

FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Isla Bella Beach Resort
1 Knights Key Boulevard MM 47
Marathon, FL 33050
Tuesday, February 18, 2020

FINAL MINUTES

SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL MISSION STATEMENT
(adopted unanimously, December 6, 2005)

Council Members

Boating Industry: Bruce Popham (Chair)
Tourism – Lower Keys: Clint Barras (Vice-Chair)
Citizen at Large – Lower Keys: Mimi Stafford
Citizen at Large – Middle Keys: George Garrett
Citizen at Large – Upper Keys: David Makepeace
Conservation and Environment: Ken Nedimyer
Conservation and Environment: Chris Bergh
Diving – Lower Keys: Joe Weatherby
Diving – Upper Keys: Elena Rodriguez
Education and Outreach: Jessica Dockery (absent)
Elected County Official: Michelle Coldiron
Fishing – Charter Fishing Flats Guide: Will Benson
Fishing – Charter Sports Fishing: Steven Leopold
Fishing – Commercial – Marine/Tropical: Ben Daughtry
Fishing – Commercial – Shell/Scale: Justin Bruland (absent)
Fishing – Recreational: Ken Reda
Research and Monitoring: David Vaughan
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration: Jerry Lorenz
Submerged Cultural Resources: Corey Malcom
Tourism – Upper Keys: Andy Newman

Council alternates (present)

Boating Industry: Karen Thurman
Citizen at Large – Lower Keys: Stephen Patten
Citizen at Large – Upper Keys: Suzy Roebing
Conservation and Environment: Caroline McLaughlin
Conservation and Environment: Tracy Allen
Fishing – Charter Fishing Flats Guide: Daniel Dawson
Fishing – Charter Sports Fishing: Richard Gomez
Fishing – Commercial – Shell/Scale: Jeff Cramer
Research and Monitoring – Shelley Krueger
Submerged Cultural Resources: Diane Silvia
Tourism – Upper Keys: Lisa Mongelia

Agency Representatives (present)

Florida Department of Environmental Protection: Joanna Walczak, Nicolas Parr
FWC Division of Law Enforcement: David Dipre
NOAA Office of Law Enforcement: Kenny Blackburn, Mitchell Robb
NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service: Heather Blough
National Park Service, Everglades: Christopher Kavanagh
U.S. Coast Guard: Phil Goodman (auxiliary)
U.S. Navy: Ed Barham

Municipalities

City of Layton: Cynthia Lewis
Islamorada, Village of Islands: Deb Gillis

I. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL OF OCTOBER DRAFT MEETING NOTES

MOTION (passed)

A motion to approve the December 10th, 2019 minutes was made by Karen Thurman and seconded by Chris Bergh. The minutes were approved.

A request was made to modify the agenda to begin with advisory council business before moving on to honor Don Kincaid. A motion to adopt the agenda was made by Michelle Coldiron and seconded by Ken Nedimyer. The agenda was adopted with noted change.

Presentations can be found at: <https://floridakeys.noaa.gov/sac/meetings.html>.

Chairperson's Comments

Chairperson Popham acknowledged sanctuary staff for hosting this meeting and all of the members and alternates for coming prepared to discuss the Restoration Blueprint. Today will focus on prioritizing key policy issues from the council to be discussed at our next special meeting in March.

Public comment will take place this afternoon for advisory council related business. Restoration Blueprint official comment closed in January.

Chairperson Popham, as outgoing chair, shared that he has been a part of this council since 2002, and has appreciated all of the work done since that time. He challenged the council to make tough decisions in protecting this area. Superintendent Fangman recognized Chairperson Popham for all of his work over the last 20 years of his work with the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries on a voluntary basis. The entire sanctuary team wishes him well on his new adventures.

II. SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL BUSINESS

Lt. Joe Scarpa and Tracy Dunn from the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement recognized four Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) officers for assistance in protecting Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. Officers recognized were Jason Richards, Jeremy Foell, Jessica Sutter and Ryan Trueblood.

The recruitment period for new advisory council members has closed. Sanctuary staff are in the process of vetting those applications and new members will be seated in April. Two of the outgoing seats are the current chair and vice chair. Nominations for these officer positions can be made by members and governmental seats, alternates may nominate and vote if their member is not present. Nominations will take place in April with the new officers assuming their roles in June.

