect that you
13 have closed areas, static closed areas, and as fish
14 migrate you don't have fisheries happening in those
15 areas because they're closed?

16 How does that work when you have sections
17 up and down the East Coast that are closed? And as
18 fish move, how do you assess that vulnerability and
19 changing conditions and stuff like that? How is that
20 taken into account or was it?

21 MS. LOUGHRAN: Thank you, Dewey. In terms
22 of closed areas, I do want to say that our species

1 distribution covers the entirety of the species
2 distribution. So that can range from the entire
3 Atlantic Basin to more specific distributions, like we
4 see in our small coastal shores in some instances.

5 In terms of closed areas, our sensitivity
6 analysis is really geared towards taking into account
7 what life history characteristics might pose some
8 vulnerabilities to climate and if so, how.

9 For example, for habitat specificity,
10 instead of naming a range under that sensitivity
11 attribute, we do ultimately describe what habitat the
12 species can be found in. And it does change whether
13 it's in the Northwest Atlantic or the South Atlantic
14 versus Greater Caribbean. So we do our best to
15 capture all of that information under that sensitivity
16 attribute.

17 We do have a separate sensitive attribute
18 called sensitivity to temperature. That does take
19 into account the entirety of the range of that
20 species. At that point, we're looking at latitudinal
21 coordinates and things like that, trying our best to
22 capture where the species may be found.

1 Do you want to expand on that?

2 MS. CUDNEY: Some of the scientific
3 literature that we're referencing in the CVA uses
4 things like PSAT data. So there are ways to get
5 information into the assessment for the scientists to
6 consider.

7 We are relying on an expert panel. We're
8 relying on the sum total of their knowledge of the
9 distribution of these species. We've got some very
10 smart people that are aware of the satellite tagging
11 work, so you have data that's coming in that is not
12 based on fishery-dependent data sources.

13 Asking these folks to look at the sum
14 total of what's out there, it's going to be a mix of
15 fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data, but
16 there is a way to get information in areas that are
17 closed.

18 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. I want to see if
19 Raimundo is wanting to get into the conversation.

20 And Pete, I may be having some
21 connectivity issues here. So if you're seeing any
22 other hands raised at your end, let me know.

1 Raimundo?

2 MR. ESPINOZA: I hadn't heard about the
3 workshop from yesterday. So I don't know if I missed
4 it from the last AP meeting, but I just heard about it
5 yesterday when I got the email from the HMS Atlantic,
6 the email that sends out all the work. I don't know
7 if I missed a previous email about it because I
8 haven't heard about it.

9 MR. BROOKS: Okay. I guess the question
10 is just that he hadn't heard about it, but is there a
11 place where folks can get more information about where
12 that is? Maybe you can just repeat that?

13 MS. LOUGHRAN: Yes, absolutely. I'll
14 actually go ahead and pull up the link now. This web
15 link will lead you to a meeting website where we have
16 posted our agenda.

17 There is also an observer registration
18 link. Once you fill out that form, we can go ahead
19 and send you an online meeting link so that you can
20 attend from Google Meet.

21 MR. BROOKS: So just to be clear, the
22 presentation is in the agenda. If you click on that

1 link, you'll then find your way to this link.

2 Marcos, the very last comment to you.

3 MR. HANKE: Yes. Thank you.

4 Following up what Tim and Rick brought to
5 the table, this is important because the wind farms
6 and the aquaculture, in the case of the Caribbean are
7 being installed by the government on the north coast
8 and so on, those are not little things.

9 This is a major happening around our
10 coast. And that will change the sensitivity
11 distribution of the species and that relationship with
12 the prey, and how long they stay there in terms of the
13 seasonality and availability.

14 I think the point that Tim brought to the
15 table is extremely important to include if you're
16 going to make international policy and other things
17 that we are doing in the US. Thank you.

18 MR. BROOKS: Thanks so much.

19 Did you want to jump in on that or no?

20 Okay.

21 Thank you all very much. Just a quick
22 clarification, the agenda will be updated with

1 presentations after lunch. So if you go to look there
2 right now, you might not find it.

3 And then just thanks for the conversation
4 there. Lots of good questions, comments, suggestions.

5 Some of the pieces that I've captured are an info
6 request to understand who the experts are, and then
7 whenever that kind of thing is brought up here to make
8 sure it's always provided since there will be interest
9 in it.

10 And then some cautions, suggestions. Take
11 care with using IUCN data as a starting point. Be
12 region specific. Be mindful of the international
13 connections, ramifications. Pay close attention to
14 forage, thinking about wind industry, impact as a
15 potential stressor, and accounting for closed areas.
16 So thanks, all, for that conversation.

17 If there's nothing else from either of you
18 or you, Randy, we should go to break. We will return
19 at 1:30. And we will dive into Bluefin Tuna Fishery
20 Year in Review and looking at 2023 management issues.

21 Thanks, all, for the good conversation
22 this morning and presentations. We will see you after

1 lunch. Thanks.

2 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went
3 off the record at 12:08 p.m. and resumed at 1:30 p.m.)

4 MR. BLANKINSHIP: I just wanted to
5 recognize that we've got some -- we don't normally
6 recognize our visitors in the gallery, but we have
7 some special visitors today that are conspicuous
8 because they're rather young.

9 We've got a group of seniors that are
10 visiting from Landon School in Bethesda, Maryland.
11 They were interested in seeing some of the fishery
12 management process. I think Rick Weber is the contact
13 that they've been talking to about this. So if you
14 were wondering who these folks were, that's who has
15 joined us.

16 Welcome, you all. I'm glad you're here.

17 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thanks.

18 As you're getting settled here, just to
19 remind us of the rest of the afternoon here. We're
20 going to dive into Bluefin Tuna Fishery Year in Review
21 2022 and then talk about 2023 management issues. I
22 know there's always some meaty stuff to talk about

1 there.

2 We will go to a break at 2:45. At 3:00,
3 Sam Rauch will be here to give a leadership update
4 and, as always, listen to all of you and hear what's
5 on your mind.

6 At 3:30, Brian Hooker with Bureau of Ocean
7 Energy Management will be here to talk about Offshore
8 Wind. For members of the public that want to comment
9 online or in the room, we'll take public comment at
10 4:45.

11 And then we'll start wrapping up at around
12 5:00. We'll get you out by 5:15. And then just a
13 reminder, downstairs on the first floor there will be
14 a no-host social hour at 5:30.

15 Any questions? Anything to address before
16 we hand it off to Brad? Okay. I'm not seeing
17 anything online.

18 Brad, over to you.

19 MR. MCHALE: All right. Good afternoon,
20 everyone. Let me know if we get any feedback and I'll
21 adjust the microphone. It's a pleasure to be in front
22 of the room with you all once again.

1 For those AP members I haven't had the
2 opportunity to introduce myself yet, Brad McHale. I'm
3 one of Randy's branch chiefs. I head up the Fisheries
4 Reporting and Monitoring Branch located up in
5 Gloucester, Massachusetts.

6 The longevity of the division is long, but
7 a lot of it has been dealing with bluefin tuna. So
8 this is kind of a presentation we typically give at
9 the spring meeting that kind of reflects back, looks
10 at some of the information that came out of the
11 fisheries in the prior year. And then how is that
12 helping inform how we're reviewing the year to come,
13 lessons learned, and what have you.

14 And as we talked about this morning, a
15 slight difference to that typical presentation was
16 touching base on the individual bluefin quotas that we
17 were discussing in some of the overview, and creating
18 some of the space to have some of those discussions as
19 it relates to the appeals process, turnaround time,
20 and the like.

21 If I'm quick here and run through this,
22 the slides obviously are available on the website.

1 There's a significant amount of information here.

2 I'm not going to be able to belabor it, so
3 I'm going to hit highlights and obviously that will be
4 available for references. Otherwise, we'll just get
5 too bogged down and it'll chew into some of the time
6 we have to actually discuss.

7 So reflecting back to how the fishery for
8 bluefin tuna had played out in 2022. And granted, my
9 eyes are old, so the font size here is a little tight.

10 But as you'll see, a very productive year.

11 I think it was last year that all the
12 slides were screwed up. Now that they're not screwed
13 up, it's my eyes that are screwed up.

14 Kind of the take-home message here, it was
15 a very productive year. The fish were available to a
16 number of different gear types and to a number of
17 different geographic areas.

18 That will be the theme that kind of runs
19 through the entire presentation. You'll kind of see
20 how all the different categories are listed, what our
21 base quotas were, numbers of fish, weight, all the
22 different metrics.

1 Kind of the take-home there is when you
2 look towards the bottom line, we essentially caught
3 our base quota. So we were really digging into some
4 of our overall adjusted quota. That's something we're
5 keeping in mind as we continue to move forward.

6 As it relates to what's already transpired
7 in 2023, obviously we're still getting underway but
8 we've had our winter handgear fishery take place, as
9 well as some of the longline fishing activities.
10 Obviously, these numbers are still preliminary.

11 I think as Karyl had mentioned earlier, we
12 had some of our trophy recreational fisheries fill
13 their quotas and since closed, both in the South as
14 well as the Gulf of Mexico.

15 I threw this slide together because I was
16 coming to the realization that the number of changes
17 that we've all experienced as it relates to bluefin
18 tuna quotas over the past 12 or 18 months have been
19 rather substantial.

20 Case in point, we had Amendment 13
21 finalized. That became effective January 1st. That
22 had some implications on how we distribute the US

1 quota domestically. We had the ICCAT recommendations
2 change.

3 And so this slide here is really designed
4 to be a reference for folks so they can see exactly
5 where the tonnage has gone to, the various percentages
6 as it's divvied up via the fishery management plans.
7 So folks kind of know what the landscape looks like as
8 far as a quota perspective for the next few years.

9 As it relates to number of actions, I
10 think folks around the table are aware of this. And
11 if you're new, you will become aware of this. This is
12 a highly active managed fishery. There are a number
13 of actions the agency takes place in season.

14 So we're adjusting retention limits both
15 in our commercial and recreational fisheries multiple
16 times throughout the year. We're moving quota around
17 based upon needs, utilization, mitigating closures,
18 what have you.

19 There has historically been some rather
20 significant quota adjustments, reallocating from the
21 now-defunct purse seine gear type, as well as
22 augmenting the Reserve with what we're allowed to

1 carry over from one year to the next of unutilized
2 quota as per ICCAT recommendations.

3 And then the almighty closure. Once
4 quotas are reached, they take the action to close
5 those fisheries to further harvest.

6 And so then there's just a whole litany of
7 the different numbers that go along with it, where
8 various tonnages have been moved from one category to
9 the next or from the Reserve, again, trying to
10 supplement and provide additional fishing
11 opportunities within the US quota as a whole.

12 When it comes to the 2023 actions, it's
13 still underway so we really only have the first one.
14 That was related to moving some of the quota around
15 for the winter fishery, but then those potential
16 additional actions of adjusting retention limits.

17 We touched on the restricted-fishing days
18 schedule. We touched on the IBQ appeals earlier
19 today, as well as the anticipated adjustment to the
20 Reserve with US carryover from 2022. And then the
21 whole litany of in-season closures and additional
22 quota transfer. So that's still all on the table and

1 yet to come.

2 Getting down to a little bit more of a
3 refined scope of looking at the recreational fishery.

4 Here we have the table looking at what it was for
5 2022. When I originally crafted the slide, the 2023
6 retention limits hadn't finalized. Now that they are,
7 here they are. They are identical.

8 In reviewing the catch information from
9 last year, we didn't see any real just cause of having
10 to either be more liberal or more restrictive based
11 upon how the final numbers play out. You'll see some
12 nuances in some later tables of how the distribution
13 of different sizes of fish and the quota available for
14 those categories gets bounced around.

15 And then prior to this adjustment that was
16 just recently announced, we had our default retention
17 limit of one fish in play, which is common for those
18 winter months as we kind of get into the spring.

19 As it relates to some of our trophy
20 fishery, for members of the audience, these are giant
21 bluefin tuna that are allowed to be caught and
22 retained recreationally for no sale.

1 We've had that closure, as I mentioned, in
2 the South. The Gulf of Mexico recently just closed,
3 and we're still doing some final tabulations there of
4 catch. Last year the Northern area had closed in
5 June.

6 And then as another output of Amendment
7 13, we bifurcated what was the area in the North to be
8 the Gulf of Maine as well as the Southern New England
9 areas to provide reasonable fishing opportunities on
10 these recreational fish. And trying to recognize when
11 and where they're harvested, and more opportunities
12 might be curtailed.

13 Trying to do a balancing act, but not
14 getting to a level of resolution where we're then
15 trying to make quota available in everybody's backyard
16 because there isn't quite enough to go around to
17 accomplish that goal.

18 Highlighting some of the variability that
19 we experienced in the recreational fishery. Here
20 we're looking back over the last couple of years, as
21 you can see.

22 We had the years in the first column and

1 then different metrics on the size classes. These are
2 all numbers of fish and the tonnage they equate to as
3 you move across the table.

4 Even just looking at that first column as
5 it relates to the summary of the middle two of the
6 large school and the small medium in a short time
7 frame, in 2019 we're looking at about 1,700 school
8 fish that were reported through the different
9 methodologies. And all of a sudden you get to 2021
10 and we're just shy of 10,000.

11 How does the management try to speak to
12 that level of fluidity in what the fishery might
13 experience from one year to the next? Especially when
14 you look at 2022 and that number dropped off to be
15 about 2,300.

16 But then when you move over to that large
17 school column there of those fish that are 47 to 59
18 inches, you start to see some of the numbers jump.

19 As you move further across the table, this
20 is where size does matter. You may have significant
21 numbers of those smaller size class fish, but when it
22 comes to how ICCAT quantifies tonnage, they just don't

1 add up in the same way.

2 This has always been one of the challenges
3 with the recreational fishery. Based upon the size
4 classes that the fishery is interacting with and that
5 are available, how do you try to set up retention
6 limits that stay within those tonnage quota
7 allotments, knowing that they have ramification on
8 retention limits and availability?

9 So just a slightly different way to look
10 at last year's catch. You'll see some of the
11 percentages there where I'm kind of just sharing some
12 of the same information in a different format.

13 We didn't have significant numbers of
14 school fish last year. They kind of equated to about
15 36 percent of the overall catch, but yet those large
16 school/small mediums dominated, so how that tonnage
17 kind of all adds up.

18 We do have some ICCAT requirements that
19 we're beholden to of keeping our school quotas set at
20 a 10 percent level of the US catch. So there is some
21 fluidity where we can move some of the tonnage around
22 from one year to the next.

1 We're always in consultation with our
2 Science Center partners to ensure that these variable
3 catches aren't impacting the stock assessments, or
4 they're being included into the stock assessment
5 process to make sure that nothing is then running
6 afoul of those outputs. So those efforts kind of go
7 hand in hand.

8 Another way to display it if you're more
9 visual versus a tabular approach is just looking at
10 the composition of the catch as it moves across time.

11 This table is going a little bit further back. You
12 can kind of see that light blue bar there of those
13 large school fish that really showed up last year, but
14 were not nearly as strong in '21.

15 So again, some of the challenges when
16 you're dealing with a survey-based reporting
17 methodology of how do you set the limits when you know
18 the feedback from the fishery is usually a couple of
19 months behind. How do you make adjustments but yet
20 set up expectations of fishing opportunities for for-
21 hire bookings, vacation planning, and the like.

22 And just because it wasn't variable enough

1 or complicated enough, then you start to look at some
2 of the geographic and spatial distributions, that
3 these fish aren't necessarily showing up in the same
4 locations year after year after year.

5 A prime example, if you look here at 2021,
6 there is a pretty equal distribution on those states
7 looking at Virginia North of when certain size classes
8 were available.

9 But then you look at some of the other
10 years and they aren't showing up in those same
11 geographic areas from one year to the next, which then
12 obviously plays into concerns that folks aren't seeing
13 them, lack of fishing opportunities.

14 And trying to achieve a balance, trying to
15 create opportunity where the fish are at the size
16 classes they are, but yet still being within our
17 quotas to manage the fishery properly.

18 Then this is something that we
19 traditionally put up. There have been some years
20 where you see a true year class kind of march through
21 the fishery as they grow in length. So we don't
22 necessarily have strong signals this go around, but

1 something that we'll continue to do that helps inform
2 the discussion.

3 All right. So segueing off of the
4 recreational fishery in review, let's turn our
5 attention to more to some of the commercial fisheries
6 in review. Here we have our general category
7 landings. This is our commercial rod and reel
8 fishery.

9 We've broken it down into time periods.
10 We've looked at the retention limits, how many days
11 those fisheries were open, what was the tonnage
12 landed, and then ultimately what was the average
13 metric tons landed per day.

14 This is inclusive of any restricted-
15 fishing days as well. And then just kind of breaking
16 it down to show how the fishery evolves throughout the
17 year where all things are not created equal.

18 As far as catch rates, I know around this
19 table for years we've had discussions about what the
20 fishery that commences on June 1st should start at.
21 Is it two fish? Is it one fish? Is it three fish?
22 And where we've kind of followed the information that

1 catch rates on rod and reel tend to be extremely low
2 in June.

3 So we've been able to provide a more
4 liberal retention limit during that month to those
5 vessels that are using harpoon as a gear type. And
6 then once we start to see the rod and reel fishery
7 pick up, we reduce it back to one.

8 So you can see there just by that one
9 example where we had 0.6 metric tons as a daily catch
10 rate, once that rod and reel bite really does pick up,
11 here noted by the June 3rd date through August 10th,
12 we're jumping right up to about 11 metric tons.

13 A lot of that is the fish availability and
14 just there are that many more vessels fishing rod and
15 reel versus that harpoon gear type. So again, a
16 different dynamic that we're looking to to not only
17 help inform retention limits but trying to help inform
18 effort controls as well.

19 Case in point, the restricted-fishing day.

20 And I know other tools have been discussed of how do
21 you flatten this curve out so there aren't the same
22 peaks and valleys between openings and closures.

1 Looking at those time periods along that
2 first column there of how the quota is managed, and
3 then looking once again for reference, the same
4 information sliced slightly different of how much
5 quota was harvested.

6 What was the base level, what were
7 adjusted, what are the percentages. Nothing I'm going
8 to belabor here other than more information to help
9 inform the conversations in ways we may need to
10 evolve. And obviously, that with Advisory Panel input
11 as well as those of the regulated community.

