

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SNAPPER GROUPE AMENDMENT 14 (MPA) PUBLIC HEARING

**Islamorada, Florida
January 22, 2004**

Summary Minutes

The Marine Protected Area public meeting for the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened in Islamorada, Florida, on Thursday, January 22, 2004, and was called to order by Chairman Anthony L. Iarocci.

Mr. Iarocci: Good evening ladies, and gentlemen. I am Tony Iarocci, and today I am acting as chairperson on behalf of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

Other members of the meeting board are as follows: Dr. Roy Crabtree from NMFS is sitting to my left. Kerry O'Malley and Julie O'Dell are here also. And Captain Bill Kelly sitting in the back is a member of the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel of the council. Thank you for attending, Bill.

The purpose of this meeting of this informational public hearing is to give you the opportunity to comment on social and economic impacts that may be associated with specific marine protected area sites that are proposed to be included in the Snapper Grouper Amendment 14.

It is the council's intent to gather information that is not available through traditional data sources -- logbooks, surveys, et cetera -- so that the council has the best possible information before any final decision is made.

This meeting is different from a traditional public hearing in that the council will not be making any final decisions after these informational public hearings, and not all measures, expected to be included in Snapper Grouper Amendment 14, are included for comments during these informational public hearings.

A second round of public hearings, likely to be held later this year, will take a more traditional format and enable you to comment on all alternatives, including proposed MPAs to be considered in Snapper Grouper Amendment 14.

Your input concerning social and economic impacts of specific proposed marine protected area sites will be collected and used in developing Amendment 14 to the Snapper Grouper Fisheries Management Plan, the East Hump Area. And we're not here to debate the pros and cons of MPAs.

This informational public hearing will be conducted in the following manner:

First, Kerry O'Malley of council staff will present a brief overview of the issue. Following the council presentation, there will be a short period of time allowed for your questions.

Then I will call you to the podium to make a short statement on the specific impacts of the proposed marine protected area that is likely to most affect this area, the East Hump and the Unnamed Hump.

Everyone who wishes to provide input will be called upon. After everyone has had a chance to speak on the East Hump, Unnamed Hump MPA, we will then proceed through the list of the other eight proposed MPAs in the same manner until everyone has had a chance to provide input on the impacts of all proposed MPAs. I thank you for taking the time to attend. And with that said, Kerry.

Ms. O'Malley: Can you hear me okay, now? It wasn't on before. First of all, I want to make sure, if you didn't pick up this informational public hearing document on your way in, please make sure you get one. It has all this information.

I know that we scheduled this at the same time as some tournaments, banquets and things like that. If you know of people who want these, we have plenty. We have tons. You'd do us a favor by taking them off our hands and handing them around, so grab some on the way out and put them wherever you think people will see them.

And if you look on Page 38 and 39, that discusses the site here that we're talking about, the East Hump and the Unnamed Hump. We're going to do a little background information in my presentation just so that we're all on the same page, because this marine protected area process has been going on for a long time.

I recognize a lot of these faces and I know a lot of you know what's going on but some people might be new to the process so I want to catch us all up-to-speed.

A couple things first, as Tony mentioned, this isn't a traditional public hearing. I want to make it real clear. No final decision is being made after this round of public hearings. There will be another round of public hearings later this year or early next year, and that's when final decisions will be made.

This is different because we're here to gather information from you, which we're then going to use as data. We're going to use it for analysis in our public hearing document and then turn it back out for the public to look at. So it's a little different than how we usually do it.

All the management measures that may go into Snapper Grouper Amendment 14, which is the amendment in which we're expected to look at marine protected areas, are not open for discussion tonight. They are not in the document. And I'm going to go into the reason why that's the case here in just one more slide.

These are traditional, just so you know, in the fact that we are audio recording and video recording these public hearings. All council members from all states will receive copies of video tapes of these public hearings.

The council members from North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia will also be able to hear your input on this site and have that information at their disposal when the time does come to vote. And they will be transcribed.

It's a little confusing here for a second. Stick with me. But I think it's important that you know this, so you don't think that we're not trying to pull one over on you, because this is different than how we usually do it.