Caroline McLaughlin reminded the council that the Army Corps of Engineers currently has a proposal out for public comment about water flow moving south to Florida Bay. The National Parks Conservation Association has additional information and sign on letters if anyone is interested in learning more.

III. MEMORIAM: DON KINCAID

Chairperson Popham invited the council to participate in a moment of silence for one of our recently passed council members, Don Kincaid. Mr. Kincaid was a long standing member of the Florida Keys Sanctuary Advisory Council and his contributions to this body will not be forgotten. Council members were asked to share memories and stories of Don in memoriam.

IV. PROTECTING PARADISE: TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL SUSTAINABILITY CAMPAIGN

Andy Newman, Media Relations Director, Monroe County Tourist Development Council

Mr. Newman explained that the TDC has recently begun producing a television show called Florida Keys: Protecting Paradise. The hour long program has aired on Destination America and WGVN. One 10 minute segment of the program was shown to the council. This segment featured interviews with knowledgeable fishing guide Will Benson, sanctuary superintendent Sarah Fangman, naturalist guide Bill Keogh and others. The interviewees emphasized the importance of the Keys diverse marine ecosystem and its connection to the Florida Everglades. The program also provided background on the establishment and function of the FKNMS and the environmental issues and concerns that exist today. Mr. Newman also described the Florida Keys Superfan Coral Reef Restoration Trip Giveaway aired at the Super Bowl a few weeks ago. The TDC had over 7,000 entries for the trip giveaway and got the message out to nearly a million people through social media.

Break

V. RESTORATION BLUEPRINT: ADVISORY COUNCIL ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATION ROLE AND PROCESS

Sarah Fangman, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

Superintendent Fangman thanked the advisory council for their involvement in the meetings and processes during the open comment period of the Restoration Blueprint. The goal of the session today will be to prioritize the many policies and proposals included in the blueprint. With these many elements, there will likely not be a consensus or agreement among every councilmember. However, this input will be utilized along with public comment, government agencies, and partners to inform the next draft of the Restoration Blueprint.

VI. RESTORATION BLUEPRINT: COMMENT AND CONSULTATION TO DATE

Beth Dieveney, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

Ms. Dieveney began with a review of the process to date including the advisory council working groups and action items over the last six years, and an overview of meetings and information sessions hosted by the sanctuary since the release of the blueprint. In total, over 32,000 individuals participated in this process by providing public comment.

Ms. Dieveney described a high level summary of comments received both in support and opposition to the proposals. General support for the need to take action was seen along with general opposition to take any action. Boundary expansion proposals saw both support and opposition, particularly related to Pulley Ridge and Tortugas regions. Sanctuary-wide regulations such as live rock aquaculture, discharge regulations, and emergency regulations did not see as many comments but were specific in nature. Historical resources permitting proposals were met with comments about the loss of ability for treasure hunters balancing with the protections of historical resources. Proposals to limit fish feedings from divers and vessels were met with general support for public safety, but opposition due to loss of educational opportunities. Marine zone regulations including no anchoring in SPA's and no anchor in the Key Largo Management areas were met with both support and opposition. Many of these comments called for clarified language, better education, and limits of blanket regulations. Limited entry proposals were met with general opposition, but comments did acknowledge the need to address number of users in the sanctuary. Certain marine zones in each region were highlighted based on the number of comments received. Many of these individual zones received mixed comments in support and opposition.

In addition, comments and input from government partners, councils, and agencies were reviewed including a timeline of many comments expected from these groups in the next few months. Ms. Dieveney also recognized the role of this council in the Restoration Blueprint process from the beginning release of the condition report in 2011.

Discussion

- A member asked about zones in the Marquesas region. Ms. Dieveney explained the mixed comments in that area were both in support and in opposition of the new zones.
- A member asked about cruise ship discharge. Ms. Dieveney explained that cruise ships cannot discharge grey water in state waters, and this proposal will expand that prohibition to the rest of sanctuary.

