



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

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Virtual Commission Meeting
July 22 - 23, 2020
Minutes

*A digital recording of the entire meeting is available upon request. Please contact the Community Relations Office at (850) 488-4676 for additional information.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) held its regular meeting July 22 – 23, 2020, via Electronic Communication Technology. Chairman Robert Spottswood called the meeting to order with the following members also in attendance:

Michael Sole, Tequesta
Gary Nicklaus, Jupiter

Sonya Rood, St. Augustine
Gary Lester, Oxford

Rodney Barreto, Coral Gables

Senior and Presenting Staff:

Eric Sutton	Executive Director
Dr. Thomas Eason	Assistant Executive Director
Emily Norton	General Counsel
Chris Wynn	Director, North Central Region
Dr. Tom Reinert	Director, South Region
Billy Sermons	Interim Director, Northwest Region
Thomas Graef	Director, Southwest Region
Greg Workman	Interim Director, Northeast Region
Colonel Curtis Brown	Director, Division of Law Enforcement
George Warthen	Director, Division of Hunting and Game Management
Jon Fury	Director, Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management
Jessica McCawley	Director, Division of Marine Fisheries Management
Gil McRae	Director, Fish and Wildlife Research Institute
Kipp Frohlich	Director, Division of Habitat and Species Conservation
Tindl Rainey	Director, Office of Strategic Initiatives
Susan Neel	Director, Office of Community Relations
Charlotte Jerrett	Chief Financial Officer
Jessica Crawford	Director, Office of Legislative Affairs
Martha Guyas	Division of Marine Fisheries Management
Krista Shipley	Division of Marine Fisheries Management
Michael Norberg	Division of Marine Fisheries Management
Kristen Sommers	Division of Habitat and Species Conservation
Claire Sunquist Blunden	Division of Habitat and Species Conservation
Melissa Tucker	Division of Habitat and Species Conservation
Major Rob Rowe	Division of Law Enforcement

There were 106 individuals who addressed the Commission during the virtual meeting.

Meeting Opening

Chairman Spottswood called the July 22 - 23, 2020, meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Mr. Chris Wynn, Regional Director of the North Central Region, gave the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Executive Director Sutton.

Chairman Spottswood asked Executive Director Sutton and Colonel Curtis Brown to present a memorial to Officer Julian Keen who tragically was killed last month. He then asked for a moment of silence in honor of Officer Keen.

Adoption of Minutes

Upon a motion by Vice Chairman Sole, seconded by Commissioner Rood and carried, the May 2020 minutes were approved as written.

Adoption of Meeting Agenda

Upon a motion by Vice Chairman Sole, seconded by Commissioner Lester and carried, the July 2020 meeting agenda was approved.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Upon a motion by Commissioner Rood, seconded by Commissioner Nicklaus and carried, the July 2020 Consent Agenda items were approved.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Sutton highlighted the following topics in his report to the Commission:

- Fisheries Disaster Funding:
 - Hurricane Irma funding.
 - Hurricane Michael funding.
 - CARES Act funding.
- Virtual ICAST 2020.
- Lake Management Plans.
- Aquatic Plant Management Technical Assistance Group.
- Python Program Update.
- Everglades.
- Legislative and Budget Update.
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Foundation Board Meeting.
- Request from Islamorada Mayor to close Lobster Mini-Season:
 - Chairman Spottswood commented that a formal response to the request is the correct approach.
 - Vice Chairman Sole noted concern with the request since it is a statewide effort.
 - Commissioner Barreto suggested that county closures cause more issues.
- Staff Retirement Recognition:
 - Kipp Frohlich
 - Jon Fury

Items Requiring Action

Final Rule – Stone Crab

Ms. Krista Shipley with the Division of Marine Fisheries Management presented a final rule proposal for stone crab to move the end of stone crab season from May 15 to April 15; extend the post-season trap retrieval period from five to 10 days; require a 2 3/16” escape ring in all plastic and wood stone crab traps before the 2023/2024 season; increase the minimum claw size limit by 1/8” to 2 7/8”; and limit the possession of whole stone crabs on the water to 2 checker boxes, each up to 3’ x 2’ x 2’ or 12 cubic feet.

Public Comment

The following individuals addressed the Commission on this agenda item:

Mr. Bill George addressed the Commission with concern about the proposal to increase the claw size by 1/8”. He believes that the change will not provide enough of a gain for the species.

Mrs. Carrie Doxsee addressed the Commission suggesting that if these regulations are passed it will kill many businesses in the state.