The council is in the process of developing two amendments right now to the snapper grouper fishery. One we call "Snapper Grouper Amendment 13B" and one "Snapper Grouper Amendment 14." I know that's bureaucratic. We haven't come up with better names than that yet.

Snapper Grouper 13B has been developed to meet the mandates of the Sustainable Fisheries Act Amendment, which is the amendment to the Magnuson Act. If you don't know, that's what we follow under to manage these species.

That's what we all operate under and the law we have to obey when we decide whether or not species are overfished and how we're going to rebuild them.

It was amended in 1996, and because of that, we need to go back to our fishery management plans, and we need to make new definitions of maximum sustainable yield and optimum yield and those measures, under which we manage.

A lot of it is really technical and bureaucratic, and it's stuff that most of us don't understand, so it's not straight-forward management measures like most people are used to. But management measures will result from the designation of whether or not a species is overfished or not overfished and things like that.

Originally, we started Amendment 13B to include all species in the snapper grouper complex. If you don't know, there are 72 species in that complex. We have jack. We have porgies and grunts and snapper grouper, tilefish. They're very varied. They all require very different management measures.

When the council knew Amendment 14 was going to be moving forward as well, the council had thought that maybe it was more appropriate that we take the deep water snapper grouper species out of Amendment 13B, issues such as MSY and OY and things like that, and move them into Amendment 14 where we're already dealing with marine protected areas for snapper grouper species, for the deep water species.

So, they may end up requiring more management measures for deep water species. The council recently just did this in October, so that will be determined down the line. Any management measures that will result would go out to another round of public hearings.

You will have an opportunity to comment like you always do with every fishery management plan. But those would be the more traditional fishery management measures, quotas, and other restrictions.

Just so we're all on the same page, I probably should have said this before, the deep water species that we're talking about are: speckled hind, snowy grouper, Warsaw grouper, misty grouper, yellowedged grouper, golden tilefish and blueline tilefish. So when we refer to "deep water snapper grouper species", those are the eight we mean.

The reason why we decided to look at marine protected areas for deep water species is because they're long-lived. The example that I give is yellowedged groupers, that one has been aged to be 85 years. They're slow growing, and they're late maturing. So these are all characteristics, and we need to manage them a little differently than other species that we manage.

Of course, as you know, because of the depth, traditional fishery management measures such as size limits and bag limits don't work because they don't make it back alive after release.

I'm going to try to breeze through this real quick because there are not that many of you here, and I'll talk longer than you guys will if I don't. The council has been looking at MPAs forever, since 1990 when our scientists that advise us told us that marine protected areas were really the only tool that was going to work to maintain the long-term age and size structure of these snapper grouper species.

But in 1990 this was still a new concept. The council did go out and hold scoping meetings on the concept and got a lot of mixed reviews. They certainly got a lot of reaction. And the council decided that they weren't quite ready to go that route at the time.

They asked for some scientific review on the concept. But they did decide at the time to sort of put it aside and not use it as a management tool. Later on came Snapper Grouper Amendments 8 and 9. For those of you who fish, you're familiar with these because they probably impacted you in some way.

Snapper Grouper Amendment 8 was the limited entry program for the commercial fishery, in which we required two permits to be traded in in order to get one which reduced the number of permits in the commercial fishery.

And Snapper Grouper Amendment 9 implemented a host of bag and size limits. Both were pretty -- they had a lot of effect on a lot of people. A lot of people still talk about them as being very severe.

So the council still hasn't taken severe actions to meet its goals. And it's still thinking about

maybe using MPAs as a tool. The council did go on to form an MPA Advisory Panel which is industry members, commercial and recreational, environmentalists.

As Tony mentioned before, Bill Kelly who is sitting in the audience, is one of our charter representatives on the Marine Protected Area Advisory Panel. They're very active. They meet often. It's been a little slow lately, but it's one of our larger panels.

And they've recommended to us -- two or three times they've voted that they think that the way to go is with marine protected areas for these deep water species. So we're getting the recommendation from them, we're getting the recommendation from our scientists. and three times the council has confirmed that this is the direction in which we need to go.