12 Then looking to what's transpired here in
13 2023. Granted, it's just the winter fishery, but that
14 has gotten us out of the gate in trying to see how
15 those winter fisheries compare across time.

16 I think I've used the analogy that when
17 you manage bluefin tuna, you really need to have a
18 crystal ball available. I have a government-issued
19 one. It isn't necessarily as precise as common
20 technologies, but it still gets the job done.

21 We'll continue to be using everything at
22 our disposal trying to figure out how to manage these

1 fisheries given all the nuances that can change them
2 from one year to the next, or even one part of the
3 year to the next.

4 And then just graphically displaying the
5 general category catch in 2022. The black line here
6 is representing the quotas. The blue line is the
7 catch.

8 It looks pretty linear. Sometimes the
9 detail gets lost in this particular graphic, but it
10 kind of just shows how the fishery evolves over time.

11 It doesn't tell quite the same story that it has in
12 years past about some of those nuances.

13 All right. Moving from that general
14 category handgear fishery to some of the information
15 as it relates to the harpoon category. Breaking down
16 last year's catch on how many, what the composition of
17 the harvest was for those large mediums, which was set
18 at a two-fish limit per day, that compromised about 22
19 percent of that category's catch.

20 The giant fishery, which is really where
21 that effort is to be expended with that particular
22 gear type, with unlimited harvest allowed equated to

1 about 78 percent.

2 Obviously, there were some adjustments
3 made where we moved some quota that I referenced
4 earlier. So then we try to break down some of these
5 statistics for the resolution as well.

6 So how many trips just landed one large
7 medium and that was it? How many landed a combination
8 of those large medium and giants? How many were
9 exclusively giants? This gives us a window to look to
10 see what is the catch composition that that fleet is
11 experiencing.

12 The same as that second tier there. How
13 many are catching one fish, two fish, three fish, and
14 then onwards and upwards.

15 One item to make note that is different
16 and is in play for 2023 is that Amendment 13
17 instituted a cap or a limit on the number of bluefin
18 tuna harpoon vessels can catch in any given day. We
19 no longer have the unlimited giant threshold in place.

20 Essentially, how that ten fish looks is
21 that two of those can be large medium and then the
22 other eight could be giants or all ten could be

1 giants.

2 So we still have that threshold to handle
3 those fish that are less than 81 inches and mitigate
4 some of the effort that's expended on those size
5 classes, but yet still preserve an ample retention
6 limit given the environmental conditions that are in
7 play for that gear type to be effective.

8 And then also what's in play with that
9 ten-fish limit is that the agency has the ability to
10 reduce that down after reviewing a number of different
11 determination criteria if it seems that all of a
12 sudden that ten-fish limit isn't getting the balance
13 right of extending fishing opportunities, but
14 providing economic opportunity and staying within our
15 quotas. We have some wiggle room there, just like we
16 do with some of the other fisheries.

17 Comparing harpoon gear landings across the
18 general category and that harpoon category because it
19 is an authorized gear; something that we just kind of
20 keep tabs on.

21 Potential implications of vessels moving
22 from one category to the next. Do they genuinely like

1 to have the diversity in the gear types they could
2 prosecute in a given year or do retention limits shift
3 this around?

4 Recognizing some of the core limitations,
5 something we just keep our thumb on the pulse of to
6 help figure out management trends and what have you of
7 how this particular gear type is being used, seeing
8 it's authorized in both categories.

9 I think in years past there was some
10 feedback, not necessarily from around the table but I
11 think more from the public at large, on whether or not
12 gears should be eliminated from one category or what
13 have you.

14 So this is something that kind of keeps us
15 informed of how those two fisheries are evolving, if
16 we ever get to that point where we really need to take
17 something like that on.

18 All right. Moving away from harvest,
19 let's touch on a slide that I think gets folks'
20 attention, looking at some of the reporting
21 compliance.

22 If you recall back with the implementation

1 of Amendment 7, which went into play January 1, 2015,
2 there were some mandatory reporting requirements that
3 came along with some of the handgear fisheries.

4 We've steadily seen improvement from those
5 initial years. We chalk that up to education, kind of
6 getting the word out that these fisheries and the
7 reports are mandatory. But we seem to have flatlined
8 for the last couple of years of different compliance
9 rates.

10 Something that we're continuing to try to
11 work at, whether it be through our partners in the
12 Office of Law Enforcement writing citations for non-
13 compliance here, as well as looking at some other
14 parts of the agency that have their own reporting
15 requirements.

16 We understand that HMS is just one fishery
17 that our constituents have permits for. More often
18 than not, they'll have permits out of GARFO or the
19 Southeast region that may have additional reporting
20 requirements.

21 And is there confusing there where
22 different reports are going to different parts of the

1 agency? Is that information adequate?

2 Something that Randy, myself, and our
3 respective staff are continually and constantly
4 working at of, how do you then break down some of the
5 stove pipes that exist inside the agency, especially
6 given the unique position HMS is where we overlap with
7 all of the other regions whether it be GARFO, SERO.

8 All the different management councils
9 throughout the Gulf and throughout the Caribbean give
10 us that perspective of where some of these challenges
11 exist and where some of the gaps exist, and where the
12 agency as a whole can be doing better to serve our
13 customer, the US fisherman.

14 Again, another way to display that
15 compliance information that shows where for the last
16 number of years compliance has seemed to flatline.
17 How do we continue to strive to get better numbers
18 there?

19 Moving a little bit more onto the economic
20 dynamics over the last couple of years here.
21 Something that's been an ongoing debate of when are
22 the fish most valuable, when are the best prices.

1 This doesn't necessarily reflect volume.
2 As mentioned in some of the other slides, the summer
3 and fall months the volume goes up exponentially, so
4 there's somewhat of a supply/demand impact.

5 We've also discussed around the table for
6 years what is the quality of fish. Are the fish more
7 valuable because they've been feeding all summer/fall
8 long, so their fat content and oil content is higher
9 in the fall/winter months.

10 There's different schools of thought
11 across all that. Not one theory definitively holds
12 true, but just some numbers that we share to reflect
13 that.

14 You'll note there for 2022, we have a gap
15 there between October and December. That is
16 attributed to that fishery closing there in October.

17 Then we'll look across trends as well of
18 what we're seeing with that price information. Not
19 that it drives our management because that's not one
20 of the criteria that is informing or directly
21 resulting in management actions, but we're also not
22 blind to it because we understand that's how the

1 fishery is prosecuted from the business side. So we
2 kind of keep tabs there.

3 And then lastly, something that's been
4 very informative over the years is where traditionally
5 Atlantic bluefin tuna caught by US fishermen was
6 viewed as an export product. They were going over to
7 Japan for the sushi and sashimi market.

8 That is absolutely no longer the case. As
9 you can see here, the number of fish that are exported
10 has continued to drop consistently over the last
11 decade. A lot of different variables come into play
12 here.

13 Exchange rates. Obviously COVID had its
14 influence. Fuel costs; how much does it cost to
15 actually put a fisherman in a jet and fly him to Japan
16 versus are you able to find a marketplace for that
17 product here in the United States.

18 I know that there's been a lot of effort
19 expended on how do you develop better markets here
20 domestically to move some of this fish product,
21 especially when it is coming through in high volumes
22 that aren't the traditional of going to Miami, Los

1 Angeles, and New York, to high-end marketplaces,
2 versus how do you establish those markets so they're
3 more prevalent and more accessible to US codfish.

4 Then this graph here is really just
5 sharing more information about the relationship of
6 what our base quotas are, how they're adjusted, what
7 our landings are, and then catch. The catch being
8 inclusive of not just landings but also dead discards,
9 which is something that we're obligated to report to
10 ICCAT.

11 For those in the back of the room, I keep
12 saying ICCAT. International Commission for the
13 Conservation of Atlantic Tunas. It's a regional
14 fishery management organization that manages these
15 species Atlantic Basin wide, so it's not just the
16 United States at the table. This is something we
17 always keep in check there as well.

18 Speaking of dead discards, we're always
19 reviewing methodologies and sources of information.
20 We have different fisheries, longline fisheries,
21 handgear fisheries, trying to calculate what the best
22 numbers are that we can confidently report to that

1 regional fishery management organization.

2 This is always an ongoing dialogue with
3 our Southeast Fisheries Science Center, obviously with
4 you all here, and the fisheries at large of how best
5 this information is shared back up.

6 Then just kind of displaying that
7 information when you go back in time. You'll see some
8 of the sparks of what triggered the conversations that
9 led us through the Amendment 7 process there, '12,
10 '13, '14. 2015 is when Amendment 7 and the IBQ
11 program came into play.

12 And then you can kind of see the impacts
13 that had on the fishery as it related to the pelagic
14 longline discards and geographically where they were
15 coming from. Somewhat of a success story there, but I
16 think we've all heard around the table that the
17 consequence is felt by the longline fishery as a
18 whole.

19 It's still ongoing with how do you get
20 those fisheries' quota to allow them to prosecute the
21 target fisheries for swordfish and bays, yet still
22 manage the bycatch species that they encounter or the

1 incidental catch that they encounter, bluefin tuna
2 being one of those.

3 Then I think for a year in review summary,
4 kind of summarizing the contributions of the different
5 category fisheries and what they're doing to help
6 fulfill the United States in achieving its goal of its
7 US quota. I'm not going to belabor that because I'm
8 just about at time.

9 So reflecting back to some of the dialogue
10 this morning, for those that are uninitiated, IBQ is
11 our Individual Bluefin Quota Program. It is our catch
12 share program that we initiated to account for bluefin
13 tuna mortality that coincides with our pelagic
14 longline fishery.

15 The Amendment 13, which finalized this
16 year, introduced a new process based upon feedback
17 around this table for the last number of years as well
18 as through proposed rule actions to try to get that
19 quota into the hands of individuals that are on the
20 water.

21 So instead of having a static set it and
22 forget it mentality of looking and setting up a quota,

1 then dividing out who's got a percentage of that, and
2 then letting that remain in play, it's introducing
3 this new dynamic approach where we're looking to
4 reassess that every single year, and look back at each
5 individual's fishing history to help inform that
6 process.

7 That process is looking at the number of
8 sets that each vessel is making as its metric over the
9 prior 36 months or three years. And having that
10 inform what quota they could get in that subsequent
11 year.

12 The old process, as I mentioned, was
13 looking back at historical participation. It was kind
14 of set it and let it alone. But we also then quickly
15 realized that latent effort or folks that were no
16 longer actively involved in the fishery didn't
17 necessarily have that readily available to lease out
18 to those that were.

19 So there were problems that we experienced
20 there. Amendment 13 was an attempt to address those
21 and make it more the effort-based program.

22 When we're looking at set information, we

1 have a couple different sources. There are mandatory
2 VMS set reports that are required to allow us after
3 conclusion to send the haul back. That's currently
4 what we've used to help inform that IBQ calculation
5 because it's the most readily available real-time
6 information.

7 We have not discounted that log books also
8 serve as a vital reporting tool, but we also then
9 recognize that there are some time delays potentially
10 with how those log books are submitted to the agency,
11 when they're reviewed, when they're finalized after
12 the quality control processes kick in, as well as some
13 of the dynamics of how prematures shoot out of the
14 Southeast in birth month.

15 Just some complicating factors there, but
16 those are essentially the sources of information we're
17 currently using.

18 As part of that Amendment 13, we started
19 an appeals process for better or for worse to provide
20 an opportunity for fishermen to appeal what the agency
21 has on record to reflect their fishing and their
22 footprint over those past three years.

1 Essentially, they're a third-party
2 component of the agency that can be brought into play
3 to review information, sometimes at very deep depths.

4 To the point of even redoing all the work
5 other parts of the agency have done to try to get the
6 answer right to those constituents that are either
7 observing something that is a foul or to make sure
8 that the agency gets it right.

9 A byproduct that we're about to probably
10 get into, and as Dewey had already mentioned there, is
11 the time delays. If you're trying to stand up a
12 program that's annual in nature, the agency can't be
13 taking six months to figure out what those quotas are
14 for some of those individuals.

15 In my terminology, it's unacceptable. We
16 can do a better job collectively as an agency. But if
17 the goal is to that annually, to truly get to the
18 dynamic model of you're on the water and you get the
19 allocation, this first year there's immense room for
20 improvement and refinement. So look forward to that
21 dialogue and exchanging ideas.

22 Then lastly here, regarding some of the

1 aspects of that IBQ program, is making sure that folks
2 are aware of who else within the fishery has quota
3 that could be approached to lease that allocation
4 from. For years this was a challenge or an impediment
5 that we've been trying to work towards to create more
6 or less a marketplace.

7 We've stood up some contact lists that are
8 available that show the shareholders that have
9 received quota. I think we can do a little bit of
10 additional work there to help simplify that contact
11 list, but also trying to set up essentially a
12 marketplace.

13 Hey, listen, I've got allocation. My
14 boat's tied up or I'm involved in a different fishery.

15 I have something available or I'm in search of.

16 Trying to break down some of the barriers
17 so folks within that fleet can make those connections,
18 and figure out how they can support each other to keep
19 the US fishery going and still address some of these
20 challenges that are before them.

21 And then I have a link here of just some
22 of those catch shares programs that gets into some of

1 that information more in depth.

2 With that, I will shut the heck up. We'll
3 turn the microphone over to those in the room and
4 those virtually. Thank you.

5 MR. BROOKS: Thanks very much, Brad, for
6 that.

7 Just a quick time check. We're at 2:05.
8 We have until 2:45. We're not really going to be able
9 to extend because we've got Sam coming at 3:00 and I
10 know we're going to want to have all of our time with
11 him. We could squeeze a minute or two out of break,
12 but not much more than that.

13 Let's start looking and see who wants to
14 get into the conversation. I'm going to start online
15 here. I've got Charlie Bergmann and then George
16 Purmont, and then I'll start working around the room
17 here.

18 So if we could open up Charlie's line?

19 MR. BERGMANN: Can you hear me?

20 MR. BROOKS: Yes, we do. Thank you.

21 MR. BERGMANN: Hello?

22 MR. BROOKS: You're good, Charlie.

1 MR. BERGMANN: Can you hear me?

2 MR. BROOKS: Yes.

3 MS. CRAWFORD: We can hear you.

4 MR. BROOKS: Okay. Go ahead, Charlie.

5 Charlie, are you there?

6 Okay. Let's start in the room. We'll go
7 back there. Let's start with Bob.

8 MR. HUMPHREY: Thank you.

9 Brad, the non-compliance reporting, how is
10 that determined? Is it dealers reporting that
11 fishermen aren't reporting?

12 MR. MCHALE: In a nutshell, yes. In the
13 commercial fishery we have those two different data
14 streams that you can validate and it's at a fish
15 level. We can do that comparison of what fish the
16 fishermen didn't report but dealers did, as well as
17 vice versa.

18 Perhaps there are fish that the dealers
19 didn't get to us that the fishermen reported. So
20 we're able to track back both ways.

21 MR. HUMPHREY: So one way or another,
22 they're being accounted for?

1 MR. McHALE: Correct.

2 MR. BROOKS: Let's go over to Matt.

3 MR. HUTH: I don't want to elaborate on it
4 too much, but I just want to go on record saying I've
5 spoken with Brad about accounting for the sets for
6 longline. There's multiple boats in our harbor that
7 have been affected by this.

8 Moving forward, I hope we can get it right
9 and maybe try to make up for the time lost. These
10 guys have lost five or six months of fishing here, and
11 it's still not rectified. So it's going to affect
12 them in the future because we have that rolled into a
13 3-year average.

14 MR. BROOKS: Thank you. I appreciate that
15 comment.

16 Let's go over to this side. Willy?

17 MR. GOLDSMITH: Thanks, Brad. Just a
18 couple of questions. The first one is pretty quick.
19 You had mentioned, I think, only around 15 percent of
20 fish are getting exported now for bluefin and that
21 there's been a challenge in developing the domestic
22 market.

1 I know certainly in New England you don't
2 see bluefin tuna on the menu very often. You kind of
3 mentioned some potential market, where the
4 destinations of those fish are.

5 I was wondering if there's been more of a
6 comprehensive look at where the markets are for
7 bluefin around the country. That's one quick
8 question.

9 The second one, Bob had asked about
10 general category compliance. I know we've talked
11 about recreational compliance in the past.

12 I saw that when you were talking about
13 catch estimates, it was large pelagic survey and then
14 a combination of other sources, catch cards, and also
15 the automated landings reporting system at other times
16 of the year.

17 And I know with the HMS catch reporting
18 app that was implemented, I think, in 2017, I was just
19 wondering if there's been an updated look at maybe
20 comparing the self-reported catch with large pelagic
21 survey, try to get a sense of compliance for that?
22 Thanks.

1 MR. McHALE: All right. So to tackle
2 those in order, the agency itself hasn't done a
3 comprehensive assessment of how the domestic markets
4 have been evolving.

5 The layers that we have been directly
6 involved in is really dealing more with the states and
7 dealing with food safety related matters that
8 transcend fisheries' jurisdiction whatsoever.

9 What became very apparent in 2020 and
10 continued to 2021 is folks trying to diversify their
11 business portfolio of how do they move product. So
12 think of the farmer's market type of a model where
13 they are able to sell lobsters, some groundfish, and
14 what have you.

15 Folks were trying to do that with bluefin
16 tuna, but bluefin tuna is just a different beast given
17 its scombroid poisoning potential, and then under FDA
18 a whole bunch of requirements that aren't necessarily
19 administered to fisheries but administered through the
20 states and the states back up to FDA.

21 It's been more on that educational market
22 to the fleet that not one size fits all as far as

1 their ability to diversify their business model and
2 move their product. They do need brick and mortar
3 facilities that then are inspected, et cetera, but it
4 would be interesting.

5 I know that at least locally you start to
6 see it a little bit more commonplace on menus and
7 folks trying to diversify how to pitch that product,
8 given it's not quite the same as the yellowfin or
9 bigeye steak that folks are a little bit more
10 accustomed to given their palate.

11 As it relates to the compliance component,
12 we haven't fully engaged on undertaking and exercising
13 doing a comparison of those data sets.

