

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
SOUTH ATLANTIC STATE/FEDERAL FISHERIES
MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**Crowne Plaza Hotel
Old Town, Alexandria, Virginia
March 21, 2011**

Approved August 2011

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ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Russ Allen, NJ, proxy for D. Chanda (AA)	Red Munden, NC, proxy for L. Daniel (LA)
Adam Nowalsky, NJ, proxy for Asm. Albano (LA)	Robert H. Boyles, Jr., SC (LA)
Craig Shirey, DE, proxy for D. Saveikas (AA)	John Frampton, SC (AA)
Roy Miller, DE (GA)	Spud Woodward, GA (AA)
Bernie Pankowski, DE, proxy for Sen. Venables (LA)	John Duren, GA (GA)
Tom O'Connell, MD (AA)	Jessica McCawley, FL (AA)
Bill Goldsborough, MD (GA)	Ellen Cosby, PRFC
Bill Cole, NC (GA)	

(AA = Administrative Appointee; GA = Governor Appointee; LA = Legislative Appointee)

Ex-Officio Members

Staff

Vince O'Shea
Bob Beal
Kate Taylor

Daniel Brzezinski
Meredith Wilson

Guests

Pat Augustine, NY (ASMFC GA)
David Simpson, CT (ASMFC AA)
Bill Adler, MA (ASMFC GA)

Paul Diodati, MA (ASMFC AA)
Robert Ballou, RI (ASMFC AA)
Ben Martens, MA (Legislative Proxy)

The South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission convened in the Presidential Ballroom of the Crowne Plaza Hotel Old Town, Alexandria, Virginia, March 23, 2011, and was called to order at 10:45 o'clock a.m. by Chairman Jessica McCawley.

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIRMAN JESSICA McCRAWLEY: We're going to go ahead and start the South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board. I'm Jessica McCawley, your vice-chair for this board. Dr. Louis Daniel is out this week. We also have a new staff person to replace Nichola. Danielle Brzezinski will be assisting us with this board in the future. This is her first board.

MR. STEVE MEYERS: Madam Chair, I would just like to introduce Dr. Wes Patrick who will be representing the agency at this board today. Thank you very much.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Thank you. Okay, our first order of business is to approve the agenda. Are there any other items for other business or any other additions for the agenda? I have one item that I'd like to discuss under other business concerning red drum management in Florida. Also, the agenda has been updated from what you have on your CD.

There was an updated agenda that was included in the supplemental material you were sent following the CD. Seeing no other comments on the agenda, we'll consider that approved.

APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS

The next item on the agenda is approval of the proceedings from our November 2010 meeting. Are there any additions to those minutes? Seeing none, we'll consider that approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The next item on the agenda is public comment. Do we have any members of the public that would like to make comment? Okay, seeing none, moving right along, our next item is the consideration of our Draft Omnibus Amendment for public comment. Danielle is going to give us a presentation on that.

DRAFT OMNIBUS AMENDMENT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

MS. DANIELLE BRZEZINSKI: I'll be presenting on the status of the draft omnibus amendment for your consideration to go out for public comment. Just to give you an idea of where we are in the current timeline, the board originally decided to initiate this process back in August 2009 when it was decided to do this as a full omnibus amendment for spot, spotted seatrout and Spanish mackerel and not just Spanish mackerel.

Where we are currently is what you see in the box. There were a couple of problems that the omnibus amendment wanted to address. This is a quick summary. One of those was the consistency with the ACFCMA requirements. ACFCMA was passed in 1993 and all these FMPs were put into place prior to that. That was one of the issues that this omnibus wanted to address.

Thus as part of our objective, we made that part of our omnibus amendment such conservation measures and the ability to adopt more timely conservation measures. One of the other issues that the omnibus looked to address was consistency with the ISFMP Charter, which was first put into place in '95, so again after all the FMPs had been passed.

Such things that were included in the ISFMP Charter that were not included in FMPs included things like de minimis criteria, other compliance requirements and such, so part of the objective was then to develop management programs that would be consistent and provide clear direction to states.

One last issue that the omnibus wished to address was the state/federal consistency specifically related to Spanish mackerel. The original FMP had a mechanism within that to help track the federal plan. However, there were concerns from the board that the mechanism was unused, and so the board wished to include or provide a direction to include some sort of measurements that would allow them to review and follow the federal plan more consistently, and so that was brought into the development of this.

We looked to include those either through adaptive management measures so those would be able to be incorporated through an addenda or through direct board action. Some of the issues, I'd just like to go over what is in there generally. One of those things that we included were overfished and overfishing definitions for Spanish mackerel.

These are based on the current federal definitions. Due to the fact that the most recent SEDAR assessment of Spanish mackerel could not conclude specific biological reference point values, there are no specific values included. However, as I mentioned the possibility exists for this board to review new values should those come about from an assessment and implement them.

There are no current values or definitions for spot or spotted seatrout, but those could be incorporated in the future via adaptive management, and so that mechanism does exist for the board currently in the omnibus. In terms of monitoring specifications, the omnibus currently includes no requirements. There are certainly encouragements and recommendations to continue current surveys regarding both adults and juveniles.

One issue that got brought up was that the bycatch might be an issue in terms of monitoring, especially in the South Atlantic Shrimp Trawl Fishery. That was an issue that was brought up for all three species but certainly highlighted for spot. One issue that the board could potentially put out a preferred option, if you wished, was regarding the spot stock status.

There is currently no coast-wide assessment for spot, and there was no recommended one from the PRT due to the fact that it likely would not have passed a peer review without better bycatch data from the shrimp trawl fishery. There are currently two options included in the omnibus. The first is to recommend collection of needed data to complete an assessment; and then Option 2 which would be – in addition to Option 1 would be to implement a management trigger until a stock assessment can be completed.

This comes from PRT recommendations to look at five different indices. Those include coast-wide recreational and commercial landings as well as the SEAMAP Survey, the NMFS Survey from New York to North Carolina and the Chesapeake Bay Seine Survey. Another part of the omnibus that the board could put out a preferred option, if they wish, is regarding recreational management measures. There are three options currently included in the omnibus.

The first is the status quo, which means that there would be no required recreational management measures. Option 2 is similar to the operating status quo, which would incorporate the current state and/or federal requirements in reference to Spanish mackerel. Those are included currently in the omnibus on the least common denominator sort of basis in that, for example, the spotted seatrout some

states have a minimum size length of 12 inches, others have 14, and so currently the recommended measures include a minimum size for 12 inches.

The only two additions that would be different from what you currently have in terms of your state regulations would any new federal measures that are included in the Amendment 18, which is currently under development for the South Atlantic and Gulf Fishery Management Councils and is going out for public comment next month and then in addition the PRT recommended management triggers for spot.

To give you a quick view, these are currently the requirements that are included under Spanish mackerel for Option 2. These currently incorporate in terms of the minimum size and the creel limit the recommended and preferred options within the Amendment 18 that is going out for public comment.

Again, Option 2 for spot and spotted seatrout, the current management measures that are in Option 2. Option 3 for recreational management measures would be any other combination that the board would wish to put forth, including any kind of size limits, restrictions, whatnot. Commercial management measures are also three options; very similarly set up to the recreational; Option 1, status quo, no requirements for commercial management measures.

Option 2, operating status quo; again the state requirements on a least restrictive basis; and again these would incorporate the new federal measures for the Spanish mackerel and the PRT recommended management triggers for spot. So again just to give you quick overview on the slide of what is included in our Spanish Mackerel Option 2, including the requirement for a permit, gear restrictions, minimum size and so forth.