- A member asked about the term “general” presented. Ms. Dieveney explained that some proposals had higher support and some had higher opposition, but there has not been a ranking of percentage or tally completed at this time.
- Will the management plan aspects of this plan including mooring buoy management and enforcement be explained in the next draft? Ms. Dieveney clarified that a companion document will be drafted to help answer those questions.
- A member reminded the council that the quality of the various comments means as much if not more than the quantity of comments. Superintendent Fangman added that a deeper dive into the comments on a certain area can be completed if this council feels that would be necessary. Ms. Dieveney also noted that some comments are individual, and some are from organizations. All of these comments are valid and taken into consideration when evaluating this proposal.
- A member asked if there were certain areas with near consensus. Ms. Dieveney described the high level of support for education, mooring buoys, and enforcement and the high level of opposition to large blanket regulations.

VII. RESTORATION BLUEPRINT: ADVISORY COUNCIL PRIORITY ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES

Mimi D’Iorio, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

Ms. D’Iorio, acting as a facilitator with NOAA, assisted the council with prioritizing the issues that have arisen through the Restoration Blueprint process. She reminded the council that the exercise today will help capture the member’s constituent positions, the thoughts of the council as a whole, and will help inform the next meeting where the items prioritized today will be discussed.

The first exercise focused on identifying priority issues from each constituency. Members and alternates worked together to identify up to 10 topics they would like to discuss further with sanctuary staff. Council members were asked to write out their priority topics and arrange them by theme.

Lunch

VIII. RESTORATION BLUEPRINT: ADVISORY COUNCIL – SETTING PRIORITIES

Over lunch, sanctuary staff compiled topics and organized into single line items. Advisory council members were asked to address any additional topics that were not raised in the previous exercise. Next, members were given 10 colored dots to begin prioritizing each issue.

After these processes, the list of priorities included: Long Key / Tennessee reef, carrying capacity, water quality, channel marking, user fees, shoreline / idle speed, protecting large contiguous habitats, iconic reef restoration, funding, Carysfort reef, incorporating Pulley Ridge, mooring buoys, and artificial reefs.

Members were then asked to further refine priorities with five dots. Priorities from this process included: incorporating Pulley Ridge, protecting large contiguous habitats, carry capacity, artificial reefs, shoreline / idle speed, funding, user fees, Blue Star operators in restricted zones, channel marking, private salvage shipwreck, water quality, turtle foraging area, Western Dry Rocks, general marine zone intent / purpose / GPS, Alligator reef, Carysfort reef, and Key Largo management area.

These priorities will be used to determine the agenda for the March special meetings. Ms. Dieveney reminded the council that there are many other items that may not be on this list, but will be informed by public comment and partner agency feedback.

Break

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

Stacy Aguilar (statement read by Suzy Roebing)

As a long-time resident to the Florida Keys, I spend a lot of time on the water diving usually making at least one dive trip per week. In past years, there has been multiple mooring balls on the Adolphus Busch wreck. There were three marked for diving and one marked for fishing. Recently, the number of mooring balls was down to only two and too often they are in use by fisherman who stay on the balls for extended amounts of time. If another dive boat is using a ball it's customary to tie off to one another so all can enjoy a nice dive but in the case of fisherman, you cannot. My last three attempts to dive the wreck have all resulted in missing out on the dive. After planning the dive trip, loading proper gear to dive the wreck, arranging schedules, and heading out only to end up turning around and heading home since the balls were already taken by fisherman. On our last attempt to make the dive, we noticed there is now only one ball remaining. We have tried waiting for the other boats to leave, sometimes waiting for over an hour, but our schedules are tight and we had to leave abandoning our dive plan. It would be great if the number of mooring balls located at the Adolphus Busch was corrected so more than one boat can enjoy the wreck at a time. I have enclosed pictures of the mooring balls being used by fisherman instead of divers making it impossible to dive the wreck.