We need to just make sure, again, we're on the same page, because, especially living down here, you guys probably know better than anyone that there are a zillion definitions for what a marine protected area is or a marine reserve.

You guys have the Florida Keys Sanctuary. You have John Pennekampe. You guys definitely know better than anyone. I don't need to tell you when you're talking different forms of government, you're talking different definitions.

Here is another one. This is ours. It's that MPAs are a network of specific areas of marine environment that are reserved and managed for the primary purpose of aiding in the recovery of overfished stock and to ensure the persistence of healthy fish stocks, fisheries and habitats.

It probably doesn't really tell you much. It doesn't tell you what we're going to do, so this ought to help a little. The council has considered four types of marine protected areas as tools that they can use.

The first one is the one that most people are familiar with, the one most people are afraid of, it's a permanent area that's closed to any take. We call it a Type 1 marine protected area.

The second one is highlighted because that's what we're here to focus on tonight. It's the one that the council has chosen as its choice tool for managing deep water snapper grouper species. And that's what we call a Type 2 or a permanent closure with some take allowed.

In this case what that means is you would be prohibited from possessing or retaining snapper grouper or bottom fish, but you would be allowed to troll and do other kinds of fishing in the area. No bottom fishing is allowed. Trolling is allowed.

The third one is a limited duration closure with no take which would be, if we knew when they were spawning -- if we knew when some species we were concerned about was spawning -- we would shut down an area to everything during that spawning, open it up back to everything when the spawning was over.

And the third one is a limited duration closure with some take, meaning if we knew when

something was spawning, we would closure that area only to say harvest of snapper grouper species but allow trolling during that spawning time.

Again, we're here to focus on the second type tonight. The reason I have all this history in here, because I think it's important to know that we've had three rounds of public scoping meetings on marine protected areas.

This isn't a new thing with the council. We're not going to come down over night and try to sneak one by you. It has been 14 years. If you think that's sneaky, I don't know -- it looks kind of slow to me.

We've been also down here for informal meetings. You guys are sort of an interesting story in that we originally had picked another site to possibly look at for a marine protected area down here, somewhere called Islamorada Hump.

I don't know. I've heard some stories about it. And there was a little bit of controversy. There was a little bit of controversy over it. We got lots of calls, and people from your community got together, the commercial industry, the charter industry, the recreational industry, and said, "You've got to come down here. This is not going to work. It's going to kill us."

We came down here. We met informally a year and a half, maybe two years ago. And collectively they came up with a site that we now have, the Florida East Hump and Unnamed Hump, as a way to get around, still have the scientific benefit but maybe not have the economic and social impacts that the Islamorada Hump would have had.

So, you guys are actually a great example of how it can work, how the council doesn't make up its mind and then just do it. We may have to do that in Jacksonville. We were up there a couple nights ago, and we found out maybe we had a completely wrong spot.

It was right off an inlet, and they offered up another one that may be just as good and it may hurt people less. So, that's what the council is here to do. That's what we're here to do tonight, to make sure we can judge what the social and economic impacts are.

Really quick, as I said, in October, they did move some possible new management measures into the Snapper Grouper Amendment 14. Again, you will have a chance to comment on those later in the year through the traditional fishery management process.

That put up here, coming out to these informational public hearings to make sure we could get all the information from you on these MPAs before we develop the amendment. And we will expect to hold more public hearings later this year.

Real quickly, I'm just going to get through these very quickly. These are the nine sites. North Carolina sites. I do want to make sure, if anyone here fishes somewhere else, knows these other sites and has information and wants to talk about the impacts of them, you're perfectly allowed to.

You don't just need to talk about what's going on down here. We just know most people have spoken from where they live. But if you know something about the Snowy Wreck off of North Carolina, feel free to let us know.

Here are options off North Carolina. Here are options for sites off of South Carolina. You may notice there are three boxes. There are not three boxes, because the council wants to put three MPAs right there.

There are three boxes because those are three options and the council would end up choosing one if they were to move forward, not all three. And as we go out to public hearings, hopefully, we'll find out which ones have the least social and economic impact but still meet our scientific needs.