One thing to note as also part of the federal plan is the requirement for a payback of overage. Again, for spot, Option 2, and spotted seatrout. I have question marks around the second bullet under spotted seatrout, Option 2, because this was something that was included on the recreational but not on the commercial, and I didn't know if that was on purpose or whatnot.

Again, Option 3 for the commercial management measures is just any other combination of any kind of restrictions that the board would want to see required. As part of the updating of the FMPs, there are de minimis guidelines that the board can choose. Again, there are three options to set the de minimis threshold

at 1, 2 or 3 percent of the average coast-wide landings.

The majority of the PRT and PDT members recommended the 1 percent as the standard guideline. There is also the ability for the board to include exemptions from any requirements for states that qualify for de minimis. However, in reviewing other plans most of these exemptions are generally from monitoring requirements; and as there are currently no monitoring requirements in the plan, I'm not quite sure what you would wish to include under there regarding exemptions, but that is certainly an option as well. These are all able to modify at a later date through adaptive management measures, so via an addendum.

Compliance reports will now also be required for all three species. The reports will not include anything regarding monitoring requirements but will include any regulatory requirements that are included and a statement regarding law enforcement capabilities. The proposed schedule from the PDT was for spotted seatrout to be due September 1st, Spanish mackerel October 1st and spot November 1st.

Under recommended management measures, the omnibus currently includes those measures that are under Option 2 for the required management measures. Should the board decide to not require any management measures, there is still the option to include them as recommended management measures.

The recommended management measures also request that states outside the management units implement complementary regulations to protect spawning stocks that may come into their waters. There many management and research needs identified. Many of them refer to better estimations monitoring the stock, certainly needs for any stock assessments.

Also, there was identified the need to characterize the bycatch in the South Atlantic Shrimp Trawl Fishery; also to identify any social and economic impacts of any future regulations. The current surveys that are used are listed in Table 17 of the document and so those are just some ideas to give you an idea of what are the current surveys that may sample any of these three species.

There were some protected species concerns raised. There were potential and/or documented interactions with marine mammals, sea turtles, Atlantic sturgeon and seabirds. The committee identified the fact that

the bottlenose dolphin take reduction plan is probably the most likely to impact these management measures due to the high level observed take and estimated bycatch in past gill net fisheries.

They also identified potential impacts from reductions plans for Atlantic large whales and harbor porpoises. That was a quick summary of what is in there. Just as a reminder, there are some options that the board, if they wish, could identify a preferred option, and those include the spot stock status, recreational management measures, commercial management measures, and de minimis guidelines. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Are there any questions for Danielle about the powerpoint presentation? Robert.

MR. ROBERT H. BOYLES, JR.: Danielle, you mentioned the Spanish mackerel measures right now were congruent with the South Atlantic's Mackerel Amendment 18; is that correct?

MS. BRZEZINSKI: Yes, in terms of what is included in the omnibus, we are currently mirroring what is included in the Amendment 18 in terms of the preferred options identified by the South Atlantic and Gulf Councils, yes, sir.

MR. BOYLES: Madam Chair, the reason I asked the question – and maybe this is much ado about nothing, but Amendment 18 is scheduled for final action by the South Atlantic and the Gulf Councils in their June meeting in Key West. I'm just wondering about timing. Are we at an awkward position with respect to timing? I don't know that anything in the Mackerel Amendment will change, but if we're going to go out to public hearings, I'm just wondering if this is a good time to go out or should we wait until that June meeting? It's just question for discussion and for us to think about.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Yes, I think that is a very good point, Robert, because I'd hate for this to be confusing to the public where it looks like we're thinking about making a change on Spanish mackerel and then the South Atlantic Council changes their preferred option and takes final action in June and we've already gone out to public comment. What was our schedule that we had lined up for taking this out?

MS. BRZEZINSKI: There wasn't any specific schedule for any hearings just yet. It would be

hearings between now and the August meeting, and we would work with the states to schedule those.

MR. ROBERT E. BEAL: I guess there are a couple of options depending on how fast this board wants to move forward. If the board wants to be in a position for final approval of this document at the August meeting, the board could wait until the councils have their final decisions in June and then we can conduct our hearings during essentially the month of July and update the document to reflect what occurred at the June meetings.

Then this board would be in a position for final approval at the August meeting. The other option is wait until the August meeting or you can go through all the steps today other than the final approval of this document and finally approve it at the August meeting and public hearings before the annual meeting.

There is nothing in this document that's a pressing conservation need. It's consistency and flexibility for this board. There are a couple of approaches that could be used. It just depends how fast this board wants to go.

DR. WILSON LANEY: Madam Chairman, I was going to suggest what Bob suggested as his Option 1 there. To the extent that we reflect in our document the breadth of the options that are present in the councils' Amendment 18, as long as we've got everything in that they have in theirs, then I think we have the flexibility to elect to follow the council after they make their decision at their June meeting.

MR. BOYLES: And I agree. We've been working on this for a while. While there is no pressing need, I don't see a real need to drag this out any longer than necessary. My only concern was confusion among the public. My preference would be to at least get a signal from Amendment 18 as to what the final action is and then hold the meetings would be my preference. I don't know how everybody else feels.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Do we have the ability to make changes following that council meeting so if the changes to Amendment 18 were made, could they be reflected in the document without us having another board meeting?

MR. BEAL: If this board is comfortable with staff making those changes and we can work it through the vice-chair or chair, you or Louis – and it's really updating the document to be consistent with the councils have done, so not a creative writing project.

It's a cut-and-paste kind of thing, so I think it can be done.

While I have the microphone, if you don't mind, the other spot we end up in with these complementary management programs is even though the councils make their final recommendations, the National Marine Fisheries Service still has to make a decision and there could be some changes there, so the board will have to think of that as they move toward final approval of this document at August or the annual meeting.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: I think we might need a motion to approve with certain specifications that we would like to give the liberty to make the changes to Amendment 18. If they made changes at the South Atlantic Council Meeting in mid-June, I think we'd like to give staff the liberty and I think we need a motion. Robert.

MR. BOYLES: I would make a motion that we approve the Draft Omnibus Amendment for public comment and provide staff license to make changes with respect to Spanish mackerel based on final action by the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils on Mackerel Amendment 18. That's probably too many words for a motion, but let's get it up there and see.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Okay, do you need me to read the motion? Seconded by Red Munden. Robert.

MR. BOYLES: Sitting back here with the table talk, I wonder the wisdom of going through and identifying preferred options, it might be better. I would like to know the board's sense of whether we need to select preferreds before we go out to public comment.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: I agree with you that we probably go species by species and pick out the preferreds. Do you want to table this motion? Should we go ahead and table the motion or should we go ahead and take a vote on the motion that is just for Spanish mackerel and giving staff the liberty to make the changes?

MR. BOYLES: Actually, let me withdraw my motion for the moment, if I may. I think we're going to get into a parliamentary quagmire if we don't. Danielle, could you put up the slide where we need to select preferreds.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: We can or cannot select preferred options. We're not required to select

them. If we are going to select them we should probably do it on a species-by-species basis; is that the board's preference? The first place that we an option is for the spot stock status, and there are two options on the board there. Does the board have a preference for recommending a preferred option for spot stock status? Okay, Danielle is going to explain the options a little bit more for us.