14 I think the gravitational pull is getting
15 us closer and closer to where enough things have
16 evolved since last time we've done the exercise, as
17 well as a number of publications that you were
18 involved in, as well as others, trying to look at when
19 you don't have two identical data streams like Bob was
20 mentioning in the commercial fishery.

21 How do you get a true representation of
22 what the compliance is there? And then how do you

1 even tackle it? Is it more outreach? Is it
2 incentivizing reporting to some degree? Is it holding
3 folks accountable? What are all those options on the
4 table to get those better numbers?

5 I think we can all -- as we experienced
6 with some of the recent large pelagic survey work with
7 the Science Center folks as well as members of the
8 recreational community, how valuable that data is to
9 help inform the assessments.

10 If there's a zero there, then that feeds
11 into those assessments. And it feeds into
12 recruitment, impacts quotas, and impacts
13 opportunities.

14 So the power of the data, I think, is a
15 note that we need to continue to hit. It's no longer
16 the 1-800-closeme dynamic. Every fish that you're
17 accurately reporting is immensely powerful for
18 supporting fishing opportunities.

19 MR. BROOKS: Great. Let's try to go back
20 online here. Let's see if we can bring in George
21 Purmont and then we'll see if we can get Charlie back
22 in. And then we'll come back into the room for Tim

1 and for Dewey.

2 George, are you there?

3 MR. PURMONT: Hello?

4 MR. BROOKS: We've got you.

5 MR. PURMONT: Okay. Thank you. It's a
6 pleasure to sit in with you this afternoon.

7 Imported bluefin, how does domestic
8 bluefin compete with imported bluefin? Are we buying
9 more fish now than in the previous years?

10 MR. McHALE: You know what, George?
11 That's an excellent question and I do not have an
12 answer off the cuff for you. I would have to go look
13 back.

14 The last years that we looked at domestic
15 bluefin tuna, I think we were comparing it more
16 towards what the import numbers were for bigeye tuna
17 versus an import of bluefin tuna given some of the
18 more common marketplaces for the US of where tuna was
19 filling that, whether it be restaurants or the
20 sushi/sashimi market as well.

21 So that's something I take away as
22 something to look back and get back that answer to

1 you, as well as to the rest of the Advisory Panel.

2 MR. BROOKS: George, did you have any
3 other comments or questions?

4 MR. PURMONT: I'm having audio issues.
5 Thank you very much.

6 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Sorry about the
7 audio issues here. I'm not quite sure what's
8 happening.

9 Let's see. Charlie Bergmann, did you want
10 to try to get back into the conversation with a
11 comment or question?

12 MR. BERGMANN: I'd love to. Can you hear
13 me now?

14 MR. BROOKS: Perfectly.

15 MR. BERGMANN: I feel like that damn pink
16 bunny rabbit that beats on a drum.

17 Brad, if you can hear me, I'd like to know
18 how the US reporting percentages compare to maybe
19 Spain or Greece in bluefin catch.

20 MR. BROOKS: The question was, what's the
21 compliance reporting figures like compared here
22 compared to say Spain or Greece or some other, other

1 areas?

2 MR. MCHALE: Charlie, I'm going to defer
3 that to the ICCAT Advisory Committee and folks that
4 are directly involved in ICCAT versus the domestic
5 reporting component here.

6 So, that is something that we can look
7 back, because there is that Compliance Committee at
8 ICCAT that looks across all CPCs.

9 Now, granted the reporting methodologies
10 for each individual country are going to differ. But,
11 that is something that we can report back.

12 And, I suspect we'll have a probably
13 national report to ICCAT readily available that we can
14 get in your hands.

15 MR. BROOKS: Okay. It looks like David
16 Shields might have something to say on this. David?

17 MR. SHIELDS: Well, if you asked the
18 countries, their compliance is perfect. But, what I
19 was, I was leading up too, was this question of
20 imports to the U.S. from the farms in the
21 Mediterranean. That data is probably available
22 through the EDCD System at ICCAT.

1 And, that would be interesting to look at,
2 because we have -- we are only able to supply fresh
3 bluefin tuna from let's say the month of June through
4 the month of February.

5 And, if there are restaurants, fish
6 mongers, et cetera, who want to carry it virtually the
7 year round, and dealers who what to deal in this
8 product virtually the year round, they are compelled
9 to find alternate sources for bluefin when we're no
10 long -- when we're not in season.

11 Consequently, there will be imports from
12 Spain and Turkey, and so on and so forth. And, in
13 fact, Balfego has an office here in the U.S. at this
14 point.

15 And, they had a big booth at the Boston
16 Seafood Show, where they were slicing and dicing
17 bluefin.

18 So, but I don't see this strategically as
19 a big market, as a -- I don't see the Mediterranean as
20 looking to move heavily into the U.S. market at this
21 juncture because most of their product, most of their
22 productivity is now owned by Japan. Thanks.

1 MR. BROOKS: Thanks David. Let's come
2 back into the room. Tim then Dewey and then back over
3 to Mike.

4 MR. PICKETT: Okay. Two completely, I
5 mean, kind of unrelated questions. I'll just do them
6 back to back.

7 On slide 23, you have the price per pound.
8 Just a couple of clarifying questions. Does this
9 include no sales?

10 Does it include the zeros? And, if you
11 have any data on the number of no sales, receipts that
12 may have come in that fishery.

13 And, my other question is on page 27, with
14 the dead discards. Just some clar -- how is that
15 number extrapolated?

16 Because you would expect that number to be
17 close to zero in theory. So, you know, I mean, 28
18 tons is a significant amount of animals, you know.

19 And, it went up. Was there an unusual
20 event? Or, you know, I mean, how is that number
21 determined?

22 MR. MCHALE: Sure. So, for the first

1 part, my understanding is that the general category
2 average prices is not inclusive of those fish that did
3 not equate to a sale.

4 So, those numbers of fish, although they
5 exist, the volume of them still remains relatively
6 low. I doubt they would add, you know, drop these
7 prices down.

8 But, that's something we could look at
9 once again. We do track those. So, we require all
10 fish to be reported whether it's sold or not. And so,
11 we work with the Office of Law Enforcement to stand up
12 a line.

13 And, this really kind of merges 2019 into
14 2020 given what those marketplaces and folks still
15 going out fishing and thinking, why isn't somebody
16 buying my fish without a capitalism 101 type of
17 conversation.

18 If there's no market, then nobody's buying
19 your fish. And, they're not obligated to either if
20 you didn't care for it. But, those are other side
21 bars.

22 So no, these do not include the zeros. I

1 don't have the summary tally of the number of fish.
2 But, I'll get that back out to you as well.

3 It's relatively low in comparison to the
4 overall volume that's coming into the commercial
5 fisheries. But, it's there.

6 We experienced that a couple of times.
7 Especially there was an event down off of Rhode Island
8 where the fish showed up where normally they hadn't.

9 They were all poor quality, readily
10 accessible. And, as such the dealers like, we can't
11 move this. So, all of a sudden, these fish are coming
12 into the dock, and they were kind of being reported to
13 us as no sale.

14 So, I can do that as a get back to you
15 there Tim, as well as the rest of the panel.

16 As it relates to the methodologies
17 regarding dead discards, currently the methodology is
18 looking at data drive from the At Sea Observer
19 Program, combined with effort information derived from
20 the logbooks. And then the Southeast Fishery
21 Science Center staff are kind of combining those two
22 data sources. One is to the observed mortality that

1 are discarded. Combined then with the effort that's
2 extrapolated over the fishery in those geographic
3 areas, whether it be North Atlantic, whether it be
4 Gulf of Mexico, or the Northeast Destin area.

5 And, that's how that 28.4 metric ton
6 number is still generated. I'd have to go back to
7 look to see why, for example, we saw that uptick in
8 2021, versus where we had been in the prior years.

9 But, you're right, the numbers should be
10 relatively low. Right now, legally, the only fish
11 that should be discarded dead are those that are sub-
12 legal. So, those fish that are 27 to less than 73
13 inches.

14 Vessel Captains can elect to discard that
15 fish that might be 73 inches or greater. But, they're
16 obligated to count it off their IBQ.

17 And so, to throw a fish back and not
18 derive any economic gain from it, I mean, I don't
19 think would fit a business model. But, I would defer.

20 So, I'd have to kind of get back and see
21 kind of what some of the story behind that particular
22 number and why the uptick in 2021. And, that's

1 something I can do as well.

2 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Dewey, let's go to
3 you.

4 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Okay. Given the
5 discussion around the table, centering around the
6 general category compliance, one of the best ways to
7 fix that would be no reporting/no permit.

8 And, you would fix that compliance rate
9 right quick like. And, that would be the same way
10 that's done for the Pelagic Longline industry, or the
11 commercial industry, where if you don't report your
12 stuff, you don't get your permit.

13 So, if you really want to fix this, it
14 would be instantaneously, you could do that. So,
15 that's number one.

16 Number two, your reference to the
17 marketplace. Has anybody at that table or sitting up
18 there, have you all went on the marketplace?

19 And if so, how much quota is available and
20 who's got it for sale right now? Since you said the
21 marketplace is up and available.

22 To my knowledge the marketplace is empty

1 of any sale, anybody that wants to sale their IBQ
2 quota.

3 And, when you look at the 2023 year on the
4 IBQ, and I'm going to limit my conversation since I've
5 exhaustively talked for the past four months on the
6 Individual Bluefin Quota and the Amendment 13 roll
7 out.

8 And, we're still waiting for quota as I
9 discussed at lunch. And, somebody in this agency, in
10 a leadership position needs to call the appeal people
11 folks and ask them what the hell is up?

12 Where is the quota that the fishermen need
13 and are deserved and should be given?

14 It's like a double jeopardy. You're not
15 given your quota based on a faulty BMS system. You've
16 got appeals.

17 And, if you don't make sets, unless you're
18 in the Gulf of Mexico where if you participated in the
19 BP Oil fund, you got sets. And, you didn't have to
20 make sets.

21 In the Atlantic, if you don't make sets,
22 you don't get no quota. So, right now with 25 vessels

1 potentially, I don't know the exact number, that are
2 awaiting quota, some of them are tied to the dock and
3 can't make sets that's going to affect them in the
4 future.

5 And, another thing that's going to happen
6 into the future here, and as a prediction, given this
7 is my last HMS meeting, as I'll be termed out, and I'm
8 going to predict in the future, you're going to have
9 some stuff going on, because there's too many bluefins
10 and there's not enough quota for the Pelagic Longline
11 industry.

12 And so, guys are going to be tied to the
13 dock. And, as the bluefins continue to increase,
14 they're not going to be able to go fishing because
15 nobody's going to be leasing no quota.

16 And, we're already seeing this play out.
17 So, we need somebody in this Agency right now,
18 wherever the leadership it may be, to call the Appeals
19 Office.

20 Go right down the road and ask them, where
21 is the appeals for the fishermen that is taking place?

22 Provide the information. You all have provided the

1 information, where is it at? Thank you.

2 MR. BROOKS: Thanks Dewey. Mike.

3 MR. PIERDINOCK: Hey, thank you, Brad.

4 And thank you for the details. We've come a long way
5 from the days where we couldn't catch enough bluefin
6 to use up our quota, to we have no issues with
7 catching our bluefins.

8 So, it's a testament to management of the
9 stock to make it rebound to the levels that we have
10 today, which is quite positive.

11 To note here, the reporting, as it's been
12 noted and so duly noted Brad, that it ultimately is
13 captured by the seafood dealers.

14 And, I found it interesting through
15 discussions with you and your office that there was
16 many out there that were under the assumption that the
17 one stop shopping took place through these different
18 apps for the For Hire Fleet.

19 Where technically it's only eTrips that --
20 with eTrips and for many multi-species permitted
21 vessels that they have to report everything they catch
22 on it. With eTrips it will ultimately go to HMS.

1 But, there are other apps that do not
2 and, I found that surprising and had outreached to
3 many in the public that were unaware of such.

4 So, me as well as others around this table
5 will get the word out to help for that public
6 outreach. And, I appreciate the fact that that's been
7 noted.

8 With the recreational catch, I mean, it's
9 been noted, and I think it's been discussed here as
10 well as earlier. And the fact that the fish are
11 arriving sooner, they're leaving later, and, we're
12 finding them in areas not found before.

13 And, we're trying to get the large pelagic
14 surveys to catch up with that timing. Fish are
15 earlier even now with what's going on up and down the
16 coast and up into the northeast.

17 Which I suspect and, you know, Mr. Getto
18 noted that he'd like to open up the Harpooner earlier
19 category, because I suspect he's correct.

20 Every other fish, or many other species,
21 whether it's forage or Pelagic or so on, are arriving
22 much earlier than they've ever been seen.

1 So, I hope that the large pelagic survey
2 can capture those early events which are even earlier
3 then what we've thought in the past.

4 The last thing on page eight, as it's
5 noted here, we have charter boat and head boat bag
6 limits for bluefin tuna. This has been pointed out
7 before.

8 And, the beauty of this increased numbers
9 here for the head boats is that those that are not as
10 economically, have the economics to go out on a
11 charter boat, can go out in a head boat and have the
12 ability to have access to the fishery.

13 And, it's good to note that we see this
14 with bluefin. And, with equity and environmental
15 justice, it's nice to see that.

16 Maybe the same could be seen with other
17 species, whether it's Yellowfin or other pelagics. To
18 provide those less economically viable to be able to
19 go out in a head boat to have those numbers that could
20 make sense economically for the head boats, but as
21 well for those people that typically can't afford to
22 go on a more expensive vessel.

1 So, maybe there could be some
2 consideration or thought to do that with other
3 pelagics in addition to bluefin. Thank you.

4 MR. BROOKS: Thanks Mike. Jeff.

5 DR. KNEEBONE: Hey, thanks a lot Brad.

6 Just a clarifying question. On slide 27, when you
7 talk about refining reporting methodologies for
8 commercial and recreational hand-gear dead discards,
9 is that inclusive of post-release mortality?

10 Or, are you talking solely about at vessel
11 mortality dead discard? Thanks.

12 MR. MCHALE: I mean, at this point in
13 time, at vessel mortality. So, kind of a known fish
14 that is going back dead.

15 We don't necessarily have the same
16 information right now to generate dead discard
17 estimates with the confidence that we'd ultimately
18 report back. I know there are a lot of efforts to try
19 to get at that information.

20 But, I think we can recognize around the
21 room that we're no longer talking about a fishery
22 that's Pen-130. You know, and that's consistently

1 used across, like where we still have that sort of
2 gear that is being used.

3 But, then we also I have seen the
4 emergence of like the spinning reel and the surf
5 casting stuff. And then the variables with water
6 temperatures. Like, where is that fish being caught?

7 So, this currently is known mortality.
8 And so, eyes on the dead fish. Whether it was landed
9 or had to be put back, for now at least.

10 MR. BROOKS: Chinh.

11 MR. NGUYEN: I have a quick question.
12 With the Vietnamese community in the Gulf, with the
13 IBQ, there's a little confusion. And, I don't know if
14 this question has been asked before.

15 Let's say you reach your IBQ and you catch
16 a bluefin tuna. You know, it's -- what do you do?

17 What are the consequences, or how do we
18 resolve that? Will you get in legal trouble?

19 Because right now some of the boats are
20 breaching the quota and they're deadly scared to go
21 out, because, you know, they talk amongst themselves.
22 There's a big language barrier.

1 And, they're like, oh, if we reach our
2 quota, that means we can't go fishing anymore. So,
3 they're afraid, they're deadly scared to go catch
4 tuna.

5 I mean, has that question been asked
6 before?

7 MR. McHALE: So, the way that program is
8 set up is that we have quarterly accountability. And
9 so, vessels, whether they're in the Gulf of Mexico or
10 elsewhere, they need a minimum amount of IBQ to embark
11 on the trip.

12 That IBQ then covering any sort of those
13 bluefin that they interact with. If they happen to go
14 into a deficit situation, they need to rectify that
15 deficit before the next quarter.

16 And so, rectifying that deficit is
17 acquiring more quota. And, that's usually kind of
18 going within the fishery itself to find somebody
19 that's willing to lease you quotas.

20 And, to the point Dewey just mentioned, it
21 sounds good on paper, but is it actually happening?

22 Is anybody relinquishing quota?

1 Especially when the dynamics of the fishery may make
2 individuals adverse to leasing out. Because they may
3 have the same need that you have.

4 And, so that is still one of these ongoing
5 challenges of how do you then create fluidity in that
6 dynamic?

7 So, unfortunately, the fear that they are
8 articulating and experiencing, is real. That if they
9 happen to be in a quota deficit, and they are unable
10 to acquire more IBQ, they are unable to prosecute the
11 fisheries for Yellowfin, Big Eye and Swordfish.

12 And, that's by design to be a rather
13 incentive to curtail fishing activities. But, we
14 recognize in aces that have this potential affect.

15 And Dewey kind of just mentioned it, that
16 if there are too many bluefin around, then all of a
17 sudden there isn't going to be anybody that can
18 acquire bluefin from another party.

19 And so, it's at that quarterly level. And
20 then when once that resets the clock, if they happen
21 to go into deficit say the first week of that quarter,
22 they can continue to operate, they just have to

1 balance the books at the end of each quarter.

2 And, that's something my staff will send
3 notifications out to each permit holder, letting them
4 know exactly kind of what our numbers show what their
5 status is. And then, kind of what they need to do to
6 kind of get that resolved.

7 MR. BROOKS: Chinh, do you think there's
8 any kind of outreach need with the Vietnamese fleet?

9 MR. NGUYEN: Yes, definitely. There's a
10 big need. Like another example, many of the boats in
11 the Gulf, where we live, they participate in the
12 Ultimate Year Program. You know, the last several
13 years.

14 So, when we received the IBQ, because we
15 were in the Program, we didn't fish more than ten days
16 out of the month. So, that affected our number on the
17 IBQ.

18 So, that's another thing.

19 MR. MCHALE: So, underneath Amendment 13,
20 and recognizing that offshore Fish Restoration
21 Project, which was in the Gulf, derived from the Gulf
22 Deepwater Horizon oil spill there, that -- and Dewey

1 had kind of mentioned this, I think, in one of his
2 comments, is that we've set up a proxy.

3 So, for each year somebody was
4 participating in that program, we looked across the
5 entire Gulf of Mexico Longline fishery, developed an
6 average number of sets that are performed by the
7 fishery. And then, used that as a proxy so those that
8 participated in that program voluntarily, weren't
9 disadvantaged by that participation.