Another one off South Carolina with two options -- all these are about 60 miles off shore. Up north, mostly, these are sites where people are commercially bandit fishing for deep water snapper grouper species.

Because they're so far off shore, there's not a lot of recreational fishing. A little headboat fishing, but we'll certainly find out more about that when we do our public hearings up there.

This is one off of Brunswick, Georgia, again, about 60 miles off shore. These are the two in North Florida that I just spoke of. They're off of Jacksonville and St. Augustine. Those can be located straight out of the inlet, which we found out is not a popular thing to do.

This is one -- we had our public hearing on this the night before last -- called Sea Bass Rock. It's off the St. Lucie Inlet. It's the closest to shore. It's only nine miles off shore. But it does hold a bunch of deep water snapper grouper species according to a lot of the fishermen there that we work with.

Finally, the site we're here, hopefully, to talk about tonight, the East Hump and Unnamed Hump, so we'll get back to that in a second. We do have two sites, real quick. In all these scoping meetings and public meetings we've done, probably the question we've been asked the most is, why can't you just find some sand and stick -- an old bridge or an old aircraft carrier out there and close it down and not take our bottom away.

We hear that over and over and over again. Well, there's a lot of scientific debate over whether or not that would be an appropriate marine protected area, or whether or not that could actually do more harm.

So what the council has committed to do in this state is looking at how that may work while we're still doing traditional marine protected areas. So this box you see is off of North Carolina. It's very small, but it is just sand bottom.

There would potentially be an artificial reef there, and an MPA would be created around it. This

is different in that this is the only possible Type 1 marine protected area. No fishing at all would be allowed in this artificial marine protected area if it were created.

Finally, here is one of the first very deep water proposed artificial reef marine protected areas to see how artificial material may work as an MPA in deep water. Again, that's because the council really wanted to answer the public's questions about why can't we do this instead of taking our bottom.

Here is the thing that we're here for tonight, and we really need specific information. As Tony said, we've debated and debated whether or not MPAs are a good thing for 14 years. Now it's time to get to the nitty-gritty.

What we need to know tonight is not whether or not you love it, but what type of fishing you do at this specific site. Of course, we'll focus on the East Hump. Where do you fish out of? What's your home port?

How many bottom fishing trips a year do you make in that site, because that's the gear that would be affected? But we'd also like to know would you still troll in that site if bottom fishing wasn't allowed? That way we can know economically how the benefits lay.

Tell us the main species you've targeted or caught at that site. And would you fish in another areas if that site was closed down to bottom fishing? I will go back to the questions and leave them up there to remind you for when you come up and talk. Thank you very much and we can answer any questions.

Mr. Iarocci: Thank you, Kerry. I'd like to acknowledge Dr. Jim Bohnsack, who is here, also, from NMFS. He has been doing a lot of work on MPAs lately. And I'd be remiss in not acknowledging the work of the Islamorada Charter Boat Association throughout the last couple of years.

When we started with these meetings, Bill Kelly came to the forefront. Steve Leopold and some of you guys put a lot of time and effort and a lot of work into this. It was a very controversial site to start with when we did start talking about the Islamorada Hump.

It was something where both the commercial fishermen -- and I was proud to be a part of what went on, where you could see the two, both the commercial and sport fishermen, come together and make compromises and work together.

It only shows that the council process does work when you're involved in the process, and you're a part of the process. So I know, like I said, tonight there are other meetings going on, but please pass the word to the guys that we do appreciate the time and effort in the past.

I know you, too, Steve, tonight you have to get to another meeting, so I'll be short, but I just want to make sure -- tell these guys we appreciate the work and the time and effort. And with that said, Steve, I'm going to call you to the podium first. And thanks for taking the time to be

here tonight.

Mr. Steven Leopold: My name is Steve Leopold. I'm a charter fisherman, sport fisherman, in Islamorada. And just a few quick comments, I want to thank you for listening to us two years ago when you selected a site -- or there was a site brought in front of us that would affect us greatly -- and moved it to a site that we could all work with.