MS. BRZEZINSKI: Option 1 is just to have the omnibus amendment recommend collection of the needed data to complete an assessment and Option 2 can be a preferred option and/or passed in addition to Option 1. Option 2 would then say in addition to recommending the collection of the needed data, the omnibus would implement a management trigger until a stock assessment can be completed. How the management trigger works is there are these five indices that are looked at every by the Spot PRT. Should any of those fall below the 10th percentile – or should two of those, my apologies, should two of those fall below the 10th percentile, the PRT would let board know that had occurred, and then the board could review whether or not management action needs to be taken.

MR. ROB O'REILLY: I guess the trigger idea is something that came with Amendment 1 for Atlantic croaker. I don't have a lot of familiarity with some of the proceedings with the omnibus, but it would seem that you have these in the right order. As far as options, I'm not sure which is really preferred other than it seems like if you're going to have these compliance reports starting this fall – was that the idea?

MS. BRZEZINSKI: I don't think so. I think in terms of the schedule it likely would not be until next year.

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, then if there is an identification – I know there is no technical committee for the committee so far, but if there is an identification as to the data needs, that's obviously the thing to do first; and without the data how do you know what the triggers are doing unless it's the independent data? If you're going to use some of the recreational data, the landings' data and don't have them, then it would make sense that you have these in order. I think both are important and has there been a mechanism to collect the data put forward so far?

MS. BRZEZINSKI: I think the reference to the needed data in Option 1 refers to bycatch data. The PRT had done a review of the current data available to look at the spot stock status to do a stock assessment, and they concluded that pretty much all

the data was there to be used except for the bycatch data, which would likely prevent it from passing a peer review similar to what happened to Atlantic croaker with the 2010 stock assessment.

In terms of the indices that you see listed for the management triggers, those are data that are available. Certainly, the timing of them and when they come in is a consideration, absolutely, but those data are available. The PRT has been looking at these management triggers over the past few years.

MR. O'REILLY: May I follow up for a second? Yes, I know that Joe Grist, for example, has been working to collect some of that data so I'm aware of that. Given what you said, the bycatch information, again if that's something that is not ongoing, then that becomes important. That would be my preference especially based on the difficulties there were with Atlantic croaker and with the SEDAR comments that came back relative to bycatch.

MR. ROY MILLER: Madam Chair, just looking ahead a little bit, can you help give me an idea if a management trigger is, one, the preferred option at this point, and if the trigger is ever pulled which state complex do you foresee that trigger applying to. In other words, are we talking about New York to Florida or some subset of states within the range of the spot?

MS. BRZEZINSKI: Currently as I know it, it's managed on a coast-wide status. In terms of where – are you asking in terms of like where the management changes might be considered? I just want to make sure I'm understanding your question. That would be up to the board in terms of where that particular trigger potentially occurred because there are definitely some regional surveys that you see here. And again, the trigger just triggers board review of the current management measures and what is going on. It doesn't particularly trigger any – or require any particular action with it. Does that answer that question, sir?

MR. MILLER: I think so. What that management will be is yet to be specified so we'll worry about that when the time comes. Thank you.

MR. BOYLES: Madam Chair, a motion to select Option 2 as our preferred.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Just to clarify, by selecting Option 2 it's also selecting Option 1? Okay, I just wanted to make sure. Seconded by Spud Woodward. The motion is move to select Option 2

for spot stock status. Motion by Mr. Boyles; seconded by Mr. Woodward. Wilson.

DR. LANEY: Madam Chairman, for Roy's benefit I was just going to point that the exact language of what would be required by the management board is on hard copy Page 38, PDF Page 61. Roy it says, "Management board will be prompted to consider management action for spot when the terminal values in two of the relative abundance indices below, at least one of which must be from a fishery-independent data source or equal to or below their respective data sets 10th percentile." It doesn't specify a geographic range but I assume that somewhere in the document the fishery management unit is specified, and I guess it would apply to the whole FMU.

MR. BOYLES: To select Option 2 as preferred, by the way, for spot stock status.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Anymore comments on that motion? Robert.

MR. BOYLES: Rob, correct me, this is like croaker, is it not?

MR. O'REILLY: I think it's an offshoot in a way. The difference with Atlantic croaker is that when the trigger system was set up, if they're pulled, then it would lead to a stock assessment; whereas here the language is management action until a stock assessment is completed. But given the two data sources for the two different species that are available, I can understand why this is worded the way it is.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Anymore questions or discussion on this particular motion? The motion is move to select Option 2 as the preferred option for spot stock status. Motion by Mr. Boyles; seconded by Mr. Woodward. Is there anyone against this motion? If you're for this motion, raise your right hand, please; against; null; abstain. **Okay, we nine for and one against; the motion passes.**

Okay, the next item is the recreational management measures. We can either choose options that would apply to all three species or we could take each species separately. What does the board think that they want to do – or we could not choose a preferred. Robert.

MR. BOYLES: Madam Chair, could we go individually, please.

DR. LANEY: For those of you who may be trying to follow along in the document, this is on hard copy Page 48 and PDF Page 71. They're all listed there.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: All right, so the slide that we have, that's a general summary of what Option 2 would be. Option 1 is just the status quo. These are some lists of what it would be for Spanish mackerel for Option 2 is on the board right now, and this is based on the amendment that will be finalized in June. Wilson.

DR. LANEY: Jessica or Robert, do we know what the – did the council designate preferreds yet for these? I guess we did; I don't remember.

MS. BRZEZINSKI: Wilson, the current preferred options that the council voted on, I guess, are currently included in the omnibus amendment.

DR. LANEY: Right, yes, I presumed that was the case. My question I guess was just to whether or not they – this is the entire suite of preferreds that they designated? I know we included all the measures they included, so these are their preferreds as well?

MS. BRZEZINSKI: Yes, in specific regards to the Atlantic migratory group of Spanish mackerel, yes, sir.

MR. BOYLES: **Madam Chair, move to select Option 2 – are we at Spanish mackerel as preferred – move Option 2 for Spanish mackerel as preferred. This is on recreational management measures.**

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Robert, would you like your motion to include the latitude to give staff –

MR. BOYLES: **Yes, with that understanding that if there are changes in the Gulf and South Atlantic's final action on Mackerel Amendment 18**, that the changes that go to public comment would be reflected in this document.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Do we have a second; seconded by Mr. Woodward. To read the motion for you, Joe, move to select Option 2 for Spanish mackerel as the preferred option for recreational management measures with the understanding that if there are changes in the South Atlantic and Gulf Councils' Amendment 18 – I guess we're still working on the motion. Robert.

MR. BOYLES: Madam Chair, we do have a second, correct. The thinking here is recall that the purpose of this – one of the purposes here is to be consistent

with the federal FMP; and so if the federal FMP is changed between now and the time we meet again, that's the purpose for giving staff the license to make those changes.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Okay, let me read that motion one more time; move to select Option 2 for Spanish mackerel as the preferred option for the recreational management measures with the understanding that staff can update the measures if there are changes in the final action of the South Atlantic and Gulf Councils' Amendment 18. Motion by Mr. Boyles; seconded by Mr. Woodward.

Is there any further discussion on that motion? If not, let's take a vote. All those in favor please raise your right hand; any opposed; any null; abstentions. **Okay that motion passes.** Okay, taking these separately, next we have looking at what preferred we would like for the recreational management measures for spot.

MS. BRZEZINSKI: And just as a note under spot, the only specific requirement that is put out there is the management triggers, the PRT recommended management triggers to incorporate those. The second bullet is for any other requirements that the board would like to put in.