10 And so, we have a placeholder for those
11 vessels for the years that they participated. So,
12 it's not a -- it's not a zero effort, if you will.

13 Once that, well, now that the program has
14 kind of come to term, that that would help inform the
15 Amendment 13 process for those entities.

16 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. And, I think, at
17 this point I just have Matt in the queue. Oh, and
18 David, and then if we are, if that is it, we'll
19 probably go to break early.

20 Sam is already here, so we might. And
21 then pick up a bit early and have a little bit more
22 time with him.

1 But, let's just take the conversation
2 forward. Matt.

3 MR. HUTH: No, I just was going to
4 clarify, and Brad, you might -- I might be right on
5 this.

6 But, on our IBQ website, I believe there
7 is an area on there that you can post that you have
8 quota for sale.

9 But, the problem is, I think that a lot of
10 guys -- or a lot of people either don't know it
11 exists. I mean, I know our fishermen, you know, don't
12 know how to use that.

13 We do it for them. We do the website for
14 them. So, I don't know, you know, if moving if you
15 guys could send an email or a snail mail out to people
16 that have quota and notify them of that.

17 I mean, there might be people that have
18 quota that don't even know that they can post it. Or,
19 don't know how to get a hold of somebody that -- I
20 don't know. I'm just speculating.

21 And then, Chinh, I believe we can -- we
22 can buy quota from you guys in the Gulf. But, I don't

1 think you can buy quota from the Atlantic side.

2 In other words, if you needed quota, I
3 don't think I can sell it to you. But, I can buy your
4 quota.

5 And, I don't know why that is. But,
6 anyway, just trying to.

7 MR. MCHALE: So, here real quick,
8 regarding the marketplace. If the Agency stood
9 something up, they spun the dial like around the
10 table, and it's not being used, then it's not doing
11 anybody any good.

12 If there's other resources that even maybe
13 outside of the Agency's purview to help inform that,
14 then let's talk. Because whatever's going to be used
15 by the fleet to help that communication, at least to
16 break down that barrier.

17 It's not going to break down all the
18 barriers, but, if that helps us get somewhere, I'd
19 like to be able to figure out how to help inform that.

20 And, whether it's through correspondence
21 with folks, again, we can't advocate for one chat room
22 versus another. But, how do we then break down those

1 barriers so folks are able to at least make the
2 connections?

3 And again, fully acknowledging that's not
4 the only hurdle that needs to be overcome.

5 Regarding that component chain that Matt
6 had just mentioned, is given the sensitivities of the
7 Gulf of Mexico and its designated spawning area for
8 bluefin tuna, there's been a policy stood up that we
9 don't allow effort to -- effort as translated as IBQ
10 quota, to move from the Atlantic into the Gulf.

11 But, if it moves from the Gulf to the
12 Atlantic, that we've allowed that one way pathway.

13 So, hence Matt, that's kind of some of the
14 background behind why you may have Atlantic
15 allocation, but Chinh or somebody else in that
16 Southern Louisiana fleet couldn't procure it to then
17 use it for Gulf discards or Gulf catch.

18 It's self-contained to the Gulf of Mexico
19 by design.

20 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thanks. Thanks Brad,
21 thanks for the question there. I want to just double
22 check.

1 I'm not seeing any hands in the room or
2 online. But, I just saw a card go up. Marcos.

3 MR. HANKE: Just --

4 MR. BROOKS: Oh, sorry. And then over to
5 David. Sorry.

6 Go ahead Marcos.

7 MR. HANKE: Just out of curiosity, in the
8 Caribbean, the WhatsApp chats to communicate among
9 fishermen for things that are pertinent that we need
10 to respond or to be aware quick, have been very
11 helpful.

12 The Agency has a communication channel for
13 them to inter-communicate among the people that have
14 the quotas. Or it's just a general announcement?

15 That's the question.

16 MR. MCHALE: So, what the Agency currently
17 does, is post a list of all those that have received
18 allocation. You know, just a cold call type of a
19 list.

20 So, it says, Marcos is on this list. He
21 received quota. Matt is on the list, he received.
22 Dewey.

1 But, it doesn't necessarily inform the
2 details of exactly how much or your willingness to
3 pay. So, there's that list that exists.

4 And then, there's more of a marketplace
5 that's part of the IBQ system that is designed to be
6 more of that hey, I'm in search of, or I'm willing to
7 sell.

8 But, clearly, it sounds like it's not
9 getting a whole lot of traction. And so, that's
10 where, you know, a willingness to engage with like,
11 well what might get traction?

12 To at least make those connections that
13 we're ears wide open and have been. We don't want a
14 government system stood up if it's not serving a
15 purpose for the fleet.

16 We'd much rather see what's going to work
17 for the fleet and how do you then bolster that up.

18 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. David.

19 MR. McHALE: And, it might be. I mean, it
20 might be that just nobody wants to sell their quota.
21 You know, who knows. But, I'm just.

22 MR. BROOKS: David.

1 MR. SHIELDS: Yeah. I apologize for
2 changing the subject. Because I understand, I sense
3 this is a very, very important topic that we're
4 talking about right now.

5 I just wanted to make two very brief
6 comments regarding this presentation. The first
7 comment is, this presentation gets better every year
8 that I see it. So, thank you both Larry and Brad.

9 And, the second issue has to do with an
10 observation. Page 13, it's a classic example of the
11 high variability that we see in the recreational
12 fishery. I think that's -- that's something worth
13 contemplating.

14 This is a challenge that's not going to go
15 away, because the bluefin are not going to behave in a
16 better way than they are -- then they have been.

17 Yet, this is what the large pelagic survey
18 is looking at. How can they -- how can they apply
19 human resources to something as highly variable as
20 this, where you can see groups of states where there
21 are landings that vary tremendously geographically
22 over a period of time.

1 And, this has a direct effect on ICCAT's
2 estimates of recruitment. And, our estimates of
3 catch, of fellow catch.

4 So, I just wanted to make that comment.
5 Thank you very much.

6 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Marcos, do you have
7 another question? Or, is that left over? Okay.

8 All right. Then I think I don't see
9 anyone else in the queue. Lots of good important
10 comments here, sort of swirling around compliance,
11 markets, obviously the appeals process, the discards,
12 and then at the end here, a really good back and forth
13 around sort of communication needs and quota, et
14 cetera.

15 So, lot's to chew on. Brad, I also have
16 down sort of the potential to come back. A couple of
17 asks sort of looking at price, domestic bluefin tuna
18 versus international.

19 Compliance, the U.S. versus international,
20 but recognize that's not sitting with you. Number of
21 zero sales.

22 And, any thoughts around the 2021 dead

1 discard uptick. So.

2 MR. McHALE: And, can I just make one
3 comment?

4 MR. BROOKS: Yeah, please.

5 MR. McHALE: And then just one final
6 comment. I wanted to thank Larry for riding shotgun,
7 in case there were any in depth Amendment 13 questions
8 I needed help on.

9 And yes, thank you, this was the best
10 presentation that's ever been given in front of an
11 advisory panel ever.

12 (Laughter)

13 MR. BROOKS: Finally, Larry has been
14 dethroned. After several years ago, when Matt was, in
15 fact, the best presentation ever given.

16 You're going to have to step up the game
17 now.

18 (Laughter)

19 MR. BROOKS: All right. We are just a
20 tick ahead of schedule. So, let's take a break and
21 why don't you scoot all back to your seats a couple of
22 minutes before the top of the hour so we can get as

1 much of leadership as possible.

2 Thanks all.

3 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went
4 off the record at 2:43 p.m. and resumed at 2:58 p.m.)

5 MR. BROOKS: So let's get going here. If
6 folks can stop the side conversations, that would be
7 good. All right.

8 So we are joined at the table, Sam Rauch
9 is here. He is Deputy Assistant Administrator for
10 Regulatory Programs. We always have a slot on the
11 agenda for leadership to come and talk with you and
12 hear from you, and it's always a really important sort
13 of 30 minutes or so.

14 It's always a challenge, too, because
15 there's so many of you who want to pose a question,
16 you know, and be able to hear from Sam. So we'll do
17 what we started to do last time, which was just try to
18 make sure we're balancing across the different
19 sectors. So I want to make sure that we have an
20 opportunity to hear from the different perspectives
21 here.

22 As always, I ask people to focus on a

1 question for Sam more than sort of a diatribe. I know
2 that's sometimes a little challenging, so I hereby
3 give you a brief, like, 30-second preamble, but try to
4 get to a question so that we have that opportunity.

5 So with that, Sam, over to you.

6 MR. RAUCH: All right. Thank you. For
7 those of you I have not met yet, which is only a few
8 of you, I am Sam Rauch. I'm the Deputy Assistant
9 Administrator for Regulatory Programs, which means I
10 oversee the work of our Headquarters' Offices of
11 Sustainable Fisheries, which is where a lot of other
12 NMFS folks you see here today sit, and also in
13 Protected Resources, Habitat Conservation, and then
14 our regional offices, our five regional offices.

15 The last time I met with you, I was here
16 with Janet Coit, the head of our agency. She regrets
17 that she's unable to be here today, but I'm pleased to
18 be able to talk with you.

19 This is always a very important meeting.
20 I was really pleased to see all the students that were
21 here earlier; I'm not sure what they thought about the
22 meeting. They're not here anymore, I don't think. It

1 is an important work that we do here, and it ranges
2 from very complex high-level issues to very minute
3 details. We get feedback from you, we talk about you,
4 we get ideas with you and vet things through you. It
5 is important the role that you have here, and we could
6 not do what we do without you all committing the time,
7 taking the time, being prepared, coming here, and we
8 really value that greatly.

9 I have just a couple of higher-level
10 agency-wide statistics to provide you, and then I'll
11 get into more specific on the HMS fishery. We just
12 recently released our updated Status of the Stocks
13 report for last year, so the 2022 numbers. We manage
14 jointly, not just you all in HMS but across the
15 country, 492 different stocks in 45 fishery management
16 plans. We have been making great progress, although
17 it's incremental progress, in ending overfishing and
18 rebuilding overfished stocks. Last year, the number
19 of stocks subject to overfishing went from 26 to 24,
20 which is good, so that's a good direction, right. So
21 we took two off the overfishing list. We took two off
22 the overfished list, and we rebuilt two stocks. So

1 for year-to-year movement, that's really good.

2 Overall, we are managing, we jointly,
3 which includes you all, can be extremely proud of the
4 way that U.S. fisheries are managed. We are the best,
5 most transparently-managed fisheries in the world. We
6 have a transparent, top-to-bottom science-based,
7 stakeholder input-driven management system. And while
8 other countries can say we do this and that, we can
9 show you how we get from where we are to our results,
10 and that is in no small part to the work we do with
11 you all for these fisheries that you deal with.

12 So it's very important, but we can all be
13 proud that we are important parts of key fisheries
14 management, and that means so much to everybody,
15 whether we're talking about providing economic
16 livelihoods in our commercial fisheries or very
17 important recreational opportunities which drives a
18 lot of also economic mandates in coastal communities.

19 These are all very important to us while we try to
20 make sure that we have adequately accounted for all
21 the environmental pressures.

22 And that creates a number of difficulties

1 as we're trying to balance all those mandates, and
2 some of those difficulties you'll see on the agenda
3 today. How we deal with the changing environment due
4 to climate change, you know, you all are talking about
5 that. How you deal with economic, you know, is there
6 a better way to achieve the same environmental results
7 at a cheaper cost or providing more recreational
8 opportunity. How we deal with new congressional
9 mandates, like the Shark Act. These are all important
10 issues that you guys work through every meeting, and
11 this meeting is no different. So these are very
12 important to us to get your input, to you, and thank
13 you for providing that.

14 So I'm not going to go through the -- they
15 want me to go through your agenda. You've already
16 done that, so I'm not going to do that. But I am
17 going to talk about -- I tell them I'm not going to do
18 it.

19 I do want to talk about a couple of
20 overarching things, and it may feed into some of what
21 you're doing. One of them is something I'm personally
22 very proud of. I've been trying to lead the effort

1 within the agency of coming up with a new equity and
2 environmental justice strategy, which I hope to
3 release next week. So that will be coming out. You
4 will have seen if you were looking, last year we did a
5 draft strategy document. We did that after taking an
6 enormous amount of public input, put that out, and
7 took another round of public input, and we are
8 hopefully going to finalize it within the next week or
9 so. It will just be a national document which will
10 set the framework for more regionally-based approaches
11 because much of the equity and environmental justice
12 issues come out of local interactions. You can make
13 broad statements and create an empowering environment
14 nationally. A lot of the issues are coming out
15 through the regional implementation.

16 And I do appreciate the input from last
17 spring on the draft that this group provided, and we'd
18 be happy to talk with you about the final once that is
19 released. It, unfortunately, could not be released
20 for this meeting but soon, very soon, I hope.

21 We also have put out recently, and I think
22 you probably talked about our draft seafood strategy,

1 which represents not anything necessarily new that we
2 are doing but a new way to look at what we are doing
3 because providing seafood is an important part of many
4 of our mandates. And so trying to figure out those
5 parts, highlight those parts, and approach them more
6 strategically has been an important part of that. And
7 that was out for comment. We hope to finalize that
8 one soon.

9 And the final initiative that I want to
10 talk about, and this does transition a little bit to
11 some of the stuff that you're doing, is how we all
12 collectively deal with climate changes in the
13 fisheries, not climate change writ large but just the
14 idea that stocks are shifting due to climate change.
15 Different stocks, they may be moving, they may be
16 healthier or unhealthier based on climate change.
17 This creates a management challenge for us in how we
18 collect the data in this kind of changing environment
19 and then how management units, like this group, like
20 the fishery management councils, like National Marine
21 Fisheries Service, how we can deal with that, what
22 sort of tools do we have to deal with that.

1 We've been working on this issue for some
2 time. It's not really new, but we've taken a new look
3 at it. And in the President's budget for '24, which
4 was just released last month, we laid out some of the
5 groundwork for a congressional request for an
6 investigation in much of our science and survey
7 activities to better provide input into the management
8 structure to account for new ways to collect data in
9 the face of climate change. So we look forward to
10 talking with the Hill about that one, but that is a
11 very exciting new initiative that we are working on
12 that will hopefully provide management groups with
13 tools to make better, more informed decisions about
14 the future of our fish stocks.

15 So I know most of you didn't come here
16 just to listen to me drone on in my opening remarks.
17 You want to get to those diatribes, so I'm going to
18 stop there and turn it back over to Bennett to manage
19 that process if you all have questions for me as we go
20 through this.

21 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thanks, thanks, Sam.

22 So this is your opportunity again to sort of weigh in

1 with questions that you have that would be helpful to
2 hear some thoughts back from Sam on.

3 Dewey, we'll start with you.

4 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Hello. And thank you for
5 being here. I've been belaboring this point today,
6 and I want to belabor it one more time with a question
7 to you, and I believe you could help. There's about
8 25 vessels that are appealing their IBQ quota appeals,
9 and we've been in it for about four months now to no
10 resolve from the appeals office right down the road.
11 So I'm asking if you would request from them or ask
12 them what the heck is up and when is the fishermen
13 going to get their appeals successfully given or
14 denied. And we need that quota. The agency, HMS,
15 rolled out an A13 Amendment, and it didn't have the
16 right quality controls that was needed, and so the
17 fishermen are paying the price of having to go through
18 an appeals process that is just unbelievable having to
19 wait this long. It's affecting people financially.
20 People are staying tied to the dock and can't go
21 fishing, and so I would respectfully request if you
22 could reach out and anything you could do to ask the

1 appeals process how much longer is it going to take
2 and when can the fishermen be granted their appeals if
3 they're successful. Thank you.

4 MR. RAUCH: Yes, thank you for that
5 question. And it is somewhat a matter of perspective.

6 When I first started my federal career way back in
7 the 90s, I worked on the groundfish appeals process,
8 which, in my recollection, took, like, eight months to
9 do.

10 It's a really difficult thing when you're
11 asking the appeals people to speed up because there
12 are fishermen who want a full and fair consideration
13 of their claims, and I understand that the process is
14 somewhat delayed for that. But we do owe it to them
15 to give them that full understanding and not to cut
16 them short and just say no because I don't have time.

17 That being said, this is something that
18 Kelly and I have talked about, we've talked about it
19 with the appeals office. We want to make sure that
20 that process is -- so we want both to make sure that
21 those people have a full and fair opportunity to be
22 heard and get a decision on the merits, whatever it

1 is. Yes, no, whatever it is, but they need to be
2 heard properly. But also we understand the timing in
3 play, and so this is something both Kelly Denit, who I
4 don't see right now but you may have talked to her
5 already, you know, we're both working on trying to do
6 that to avoid that, but we're trying to balance both
7 of those needs. It sometimes gets difficult when
8 you've got people who, you know, they also have, you
9 know, if they get denied, that's a big financial
10 impact for them, and they need to make sure that
11 they've got that full opportunity.

12 But we're looking into that and seeing are
13 there ways within that that we could move that process
14 quicker. We understand there are people who are
15 delayed, you know. The whole fishery is somewhat
16 delayed, and we need to get this process done so
17 everybody can move forward.

18 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes. And also, maybe in
19 the future, we learn that do something in-house first.

20 This could have been cleaned up, to my belief, for
21 quite a few folks in-house before you ever send it out
22 to this appeals process that that could take six

1 months or something like that because there's checks
2 and balances that could be done in-house for this
3 particular thing. We're not talking thousands of
4 people. We're talking less than probably 70 active
5 longline boats left from Maine to Texas. So if we
6 could work on something in-house in the future, which
7 we've had discussion with Brad and Randy and both
8 Kelly, I think we could have some futility before it
9 ever, you know -- sending it off to appeals is like
10 the last resort, and it seemed like that this
11 particular juncture it was almost a first resort. And
12 so, hopefully, we can learn from that and, in the
13 future, try to do something in-house to figure out the
14 inequities that's there. Thank you.

15 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Dewey. Let me go
16 online, and if we can open up Raimundo's mic, please.

17 MR. ESPINOZA: Hi, Sam. How you doing?
18 Thanks for coming and thanks for your words. I really
19 appreciate all the work that you're doing, especially
20 on the justice aspect of it.