As far as fishing in the proposed site, the East Hump, many of us do surface fish across there, troll across that area. It's a very good rip area, a lot of pelagics swim across, and we do fish there a fair amount.

As far as bottom fishing for myself and many of the other sport fishermen, I've asked a bunch of guys that were in the charter boat industry, and we can pick another spot. Our livelihood is not made bottom fishing, deep dropping, as many of us call it.

But, we could live with the site that's known as East Hump. I think it's pretty obvious that most guys are in agreement, or they would be here. The last meeting we had a packed room, and there was quite a bit of opposition.

That spot, the Islamorada Hump, would have greatly affected our business. So I just wanted to say, thank you for listening to us, and I think we can work with the selected sites and also for giving us an opportunity all along the way to speak our minds.

Just to make it short and simple, everybody I have spoken to, I have heard no opposition amongst the charter fishing. We all know that regulation helps a lot. And we're seeing it. Last time I was with you, Roy, at the ballyhoo meeting when we limited entry into the fishery and cut back the commercial take on ballyhoo -- you go out there today, firsthand you see what is happening up there.

You speak to other guys, who have been here for many years, who see the bait fish are coming back. And there are bait sharks -- in fact, this week firsthand, we're out there every day to see what goes on there.

It's proof that protecting the species and regulations help. We all agree with that. And as long as it doesn't put us out of business, we're okay with it. I don't have much else to say except, we can go along with your program on that.

I, also, have to apologize about leaving, because your meetings are great, and I feel privileged to be here and gather up all this information. But keep us informed. We like it better -- I do. Thank you very much.

Mr. Iarocci: Steve, got one minute?

Mr. Leopold: Sure.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: My question was, of the deep water species we listed, which ones are out there, and what are the most common?

Mr. Leopold: I, myself, don't do a lot of deep dropping but pretty much everything you say. There are yellowedged groupers. There are tilefish. Some of the commercial guys might be able to tell you more specifics, but typically our deep drop fishing is very limited.

I mean, some guys do it. It's a great thing to do on a slow day when you're way off shore. You come in and do some deep dropping. I don't know that anybody in the charter fishing industry targets that on a very regular basis. Some of us do it a fair amount, but you kill and you have to clean.

We're charter fishermen and I'm speaking on behalf of the charter fishermen. I don't want to kill a bunch of fish. If I do go deep drop, I typically would catch a few say yelloweye snappers, and if you get a yellowedged grouper that's a real treat or a tilefish.

But it's not something that we "hit real hard". In the Type 2 closure that you're proposing, it works out well for us. We do fish that -- there are rips in that area that are very productive for us.

My limited scientific knowledge of the pelagics really is moving through, and I think to close it to that, first of all, would be incredibly tough to regulate and enforce.

But even driving around an area that big would be tough for many boats that are slow boats. And they'll say, "Oh, well, I'm in the area". It would be tough to get around it. So, for us and for everybody I've spoken to, I think your proposed area and the method and the way you're going about it is fine with us. Thank you.

Mr. Iarocci: Thank you, Steve. The next speaker is Bill Kelly, please.

Mr. Bill Kelly: Good evening, Mr. Chairman, Kerry, Dr. Crabtree, members of the audience. My name is Bill Kelly. I'm a charter/recreational fisherman and have been in Islamorada and the Keys for 28 years and fishing throughout these islands and the Bahamas.

I've represented the Islamorada Charter Boat Association on this issue of MPAs starting back in 2001. That was actually May of 2001 when the "war cry" went up regarding the closure or possible closure of the Islamorada Hump, which is the calling card and the trademark of this small fishing community. We were very much concerned about the economic impact that this might have.

That all started at the Holiday Isle Resort, then leapfrogged in a fast-forward fashion to June 20th in St. Augustine, Florida. I, again, represented the association with regard to the issue and what we thought were important issues about it, particularly the economic import of this thing.

Five months transpired and then in September, I put together a presentation for our association

for the South Atlantic Council that was presented. Tony did so on our behalf at the Town and Country Inn in Charleston, again, in September of 2001.

In five months, we got a lot of groups, which came together and did a lot of things. I mean, you want to see cooperation, it really happened between all the user groups: charter, recreational, commercial and environmental.