Ms. Kelly Kirk addressed the Commission and requested that her written comments that were sent to Commissioners be made a part of the official record. She noted that any regulations approved today will have a major impact on this industry.

Mr. Jerry Sansom addressed the Commission in opposition to the proposed season end date and extension of the post-season trap retrieval period. He also spoke in support of escape rings and the checker box proposal and noted support for closing the season on May 1 instead of April 15.

Mr. Arthur Cannon, Director and Vice President of Organized Fishermen of Florida, addressed the Commission in support of escape rings and the size limit change, and in opposition to the season closure date.

Mrs. Hollie Livingston Dudley addressed the Commission in opposition to the proposed regulation changes.

Mr. Bill Kelly, President of the Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen’s Association, addressed the Commission in support of staff’s proposal for escape rings, size limit increase, and checker boxes. He noted opposition to proposals to extend the trap retrieval period and end the season on April 15, suggesting that the season close on May 1 instead.

Mr. Gary Nichols addressed the Commission in opposition to the proposed season change but noted that he would support ending the season on May 1. He also spoke in support of implementing the escape ring proposal but would like all other proposed changes to be delayed.

Ms. Taren Wadley addressed the Commission and noted the value of commercial fishermen’s knowledge of fisheries.

Ms. Michelle addressed the Commission in support of the size limit increase and opposition to the remainder of the proposals.

Commissioner Discussion

Chairman Spottswood asked Dr. Thomas Eason, Assistant Executive Director, to read a comment letter from Commissioner Hudson who was unable to attend the meeting. He read the letter which highlighted strong support for the following proposals: extending the post-season trap removal period, requiring escape rings, limiting possession of whole stone crabs to no more than two checker boxes. The letter further suggested the following changes to the final rule proposal: ending the stone crab season on April 9 instead of April 15 and increasing the minimum claw size to 3” instead of 2 7/8”.

Chairman Spottswood noted the amount of public comments and interaction with stakeholders leading up to this meeting. He thanked everyone for their participation.

Commissioner Barreto asked staff to respond to Commissioner Hudson's request to end the season on April 9.

Ms. Jessica McCawley, Director of the Division of Marine Fisheries Management, noted that the earlier the closure date is, the more positive impact it has on the species recovery.

Vice Chairman Sole commented that this fishery has significant variability in season harvest from year to year. He asked staff to address what the proposal will do to help recovery of this species and that variability.

Mr. Gil McRae, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, noted the cyclical nature of landings in this fishery with peaks and valleys every 3-5 years and that this is not unusual in invertebrate fisheries. He further noted the importance of the general downward trend in the highs and the lows.

Vice Chairman Sole asked whether ending the season on May 1 will have an adverse impact on the fishery but a positive impact on helping to level out highs and lows.

Mr. McRae responded that the number of female crabs carrying eggs is significant in April but much higher in May. Protecting stone crabs during the first two weeks of May will have a positive impact; however, the level of impact is difficult to estimate because of the cyclical nature of the fishery.

Vice Chairman Sole asked if there is concern about just specifying a total volume of checker boxes instead of two checker boxes with a maximum size.

Ms. Shipley responded that including a total allowable checker box volume would be possible.

Chairman Spottswood commented on the chart showing the percent of egg-bearing crabs by month and noted that 23% of females caught during the month of April are egg-bearing. He asked how that relates to the overall monthly landings as they typically decline as the season progresses.

Mr. McRae responded that stone crab landings are typically front-loaded with the highest landings in the first few months of the season and tapering off by the end of the season, with an occasional spike in landings at the end of the season.

Chairman Spottswood noted that, according to the data, industry is not harvesting the majority of egg-bearing females throughout the season.

Commissioner Rood asked about wire traps and whether they are used in the fishery and included in the proposal.

Ms. Shipley responded that wire traps are used in the fishery but that wire traps are already required to have a 2 3/8" escape ring, so they are not included in the escape ring proposal.

Commissioner Nicklaus addressed the landings chart provided in the presentation. He noted that the industry has upward mobility in the price. He added support for ending the season on May 1, escape rings, and a total volume limit on checker boxes. He noted support for a 1/4" increase in claw size but does not believe the 1/8" provides enough benefit.

Vice Chairman Sole commented that the invertebrate fishery is a little different than normal fisheries we are used to managing. He asked Mr. McRae if he could comment on whether the fishery was currently in a collapsed state.