DR. LANEY: Madam Chairman, **I'll move that the board select Option 2 as its preferred for spot recreational management measures.**

MR. O'REILLY: I thought I saw spotted seatrout up there with spot and that all spot has is the triggers and any addition – what would be Option 2 there for spot?

MS. BRZEZINSKI: Yes, Option 2 would just incorporate the PRT recommended management triggers as part of the regulatory requirements. There are no other regulatory requirements listed for spot. Does that clarify?

DR. LANEY: There is a 2B under that option, Rob, that says any requirements selected by the management board, including but not limited to a minimum size limit, maximum size limit, creel limit, fishing season, space/time closure, gear requirements, quota or cap, so those are in the toolbag in addition to the management trigger should the board so choose.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: The motion is seconded by John Duren. Is there anymore discussion on this motion? Okay, all those in favor of the motion please raise your hand. Okay, that's ten so that's all of our votes. I'm not going to ask for

the other preferences. **The motion passes.** Now we'll bring up the slide for the spotted seatrout option.

MS. BRZEZINSKI: Under spotted seatrout for Option 2 there are these two bullets which is the minimum size and the 20 percent SPR as well as the third bullet is like a general, again, of any limits that the board would want to put on, including anything else.

DR. LANEY: Madam Chairman, just to move us along, **I'll move Option 2 as preferred for recreational management measures for spotted seatrout as well,** and then I have a follow-up comment, if I can get a second.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: That was seconded by Mr. Woodward.

DR. LANEY: I had a question. I think I brought this up before at our last meeting, but the question is in that list of options under 2C there, there is an additional requirement list. Whether or not the rest of the board is comfortable with the generic comment about having a potential space-time closure applying in those cases when we have cold stunt events – and once again this winter in North Carolina at least we did have a cold stunt event that resulted in spotted seatrout mortality; and since Dr. Daniel has proclamation authority, he was able to take quick action to close that fishery.

My question to other jurisdictions is whether or not that is something that would be useful for us to put in 2C as an additional potential management measure for those jurisdictions that don't have proclamation authority or whether you think that the language that is there now, which just says space-time closure – it doesn't specify a particular reason for that, but whether or not that's good enough to accommodate cold event closures.

MR. BOYLES: To that point, Wilson, I think the language we've got there gives us the flexibility. Quite frankly, our jurisdiction does have emergency regulatory authority but it is an anvil to deal with what can be a very, very specific – we've got some jurisdictional issues in South Carolina that we're working on, but I think this language gives us that flexibility.

DR. LANEY: Thank you, Robert, and we do address the whole issue on Pages 6, 11, 22 and 65 within the document, so we've talked about it quite a bit, and I just wanted to make sure we were on the record as

having addressed that as a concern and a need to address it when it arises.

MR. MILLER: Madam Chair, I hate to belabor something I've previously brought up, but in regard in spotted seatrout, from Delaware northward at least spotted seatrout are a fairly rare occurrence. Delaware has a minimum size limit presently at 12 inches.

However, if any other management measures are contemplated, it becomes ridiculous to try to implement management measures when the species doesn't normally exist in any manageable quantity within a jurisdiction's range.

I'm just wondering and thinking ahead would a de minimis declaration absolve a state like Delaware or New Jersey or New York from implementing other types of management measures or must a state meet all the compliance measures even if a state is in this particular case eventually judged de minimis?

MS. BRZEZINSKI: There currently is the option for the board to include exemptions for de minimis qualified states, and so that is something that you could include if you wished.

MR. MILLER: I'll take that as a yes; thank you.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Is there anymore discussion on this motion? All in favor of this motion; against; null; abstain. **Okay, that motion passes.** Okay, now we're moving on to the commercial management measures. These are the commercial management measures on the board for Spanish mackerel for Option 2. John.

MR. JOHN DUREN: **I move we adopt Option 2 as our preferred option.**

DR. LANEY: Second the motion, Madam Chairman.

MR. BOYLES: Madam Chair, pardon my ignorance, do we need to provide staff editorial license here as well? In dealing with Spanish mackerel; the same thing regarding the Gulf and the South Atlantic's Mackerel Amendment 18.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Yes, I agree that is needed here, also. John, is that okay if we amend your motion.

MR. DUREN: Yes, that's acceptable.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: The motion is move to select Option 2 as the preferred option for the Spanish mackerel commercial management measures with the understanding that staff can update the measures if there are changes in the final action of the South Atlantic and Gulf Councils' Amendment 18. Motion by Mr. Duren; seconded by Dr. Laney.

Anymore discussion on that motion? Seeing none, all those in favor; against; null; abstain. **The motion passes.** Okay, now we're on to the commercial management measures for spot. Wilson.

DR. LANEY: Madam Chairman, **I would move that we select Option 2 for the commercial management measures as the board's preferred option.**

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Seconded by Mr. Woodward. Discussion on that motion? All those in favor; against; null; abstain. **The motion passes.** Now we're back to spotted seatrout commercial management measures.

MS. BRZEZINSKI: And just as another note, again the 20 percent SPR was not listed under the commercial management measures for spotted seatrout. I put that under question marks. I didn't know if that was something that the board would want to include under commercial management measures as well as a preferred option as it is included under the recreational management measures for Option 2.

MR. BOYLES: Madam Chair, **I would make a motion that we include the 20 percent SPR monitoring and management requirements for the commercial fishery as part of the preferred Option 2.**

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Are you seconding?

MR. O'REILLY: I am seconding. I don't see how you would not have them tied together like that.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Yes, I agree. The motion is to include the 20 percent SPR as part of the preferred Option 2 for spotted seatrout commercial management measures. Motion by Mr. Boyles; second by Mr. O'Reilly. Is there anymore discussion on that motion? Seeing none, all those in favor; against; null; abstain. **The motion passes.** Now we're moving on to the de minimis criteria for the various species.

MS. BRZEZINSKI: If you want to follow along on the hard copy, it's Page 53 of the document, 76 of the full hard copy, I believe, is the version I had. That details which states would qualify under the specific different options whether the de minimis is set a 1 percent, 2 percent or 3 percent.

MR. O'REILLY: I agree with the 1 percent, the PDT and the PRT, but I just want to make sure. Most of the time, for example, for weakfish that's commercial and recreational landings; is that the intention? It's a combination?

MS. BRZEZINSKI: You could separate it out for commercial or recreational or you could do it as both; it's up to you.

MR. O'REILLY: That might be worth talking about depending on the species. For example, for spot I could see lumping the two fisheries. Perhaps maybe some other board members on spotted seatrout might think it should be separated. Other than that, I still would support a 1 percent regardless of the disaggregation or not.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Why don't we take this species by species; let's first talk about Spanish mackerel and what percentage we would want and then whether we want that percentage to be commercial and recreational combined or separated. Once again, there is a table in the document that is on the CD that you can see which particular states will qualify. Robert.

MR. BOYLES: Madam Chairman, **I make a motion that we select Option 1, which is the 1 percent of de minimis criteria for Spanish mackerel commercial and recreational fisheries combined.**

MR. O'REILLY: I'll second.

MR. BOYLES: Just for the record, I think this is consistent with what we've done in a number of other fishery management plans and thus the reason for the motion preferred. Just to clarify, it's a motion to select Option 1 as preferred.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Okay, move to select Option 1 as the preferred option of de minimis for Spanish mackerel for both recreational and commercial fisheries combined. Motion by Mr. Boyles; seconded by Mr. O'Reilly. Roy.