Ross Boueck, Bonefish Tarpon Trust

Mr. Boueck advocates for a fishing closure at Western Dry Rocks. A closure is not only necessary to fishing, but it will result in more fish, bigger fish and the least amount of management possible to achieve those goals. Recreational fishing in the Florida Keys has changed dramatically over the past 10 years with more and more people fishing and tourists breaking new records every year. We're getting better and better at catching fish and the technology is more efficient with side scan sonar and faster fishing boats. On top of this, a lot of the habitats for fish are degraded. And water quality and vessel damage in shallow water are issues. In a nutshell, we have fewer fish and we are better at catching fish. We're having a hard time with traditional approach to fishing management. He used permit as an example. This species shows signs of being overfished even though there is a seasonal closure. The most effective management tool is to protect the spawning aggregation. This allows large breeder fish to reproduce and rebuild the stock for the next generation. Mutton snapper have the same issue. This one area protects the seven game fish species that spawn there. Protecting this area will maximize our ability to protect these species because so many species spawn there. He supports

working with state partners to see this closure pushed through to protect spawning fish and appreciates the council's time.

Gerald (Gerry) Ward

Mr. Ward has been involved in the NEPA process since the 1970s. He is based in Key West. This is the 1990 Congressional Act, which was then approved by the executive branch and produced a study of six years. The study resulted in the first plan and a resolution by the internal improvement trust fund State of Florida resolution in 1997. That document is 4 pages. Later in the year, a co-trustee agreement document was produced and is only a few pages. He seriously suggests that each person visit the NOAA website and read both of these documents before the next meeting. These documents provide some excellent guidance on many of the issues that are being discussed today. He believes that someone mentioned that there are other levels of government that can take care of some of the problems that you have. The topic of Airbnb's, for example, has been mentioned by Heather Carruthers and is being examined by the county. He recommends that council members follow the guidance of the resolution. These documents will outline what should be in the plan. Unfortunately, you failed to do another plan, which was called for by 2001. Tomorrow the FWC meeting will be held and will be addressing the restoration blueprint. FWC has regulations with the Department of Interior for state waters in Biscayne National Park. This information is found in a 50 page document that is a great example to look at in advance of next month. Lastly, Vice Chair Clint Barras has announced his intention to run for state representative in District 120 in the Florida House of Representatives. Getting someone with knowledge of environmental issues in Tallahassee is probably a solution to this problem.

Mr. Ward added that the two most important people in the room are Joanna Walczak and Nick Parr, the co-trustees for the State of Florida. He doesn't think you have heard from them, but the co-trustee agreement between NOAA and the State and the resolution clearly puts them in charge.

Troy Testa

Mr. Testa has been coming down to the Keys since he was five years old, which means he has been coming down here for 45 years. He has seen the demise of water quality. He has been diving every shipwreck and reef from Miami all the way to Key West. He has had the privilege to dive the most amazing waters of the world and has seen the demise of the reef come and go. It comes and goes with nature. He has seen it die and seen it come back. Right now, we have lost a lot of reef and the water quality is a huge issue here. He runs a treasure ship himself. He has been a treasure salvor for over 30 years. He uses blowers. In a hundred years, not as much damage is done to the reef by a blower as compared to one day from a hurricane. In the Sebastian Fort Pierce area, there is coral growing in the crevasses that he opened up with the blower. Hurricanes move sand into those areas. He feels like being a treasure hunter, people feel that he is damaging things. He feels that the blowers open up areas that are covered by sand and that creates artificial reefs that were once a real reefs. He appreciates the opportunity to show you how he enhances coral growth with the use of air and water movement to minimize the impacts of the sand/sediments on the reef that has killed the reef over the 300 years. There are opportunities to salvage what our history is. Shipwrecks create reefs in situ; they are artificial reefs. Nature is amazing and man cannot fight nature. But, we can do our job in an ecological

manner to bring to life things left on the bottom for 300 years for the public to see. It's all there. He is a wrecker; he was born a wrecker and will probably die a wrecker. He was probably a wrecker 300 years ago and now he is here again. It is similar to fishermen who don't want to have fishing taken away. He doesn't want to see his ability to get a permit taken away. He wants to operate in a professional, ecological manner. There are people today as we speak out on the reef digging holes and you will never see the items. They will go into private collections and/or be melted down and will be gone forever. You can't do this all alone. Empower people like me to be your eyes and ears. Having people like him see what is going and help people do things by the book. He has an archeological degree and is also an ecological. Let us help you.