21 So one of the things that I wanted to, I
22 guess, like the previous comment before me, bring up

1 again is specifically the subject of the territories
2 and the first that you mentioned that's going to be a
3 national document that's going to come out and also
4 involves a lot of the Pacific territories, as well as
5 different tribes, and really recognizing that the
6 terms of scale do make a difference in fisheries and
7 how that's related.

8 And so my question specifically was going
9 to be if there's anything specific to address how the
10 participation for the U.S. Caribbean for Puerto Rico
11 and U.S. VI are going to continue collaborating and
12 participating in some of the management aspects of the
13 local HMS fishery and if there's something specific or
14 if it's still going to continue to do the Atlantic
15 work, considering that we do have a different
16 situation.

17 MR. BROOKS: Raimundo, can you repeat the
18 last part of your question? We just lost that last
19 little bit.

20 MR. ESPINOZA: It was that, just
21 considering that the U.S. VI and Puerto Rico are under
22 a different situation, so if there is a consideration

1 on how the new document addresses working with
2 territories and local communities.

3 MR. BROOKS: Got it. So it addresses
4 working with territories and locals. Okay. Great.
5 Thank you.

6 MR. RAUCH: So the issue of territories is
7 an important issue with equity and environmental
8 justice. It is a fact that, if you look at the
9 federal government's programs and where we invest in
10 things like science, stock assessments, or where we,
11 you know, assign our resources, that's a federal
12 benefit, and we have put those historically in places
13 where we've got the highest economic value, looking at
14 the gross domestic national product or, you know, the
15 most important for recreational fisheries. And one of
16 the things that we have not invested in is places
17 where it's very important for subsistence or other
18 important smaller underserved communities, and the
19 territories are a very good example of where we've
20 done that.

21 So there's been a number of years,
22 recognizing that, we have for a number of years tried

1 to increase our investment in what we call territorial
2 science, recognizing that we have not allocated the
3 same amount of scientific resources to territories as
4 other places. We've done that out of whole cloth.
5 There's not been a congressional mandate to do that.
6 We've figured out ways to do that to a certain small
7 amount of funds. That is explicitly in the
8 President's budget this year for the second time. The
9 last two years, it's been in the President's budget.
10 Last year it was not funded. We are more hopeful that
11 that provision will be funded so that there will be a
12 dedicated increase in investment congressionally
13 supported for the territories.

14 You asked more broadly about participation
15 processes, and we reflect throughout, not just with
16 the territories, although it is an issue with the
17 territories, but also with other underserved
18 communities, like tribal communities, coastal
19 communities in Alaska, other kinds of traditionally
20 underserved communities, how can we get those
21 individuals, those communities to participate more in
22 the decision-making processes that will affect their

1 rights, whether they fish or not, when they fish or
2 not. This is a difficult issue.

3 What the national strategy is going to do,
4 much like the draft did, is recognize that this is an
5 important issue, that we need to work on increasing
6 representation and participation of those communities,
7 whether it's a state, territory, town, tribe, whatever
8 you think the underserved community is that is
9 affected by what we do, making sure that their voices
10 are heard and they have an opportunity to fully
11 participate is something we're trying to do.

12 That being said, it's very challenging to
13 do that, and there's a lot of specifics about how to
14 do that, whether it's investing in educational
15 programs, having defined seats at the table.
16 Sometimes, you can have a defined seat at the table,
17 but the community doesn't have the capacity to send
18 somebody to the table. I mean, these meetings here,
19 they take a lot of time. And so working through those
20 issues to try to figure out how to better bring those
21 communities into the decision-making structure is one
22 of their focuses, but the national one is just going

1 to say that this is an important issue and we are
2 still working through that in individual instances.
3 How to work on specific island territories is going to
4 depend on the forum.

5 So there's a lot of work to be done, but
6 we clearly recognize that this is work that we need to
7 do and we want to do.

8 MR. BROOKS: Thanks very much, Sam. Let
9 me go over to Sonja and then to Marcus, and I do want
10 to check and see, I haven't heard any rec voices yet.
11 Sonja.

12 MS. FORDHAM: Thank you. Sonja Fordham,
13 Shark Advocates International. Thank you for being
14 here. I appreciate the time. I'm hastily rewriting
15 my diatribe to turn it into a brief preamble and one
16 question about recovery efforts for oceanic whitetips,
17 which I'm sure you know are probably the most
18 threatened shark managed by HMS, and I actually think
19 that my question will be of interest to several panel
20 members.

21 So, briefly, a comment in coordination
22 with other NGOs and scientists on NOAA's draft

1 recovery plan for oceanic whitetips under the
2 Endangered Species Act, and we generally urge greater
3 focus on policy over research and better integration
4 across the agency to really tackle a range of
5 opportunities through HMS and ICCAT and all the tuna
6 RFMOs, CITES, UNFSA, WECAFC, et cetera.

7 I just wanted to note that NOAA, during
8 the recovery workshops, had really great
9 representation of all the stakeholder groups, a lot of
10 active participation and interest in the recovery of
11 the species, so NGO scientists but all types of
12 fishermen, commercial and recreational, interest. So
13 we're concerned that there doesn't appear to be a plan
14 to establish a recovery team under the recovery plan
15 for oceanic whitetips. I think there's a real wealth
16 of expertise among all the stakeholders, many
17 represented at this table, that we'd like to see NOAA
18 take advantage of to sort of help implement the plan
19 and maximize the chances for success and also keep it
20 at the forefront across the sector.

21 So my question is would you consider or
22 are you willing to check into whether it's still a

1 possibility that, under that plan, we could have a
2 recovery team that reflects all the stakeholders?

3 Thank you.

4 MR. RAUCH: Thank you for the question,
5 and I would say that nothing is ever off the table,
6 particularly when you're talking about endangered
7 species, and we have to match our recovery
8 implementation with the resources that we have and the
9 threats that we face. So even if we are not doing a
10 recovery team today does not mean that we will ever
11 say no forever or even tomorrow.

12 So you ask would we consider, well, we
13 always do that, right. We would always look at what
14 we can get out of that, that issue. So yes, but not
15 necessarily in the short term.

16 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. I've got three folks
17 in the queue right now. Marcos and then Tom and Walt.

18 MR. HANKE: Thank you. Thank you, Sam,
19 for your presentation. First of all, I want to say
20 thank you in terms of the Caribbean perspective,
21 including I was on the national discussion for many
22 aspects and many committees, and so that's one of the

1 ways to address EEJ, and we really appreciate that.

2 And I want to say that the territories and
3 the small communities are classic cases of EEJ
4 situation or scenarios. But at this time, I want to
5 bring something that I always try to bring to the
6 table. It's not just that we need to be considered
7 different or whatever. I'm going to address how we
8 can be included and support the rest of the nation in
9 terms of our future as fishery management and else.

10 What I want to bring to the table is that
11 the Caribbean is an open lab for development of
12 research and technology because we are the first ones
13 to receive the impact created by climate change.
14 That's important for the agency to realize that we
15 have the opportunity by having Puerto Rico and the
16 islands in the Pacific that we're going to be under
17 this scenario because everybody is going to be a
18 tropical area in the future, right. And we are
19 already developing -- just a joke. But we are already
20 on that circumstance, and we address multi-habitats,
21 multiple species, essential habitats for juveniles of
22 the species that you guys fish around the nation. And

1 this is one of the ways that we can use the connection
2 with the territory and science to support future best
3 practices in terms of addressing climate change.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. BROOKS: And Marcos's question is do
6 you agree with me?

7 MR. RAUCH: In part, those reasons are why
8 we have continued to try to build up our investment in
9 territorial science, which is a broad-based
10 assessment. But we understand that we have under-
11 resourced that and that, if we can, you know, some of
12 the things that you're asking for are just basically
13 to improve the science on par with the other areas of
14 the country, and that would allow us to do some of the
15 things that you're talking about, to look at some of
16 those things. And we are trying to make that
17 investment. We've made some investments. It is
18 better than it used to be, but there's still a long
19 way to go, and I encourage you to look at the
20 President's budget request and that is, in part, where
21 we are asking for additional funds.

22 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Tom.

1 MR. FRAZER: Thanks, Sam, for being here.

2 So a follow-up to Raimundo's comments and questions
3 and Marcos's, as well, and it's with regard to the
4 President's budget. It's certainly exciting to see an
5 increase in dollars for science and monitoring and
6 management, but I'm just curious, since I haven't seen
7 it, maybe you could just summarize for the group how
8 it might be broken down as it relates to allocations
9 within the agency and then perhaps within regions
10 across the nation.

11 MR. RAUCH: Well, at the moment, it is a
12 request, so it is not broken down at all yet because
13 Congress would have to do that and there's always a
14 back and forth, and Congress would provide us some
15 direction in that.

16 The territorial issue is a directed one
17 which would go and split between the Pacific and the
18 Caribbean territories. There is a significant
19 investment in wind activity which would go to East
20 Coast, Gulf, and West Coast, but not Alaska or Hawaii
21 because we don't really have land activities there.

22 There is a much broader investment in the

1 climate and ecosystem fisheries initiative, which
2 would go across the board. I don't have the breakdown
3 of what we're proposing. It is rare that Congress
4 gives us exactly what we ask for, and so we'd have to
5 look at what we ask for, but that would affect all of
6 the regions and look at some of these broad-scale
7 things. You know, we try to get the biggest bang for
8 the buck by looking at things on a regional scale
9 within the large ecosystems.

10 So those are there. That is much broader
11 than the kind of more specific regional things that
12 we're talking about.

13 MR. BROOKS: Great. Walt.

14 DR. GOLET: Hi, Sam. Thanks again for
15 coming. Always appreciate and welcome listening to
16 you on the updates.

17 I guess I'll follow on Tom's comment,
18 except I'll go down the rabbit hole a little bit
19 further. Here we go. So with respect to the funds,
20 it is great and it's welcome news to hear that it's a
21 request, and I recognize that it's a request and who
22 knows where the congressional winds will blow. But at

1 the same time, do you know is there any language or
2 has there been any discussions about how the current
3 federal, for example, RFPs, might change?

4 And I'll give you an example. You know,
5 S-K, BTRP, CRP, BREP, et cetera, have been, more or
6 less, static in terms of the total allocations and
7 then, when you read the RFP, what they will allocate
8 on a per-project basis. And, of course, over the last
9 ten years, costs are increasing and so forth, and so
10 we're sort of put in this hole where we're trying to
11 keep up with the demands of the research but, at the
12 same time, we're sort of in this monetary crunch where
13 we're really not able to deliver the same product that
14 we normally once were, and things just don't seem to
15 be scaling. So it would be welcome news if these
16 RFPs, for example, might also be included in something
17 like that, even if it's under the umbrella of like a
18 climate and fisheries initiative.

19 So if you can comment on that, that would
20 be excellent. Thanks.

21 MR. RAUCH: I'm not sure about the details
22 of those RFPs. That is basically, the RFPs go out

1 based on what we get from Congress. And S-K in
2 particular is a hard one to predict because it is
3 driven a lot by the amount of seafood imports and
4 tariffs and things, things that are completely out of
5 our control to plan.

6 So the S-K, so you get this variable input, and then
7 you decide how much of that is Congress going to give
8 us in a given year, so it's very hard to plan for.

9 The other ones have not grown
10 significantly in recent years, and, you know, that
11 means, as inflation grows, that that's more limited.
12 There are a number of opportunities, not so much in
13 gear research unless you're talking about right whale
14 gear research, there is a significant investment from
15 Congress in innovative gear technology for right
16 whales.

17 There are opportunities perhaps in certain
18 other large-scale projects. We are still trying to
19 work through with Congress how to implement the
20 Inflation Reduction Act, which included a very large
21 amount of funds for the National Marine Fisheries
22 Service to do a wide range of things, and we are

1 working on trying to nail that down, but that's in the
2 billions of dollars there.

3 So there may be some abilities through
4 those processes to do that, but that's too soon to
5 tell. And most of these projects, you know, most of
6 the ones you listed, as I recall, have not seen
7 significant growth on the Hill. I don't know that
8 they're going to in this budget either, but there are
9 some other opportunities to look at that might be
10 available.

11 DR. GOLET: Thanks for that. I just want
12 to follow-up --

13 MR. BROOKS: Actually, well, I want to get
14 one more person. We've got only two minutes left of
15 Sam's time. Mike.

16 MR. PIERDINOCK: Thank you. Thank you,
17 Sam, for meeting with us today with your busy
18 schedule. With the budgetary constraints and as a
19 result of that that's impacting the science that need
20 to be generated, the whole cooperative research and
21 the use of the recreational for-hire and commercial
22 community to fill in those data gaps, in a sense using

1 the Norwegian-based type of model to generate that
2 data, there are inroads that are being made regionally
3 or at a state level or region level to go down that
4 road. Is there the same being considered at the HMS
5 end to promote such in order to fill those data gaps
6 where the budget may not be there to fully conduct the
7 other activities that could be captured by the rec,
8 for-hire, or commercial fleet? Your thoughts. Thank
9 you.

10 MR. RAUCH: That may be more specific than
11 I have thoughts on. So I don't know, and I would
12 encourage you to talk to the HMS representatives here
13 about that specific question. I do know that if
14 Congress were to fund our climate change initiative,
15 it is a lot about data collection and there may be
16 opportunities within that to look at new and different
17 things. So you talked about an alternative in which
18 we may get funding, but we're actually asking for a
19 significant amount of funding which would allow us to
20 do things because part of the problem is our
21 historical databases. We do not so much as count the
22 actual number of fish in the ocean as the trend in

1 fish in the ocean. It is impossible to count however
2 many fish there actually are. But we can say you're
3 catching more or less, the stock is growing or
4 shrinking, and that is easier to do if the fish stocks
5 stay where they are. But if they move, that becomes
6 quite difficult, and I think that we have the same
7 problem with using a study fleet in that it's the same
8 problem as we do with other things.

9 So these are issues we're looking at. I
10 do not know, I can't answer your question, but I
11 encourage you to talk to my colleagues who I'm going
12 to leave in the room with you. But we potentially
13 have a significant amount of new funds if Congress
14 were to fund our request which might go to some of
15 those kind of projects.

16 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Sam. You are out of
17 time, so we are going to let you go. But thank you
18 for being here. It's always appreciated.

19 All right. Let's shift to the last topic
20 for today before we go to public comment, which is to
21 talk about Offshore Wind. I think I see Brian Hooker
22 back there. Brian, as I think most of you will know,

1 is with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and has
2 been coming here pretty regularly to give you all
3 updates on what's going on in Offshore Wind and hear
4 questions and thoughts that you all have.

5 So, Brian, welcome back.

6 MR. HOOKER: Okay. Good afternoon. My
7 name is Brian Hooker, and I'm the biology team lead
8 within the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's Office
9 of Renewable Energy Programs, here to give you an
10 update from, I think the last time I talked to you was
11 May last year. A lot of updates since then.

12 I do have a couple of colleagues, I think,
13 on the line from the Gulf of Mexico if there are
14 questions about some of the leasing in the Gulf of
15 Mexico. So it's, I think, Kate Segarra and Mariana
16 Stein are on the line, if you want to unmute them if
17 we get a chance for questions later.

18 So really quickly again, you know, some of
19 the topics I plan to cover this afternoon, you know,
20 Atlantic project updates, Central Atlantic call for
21 information, nominations, Gulf of Mexico leasing
22 update, and then an update on some of the ongoing

1 studies.

2 So where we are, this is our snapshot of
3 all the projects. This is actually both coasts and
4 the Gulf of Mexico, you know, tallied in this table
5 here. The things I really want to highlight is that
6 we actually two projects under construction right now
7 in southern New England, the South Fork Wind Farm
8 project and the Vineyard Wind 1 project. So we
9 actually, since the last time we talked, two projects
10 have begun construction. Right now, it's just in the
11 early cable-laying activity sector. So once those are
12 built, that will bring our total projects on the OCS
13 to three, the third project being the already built
14 two turbines off Virginia. And then we also have a
15 state waters project, the Block Island Wind Farm
16 project in state waters in Rhode Island.

17 The next two projects in the pipeline that
18 are due for a decision are the Ocean Wind project off
19 of New Jersey and then followed by the Revolution Wind
20 project in southern New England, as well. So those
21 are kind of the next two projects that are in the
22 approval or decision queue.

1 I do want to highlight the Gulf of Maine.
2 Actually, beginning, I think, tomorrow, there's
3 actually a Gulf of Maine task force meeting occurring.
4 So we had a call area published on April 26th. That
5 initiated a 45-day public comment period, and, you
6 know, BOEM will accept nominations and comments
7 through June 12th. So that's an open comment period
8 that we have right now on the commercial area in the
9 Gulf of Maine. And as you can see here, beginning
10 tomorrow and running through the 11th is the Gulf of
11 Maine Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force
12 meeting.

13 What I didn't include on this slide but
14 what you can see on that slide is there's a red box.
15 We also published on May 4th a notice of intent to
16 prepare an EA for the research lease. So we had
17 gotten an application for a research lease from the
18 state of Maine. This is similar to what we did with
19 Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind project off of
20 Virginia. That was a research lease application for
21 two turbines. This is, I think, going to be more than
22 two turbines, and it's going to be floating. But,

1 anyway, that comment period is open through June 5th.

2 So two comment periods right now open in the Gulf of
3 Maine, one on the commercial side and one on the
4 research lease side.

5 An update on Central Atlantic. A lot of
6 changes again since last time, since we met last year.

7 As you can see, we received a lot of feedback on the
8 Central Atlantic areas from this advisory panel and
9 other fishery constituents especially regarding the
10 offshore area. The southern eastern area there off
11 the shelf, I think, was one area of particular
12 importance to HMS fisheries. That area significantly
13 got reduced in the draft Wind Energy Areas, which
14 published just last November. This is a new step that
15 we've added, I should say, is to publish these draft
16 Wind Energy Areas, and then we had some public
17 meetings and got several comments on the draft Wind
18 Energy Areas. And then, hopefully, in June, we're
19 looking forward to publishing the final Wind Energy
20 Areas. And once we have the final Wind Energy Areas,
21 that's when we begin the environmental review process
22 for lease issuance leading up, eventually, to a

1 proposed and final sale notice.