MR. MILLER: Again, could you direct me to where that is in the document so I can see what it says?

DR. LANEY: Yes, it's PDF Page 76; hard copy Page 53 in the omnibus amendment.

MR. BOYLES: Roy, as I read this and maybe this is a question for Danielle; under that motion Delaware in this instance would qualify for de minimis status under both, so is it additive, Danielle? How do we read that? If we combine those; do we just add those two numbers together?

MS. BRZEZINSKI: I guess it would be the question of what is the intent of your motion. Is it to look at de minimis qualifications for commercial and recreational separately or to look at them together? If you wanted to look at them is to qualify for de minimis from the species as a whole, then you could look at adding those together, yes.

MR. BOYLES: Okay, so under that, the criteria is 34,000 pounds commercial, roughly 13,000 pounds recreational, so, Roy, I'm guessing that if you add those two together, that's roughly 48,000 pounds, 47,000 pounds; and if you land less than that total, then you would qualify for de minimis; is that correct?

MR. MILLER: Well, I presume when you say de minimis for both commercial and recreational; is that correct? If I may follow up, Madam Chair, again is this the point in time where we state what the potential implications of de minimis are or is that for the policy board to determine? In other words, if a state is judged de minimis for Spanish mackerel, for instance, does that state have to implement the other management measures like size limits and so on?

MR. BEAL: That is one of the decisions this board will have to make, but I don't think you have to go out to public hearing necessarily with a preferred option. I think you can leave that as part of the final decision that the board will have to make following public comment.

MR. DUREN: The next section, 4.4.4, actually describes four de minimis exemptions, which might be useful to your question, Roy.

MR. MILLER: Actually, John, everything is X'd out in there so it's not really a lot of guidance at this point.

MS. BRZEZINSKI: It's a fill in the blank, to be quite honest, so if the board wishes to include certain exemptions, like Bob said, you could discuss those now or you could wait until after the public comment

if you wanted to fill those in or whatnot. That is up to you to fill in, so another point of discussion.

MR. O'REILLY: I agree with what Bob just said that the board can establish what the requirements are. I know when this started just because weakfish was the first commission compliance plan that de minimis at that time involved especially the New England states and then later on some of the southern states as well, and the 1 percent was the combined landings – that percentage of the coast-wide combined landings.

And then I think there were some changes where initially with weakfish it was just a matter of the state submitting the annual report and being absolved of the measures. I agree there is time to talk about that later, but I hope that we can move along and again look at this motion which takes 1 percent of the combined coast-wide commercial and recreational. If you fall below that, you would be de minimis.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Roy, is that okay with you or would you prefer that the board fill in the blank for the public comment or is it okay to discuss this the next round following the public comment?

MR. CRAIG SHIREY: If it wouldn't belabor this too much, would it be difficult to add it in now?

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Would you like to tell us what you would like filled in the blanks? Is this a separate motion or are we modifying the motion? I would think a second motion.

MR. BOYLES: Madam Chair, I would prefer to get the de minimis, the 1 percent established as de minimis criteria for coast-wide landings combined for all three species and then talk about the exemptions. I think we'd get off track, if it pleases the board.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Okay, we could do that; however, the motion on the table just is for Spanish mackerel. Do you want to amend that motion to include all three species as 1 percent commercial and recreational combined?

MR. BOYLES: Yes, why don't we do that, but I'll look to my colleague from Virginia and see if that's fine with him.

MR. O'REILLY: That's fine with me. I think initially I had some questions about spotted seatrout to see if there were other board members who felt that the strength of the recreational fishery was

something they wanted to watch separately, and that's the only reason I brought that up early on. I would support the change to the motion.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: More discussion on that motion or concerns about spotted seatrout in particular in regards to that 1 percent de minimis? **Okay, move to select Option 1 as the preferred option of de minimis criteria for Spanish mackerel, spot and spotted seatrout for both recreational and commercial fisheries combined.** Motion by Mr. Boyles; seconded by O'Reilly. All in favor of that motion raise your right hand, please. That's ten votes; **that motion passes.** Now let's talk about the de minimis exemptions and have that discussion about what you would like and if you'd like to fill in those blanks for this public comment document. Wilson.

DR. LANEY: Well, Madam Chairman, I'll just toss the thought out there that since we are going out to the public, perhaps it would behoove us to leave them blank until we get public input. That would be one way to proceed. Otherwise, I guess we have to go through the whole list of potential mandatory compliance elements and make decisions on those.

I think in a lot of cases de minimis states are exempt from many of the requirements, but I think there are certain fundamental requirements that would have to go in place to ensure that you meet your performance targets. Specifically, I think most of the states that are de minimis do implement things like minimum size limits, for example. I think probably what Roy is thinking more about are some of the monitoring requirements that probably would be legitimately given exemptions to the de minimis states. I don't know, but I guess I would prefer to hear what the public has to say about it before we take an action on it.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: That's a good point, Wilson, and Danielle also just mentioned that there aren't any current monitoring requirements in the plan. Roy.

MR. MILLER: Just to follow up on Wilson's comment, I think it's reasonable – and I'm just talking for myself here without consultation with my colleagues – it's reasonable to think about de minimis states meeting the minimum size and creel limit requirements and probably not much else. That's kind of my suggestion at this point in time. Thank you.

MR. BOYLES: Madam Chair, I think that's reasonable, Roy, and I think we can revisit that after we come back from the public comment. I think that's reasonable. Could we just move this document along and take it out to public comment with the understanding we'll come back and look at these de minimis criteria in August based on the public comment.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Roy, is that okay with you for us to do that? Okay, we're going to need a **motion to approve the document as a whole here with all of our preferences**. Robert.

MR. BOYLES: **So move, Madam Chair.**

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Second by Wilson Laney. Any discussion on that. Wilson.

DR. LANEY: Not really but I'll just note again for the record that we do have to come back at our next meeting and construct any recommendations to the secretaries for complementary actions in federal jurisdictions once we've decided upon the management measures. That's on Page 58 if you're following along.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Any more discussion on this motion? The motion is move to approve the Omnibus Amendment as modified today for public comment. Motion by Mr. Boyles; seconded by Dr. Laney. All those in favor; ten votes; **the motion passes**. Moving on to the next item on the agenda, which is Atlantic Croaker Draft Addendum for final board approval.

ATLANTIC CROAKER DRAFT ADDENDUM I

MS. BRZEZINSKI: Just as a reminder, the board approved this draft addendum for public comment in November 2010 at the annual meeting. It went out for public comment over the winter and now it is up for final approval of the options in the addendum. Just as a summary of the problem that the addendum wished to address; the 2010 stock assessment evaluated the stock across the entire range of it; so both mid and South Atlantic, which was currently incompatible with existing plan.

Amendment 1 to Atlantic Croaker had divided the stock into two management units, the mid and the South Atlantic. To make those two different assessments compatible, one of the options is to address that, so there is a need to revise the management regions as well as the biological

reference points based upon the new science from the 2010 stock assessment.

In addition the addendum tries to address the burdensome, as identified, administrative requirement to modify scientifically based recommendations that have already gone through a rigorous peer review process. Just as a quick background, the previous stock assessment was from 2004-2004.

Like I said, it had divided the region into two management regions and biological reference points were only identified for the Mid-Atlantic. Amendment 1 allowed adaptive management measures. Within those an addendum is necessary to revise the biological reference points. The 2010 stock assessment, as I said, evaluated the stock on a coast-wide basis, updated the biological reference points with ratios and not absolute values.