Rick Gage

Mr. Gage just found out about this meeting this morning and he drove up from Key West. He is with All Keys Boaters' Alliance. We were formed in November in when a thousand Keys residents attended the meeting at the high school in Key West. We were basically told by Sarah Fangman that the public input would not matter and that our comments would not matter. This was said by Sarah Fangman herself. There was local outcry for someone to do something. The plans that were proposed sent shock waves through the local community. We are the people who support the tourists who come down here to have fun and when we are done taking care of all these folks we want to also have time on the water. When our ability to have fun is being taken away we had to do something. We formed the alliance with the purpose of letting you know what the local community thinks. There are lot of things in the blueprint that they shake their heads out. They are out there all the time and have questions about the validity of what is being proposed and the motives behind some of these pushes. It's more about what the sanctuary has not done in the Florida Keys over the past 27 years. For 27 years, this group has been in control of the Florida Keys. You only have 3, 4, 5 officers total in the Keys. If you see an FWC officer on the water, it's like seeing a leprechaun. It doesn't happen. We still can't determine the amount of money coming the sanctuary on a yearly basis. Boaters run aground in the backcountry all the time and you would think that after 27 years there would be a couple of channel markers in the backcountry off Key West. He runs aground. You can't see well all the time. He and his friends are weekend boaters and they are told that they are causing all kinds of environmental damage. He hasn't seen a fish kill, dead turtles or dolphins. They see sharks on the sandbar and the fish are swimming among us. Access to Marvin Key may not be closed but the channels coming into Marvin are closed. Cruise ships are coming into port in Key West every day. All of those folks cover themselves with sunscreen. They are white with sunscreen and when they return to the ship, they shower and that sunscreen goes right out on to the reef. You should protect the local people who are out here working hard every day. We want to make this work, but please don't take this away.

X. UPCOMING MEETING AND CLOSING REMARKS

Chairperson Popham acknowledged council members and sanctuary staff for their efforts at the meeting today. The next meeting will be a special session on March 24 and 25, 2020.

Adjourn.

Agency Updates

Florida Department of Environmental Protection

DEP – Office of Resilience-and Coastal Protection

- Tallahassee Leadership changes - We are excited to welcome:
 - Adam Blalock, the new Deputy Secretary for Ecosystem Restoration
 - Alex Reed, the new Director of the Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection
 - DEP’s Beaches, Inlets, and Ports program is combining with RCP to ensure that all coastal programs are closely aligned within the agency.
- On January 30th, Governor DeSantis, DEP Secretary Noah Velenstein, FWC Executive Director Eric Sutton, and other partners to announce a new initiative to promote awareness and protection of Florida’s Coral Reef ecosystem. As part of the awareness campaign for Florida’s Coral Reef, DEP created an interactive display which we showcased at the Super Bowl Live Environmental Village in Miami this week, and will transport to other sites in the coming months. DEP has also developed a new website, www.FloridasCoralReef.org, where visitors can learn more about Florida’s Coral Reef, ways they can protect it, and the larger, multi-agency efforts to preserve and restore it. The website is part of a partnership between DEP, FWC, FKNMS, NOAA Coral Restoration and Conservation Program, Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium, FORCE BLUE, VISIT FLORIDA, and the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, among many others. Additionally, the announcement kicked off the 100 Yards of Hope ecosystem restoration project – where partners from FORCE Blue, University of Miami, Frost Science Museum, DEP, and others are partnering to restore a football field size reef near Miami.
- Lignumvitae Key Aquatic Preserve manager Katy Cummings and RCP staff have begun the process of updating the management plan for this area. This was kicked-off with a public forum on January 16th at Founder’s Park where 10 residents of the Upper Keys participated in activities to identify management issues. There will be more opportunities for public engagement as the process proceeds.

DEP - Florida State Parks

- Lignumvitae State Park has secured a five-year contract to continue with seagrass restoration in the park. We also have secured approximately \$180,000 of funding from the Division and the District. We are moving forward with the funding secured through the Keys Restoration Fund (\$430,000) to conduct seagrass restoration at multiple sites, reinstalling No Motor Zone signs, and installing additional channel markers in Indian Key Channel. Updated aerial photographs have already been accomplished as part of this funding.
- An in-house restoration project in Lignumvitae began in October.
- An update on the status of the restoration that we have conducted since 2005;
 - We have conducted seagrass restoration at 50 sites, and of those 35 have achieved the restoration goal of 50% or greater seagrass cover, 3 were abandoned due to degradation of the surrounding habitat, leaving only 12 that have yet to achieve the restoration goal. This is a 70% success rate. Most exciting is that of the eleven

projects conducted at Peterson Key Bank, there are only four phases that have not yet achieved the restoration goal.