It reflected the opinions of all these people and, of course, a great many hours of discussion here, cooperation, verbal fights and so on and so forth. But when the smoke cleared, it was pretty interesting because Greg DiDomenico, who unfortunately, is no longer the head of Monroe County Commercial Fishermen, was a guiding force behind this in his representation of the commercial group.

He and I hit it off well, and then we had a great mentor, Tony, here, who helped soften things and kept everybody cool as we progressed with these discussions.

The presentation that we made -- or Tony made with our proposal at Town and Country with the East Hump was really well received. There were still a few people barking on both sides of the fence, but it wasn't anything that we couldn't live with.

As we realized that the focus of the council was not just for greater amberjack but also to protect deep water species of snapper grouper, banded rudderfish and so forth, it became apparent that maybe this East Hump was even more important than we realized, because the Islamorada Hump is synonymous with greater amberjack and sharks and things like that. Of course, we realized the importance in protecting greater amberjack as well.

At one point, Tony, I provided you with another map, and it may have gotten misplaced, but it shows in much greater detail than what we see here, the contours and the broken bottom. I mean, depending on which chart you pick up, as you look to the north and east on this chart you see an area that we refer to as "Broken Bottom", but those same contours exist around the East Hump as well, and they lend themselves very well to habitat for tilefish and for snowy grouper and for Warsaw groupers, and those are the kinds of fish that we catch there.

Personally, I bottom fish there about ten days a year because we do that. As Steve mentioned, you'll get times when there's no current, or the fish aren't biting on the surface, and that kind of condition lends itself to deep dropping, and there are a lot of us in the recreational sector that do that with electromate reels and so forth.

When I catch fish there, I'm catching primarily gray tilefish of two pounds to, maybe, four or five. We catch sharks there if we deep drop larger live bait like blue runners and so forth. And we also catch snowy groupers and Warsaws there.

The Warsaws, generally -- the rule of thumb is everybody, if necessary, they will vent them and release them. But we're not interested in catching Warsaws, and so we don't, we can target with our gear.

We're using smaller hooks, small pieces of cut bait, and maybe a ten-hook rig down there so you're not even going to get those kinds of fish. We're primarily fishing for tilefish and snowy grouper. And that's our experience. That's what we find the most down there.

We do a great deal of trolling there as well, the series of humps, the West Hump, the Middle Hump and the East Hump, the Islamorada, the whole chain of them, the 409. The rips and current eddies that they produce really lend themselves well to fantastic trolling for pelagics like dolphin and billfish of all types and blackfin tuna.

By keeping this as a Type 2 closure, that really makes it beneficial for all of us and all the user groups -- again, the charter, the recreational and the commercial sector. Another important issue is law enforcement, and that's -- you know, what's the point in having a marine protected area or a spar or anything else if you can't control what's going on there and offer genuine protection for the species.

We encourage the -- excuse me -- and agreed with the site selection of five by ten miles. It gives you a great latitude in law enforcement. It's very easily carried out through aerial surveillance and marine surveillance as well by vessel.

Let's face it, if you don't make marine protected areas, if they're not big, they're not going to accomplish anything. And that's a fundamental element of them. The location of the East Hump from an economic standpoint really lends itself well because it's strategically placed between two of the bigger fishing communities in the Florida Keys, both Islamorada and Marathon, which contains, again, all three user groups -- the charter, commercial and recreational -- so there are no longer distances that people have to travel to go fishing.

The area of Laten doesn't have a charter fishing community at all, and it lies thirteen miles south of them. You don't impact the Middle Keys with loss of something like the West Hump that's vital to their economy and has become so important in recent years that they now refer to it mainly as the "Marathon Hump," much the same as we call ours, the Islamorada Hump.

The bottom line on these things is this site selection, unless we have some nay-sayers here tonight that I'm not familiar with, and I would love to talk with them at length, if necessary, is that in that five month period and since then in May of 2001, we have hammered this out.

We have had plenty of time to rehash this thing with everyone that's involved in it. And we don't have any outcries tonight, I don't believe. We did when we had a Chico Lodge meeting, and a lot of people were up in arms. But the word on the street is that this is very well received, as Steve Leopold has mentioned.