Those were done on the recommendations of the peer review due to the fact, again, that the bycatch data from the South Atlantic made absolute values unreliable and currently uses the same definitions of the biological reference points. To give you the summary graphs from the 2010 stock assessment, the dotted lines you see are your thresholds that you would be looking at to base your overfishing or overfished.

Based upon the ratios, the assessment concluded that the stock was not subject to overfishing and was likely not being overfished but they couldn't sure. In terms of the management options that are included there, for the management area there are two. One is the status quo, which is to maintain the two different regions, the Mid-Atlantic and the South Atlantic.

Option 2 was recommended by the technical committee which was to eliminate the management regions and to assess the stock and then put management measures across the range of the species. In terms of the management options and adjusting the biological reference points, there are three options.

Option 1 again is the status quo, which would be to maintain the Mid-Atlantic BRPs only and future revisions to the BRPs would be made through addenda. Option 2 revises the biological reference points based upon the 2010 stock assessment, which would adopt the proposed ratio-based BRPs. Again, though, future revisions to these BRPs would have to be made through addenda.

Option 3 would broaden the definitions of the current biological reference points and make them much more flexible in terms of what the values could be. It also establishes acceptable categories of what is considered a peer review. It includes the ASMFC guidelines for the benchmark stock assessments and what is considered the peer review. Again, those can be for external or internal, I believe.

And then to allow peer-reviewed revisions to the BRPs to be implemented by board action and documented, and so what this option does is just – a quick summary – it broadens those definitions of the biological reference points and allows the board to make changes to those values based upon peer-reviewed science recommendations.

Just as a note, if Option 3 is approved, the board could then still take action to implement the BRPs that were recommended as a result of the 2010 stock assessment. The results, as summarized here, would be updated compatible BRPs as well as a mechanism to apply the most current scientific information available.

The implementation for this addendum would be immediately, which thus would allow you to take board action to update the BRPs if you wish. In terms of the public comment, no public hearings were held. The public comment was open most of December and then January and no public comment was received. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Are there any questions on this powerpoint for Danielle? Okay, with that, we should probably take the management area and the biological reference points separately. Could you pull up the slide for the management area options one more time, please? These are the two different options we have for the management area; Option 1, status quo; or Option 2, to eliminate the management regions. Option 2 was the preferred by the PRT and this would follow the stock assessment. Wilson.

DR. LANEY: **Madam Chairman, I'll move we select Option 2.**

MR. BOYLES: Second.

MR. O'REILLY: I think that's fine, but there still are data that are looked at regionally through the trigger process; is that correct? For example, if there were some signals for the South Atlantic versus the Mid-Atlantic, then there is still that process that you would that information? Is that ongoing?

MS. BRZEZINSKI: Yes.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Anymore questions or comments on that motion? Wilson.

DR. LANEY: Just a clarification then from Rob; so that would mean that action could still be taken in those areas if warranted if the triggers were tripped? We're still going to continue to look at those triggers regionally as well as coastwide. That's my understanding of what you were preferring, right?

MR. O'REILLY: Yes, there was certainly a reason why there was a split initially and it wasn't all just model choice or model-based. What I recall is that it was a benefit to have that regional data set even if it was combined for the board as sort of one index, so that is what I'm saying, Wilson.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Anymore discussion on that? Okay, the motion is move to select Option 2 for management areas for Atlantic Croaker. Motion by Dr. Laney; seconded by Mr. Boyles. All of in favor of that motion please raise your right hand. **The motion passes.**

Now we're looking at the biological reference points. Remember there were three options here Option 1 was status quo. Option 2 was revising based on the stock assessment and then Option 3 is a little bit broader for the broadening the definitions of the biological reference points. Bob.

MR. BEAL: Just to provide some perspective; Option 3 is consistent with the way the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board and the Lobster Management Board have changed how they handle biological reference points. It just gives the board more flexibility and it doesn't require the board to go through the addendum process to change the point estimates of the biological reference points.

MR. SPUD WOODWARD: **I move we approve Option 3 for biological reference points.**

MR. BILL COLE: Second.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Any discussion on that motion? All right, the motion is move to approve Option 3 for Atlantic croaker biological reference points. Motion by Mr. Woodward; seconded by Mr. Cole. If there is no more discussion, all those in favor of the motion raise your right hand. **The motion passes.** Now I'm looking for a **motion for**

final approval for this Atlantic Croaker Addendum I to the fishery management plan.

MR. WOODWARD: **So moved.**

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Seconded by Mr. Boyles. Is there any discussion on that motion? The motion is move to approve Addendum I for Atlantic Croaker. Motion by Mr. Woodward; seconded by Mr. Boyles. All those in favor of this motion raise your right hand. **The motion passes.**

MS. BRZEZINSKI: The addendum as now passed changes the definitions of the BRPs to broaden them, allowing for the board to take action if it wishes to update those BRPs, which you could do based upon the 2010 stock assessment.

DR. LANEY: To that point, Madam Chairman, **then I would move that we update the biological reference points that were recommended by the PRT as a result of the 2010 stock assessment**, and those are found on Page 6 of the document, hard copy Page 6. Do I need to read those into the record? I'll just reference those as found on Page 6 of the hard copy of the draft document for board review.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Seconded by Mr. Cole. Any discussion on that motion? Once again, that motion is move to update the biological reference points for Atlantic croaker as recommended by the PRT from the 2010 stock assessment. Motion by Dr. Laney; seconded by Mr. Cole. If there is no further discussion, all those in favor of the motion please raise your right hand. **The motion passes.**

FMP REVIEWS AND STATE COMPLIANCE

Now we're going to move to the next item on the agenda, which is considering the FMP Reviews and state compliance for spot, spotted seatrout and Spanish mackerel, and Danielle is going to give us a presentation on that.

MS. BRZEZINSKI: For the spot fishery management plan review, just as a quick thing, we've got the status of the FMP and compliance. We all just heard about the omnibus amendment and the fact that there aren't currently any compliance requirements, and that is why the omnibus is there, so we have that there.

In terms of the current status of the stock, again as we discussed, the PRT is continuing to monitor that via many different inputs of data. Looking at the

management triggers that they recommended, the PRT will be presenting a much more in-depth monitoring report at the August meeting.

In terms of the current status of the stock and the numbers, in 2009 total landings of spot were estimated to be 8.42 million pounds, an increase of 14 percent from '08 but a decrease of 6.7 percent from the previous ten-year average. The recreational fishery is shown in black and the filled-in squares. The commercial is shown in the open squares.

The recreational fishery accounted for 33.5 percent of the total landings and was less than the commercial fishery, which is a change from 2008. In terms of any recommendations, the PRT will present, like I said, the monitoring report in August and will assist, if needed, in further development of the omnibus amendment. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: We're going to take each of these species separately. We need a **motion to approve the Spot FMP Review**. Mr. Boyles.

MR. BOYLES: **So moved, Madam Chair.**

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Seconded by Mr. Cole. Any discussion? All those in favor please raise your right hand. **Okay, that motion passes.** Okay, now Danielle is going to give us a presentation on spotted seatrout.

MS. BRZEZINSKI: Again, the status of the FMP and compliance, we are updating the FMP via the Omnibus Amendment for certain requirements based upon the inclusions within that. In terms of the current status of the stock there have been some recent assessments. I know North Carolina has been working on a draft FMP and they have included additional management measures in response to the research that they've doing there, including now a 14-inch total length and decreasing the bag limit from ten to six with no more than two of those being over 24 inches in total length.