- The Bahia Honda project B wetland restoration project has been completed. This consisted of the restoration of 13.87 acres of mangrove habitat on the bayside of the park: removing spoil piles, installing culverts, providing connectivity of mangrove habitats and enhancing the habitat. This is the second phase of wetland restoration conducted at the park.
- The coral outplanting project at Ft. Zachary Taylor continues to show success. We conducted a survey in August and observed only a few colonies that were showing signs of bleaching. Many of the discs have coalesced and are in great condition
- We conducted the Great Annual Fish Counts at the San Pedro Underwater Archaeological Preserve State Park
- John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park and Dagny Johnson Key Largo Hammock Botanical State Park now have a friends group. The mission of this group is to support the environmental education, natural resource protection and recreational opportunity efforts at the parks. More information can be found at www.pennekampparkfriends.org.
- The Division of Recreation and Parks has allocated \$491,000 to the habitat restoration projects at Dagny Johnson Key Largo Hammock Botanical State Park. It is anticipated that this funding will complete filling of the entrance canal at the old Port Bougainville marina site and continue the efforts to fill the Carysfort Marina site.
- Welcome Lu Dodson! Lu is the new park manager for Islamorada State Parks (including Lignumvitae Key Botanical State Park), and Overseas Heritage Trail.

NOAA National Fisheries Service, Heather Blough

- NOAA Fisheries recently published several rules proposed by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, which:
 - Allow new types of sea turtle release gear to be used in the snapper-grouper fishery effective January 8, 2020. The same allowances took effect in the Gulf of Mexico in early June 2019. Click [here](#) for details.
 - Modify commercial regulations for blueline tilefish, snowy grouper, greater amberjack, red porgy, vermilion snapper, almaco jack, lesser amberjack, banded rudderfish, queen snapper, silk snapper, blackfin snapper, and gray triggerfish effective February 26, 2020. Companion regulations for recreational snapper-grouper fisheries are under review. If implemented, those regulations will limit the harvest of any one species to 10 fish within the 20-fish aggregate bag limit, remove the minimum size limits for queen snapper, silk snapper, and blackfin snapper, and reduce the minimum size limit for gray triggerfish in federal waters off the east coast of Florida. Click [here](#) for details on new commercial regulations; [here](#) for details on proposed changes to recreational regulations.
 - Extend the commercial and recreational red grouper spawning season closures in federal waters off North Carolina and South Carolina, and establish a region-wide 200-pound gutted weight commercial trip limit for that species effective March 9, 2020.
 - Establish new or modified weekly electronic reporting requirements for charter/headboat vessels with federal coastal migratory pelagic, dolphin and wahoo, and snapper-grouper permits effective September 1, 2020. ***No action is required at this time. NOAA Fisheries will send more information this spring/summer. In the meantime, please call 1-833-707-1632 with any questions.***

- The South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Councils are in the final stages of the National Marine Sanctuary Act consultation process for the Florida Keys Restoration Blueprint.
 - The South Atlantic Council will discuss proposed changes to fishing regulations at their March 2-6, 2020, meeting in Jekyll Island, Georgia. Click [here](#) to join that meeting via webinar.
 - The Gulf Council discussed proposed changes at its January 2020 meeting, after hearing reports from its various Standing and Special Scientific and Statistical Committees, as well as Reef Fish, Coral, Shrimp, and Spiny Lobster Advisory Panels. Those reports are accessible [here](#). The Council's February 21 comment letter is accessible [here](#).

- Also, the Gulf Council is asking the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to consider removing the current two fish per vessel restriction the state has placed on African Pompano in federal waters of the Gulf in response to public comment requesting the Council assume management of that species; and initiated work on a document that will increase lane snapper catch limits after its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviews updated projections during its March 11, 2020 meeting. Click [here](#) to join the March SSC meeting via webinar. Click [here](#) to hear Council discussion of these issues at their March 30-April 2 meeting.