2 I think, you know, during, you know, the
3 final Wind Energy Areas, I do believe, will look
4 different than even this. I think the press has
5 covered some recent feedback from the Department of
6 Defense on some of these areas, so I do anticipate
7 some additional winnowing between the draft and the
8 final Wind Energy Areas. And the lease for this isn't
9 anticipated until 2024.

10 Turning now to the Gulf of Mexico, the
11 final area ID memo was published back in October. The
12 proposed sale notice published in the Federal Register
13 on February 24th and ended on April 25th, so the
14 comment period on that just recently concluded. The
15 fourth task force meeting on that, that was also in
16 mid-April, and a final environmental assessment and
17 final sale notice is scheduled to be published this
18 summer with the first auction for the Gulf of Mexico
19 areas in August of 2023.

20 I will note, I think many of you are
21 familiar with and I think we've gotten some comments
22 from folks, it was a little bit novel in the proposed

1 sale notice for the Gulf of Mexico lease sale that we
2 actually had a big credit for a fisheries mitigation
3 fund. So we did get a lot of comments back on that.
4 I know that was something of interest to fisheries
5 constituents, and we're working through those comments
6 for the final sale notice.

7 Again, here is the map of where we are.
8 So as we said, BOEM is in the final stage of the
9 auction of the Gulf of Mexico. The RFI, the request
10 for information, area was narrowed in the call, which
11 was then further narrowed to two wind energy areas,
12 one off of Louisiana and one off Texas. The proposed
13 sale notice included three potential wind lease areas.

14 And in the final sale notice, BOEM will only offer
15 one lease area within the Lake Charles Wind Energy
16 Area, the orange area on the right. And then BOEM has
17 not yet determined how many lease areas from the Texas
18 coast region, which is the yellow on the left.

19 I think that's it there on the Gulf of
20 Mexico, and, again, I do have some colleagues, I
21 think, on the line if there are any questions on this.

22 I mentioned the fisheries mitigation fund

1 in the Gulf of Mexico PSN. I did want to give an
2 update on where we are with the fisheries mitigation
3 guidance development. We began that process back in
4 November of 2021, we published the draft guidance in
5 June 2022, and then we received a lot of feedback from
6 tribal nations, particularly tribal nations on the
7 West Coast, regarding some concerns about some of
8 their tribal fishing areas. So this summer we decided
9 to request, you know, or reach out to them to consult
10 on the draft guidance. So as of right now, we're in
11 the works of preparing for those consultations, so I
12 don't have, at this point, a time frame of when we may
13 issue the final guidance for fisheries mitigation.

14 My last slide is really just an update on
15 the Environmental Studies Program or more of a
16 reminder about our Environmental Studies Program.
17 Each winter, we do conduct a solicitation for study
18 ideas and, again, encourage folks to subscribe to
19 email notifications from BOEM so you get notified when
20 that solicitation occurs.

21 Kind of under the umbrella of the
22 Environmental Studies Program, we did just recently

1 launch the standing Committee for Offshore Wind and
2 Fisheries. Just the week before last, we had our
3 first inaugural two-day meeting. I think this body,
4 this advisory panel, is something that BOEM does not
5 have. We do not have FACA committees like this to be
6 able to have discussions like this and provide
7 feedback, so one of the ways we've done this recently
8 is through funding different groups through the
9 National Academies of Sciences. We have the Committee
10 for offshore Science and Assessment that is
11 specifically focused on the Environmental Studies
12 Program, and then it's very novel that we've now
13 funded a standing Committee for Offshore Wind and
14 Fisheries that is national in scope, has
15 representatives from the Gulf, Atlantic, and the
16 Pacific, and the Pacific Islands, and it's meant to be
17 kind of a good mix of representations of the fishing
18 industry, fishery scientists, and others involved in
19 either fishing or fishery science.

20 That information, I didn't include the
21 link on here, but I can provide that after the meeting
22 that has all the information on who, if you didn't

1 attend that inaugural two-day meeting or who is on
2 that committee and, you know, what topics we're
3 intending to cover, I think we're just getting our
4 feet wet with that group and I think we've got some
5 preliminary feedback on some of the topics that they
6 want to talk about with BOEM, and we're looking
7 forward to scheduling the second meeting hopefully
8 this summer.

9 So that really concludes my update for you
10 today. I'm happy to leave some time for questions you
11 might have.

12 MR. BROOKS: Thanks so much, Brian.
13 Because this is always sort of an area that you all
14 have a lot of comments and questions on, we have
15 booked a fair amount of time and Brian has given that
16 to us, so we have up to an hour if we need that much
17 time. But let's open it up for any discussion.

18 So, Dewey, let's start with you. And,
19 again, for folks who are online, just raise your
20 virtual hand so I'll know if you want to get in.

21 Dewey.

22 MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes. Thank you, and

1 thank you for your presentation. In December of maybe
2 two years ago, you all came out with the Central
3 Atlantic Areas E1, 2, and F. And through our reach
4 out and with BOEM's support in looking at stuff, these
5 areas were able to be decertified a little and cut
6 down into areas where we were able to use our
7 deconflicting model that you are all are working with
8 and doing, and it will allow us to exist to fish.

9 That said, I don't know if regulations are
10 going to continue to allow us, but it appears like
11 your maps here, if they go as written here, with a
12 little bit on E1 we had some discussion about the
13 little bit of hawk's beak up top getting knocked off a
14 little bit, that it would allow us to fish in areas
15 where our best monitoring systems have shown where we
16 have fished at and, for that, I thank you and thank
17 BOEM for working and looking at this, allowing us to
18 exist. Thank you.

19 MR. BROOKS: Dewey, just as you're, like,
20 leaving, you're giving compliments. I don't know what
21 to do with this.

22 MR. HEMILRIGHT: I don't give many, but

1 when you look at what they had going on there and what
2 they did, now if others did that same, just imagine
3 all the compliments I would give.

4 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Dewey. All right.
5 Let's go over to Tim.

6 MR. PICKETT: Well, this is just a general
7 comment on this. I think Dewey said it well in terms
8 of, you know, it looks like at least there's a little
9 bit of listening that's happening.

10 I see this industry as being very scary in
11 general. And the amount of talk of leasing and
12 expanding leasing areas and scoping and things like
13 this, it's not a proven industry in my opinion. I
14 mean, this is all my opinion, and we could talk about
15 from an engineering standpoint, which we never seem to
16 talk about at some point either. But it seems like
17 there's a lot of motivation and a lot of interest in
18 progressing this industry that's not a proven entity,
19 and it really scares, at least me talking about
20 myself, it scares me a lot. And, you know, it just
21 doesn't, it doesn't exist enough for us to know enough
22 about it and the impacts of it in terms of from a

1 fisheries perspective or anything like that to
2 consider, you know, commenting on or anyone making a
3 legitimate comment on new lease areas and potential
4 impacts and things like that, which we don't know that
5 much about it.

6 So that's just something I just wanted to
7 get out there.

8 MR. BROOKS: Thank you. Brian.

9 MR. HOOKER: I appreciate the comment, and
10 I do recognize and, you know, understand on a daily
11 basis, in the U.S., yes, this is not that well known.

12 We have two turbines off of Virginia and then the
13 five off of Rhode Island.

14 I do know, in the past, we have had not
15 BOEM directly supporting necessarily but, on the
16 council side, some council visits to the UK and
17 others. It's been, I think, several years since some
18 U.S. representatives have gone to visit some of the
19 facilities in North Sea. I think, even when they come
20 back, sometimes I get mixed messages on how that visit
21 went. But I encourage you to continue to reach out
22 to, I think, again, on the council side, you know,

1 some people that have actually gone out and visited
2 and gone out to the sites in the UK. Again, it
3 probably has been a few years since people have made
4 that visit, but I think we've tried to encourage that
5 as much as possible, that information sharing between
6 Europe and the U.S. But I know it won't answer
7 everyone's questions, but we try to help that.

8 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Rick, did you want
9 to jump in on this point specifically? All right. So
10 then let's go to Jeff, Marcos, Rick, and then Bob.

11 DR. KNEEBONE: Me, right, Bennett?
12 Thanks, Brian. Let's think about how I want to say
13 this. So to build off of Tim's point, this is a big
14 unknown. And as the footprint grows bigger and bigger
15 out of the original regions of southern New England,
16 HMS and impacts to HMS fisheries and the species
17 themselves grows pretty much exponentially. So I just
18 urge BOEM to continue to pay more attention to HMS,
19 the initial EISSs. I mean, there's very little mention
20 of highly-migratory fishes in them, so I'm hoping that
21 they'll gain more attention as the footprint of
22 Offshore Wind grows.

1 And then related to trying to figure out
2 impacts, from my own personal experiences trying to do
3 science in this realm, it's been very difficult.

4 There's been a lot of growing pains, and a lot of the
5 funding has come from the developers themselves. So
6 when you have privatized funding, that comes with
7 stipulations, particularly related to data sharing.

8 So when we're having species that are highly migratory
9 and are transcending the barriers or the boundaries of
10 these lease areas on a perhaps minute or hourly basis,
11 it's very important to have coordinated monitoring,
12 and it's at odds with how this system is built where
13 you have all these different leases owned by private
14 companies who have competing interests and may or may
15 not be interested in sharing the data that they are
16 paying to collect.

17 So I guess that's one point, and then a
18 question related to that is, is there anything in the
19 leasing process that BOEM could do that would maybe, I
20 wouldn't say force but strongly encourage or maybe
21 even mandate data sharing, transparency, and
22 consistency between all these projects? Because for

1 someone who studies these fish and they move between
2 these lease areas, it's very difficult to stitch
3 everything together in a monitoring plan that matches
4 the ecology of the animals. So now we're beholden to
5 the business model, and the business model is at odds
6 with the ecology of the animals.

7 So is there something that BOEM can do to
8 help the scientists look at things more holistically,
9 as opposed to lease by lease? Thanks so much.

10 MR. HOOKER: Thanks, Jeff, and definitely
11 appreciate all the work you've been doing in southern
12 New England and navigating your various funders.

13 You know, I think it remains a challenge
14 when it is a privately-funded endeavor. I think BOEM
15 has, in recent leases, added some language about
16 encouraging the sharing of information. I think it
17 gets difficult in saying, like, when is that
18 information released or when is the report final and
19 able to be published. Even on BOEM's Environmental
20 Studies Program side, I think we struggle with when
21 raw data can be released if one of the people haven't
22 had a chance to publish on it yet or, you know, some

1 other aspect.

2 So I know that is something we're
3 continuing to try to work through. I think a lot of,
4 there's a lot of comfort perhaps after, you know, some
5 of these, during construction and post-construction
6 reports, after projects have kind of reached that
7 final milestone of being commissioned. That may, you
8 know, be a lot later than a lot of people would like
9 for those reports to be final and shared or the raw
10 data shared, but it is something that we are trying to
11 help facilitate not only directly but through
12 participation in groups such as RWSC, the Regional
13 Wildlife Science Consortium. I think I said it wrong
14 a couple of weeks ago and used the wrong C word.

15 Anyway, with those two entities, you know,
16 trying to really help facilitate, you know, figuring
17 out what data elements can be shared when and when the
18 final reports and just really kind of figure out when
19 that can be all laid out so that people know it's
20 coming and when it's coming.

21 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Let's go to Marcos
22 in the room, and then we'll go to Charlie online, and

1 then come back, I've got about five other folks who
2 want to jump in. So Marcos.

3 MR. HANKE: Thank you. I made a
4 presentation to the Recreational Fishing Summit about
5 the secondary value of the wind farms and the
6 aquaculture and so on. On the same lines, I want to
7 express this to this group. I think BOEM is promoting
8 the best use of clean energy. That's probably the
9 goal, right. But we are way behind on designing and
10 considering the secondary value and opportunities that
11 that can create for the coastal communities.

12 Since the beginning, those poles, those
13 anchorage, and the structure that will be in the ocean
14 must be designed for multi-use and ecological
15 enhancement, like recruitment of stock economic
16 community uses or enhancement of a new economy related
17 to those structures, not just the wind production of
18 energy. And there is other examples on that. It must
19 be done during the planning and the design on the
20 technical part of it. There is elements like
21 aquaculture, tourist activities, data collection like
22 fishery station, data collection stations on those

1 areas by design. And in terms of data collection, it
2 is a great opportunity if you guys step up to the
3 plate to help fisheries to have across the nation
4 every project like what was suggested before, have a
5 minimally-standard data collection of, you know,
6 graphic aspects, recruitment, or whatever can be
7 requested by the people that are leasing to provide to
8 best fishery management.

9 Thank you. That's my take.

10 MR. BROOKS: Did you want to --

11 MR. HOOKER: Thanks. I will say that, you
12 know, on the aspect of ecological enhancement, I think
13 that is something that, you know, we are interested
14 in. And we actually are kicking off a study right now
15 off of Virginia, you know, to look at how different
16 materials can promote settlement and use by fish. I
17 think there's a conversation that still needs to be
18 had over, you know, using existing things like, you
19 know, the mattresses used to cover cables if the
20 cables can't be buried or the scour protection used
21 around the monopile, you know, using materials that
22 can promote growth and also provide the engineering

1 aspects that they need.

2 But then there's also the add-on of, well,
3 you know, as part of the design, place other things on
4 the sea floor, as well. And I think we're not there
5 in the conversation yet to add supplemental material
6 in a leased area for the sole purpose of enhancing
7 some desirable habitat features. But at least for the
8 materials that are needed for engineering purposes,
9 trying to use materials that promote fish and habitat
10 is something that we're working on.

11 But your other ones are points well taken,
12 as well.

13 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Let's come back into
14 the -- oh, sorry. Let's go over to Charlie Bergmann
15 online, and then we'll come back to the room.
16 Charlie, your line should be open.

17 MR. BERGMANN: Brian, thank you for coming
18 and doing another one of these exhaustive --

19 MR. BROOKS: Hang on one second. We're
20 having a really hard time hearing you.

21 MR. BERGMANN: -- follow Dewey's lead,
22 thank you for working to get a fishing gear program

1 similar to the oil industry into effect.

2 With that said, while you're floating
3 offshore turbines, has BOEM been able to estimate how
4 much transmission cable will be in the water column at
5 any given time from these floating turbines?

6 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Charlie.

7 MR. HOOKER: Thanks. That's a great
8 question. And, again, I think you're referencing the
9 Fisheries Contingency Fund that's on the oil and gas
10 program, and thanks for, you know, that's obviously
11 what our fisheries mitigation guidance is supposed to
12 kind of do for the renewable energy side since we
13 don't have that in that program on the renewable
14 energy side.

15 But regarding your question on floating
16 offshore turbine, how much of that is what we term
17 dynamic cables, cables suspended in the water column,
18 I think it just has to depend on the project. So I
19 don't have any estimates. I think, generally
20 speaking, it would be suspended until it got close
21 enough to the shelf where it was able to be buried.
22 So depending on how close those shelf waters are, you

1 know, it would be quite different on the California
2 coast than perhaps in the Gulf of Maine or even in the
3 central Atlantic. So it's really project specific,
4 and, unfortunately, I can't give an estimate other
5 than to say, you know, once it gets to that shelf
6 water, we're likely to see it buried from that point
7 to the connection point on shore.

8 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Brian. Let's come
9 back into the room. I've got Rick Weber, then over to
10 Bob, then over to Mike, David Schalit, and then to
11 Willy.

12 MR. WEBER: Brian, I'm reflecting back
13 both on a lot of years in this process and a few with
14 you. But if I think way back, I think about when
15 white marlin was proposed as an endangered species and
16 we were all kind of new and learning each other, and
17 we were very paranoid and the agency, this office, was
18 not as clear in transmitting what they had to do by
19 regulation. You know, I think of scoping, and scoping
20 always comes out as everything from no action to total
21 closure, and what does the fisherman hear? Total
22 closure. Oh, my God, they're considering total

1 closure, and we all respond in absolute panic because
2 we don't know what's coming.

3 Over time, the agency has gotten clearer
4 about what their options and what the bell curve is
5 and those things. So I don't regret the way that I've
6 spoken to you in the past, but I want to give you
7 credit because we're learning each other and you're
8 learning to communicate with us, you know. I'm
9 thinking about the fact that many times, originally,
10 you guys weren't offering a preferred alternative
11 public hearing. You were sort of jumping from scoping
12 to final was one way that it was originally proposed
13 when I first got involved with the process, and then
14 the chart you brought us last year was very scary and
15 what you've done over the last 12 months is go, okay,
16 we're going to shrink this down.

17 You say you don't have one of these
18 forums. Maybe you should, and maybe that's the
19 comment that I'm distilling all of this down to is, if
20 you want to keep this body calm, communicate with us
21 and let us get to know each other because you have
22 such powerful tools under your control that, when you

1 come in and show us a big chart, we think you're going
2 to wind all of it. And here we are 12 months later,
3 and you've whittled it down and you were listening and
4 you were hearing us.

5 And I guess I'm going to hold Tim's
6 skepticism but combine Dewey's appreciation and thanks
7 for you recognizing, and I'll pick up some of Jeff's
8 let's get whatever coordinated science we can out of
9 this. Even if Tim's skepticism holds true and this
10 project, although it's clearly going through, you
11 know, let's get whatever coordinated science we can
12 out of it, and let's keep this conversation going and
13 get to know each other because I'm going to maintain
14 my skepticism along with other people, but I give you
15 credit for dampening it and showing growth together.
16 So thank you.

17 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Rick. Bob.

18 MR. HUMPHREY: I think I can be fairly
19 brief because Jeff stole most of my thunder. First, I
20 appreciate you being here, the fact that you're here
21 with this group because we are a Highly Migratory
22 Species Advisory Panel, and if you look at the bluefin

1 tuna that's a species that either spawns in or
2 migrates through all of the major proposed wind areas.

3 So I just want to say I hope that you will emphasize
4 any time the possibility or there are migratory
5 species, that term pops up, it should be a red flag.

6 I've been working a lot on this in Maine,
7 and the squeaky wheel is in the lobster industry and
8 the groundfish because they have, relatively speaking,
9 a lot more data. They're a lot more organized.
10 They're more well-funded. We don't really have a
11 group representing us at the table. It's more
12 individuals and small contingents.