Sometimes you've got good information like that or good news, and people stay away, in addition to the fact that there are some pretty big tournaments concluding today and a lot of high-fiving going on right across the street here right now and celebrating.

This site has really withstood a lot of scrutiny, and I think it will continue to hold up under any further examinations that anyone would care to give it. In this particular instance everyone is happy. Everybody can live with this thing. And it is a very productive location for those types of fish that you're looking to protect.

Broken Bottom and everything affords them a great deal of habitat. I think it's a great site selection, and I think it will work in the long run, especially because you will have the cooperation of the people that live here in this town, and they will also help enforce the rules that protect it. Thank you. Any questions?

Mr. Iarocci: No, thank you once again, Bill. Like I said, you've been instrumental in bringing the groups together on this issue and it has been great working with you on this. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Mr. Kelly: Good, thank you very much.

Mr. Iarocci: With that said, is there anybody else that wants to speak? Would you like to say something? State your name for the record.

Mr. Matthew Dettmann: My name is Matt Dettmann. Matt Dettmann, yes. I live in Tavernier, a commercial fisherman. Let's see, I fish that area quite a lot. It's mostly for the last, probably 10-12 years I've fished off the Islamorada, before I started going back to Key West and kind of traveled back and forth.

That Middle Hump there that you're talking about, we do a lot of amberjacking there, and queen snappers are like the most prolific fish that live there. Probably from that hump there to the east, like probably where the boundary is, there is me and another guy that fish there regularly, you know, mostly in the winter months.

Those are probably the only two fish that we actually target there through that area. And there's a few snowys around but we mostly just target the amberjacks and the queen snappers. So, other than that, if there is -- I couldn't really think of any better area that we can lose.

I mean, that's mostly, that's kind of like our little honeymoon? area right there. We can always go in that area and catch fish. But if you've got to take some bottom somewhere, that's probably a good spot to be taking it, because there's a lot of other area around there, on either side of that.

So, as he was saying before, everybody is pretty happy with that selection. So if we lose the queen snappers, I'll just have to go catch snowy grouper somewhere else. That's all I have to say about that.

Mr. Iarocci: Thank you, Matt. Do you do any surface trolling through that area?

Mr. Dettmann: Yes, in the summertime, we do some dolphin fishing in that area. And that definitely is a good rip that a lot of boats fish through that area, and we do a lot of dolphin

fishing there. That's about it. And the tunas get there too.

Mr. Iarocci: And if that area is closed you do have -- like you said, you do have areas east and west of that where you can move your fishery to so it's not going to really affect it all that much.

Mr. Dettmann: Right, west of there because the boundary line is kind of right there on it to the west. But the east, we're losing a pretty good chunk of bottom to the east there, like almost four or five miles, I guess.

There is a good ledge that runs up that way, and we do catch good snowys there in the winter months. But we'll just have to -- it's going to be good to probably migrate somewhere else. Yes, bandit gear, yes, year-round.

(Question asked from the audience without using the microphone)

Mr. Dettmann: Snapper grouper and golden tiles I catch in Key West.

(Question asked from the audience without using the microphone)

Mr. Dettmann: Yes, exactly. I just dolphin fish this, maybe, a month in the summertime. And when we're deep dropping, the dolphin are swimming around. If they're there, we're catching them, but I have the bandits on the boat year-round.

Mr. Iarocci: Thank you for your comments, I appreciate it.

Mr. Dettmann: All right, thank you.

Mr. Iarocci: Thanks for coming. Anybody else? Any questions? Well, thank you all for taking the time to attend tonight and I will call this meeting adjourned.

(Whereupon, the MPA public hearing adjourned on Thursday, January 22, 2004)

Tapes of Proceedings On File (1)

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SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

**SNAPPER GROUPE AMENDMENT 14 (MPA)
PUBLIC HEARING**

**Islamorada, Florida
January 22, 2004**

Attendees

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Dr. Roy Crabtree

Staff Members:

Kerry O'Malley

Julie O'Dell

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