The current status of the fishery, the total is listed in the black with the recreational in the hatch and the commercial in the orange. Total harvest declined from 2.8 million pounds in 2008 to 2.4 million pounds in 2009. Recreational landings were more than five times the commercial landings in 2009 with commercial landings listed at 394,000 pounds, which was a 7 percent increase from the previous year.

Gill nets again took most of the 2009 catch at 72 percent. The recreational harvest decreased from 1.6

million fish in 2008 to 1.37 million in 2009 with the percentage of caught fish being released increasing from 75 to 80 percent of the catch since 2000. Recreational harvest, as the number of fish are in red, has been relatively stable over the time series whereas releases which are listed in the blue have increased over time. They peaked at 6.5 million fish in 2008 and have declined now to 4.1 million fish in 2009/ Again, in terms of recommendations the PRT will assist, if needed, further in the development of the omnibus and has assisted so far. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Do we have a **motion to approve the Spotted Seatrout FMP Review**.

MR. BOYLES: **So moved**, Madam Chair.

MR. WOODWARD: Second.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Any discussion on that motion? Okay, all those in favor raise your right hand. **Okay, that motion passes**. Now Danielle is going to give us a presentation on Spanish mackerel.

MS. BRZEZINSKI: Skipping ahead in terms of the current status with the Spanish mackerel, looking at Bullet Number 3, as these aren't managed jointly through the commission Spanish Mackerel FMP and the Federal Coastal Migratory Pelagics FMP, the federal TAC was 7.04 million pounds for the 2009 fishing season; split 55/45 between the commercial and recreational.

The requirements included trip and creel limits as well as size limits. Again, the council is developing Amendment 18 and will likely be changing some of these measures. Spanish mackerel was mostly recently assessed during SEDAR 17, as we discussed, although the biological biomass reference points were not accepted by the peer review.

These are the two charts from that SEDAR review, looking at the ratios now based on whether or not the stock is undergoing overfishing or is overfished. In terms of the current status, total landings in 2009 were estimated at 5.5 million pounds, an increase of 14 percent from 2008. Commercial landings increased by nearly a million pounds in 2009 to 3.7 million while the recreational landings decreased to 1.7 million pounds.

The ratio remained similar as it was in 2008 to 2009. The Florida commercial fishermen landed 70 percent of the commercial harvest. Anglers in Florida and North Carolina took a combined 88 percent of the

recreational harvest. The next chart here shows the trend in the recreational fishery. The harvest itself is in the blue. The released alive is in the bottom in the red. The number of recreational releases are still less than the recreational harvest in all years since 1981 when recreational numbers have been recorded.

The recreational releases have generally increased over time, reaching the peak of about 1 million in '08, and about have that many were released in 2009. Again, the PRT has provided input throughout the development of the omnibus and will continue to provide input if needed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Do we have a motion to **approve the Spanish Mackerel FMP Review? Motion by Mr. Cole; seconded by Dr. Laney**. Any discussion? All those in favor of the motion. **The motion passes**. Moving on in our agenda, now Melissa is going to present the SEAMAP 2011-2015 Management Plan for our approval.

SEAMAP 2011-2015 MANAGEMENT PLAN

MS. MELISSA PAINE: I'm going to be as brief as possible. You were provided this management plan in your meeting materials so hopefully you've had some time to review that. I just wanted to very generally go over where SEAMAP is now and where we hope to go with the program and the purpose of the management plan.

Just a real quick background – you probably already know this – SEAMAP is a cooperative state/federal university program that is conducted in the Southeastern U.S. and Caribbean for the purpose of collecting, managing and disseminating fishery-independent data. It's a region-wide mechanism for monitoring long-term status and trends of populations as well as habitats within the region.

It does this by conducting surveys of economically important fish and shellfish species and those habitats. The goals and objectives, some of the main ones of SEAMAP are its intent is to maximize the effective capability of ongoing fishery-independent surveys and creating those where they are needed.

Another important objective is to optimize coordination and deployment of sampling platforms used throughout the region to best maximize efforts underway. Finally, another important objective is to provide access to the collected data through providing documents as well as providing access to these data bases.

There are three components of SEAMAP; South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean. Each component operates independently within its own region, but then at least annually there is coordination between the components. The South Atlantic has several ongoing projects meant to support the objectives of SEAMAP; the longest of which is the coastal survey conducted out of South Carolina DNR.

For the length of SEAMAP, for the most part, this has been the only funded survey SEAMAP South Atlantic. Recently in 2008 the whole SEAMAP Program received increased funding and was able to improve sampling of the coastal survey by increasing station numbers as well as collecting age, growth and diet information of weakfish, croaker and southern kingfish.

Actually we've just decided for 2011 to take a break in sampling diet and add bluefish, kind and Spanish mackerel age, growth, and diet data. Some other surveys that we're able to help fund now are the state surveys conducted by North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia for adult red drum, and those are via longline surveys. Those surveys also collect quite a few sharks. Another survey has been under the SEAMAP umbrella for most of its history but hasn't been funded is the Pamlico Sound Survey, but again with increasing funding we're now able to support a biologist to support that nearshore trawl survey.

Another effort is coordinating with MARMAP, which is also out of South Carolina, and that is the Marine Resources Monitoring and Assessment Program. They have an ongoing reef fish survey which SEAMAP is now able to help provide funding to support complementary surveys to expand the area already covered by the MARMAP survey, and that's to address the snapper grouper complex. They're also collecting some information on bottom mapping.

Another effort is the Southeast Regional Taxonomic Center. That's a curated collection of specimens taken in the South Atlantic Bight. With SEAMAP funding it has begun to collect diet samples and to process those. With increased funding they could expand to be a processing lab for age and growth.

The winter tagging cruise has long been under the SEAMAP umbrella, but has not been funded with SEAMAP funds, but in this management plan we hope to actually fund the tagging cruise if we receive more funding. Data management – given the increase in the number of projects that SEAMAP South Atlantic is undergoing, the data management needs have increased and the workgroup of the

committee has been working on trying to get a data base standardized for all these projects as well as make that data base available online.

These are touched on in the management plan, but just to give you a brief idea of some of the applications of SEAMAP data, it is becoming more important and being used more in stock assessments and most recently in the Croaker SEDAR. The South Atlantic Council actually uses a lot of the bottom mapping data of SEAMAP in the habitat characterization and ecosystem modeling.

Some future uses of SEAMAP with the new newer red drum longline surveys, as that progresses, that data will become more important for stock assessments for both red drum and coastal sharks. The 2011-2015 plan sets out to be a guideline for identifying priorities for fishery-independent data collection efforts in the SEAMAP region.

The different components work together to try to most appropriately use the available resources. Not to go into too much detail from the management plan, but it generally goes over the goals, management policies, and priorities for the southeast region. The plan also serves as a resource to document what the history of SEAMAP is as well as some of the accomplishments, including resource surveys, data management and specimen archiving.

I just wanted to touch on quickly that it also talks about expanding SEAMAP activities, and that is profiled in Chapter 4 where all the SEAMAP committees from the different components develop lists of future projects that they might be able to undertake given whatever the funding situation may be, so those three different levels are maintain, expand and then proposing new data collection. Under Level 1, that's just to maintain the current programs at their existing level, but this also takes into account trying to not have any of those programs backslide and so accounting for increasing survey costs and things like that.