13 So just please emphasize migratory
14 species, pelagics whenever you can.

15 MR. BROOKS: Mike, over to you.

16 MR. PIERDINOCK: Thank you, and thank you,
17 Brian. We go way back. I think I wasn't gray when we
18 all started with what's going on Block Island. So my
19 perspective is a little different. It's been a long
20 road.

21 If we could put up slide four for
22 discussion purposes, I wish I had the same conclusions

1 that Dewey had because that whole green area is the
2 area where wind turbines may be sited. That said, it
3 brought great angst to people in New England or
4 elsewhere, you know, up and down the coast, the
5 commercial fleet or, to some extent, the rec or for-
6 hire fleet, it goes into those waters.

7 To be able to assemble comments of where
8 exactly the wind turbines may go and then how that
9 impacts those that fish those waters, there was a
10 meeting, if you recall, a few months ago with few, it
11 was an HMS recreational meeting with few people on it.

12 I was notified the day before, so, as far as outreach
13 goes, there continues to be problems with getting that
14 out to the recreational for-hire or commercial
15 community, and I would encourage any instances with
16 HMS to notify this AP to get the word out in a timely
17 fashion to get input.

18 One thing that continues to be problematic
19 is is that it was pointed out by me and others during
20 that meeting that black line there to the east is the
21 Hague Line, and the Canadian waters are beyond. And
22 as we've had shifting stocks and increased

1 temperatures, I remember the days when we had five
2 bluefin tuna and you'd have to go all the way to the
3 Hague Line to catch them because that's where they
4 were or Georges Bank.

5 But now they're a few miles off the beach,
6 so how then do you exactly identify the location of
7 where one has fished for bluefins where it could be
8 anywhere from a few miles to the beach to the Hague
9 Line? That's difficult. As you know that's been
10 pointed out more than once.

11 Maybe Randy needs to be at the table
12 because I would like to have an understanding where
13 it's been noted more than once by the regional
14 councils where these areas or the surveys conducted,
15 the ongoing National Marine Fisheries Service surveys
16 being conducted or in all the other areas are now
17 going to be impacted by lack of access to where these
18 wind turbines are going to go here, up and down the
19 coast, or in the Gulf of Mexico.

20 So what is National Marine Fisheries
21 Service going to do about that missing data gap?
22 Because there will no longer be access into those

1 areas that, as a result, could change the outcome of
2 years and years of research. So I'd like to get some
3 thoughts to that for that and get a response, which
4 I'm not sure if it's necessarily from you, Brian, or
5 from Randy's office or HMS, because that is
6 problematic because the access will not continue.

7 So then as far as ongoing research goes, I
8 agree with what Jeff and others have said. We need to
9 know the baseline, we need to know during
10 construction, and we need to know the impacts post of
11 after construction to assess the impacts, ultimately,
12 to the fishery.

13 As far as you noted, the tribal nations in
14 the West Coast, there's been outreach. Has there been
15 outreach to the tribal nations of the East Coast in
16 considering EEJ when it comes to that because there
17 are some, I know, regionally within New England and
18 I've spoken to some of them, and they have their
19 concerns. I'm just curious, in the interest of EEJ,
20 whether there is proactive outreach to all of them up
21 and down the East Coast, Caribbean and the islands, as
22 well as in the Gulf.

1 MR. BROOKS: You want to hit pause on that
2 for a second and let us take some of those questions
3 on?

4 MR. PIERDINOCK: Yes, I'm good with that.
5 Thank you.

6 MR. BROOKS: Okay. Thanks. So, Brian,
7 why don't we start around with the last question
8 around sort of EEJ and tribal outreach and then maybe
9 see if maybe you or HMS folks want to weigh in on the
10 surveying question.

11 MR. HOOKER: I can take them in the order
12 that they were given, and then if NMFS wants to chime
13 in on it. So we did, so going back to the NMFS survey
14 mitigation strategy, so we did release the strategy, I
15 think late last year. BOEM worked with the Northeast
16 Fisheries Science Center on that strategy. We are now
17 working with the Science Center on the implementation
18 of that strategy.

19 Concurrent with that, we do have an
20 existing study. It's a simulation study. There's a
21 series of workshops that NMFS hosted to try to develop
22 a strategy around the bottom trawl survey, and that

1 report, I'm hoping, should be available soon. It's a
2 summary report of how those workshops went, and it's
3 basically, at least that's the first survey that we've
4 jointly decided to try to focus on is the bottom trawl
5 survey. That doesn't mean the other surveys are not
6 important, and they will, we're working to identify
7 resources to help out with other surveys, as well.
8 That's part of the implementation strategy. But we
9 have been making progress this whole time on the
10 bottom trawl survey. But if NMFS wants to add more
11 now or later, I welcome that.

12 Thanks for your comment on using the AP as
13 a resource for outreach. I have Pete's email. I can
14 do, probably need to do a better job of reaching out
15 to him to pass along information that we may have.

16 I hear you on the pre, during, and post
17 survey work. You know, as you know, we have the
18 Environmental Studies Program that we funded
19 ourselves. We actually have several studies that we
20 have begun in the Gulf of Maine, an ecosystem-based
21 management study, and then we have a couple that we
22 are actually putting on hold a little bit until we

1 whittled down this area a little bit. We don't want to
2 invest in areas that just may come off the table, and
3 so we're kind of letting this, you know, get a little
4 bit more focused before we jump on funding some of
5 these more habitat-specific studies here. But we do
6 have some in the queue.

7 And then also, as Jeff well knows, there's
8 the lessee studies, too, that are conducted as part of
9 a project if, eventually, we get to that leasing stage
10 in the Gulf of Maine.

11 The last, regarding tribal, yes, we have
12 reached out. As a matter of fact, there is a tribal
13 meeting occurring I think subsequent to the
14 Intergovernmental Task Force up in Maine this week,
15 but we do have a whole tribal liaison. We have
16 several folks that are working with the southern New
17 England tribes, as well. I'm not going to say that
18 all tribes are satisfied with, you know, all the
19 outcomes, but we do have specific engagement with them
20 in all areas and are working always to improve that, I
21 think, in the Mid-Atlantic in particular and on the
22 West Coast.

1 I think that covers it, but I don't know
2 if you want to --

3 MR. BLANKINSHIP: I don't really have much
4 to add to that. Mike, you were directing your
5 question to more HMS, but the survey information, I
6 guess, that is most, from my limited knowledge about
7 all of it, is the most impacted, as groundfish
8 surveys, fishery independent work that's been going on
9 for such a long time conducted by the Northeast
10 Fisheries Science Center, and I would let them speak
11 to that issue. I don't have enough knowledge to be
12 able to speak about those impacts or mitigation to
13 those.

14 And, Brian, I'm sorry, I didn't hear the
15 first part of your response, so you may have covered
16 some of this already. But that's my response to that
17 at this point. And there's ongoing consideration for
18 impacts, let's say, to recreational information from a
19 large pelagic survey that can be part of the ongoing
20 discussion. The need is there to continue to collect
21 that information for sure from a spatial aspect.

22 MR. BROOKS: Yes, go ahead, Mike.

1 MR. PIERDINOCK: Thank you. That's where
2 it kind of perked me up there. The Southeast
3 Fisheries Science Center hasn't been contacted, and
4 they're involved in many of these species, as I've
5 learned through bluefin tuna and looking into that.
6 So Northeast Fisheries Science Center speaks a
7 completely different language than Southeast Fisheries
8 Science Center, so that's why I posed the question of
9 have they been contacted and does that impact the
10 surveys. I'm not sure if it does. And I agree with
11 the groundfish. But more from a pelagic standpoint,
12 is that the body that would need to be consulted for
13 these discussions?

14 MR. BLANKINSHIP: So more for the Atlantic
15 HMS, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center has been
16 an integral part in some of the work and information
17 that is fed into, I think, some of the work that BOEM
18 has done. And our HMS management division has some
19 folks that have been working hand-in-hand with the
20 Southeast Fisheries Science Center on some of that.
21 This is more, and I could be better informed if
22 anybody of the staff over here have any more

1 information about it, most of that input has been on
2 Mid-Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico work thus far. I
3 don't know that as much has been for the New England
4 as much, but I could be wrong about that.

5 So they are looped in with the Southeast
6 Center in feeding that information into going over to
7 BOEM.

8 MR. HOOKER: This may be an opportunity,
9 too, if you have a specific question about the
10 Southeast Fisheries Science Center, I believe the Gulf
11 has been in touch with them on the Gulf leasing side.

12 And I don't know if Kate's mike is open and if she
13 wants to chime in or add anything to that, but I know
14 that there has been contact and some communication
15 with the Southeast Fisheries Science Center.

16 I think when we developed the strategy, it
17 was intended to be kind of the northeast strategy but
18 to be adopted, as appropriate, for the other regions.

19 And I know the Pacific is doing some work, and I know
20 that there have been some conversations in the Gulf on
21 the Southeast Science Center side.

22 MR. BROOKS: I think Kate's line is open.

1 Kate Segarra, if you want to jump in here.

2 MS. SEGARRA: How about Mariana Stein here
3 who is our fisheries lead in the Gulf of Mexico, so I
4 welcome her to chime in. SERO has been in touch with
5 us for many different aspects in our pre-leasing
6 journey. Most recently, today, they reached out to
7 discuss with us a strategy for reducing impacts to
8 fishery surveys in the Gulf of Mexico, so that's just
9 one of the many ways in which we're interfacing with
10 SERO.

11 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Do you want me to
12 see if Mariana wants to chime in? If we could open up
13 Mariana's line. There we go. Mariana, your line is
14 open.

15 MS. STEIN: Hi. I don't have anything
16 else to add. Yes, SERO did reach out to us just
17 recently to get the conversation started about
18 potential avenues for mitigating impacts to the SEAMAP
19 in the Gulf of Mexico, so very early in the process
20 but we're going to start having those conversations.

21 MR. BROOKS: Great. Thanks. I've got two
22 more folks in the queue. David, I think you wanted to

1 get in before; and then, Willy, we'll get to you.

2 MR. SCHALIT: Thanks, Brian. Actually,
3 just a comment pursuant to this conversation. I was
4 at the same meeting as Mike, which is a recreational
5 meeting, HMS meeting. I'm not a recreational
6 fisherman, I'm a commercial, and I only found out
7 about it the last minute. I don't think we've had any
8 meetings for the commercial HMS sector.

9 And one thing that did come out of the
10 meeting that you mentioned was that, basically, I
11 mean, I'm paraphrasing, okay, we are essentially, at
12 HMS, we are data poor on the spatial and temporal
13 dimension of our fishing in the Gulf of Maine, and
14 there's no way you can put a smiley face on that.
15 That's just a fact.

16 And so on the basis of that, you outlined
17 to us very carefully and clearly the criteria that
18 you're using for determining what's leasable and
19 what's not, and it basically relates to where you see
20 vessels moving around, you know, and you have a
21 certain density here and less there, so then you will
22 make your decision according to this. This is my

1 takeaway from the meeting.

2 But that's not the reason why I raised my
3 hand. Look, I want to sort of make a general sort of
4 comment on Offshore Wind. I am not opposed to
5 Offshore Wind, and I represent some 3,000 fishermen,
6 3,000 permit holders, who, you know, have various
7 feelings about Offshore Wind. And the problem is the
8 uncertainties that we're dealing with here. I mean,
9 what we have, to crystalize the issue, okay, we have a
10 major policy initiative with specific renewable energy
11 targets, correct? And we have a serious, we have
12 serious environmental uncertainties in developing
13 Offshore Wind in the U.S. as exemplified as the main
14 takeaway from your 300-page document that you wrote
15 with RODA. Okay. However, that document doesn't
16 really provide any concrete solutions, which seems odd
17 to me.

18 We need to be mindful of the fact that
19 Offshore Wind has been in existence for 30 years now.

20 The first project was by Ørsted, by the way, and that
21 was 30 years ago. It went live 30 years ago. So we
22 have 30 years of history of Offshore Wind being

1 developed where Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Holland,
2 Belgium, Britain, and the Mediterranean, Ireland also,
3 and there is a small mountain of peer-reviewed
4 literature out there having to do with the effects of
5 Offshore Wind on the marine environment.
6 Notwithstanding the fact that the BOEM and NOAA are
7 legally obligated to protect the marine environment,
8 my precis is they're abrogating on this because there
9 is a very specific, they have developed in Europe a
10 very specific protocol and one would have to be blind
11 to not see these things. Now, I know that Ørsted
12 understands this, Shell understands this, even you
13 guys understand it. You're all aware of the
14 scientific literature that's out there, but you're not
15 doing anything about it.

16 In other words, what it says is the first
17 step is to establish a baseline. What does that mean
18 in real terms? That means you take a look at the
19 aquatic real estate and you expand the footprint of
20 that to incorporate adjacent areas. You divide it up
21 into a grid, and you send scientists in to document
22 all marine life, including biota that happen to be in

1 that area, in those grids, in all those grids. And
2 then and only then do you commence construction.

3 Now, I mean, I'm talking about this was
4 something, Horns Rev 1, okay, they did this, okay.
5 Before any work was done, before any exploration was
6 done, they set up this grid which gave them a baseline
7 from which to evaluate the changes which will occur
8 after commissioning of the wind farm. None of this is
9 being done. I've asked you in three separate meetings
10 are you, is BOEM contemplating doing this, and the
11 answer in each case has been no.

12 So my assumption is that, with this lack
13 of, with this approach, which is clearly obvious from
14 all the scientific literature, that so much of it has
15 been written on this issue regarding European
16 projects, basically, what we're doing is we're tossing
17 the dice and saying, well, with regard to the
18 fishermen and the fish, we'll just see where the
19 chips, we'll let the chips fall where they may, and
20 then we'll get into a negotiation, a sort of payoff
21 negotiation with the fishermen afterwards. This is
22 really the substance of the discourse that's taking

1 place now.

2 But it is with flagrant disregard and, in
3 my view, in some cases, willful malicious intent that
4 nobody is focused on establishing this baseline. I
5 mean, it's obvious, it's absolutely logical that, if
6 you want to know what took place after, you need to
7 know what it was like before. And that is the issue,
8 that is the crux of the issue for me. If we're not
9 going to do this, then we are basically just involved
10 in a negotiation and probably some litigation down the
11 road when the fishermen discover that the fishery
12 isn't exactly the way it was before. And then it will
13 be up to the fishermen to prove that, you know, what
14 change is taking place. And, of course, they don't
15 have any of that data, and off we go.

16 So there it is. That's my comment. Thank
17 you.

18 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, David.

19 MR. HOOKER: Thank you for that. And,
20 first, yes, we definitely avail ourselves of all the
21 information that has been collected in Europe over
22 these past 20 to 30 years. But I'm really, you know,

1 want to focus on what we have done in the U.S. And,
2 you know, the first pilot project we did was the Block
3 Island Wind Farm project, and that was in state
4 waters. It used the Ocean SAMP process. There was a
5 lot of data collection, you know, done prior to that
6 construction. And then, on top of that, BOEM funded,
7 you know, post-construction monitoring. We actually
8 have now, and I encourage folks to look and I can send
9 the direct link, too, of all the aspects from the
10 noise from construction to post-construction
11 monitoring of looking at changes in, you know, how
12 long it took for the cable barrel areas to recover or
13 change, looking at, you know, fauna growth on and
14 adjacent to. As a matter of fact, we have another
15 ongoing study now looking at connectivity between
16 Block Island and other nearby mussel beds to see is
17 that contributing to that.

18 So we have invested even from the federal
19 side a lot on that, and we've done similar stuff for
20 the pilot project off Virginia, and that's also
21 available on that same project website.

22 I completely hear you in that, you know,

1 for this, the Gulf of Maine, you know, BOEM puts out a
2 footprint like this, and we don't have, like, a study
3 to go alongside it and say this is everything we
4 studied here because we're still trying to figure out
5 where, and that's a huge investment to, like, when you
6 study that whole entire area. Luckily, we have the
7 National Marine Fisheries Service that has done a lot
8 of research in this area, and so we avail ourselves of
9 the information that other federal partners who have
10 been active in this areas to collect some of that
11 initial baseline information.

12 You know, very early on, for all the
13 Atlantic ones, the Northeast Fisheries Science Center
14 compiled a study for us not only looking at the
15 benthic habitat but took all of the summer and fall
16 benthic trawl survey data and looked it for every
17 single wind energy area. And I think we're trying to
18 continue to that level of effort once we get closer to
19 identifying a wind energy area level so that we can
20 focus some of those funds at that higher
21 reconnaissance level, and then we pass the baton on to
22 the developer to continue a lot of those studies, you

1 know, during construction and post-construction
2 because, at that point, there's a lease issued and
3 it's something that they should, we feel like, not we
4 BOEM but the federal government generally feels that
5 they should be funding some of that.

6 So that is the approach that we've been
7 taking, rather than, I think, there are some examples
8 where, you know, the federal government could identify
9 the exact parcel and study the heck out of that and
10 then auction off the parcel. And I think sometimes in
11 some European countries that's the approach that's
12 been taken, rather than this winnowing down effect in
13 an auction process and the federal government
14 providing that reconnaissance level and then pushing a
15 lot of the during and post-construction and some pre-
16 construction on to the lessee.

17 So I think we could do a better job of
18 getting that information out. I do hope the standing
19 Committee on Offshore Wind and Fisheries is a venue to
20 help us really identify, like, hey, we have not done a
21 great job of making available the information that we
22 have or where we are in the process and why, like for

1 the Gulf of Maine, there's not like a final BOEM, you
2 know, study of it at this point. And that will come
3 later, but it's hard when we're going through this
4 leasing process when someone asks, where's the data?

5 And, you know, we have the NCCOS
6 relationship now with NOAA NCCOS. They're doing a
7 better job than perhaps we did earlier in making a
8 document that shows what all the existing data layers
9 are that are going into the siting. But I think we
10 could do a better job just talking about the science,
11 too, that we're doing to, you know, accompany that
12 that will eventually inform our assessment once we
13 actually get to a lease.

14 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, Brian. Let me bring
15 in a couple more folks. Willy, you've been waiting
16 very patiently over there, and then we'll go over to
17 Greg.

18 MR. GOLDSMITH: Great. Thanks, Brian.
19 Appreciate the presentation. It's good to meet in
20 person after having been on many Zoom meetings over
21 the years.