But one issue is an issue for the South Atlantic is the aging research vessels that are used for all of the different projects, and so that is a need that is forthcoming fairly soon as many costs are used to try to upkeep the existing vessels. If there is a way for a dedicated research vessel to be situated in the South Atlantic, it would not only support the ongoing SEAMAP activities but it would actually be a great use with the winter tagging cruise. We could use a vessel for that.

UPDATE ON THE 2011 SEAMAP FUNDING

Just quickly, on Level 2 is to expand the current projects to collect additional data on those existing platforms, and this really touches on one of the main objectives of SEAMAP is to maximize what efforts are already underway and to optimize what is already going on. As I said before, we're starting to collect more diet information and that could be expanded to some of the other surveys besides the coastal survey, collecting more environment measurements.

Both of these feed into the movement towards ecosystem-based management. The other effort that SEAMAP is hoping to take a new direction is to expand coordination efforts with these other agencies such as MARMAP, as I mentioned before. SAFIS is a new effort out of the Beaufort Lab, the Southeast Fishery-Independent Survey. It's also addressing snapper grouper. SECOORA is an ocean observing alliance as well as council interests.

Finally, these are just a list of new data collection programs that the South Atlantic Committee has proposed given any increase in funding. If we do get more funding, we will go with Level 1 and 2 and then Level 3 would be completed after Level 1 and 2 would be addressed. Just as an overview, the SEAMAP Program has been around for while. It has matured, it is being refined now to even better suit its original purpose.

I think it has always tried to support stock assessments and that's improving now. The next direction they're moving is to expand to more species, increasing the use of data, by making that data readily available to other partners, and then providing information for ecosystem-based management and connecting states SEDAR efforts and the council. I would be happy to take any questions now or later, depending on what our time is.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Do we have any pressing questions now about this? If we don't have any pressing questions, we would need a **motion to approve the 2011-2015 SEAMAP Management Plan**. Wilson.

DR. LANEY: So moved, Madam Chairman.

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Seconded by Robert Boyles. Anymore discussion on that motion? Seeing none, all in favor of that motion please raise your right hand; those against; null; abstain. **The motion passes**. Now Melissa is going to give us an update on the 2011 SEAMAP funding.

MS. PAINE: This will be very brief as there is no new news on funding, as you all are probably aware. I did just want to provide the allocation that the SEAMAP South Atlantic Committee had proposed at their last meeting in August of 2010, which just outlines how they would allocate funds given the same level of funding from last year. That was purely informational.

OTHER BUSINESS

CHAIRMAN McCRAWLEY: Thank you. That brings us to other business. Since I'm the one that asked to put the red drum action for Florida on the table, I'm going to ask Bob Beal to take over the chairmanship of this board. Thanks.

MR. BEAL: Thank you, Jessica; and whenever you're ready, if you want to introduce the issue, that would be great.

MS. McCRAWLEY: The state of Florida as a result of a recent state stock assessment that we had that was conducted by Mike Murphy – we periodically do red drum stock assessments for the state. Mike Murphy was also the chair of the regional red drum stock assessment. As a result of a very positive stock assessment that we had for Florida, we're looking at making management changes, and our commission will be taking that up on April 6th.

What we're actually looking to do is dividing the state of Florida into four management areas. The reason that we're doing this is when we looked at the assessment on a region-wide basis, it seemed that maybe the northwest and northeast portions of the state were doing a little bit better than the southern parts of the state.

We have divided the state into our four spotted seatrout management regions. What we're looking to do is we're looking to keep our 18- to 27-inch slot limit, and we're looking to raise the bag limit from one to two fish in the two northern portions of the state. What our state stock assessment showed was that the fishery is in really great shape in the northeastern portion, which would be the Nassau through Flagler Counties.

We're looking at 76 percent escapement rate in that area. As I mentioned, we would be keeping the 18- to 27-inch size limit for all management areas of the state. We're also looking to establish an eight-fish

vessel limit statewide. We did an analysis on what that increase from one fish to two fish bag limit would do in the northeastern portion of the state.

That analysis showed us that we would drop – if every person that is currently keeping one red drum chose to now keep two red drum, it would drop the escapement from 76 percent to 70 percent escapement, so still a very high escapement percentage in that northeastern portion of the state.

These management changes that our commission is considering for that April 6th meeting – and that would be final action – with these changes, we would still have the most restrictive regulations and our regulations would be somewhat similar to North Carolina except that we still don't allow commercial harvest of red drum in Florida. I was looking for board approval of this action to make this change. I can entertain any questions or make a motion.

MR. BEAL: Just as a bit of background, Amendment 2 requires all states to bring forward any changes to their red drum management programs for approval by the board prior to implementation. Robert Boyles.

MR. BOYLES: Mr. Chairman, **I make a motion that the board approve the proposed changes to Florida's red drum management.**

MR. BEAL: Spud Woodward seconded the motion. Robert or Spud, would you like to make any comments on your motion as the maker or seconder.

MR. BOYLES: Mr. Chairman, I'm struck by the fact that they've gotten a good technical review. I know Mike Murphy has been heavily involved in the regional stock assessment process. I'm comfortable with the recommendations from their scientific and their technical staff. I am cognizant of the fact as well that this is a management regime that is very similar to North Carolina's but without the commercial harvest, so I think it's consistent with the advice that we've gotten from the stock assessments.

DR. LANEY: It all sounds good to me. I just wanted to confirm Mike still is the Florida representative on the Red Drum Technical Committee, correct, and so my presumption is the technical committee has reviewed this already? Did we get any input from the technical committee? I'm real comfortable with it since Mike is on the technical committee, but our normal process is that the technical committee would have reviewed it and provided some input to us.

MS. McCAWLEY: It has not been reviewed by the technical committee, but you are correct, Mike Murphy is the – I think he is the chair of the Red Drum Technical Committee. He is the one that completed our assessment. When we went back and looked at the regional analysis, he took some comments that came from the peer reviewers of the coast-wide assessment that was done here by Atlantic States and updated our assessment based on those comments that he got. I would say they're very similar.

DR. LANEY: To that point, I think that's all good information. I just know that around other boards certain states have been hammered for bringing proposals before the board without the benefit of technical committee review. Given that Mike is on the technical committee and given that he was following the advice of the peer review, I guess I don't have a problem with it in this instance, but for consistency sake I just thought I would mention it for the record.

MR. BOYLES: To provide further information on the record, recall that the target for red drum management is 40 percent escapement; is that right, Ms. McCawley?

MS. McCAWLEY: I believe so, yes. There is an SPR percentage and an escapement percentage, and, yes, it's 40 percent I think escapement and SPR.

MR. BOYLES: Followup, Mr. Chairman, and I understand according to the calculations from FWRI you're still – with this new management measure still at 70 percent escapement, which is well above the target.

MS. McCAWLEY: That's correct.

MR. BEAL: Any other comments on the motion? Rob.

MR. O'REILLY: I'm a little bit like Wilson's suggestion there, but at the same time I know how specialized this particular technical activity is. I did serve on the Red Drum Technical Committee in the past, so I guess all I would say is I can support this and hope that the information just is sent to the committee so they know about it and are informed and then go from there.

MR. BEAL: We can definitely send out the information once we get it from Florida. Any other comments on the motion? Seeing none, all those in favor of approving Florida's proposal please raise

your right hand; any objections; abstentions, three abstentions; any null votes. **The motion carries.**

ADJOURNMENT

I think that is the final business before the South Atlantic Board today, so the board stands adjourned. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 12:40 o'clock p.m., March 23, 2011.)