22 Just a couple of specific questions. We

1 heard this morning about the ongoing discussions
2 regarding the Hudson Canyon as potential national
3 marine sanctuary, and I brought this up at past
4 meetings, as well. But I know there's been kind of an
5 ongoing discussion between NOAA Fisheries and BOEM
6 about the authority of BOEM to potentially lease wind
7 energy areas in national marine sanctuaries, and so I
8 was just wondering if there's been any kind of forward
9 progress on that conversation because I think that
10 will weigh on a lot of folks' minds as they consider
11 the potential designation of a sanctuary.

12 And the second question, kind of in the
13 spirit of what Dewey and Rick were discussing, is kind
14 of improving the process as we go. I was glad to hear
15 about the fisheries mitigation guidance document and
16 kind of the ongoing progress on developing that. And
17 so I guess, you know, as this document is being
18 finalized, obviously, projects continue to kind of go
19 through the leasing process and the various
20 environmental analyses and comment periods. And I
21 just was wondering to what extent that guidance might
22 be retroactive to projects that are already in

1 development and also if guidance really does mean just
2 that and there's no kind of binding component to that.

3 Thank you.

4 MR. HOOKER: Thank you. So for the
5 question regarding the sanctuary, I think it's very
6 clear that we can't lease in a sanctuary. I think
7 OCSLA is clear on that.

8 I think where there may be questions
9 around, well, how close to a sanctuary can a lease
10 area be and potentially what mitigation or what should
11 be an appropriate setback. I think that's where most
12 of the conversations are occurring right now.

13 Regarding the Hudson Canyon effort, we
14 have been invited to be a part of some kind of
15 advisory group that they're doing there, and we're
16 looking forward to participating in that and
17 understanding how that designation may or may not
18 impact leases in that area. And there are similar
19 conversations on the West Coast where there is a
20 sanctuary somewhat adjacent to some lease areas on the
21 West Coast.

22 So just to be clear that we cannot lease

1 in the sanctuary. The question is, well, how close to
2 a sanctuary should we be.

3 Regarding the mitigation, I definitely
4 appreciate the concern that it's guidance. We
5 definitely have heard that loud and clear. It's not
6 necessarily, I wouldn't want to call it retroactive in
7 that it's meant to be guidance for a lessee for
8 information to include in their construction
9 operations plan. We do have several construction
10 operations plans before us now, and we do have some,
11 obviously some projects that we've approved. And in
12 each one of those, there is a fisheries mitigation
13 plan. There hasn't been a project approved that
14 doesn't have a fisheries mitigation plan component
15 associated with it, and the ones that are currently,
16 you know, close to a decision, the lessees have all
17 basically adopted the fisheries mitigation guidance
18 and presented us, you know, that they will put the
19 money aside to the claims administrator and so forth.

20 It's backed up on the Atlantic, too. As
21 you know, I think there's nine East Coast states that
22 are trying to really work to set up a regional fund.

1 So, ultimately, I'm optimistic that hopefully we'll
2 get to that point where it's just a single entity fund
3 that all the different lessees are paying into, rather
4 than, you know, each project having its own process or
5 even each developer. But right now, it is on that
6 project page, and I can tell you lessees do consider
7 that guidance as pretty much that's something they
8 will do and be a part of their final proposed action
9 for their construction operations plans.

10 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Greg.

11 MR. HINKS: Hi, Brian. Thanks. It's my
12 understanding that some of the survey work that's
13 being conducted by the wind energy companies is
14 considered somewhat proprietary. Also, that they've
15 somewhat kind of pledged to make that data available,
16 but that there might be some constraints on the
17 sharing of that data. Could you confirm whether that
18 understanding is accurate? If it's not, obviously,
19 let me know. And if it is, if you could just
20 elaborate on that system. Thanks.

21 MR. HOOKER: I think the answer is it
22 depends. I think the final reports, there is usually,

1 as a part of a condition of approval of a plan, that
2 post-construction monitoring reports be available a
3 certain amount of time after, you know, the end of the
4 year or end of the season or so forth. There's a lot
5 of projects that are in a pre-construction phase right
6 now, so they're collecting data and, you know, are
7 processing that data, and there's not a stipulation,
8 per se, that those reports, you know, have to be
9 submitted by a certain date.

10 MR. BROOKS: Hang on one second. We've
11 lost video and sound. Just hang on one sec. We're
12 back up.

13 MR. HOOKER: So I think the best answer to
14 your question is if you had a specific, if there's
15 something specific you could, you know, like Jeff
16 raised, you know, we can look into what that data set
17 is, what level of data can be available when. The
18 summary reports, I think, are something that we can,
19 that we do require at some point, but it's usually in
20 that post-construction arena that we're looking at.

21 So I think I'll stop there and invite you
22 to, if there was a specific data set that you're

1 interested in that you knew someone was collecting, we
2 can definitely work with you to identify what that is
3 and what information we can make available.

4 MR. HINKS: I don't think I meant anything
5 specific. I was just, I guess what I was -- are there
6 any circumstances where -- what sort of data would not
7 be required for them to share, or is there any?

8 MR. HOOKER: No, I mean, there's nothing -
9 - there are some restrictions around, you know,
10 business confidential data, but I think, generally,
11 most of the environmental data doesn't really fall
12 under that, you know, confidential business
13 information heading. I think it's more just getting
14 their comfort to the point that they feel like the
15 data is ready to be shared and, if there is a
16 requirement that they publish the report, they'll
17 provide the report at that time. But I think there's
18 a lot of projects that are in this pre-approval stage
19 where I think they're, I don't know, maybe just
20 concerned about releasing a lot of information while a
21 decision is being made on their project that could
22 potentially present an issue or challenge if, like,

1 BOEM didn't have that data and, you know, made a
2 decision without that or it somehow wasn't something
3 considered.

4 I don't know. I'm speculating here, but
5 that's kind of where we are with several projects.

6 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Jeff, you want to
7 come back in?

8 DR. KNEEBONE: Sure. I'll respond to that
9 point. I have a lot of experience in that realm. So
10 it depends on the company, and Brian is correct that
11 it depends on the stage. I've written reports for
12 companies that are publicly available. I've written
13 almost identical reports for others who don't want to
14 release it publicly. That's kind of the root of my
15 comment to start is if we are under the gun here, you
16 know, in southern New England, we're first. So the
17 first impacts are going to be realized in southern New
18 England, and that's why being transparent and pushing
19 for data sharing, especially for highly-migratory
20 fishes, is of paramount importance, specifically now.
21 I've been working on trying to establish a data-
22 sharing agreement between the five companies that I

1 have contracts with to allow me to do one project as
2 opposed to five since October 2021, and I still have
3 not gotten approval to combine all the data into a
4 regional monitoring framework, which, as I said
5 before, matches the ecology of the animals. Right
6 now, I'm still operating under the business model of
7 looking lease by lease.

8 So it's something that I urge BOEM to
9 exert more influence over. It's extremely challenging
10 for researchers to navigate this. It's foreign to me
11 and a lot of other academic-based scientists to work
12 in the private sector, I guess you'd say. But since
13 we need this information sooner than later, like, we
14 have to strive for more transparency, more
15 consistency, more accountability in terms of sharing
16 and reporting. Thanks.

17 MR. BROOKS: Thanks, thanks, Jeff. I am
18 not seeing anybody else in the queue in the room or
19 online. I'll just sort of do a little bit of playing
20 back what I've heard here, Brian. I'm sure you heard
21 it all, too, because I see you taking your copious
22 notes there.

1 But one was just a thanks from a number of
2 folks for attending, for listening, for adapting to
3 things that BOEM is hearing. So I think that's really
4 important to emphasize.

5 I've also heard kind of an ongoing deep
6 nervousness because there's just, there's uncertainty
7 on impacts. There's still some large areas out there
8 that people look at and get nervous about. The
9 concerns about lost survey area, lack of a good
10 baseline, I think all of that contributes to just a
11 sort of general angst around, you know, around the
12 activity.

13 And then the number, a number of
14 suggestions to be thinking about as BOEM goes forward.

15 I'll pick up on the last one around data sharing.
16 Hearing that a lot around the table, a lot of interest
17 in transparency, consistency, being able to aggregate
18 data, make the most sense out of it as possible.

19 Paying attention to HMS as BOEM is going
20 forward and doing this work. A number of different
21 comments sort of outreach flavored from, hm, maybe you
22 should think about setting up a panel like this so

1 there's sort of a standing body that can inform.
2 Getting information out in a timely fashion so that,
3 as meetings are happening, activity is happening,
4 people are aware. Reaching out on sort of the equity
5 and EJ front on tribal, you know, just a number of
6 pieces there.

7 And then a comment from a bit ago around
8 just sort of making sure that, as this goes forward,
9 maximizing the economic potential and design. I think
10 it was a piece that Marcos had put on the table back
11 at the beginning.

12 So I may have missed a point or two, but
13 lots of good feedback there. So thanks to the AP
14 members for the conversation and, Brian, for your
15 consistency in coming here. I think it really does --
16 I can think back to the first time you were here, and
17 it's a really different conversation. So thanks to
18 everybody. Thanks, Brian.

19 MR. HOOKER: Thank you.

20 MR. BROOKS: Okay. We are just a drop
21 ahead of schedule. We are due for public comment at
22 4:45, so, unless, Randy, you tell, unless you tell me

1 we've got to wait five minutes, I think we should jump
2 in.

3 Okay. So I want to jump to public comment
4 at this point. Invite any members of the public,
5 basically anyone who is not an Advisory Panel member,
6 to let us know if you want to jump in the queue. If
7 you are in the room, if you can just raise your hand,
8 and I'll know who wants to be in the queue, that's
9 great. If you are online, if you can raise your
10 virtual hand. And if you can't, for some reason, do
11 that or find that, you can either just, you can just
12 throw a comment in the chat that you'd like to have an
13 opportunity to talk.

14 Our ask always is to ask folks to limit
15 remarks to three minutes or so. I'll just remind
16 everyone that this is not an opportunity for a back
17 and forth but really it's an opportunity to share a
18 comment that you want to make sure that Randy and team
19 hear.

20 And then I'll ask folks start with just
21 name, affiliation, and the topic that you're wanting
22 to talk to. And, again, if there's any members of the

1 public who are online and don't want to talk but want
2 a comment to be heard, please feel free to use the
3 chat to put a comment in there.

4 So anybody online who cares to make a
5 comment? Anybody in the room who cares to make a
6 comment? You have Glen Hopkins online? Oh, good.
7 All right. Glen Hopkins, I'm told you would like to
8 get in the mix. I'm not seeing him in my queue, but,
9 if you're seeing him, can we open him up?

10 MR. HOPKINS: Can you hear me?

11 MR. BROOKS: Yes, we can. And, Glen, if
12 you can just start, again, with name, affiliation, and
13 topic you want to talk about it. Go ahead.

14 MR. HOPKINS: Are you able to hear me?

15 MR. BROOKS: Yes, we can.

16 MR. HOPKINS: Hello?

17 MR. BROOKS: Yes. Are you not hearing me?

18 We can hear you.

19 MR. HOPKINS: Oh, okay. As long as you
20 can hear me, that's all that matters. All right. My
21 name is Glen Hopkins, commercial fisherman, pelagic
22 longline fisherman, served on an AP for a number of

1 years. I just have a brief comment concerning A13.
2 Bennett, can you raise your hand if you can hear me?

3 MR. BROOKS: Yes, I can. Keep going.

4 MR. HOPKINS: Okay. I want to put the HMS
5 staff, I want the HMS staff to put yourselves in my
6 shoes for just a few minutes. I say just a few
7 minutes because I wouldn't want anyone to experience
8 this nightmare for very long. Let's say you received
9 an email saying that your employment next year will be
10 based on your attendance at work for the past three
11 years. You say to yourself, okay, I know I was at
12 work every day in the last three years, so no problem.

13 You also have records attesting to that fact, you
14 have a boss and co-workers who all know this to be
15 true.

16 Then another email, your results are
17 revealed to you. This data in no way resembles what
18 you know to be true, and, according to this data, you
19 can only work and be paid for two days a week. You're
20 told not to worry because you can appeal those
21 results, but, unfortunately, you will not receive your
22 due pay while the process plays out, nor will you

1 receive any back pay.

2 Now you're five months in the process.
3 Five months. And you still have no answers. Imagine
4 trying to comfort your spouse that everything is going
5 to be all right every day for five months. How can
6 this be, she cries out. We have the paperwork,
7 eyewitnesses that are feeding the data. As obvious as
8 just common sense, you use what is proven to get on
9 with our lives. Please tell me what am I supposed to
10 say to her? What do I say to my friends who ask how's
11 the fishing, I thought you'd be out fishing today
12 because it's so pretty. I have no words to explain
13 such a screwed-up mess. You're still in my shoes.
14 What words would you choose?

15 Now you're out of my shoes, and you're
16 still getting your paycheck. Where is your
17 compassion? You claim to have compassion for us, but
18 where are the actions?

19 If I have compassion for a person or a
20 situation, I'd work day and night to provide a remedy.

21 That is not happening. So don't give me your
22 sympathy or your empathy; just get the job done.

1 And by the way, your staff doesn't need to
2 look through the entire country or the world for a
3 justice and equality case. There's one right here. A
4 minority, which is commercial fishermen, are being
5 unfairly treated and discriminated against.

6 I'll close with a short testimony. Because
7 this is a HMS matter, I've tried calling the HMS
8 office for two consecutive days. No answer. So I
9 left the obligatory message, including my name,
10 number, and a brief description of why I called. I
11 never received a call back. Finally, the third day,
12 someone picked up the phone. To my dismay, the man
13 who answered was very rude, very patronizing, and
14 absolutely no help. So before I gave up on getting
15 any answers, I told him that I had called the previous
16 two days but received no response. His answer to this
17 inquiry was, and I quote, that's just the way things
18 are these days.

19 My question today to HMS staff is just
20 that: is that just the way things are these days? No
21 work ethic, no compassion, no accountability, no
22 integrity, no common sense. From where I stand, that

1 is the reality. Please change my reality.

2 Thank you for your time.

3 MR. BROOKS: Thanks very much, Glen. If
4 you would just come up to the table and get to a
5 microphone. If you could start with your, again, name
6 and affiliation and topic you want to talk to.

7 MR. SHIELDS: My name is David Shields,
8 and I'm the same as Glen Hopkins. And I just want to
9 reiterate the fact of what Glen is talking about and
10 what Dewey talked about earlier with this allocation.

11 These gentlemen, they're not receiving the amount of
12 quota that they're supposed to be getting. It's been
13 five months. These are migratory fish. These fish
14 are going to be gone, and then all the quota in the
15 world that you give them does not compensate them for
16 the amount of money that they are losing.

17 So my statement is, if you can't get this
18 figured out, are you going to give them fair market
19 value for the quota that you robbed them from while
20 the fish were here? Thank you.

21 MR. BROOKS: Thanks. Appreciate it. Are
22 there other public comments in the room? And, Peter,

1 are you seeing anyone online? Because, again, I'm not
2 --

3 MR. COOPER: I don't see any hands up.

4 MR. BROOKS: Okay. In the room? Anybody?

5 Okay. Thanks, David, and thanks, Glen, for those
6 comments. Appreciate them.

7 We are, I think, at the end of our meeting
8 a bit ahead of schedule. By way of wrapping up, I
9 just want to flag there are a couple of to-dos that
10 came out of today. One was to provide the list of CVA
11 experts and make that available to everybody.
12 Obviously, I know, Brad you've got a little punch list
13 of to-dos that I assume we'll hear back from tomorrow
14 or Thursday, whenever you're able to get that
15 information, so thanks in advance for that.

16 MR. BLANKINSHIP: The list of CVA experts
17 is online in a backup slide CVA presentation.

18 MR. BROOKS: Great.

19 MR. BLANKINSHIP: So that can be acquired
20 right now.

21 MR. BROOKS: Okay. All right. So the
22 list of CVA experts is available right now online

1 again in the backup slides on that presentation. So
2 if you check that out, Dewey and others, that should
3 be there.

4 A reminder that we will, there will be a
5 no-host social hour which I think will probably start
6 as soon as the first person gets down to the no-host
7 social bar, but that's just on the first floor here.
8 So as always, I encourage everyone to go there because
9 it's just a good opportunity to spend time together
10 and talk about these issues, talk about what's coming
11 up tomorrow, and just get to know each other and,
12 particularly, there's, I think, nine or so new members
13 here, so a really good opportunity for those folks to
14 get to know each other and everyone else. So,
15 hopefully, we'll see you all there.

16 And just tomorrow, just a reminder that we
17 will start at 9:00 tomorrow. We will be talking
18 Amendment 16 in the morning. Shark quotas and
19 management will also talk about CITES-approved shark
20 proposals at its November 22 meeting. And then before
21 lunch, we will start our discussion around Amendment
22 15. We'll start with a presentation on spatial

1 management. That will be just a presentation, just to
2 set your expectations, there's a lot of information to
3 share. You've all seen it and want to make sure that
4 that's presented as clearly and accurately as
5 possible.

6 And then, after lunch, we'll come back and
7 have plenty of time for discussion on that. And then
8 around 3:30 or so, turn to electronic monitoring
9 aspect of A15 and, again, opportunity for both
10 presentation and discussion. And then we'll close out
11 tomorrow with an update on DWH restoration. And,
12 again, public comment tomorrow will be at 5:00.

13 And then just a final reminder that, from
14 6 to 7 tomorrow, there will be an informal Q&A around
15 Amendment 15. That is really designed primarily for
16 members of the public who are not panelists who won't
17 have an opportunity to ask questions but, of course,
18 love to have AP there, as well.

19 So Dewey.

20 MR. HEMILRIGHT: I just want to make sure
21 that you remind the new folks that they're the ones
22 paying at the bar down below.

1 MR. BROOKS: Hence, the no-host. Oh, no,
2 I thought, Dewey, you were going to talk about the
3 tradition where the new members buy everyone a round.
4 Isn't that it? Okay. Yes, yes, yes. Okay.
5 Anything else from anybody? Randy?

6 Okay. Then thanks, everyone, for a good
7 conversation today. See you either downstairs or
8 tomorrow around the table. Thanks, everybody. And
9 thank you, online members, for hanging in.

10 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went
11 off the record at 4:51 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY
PANEL MEETING

Before: NOAA

Date: 05-09-23

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