Mr. McRae responded that Vice Chairman Sole is correct about the nature of invertebrate fisheries and responded that we are not currently in crisis mode but that we see signs that trouble may be on the horizon. He suggested that as managers, we work to step in before a crisis occurs in a fishery. The goal today is to implement proactive, small-scale measures, to begin addressing this downward trend shown in this fishery.

Chairman Spottswood asked staff to provide a specific checker box volume based on Vice Chairman Sole and Commissioner Nicklaus' comments.

Ms. Shipley responded that based on the Commissioner's comments, the checker boxes could be limited to a total volume of 24 cubic feet.

Commission Action

Upon a motion by Vice Chairman Sole, seconded by Commissioner Rood and carried, the Commission approved the following final rules:

- Move the season end date to May 1st
- Increase the minimum claw size by 1/8" to 2 7/8"
- Require 2 3/16" escape rings in all plastic and wood stone crab traps by the 2023-2024 season
- Limit possession of whole stone crabs on the water to two checker boxes or 24 cubic feet

Draft Rule – Apalachicola Oysters

Mr. Michael Norberg with the Division of Marine Fisheries Management presented a draft rule proposal that would suspend commercial and recreational harvest of wild oysters in Apalachicola Bay (Bay) and prohibit-on-the-water possession of wild oyster harvesting equipment on the Bay through Dec. 31, 2025. Staff also recommended the Commission proactively implement these conservation measures by Executive Order, effective Aug. 1, 2020, to conserve existing oysters and oyster shell during the rulemaking process.

Commissioner Barreto asked for an update on legal action related to this topic.

Ms. Emily Norton, General Counsel, provided an update on the current lawsuit.

Public Comment

The following individuals addressed the Commission on this agenda item:

Mr. Chad Hansen with Pew Charitable Trust addressed the Commission in support for staff recommendation.

Mr. Noah Lockley, Jr., Chairman of the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners, addressed the Commission to express concerns about displacement of oyster harvesters and the timeline for the harvest suspension.

Ms. Jessica Benza with the National Wildlife Federation addressed the Commission. She noted that oyster restoration is a priority across the Gulf of Mexico and specifically in Apalachicola Bay. She spoke in support for staff's recommendation and expressed concerns regarding a shift in harvest effort to other areas of the state. She also asked a question about the re-opening criteria and provided suggestions.

Mr. Steven Rash, owner of Water Street Seafood in Apalachicola, addressed the Commission. He noted that there are very few oysters and oyster harvesters in Apalachicola Bay and that his business stopped buying Apalachicola Bay oysters years ago. He supported suspending harvest and restoration efforts.

Mr. Bill George addressed the Commission in support of staff recommendation and suggested the Commission consider suspending aquaculture harvest.

Mr. Jerry Sansom addressed the Commission in support of staff recommendation and noted the need for restoration elsewhere in the state.

Mr. Dennis David, Vice Chairman of the Florida Shellfish Aquaculture Association, spoke in support of staff recommendation and developing statewide oyster management plans.

Mr. Chad Taylor addressed the Commission in support of staff recommendation.

Ms. Georgia Ackerman with Apalachicola Riverkeeper addressed the Commission in support of staff recommendation and noted the ecological importance of restoring oysters in Apalachicola Bay.

Mr. Shannon Hartsfield addressed the Commission in support of staff recommendation and the restoration effort for Apalachicola Bay. He also noted that aquaculture will not improve the ability for oystermen to support their families.

Ms. Rebecca Tuton with Apalachicola Riverkeeper addressed the Commission in support of suspending harvest while there is substantial funding available for oyster restoration in Apalachicola Bay.

Commission Discussion

Chairman Spottswood asked Executive Director Sutton to make a few comments on this topic.

Executive Director Sutton noted how important the Apalachicola Bay oyster industry is to Florida and that these restoration and management efforts are intended to help rebuild this fishery. He also noted FWC's commitment to the recovery of Apalachicola Bay oysters.

Commissioner Rood asked about the monitoring.

Mr. Norberg provided information about FWRI's adult and juvenile oyster monitoring.

Commissioner Barreto suggested that staff look at how to help displaced oystermen to make sure that pressure is not shifted to other areas that cannot sustain it.

Chairman Spottswood asked Executive Director Sutton if the displaced fishermen could participate in work for the restoration efforts.

Executive Director Sutton agreed to work with those displaced fishermen.

Vice Chairman Sole commented that Apalachicola is a special place for Florida and noted support for staff recommendation. He asked who the staff point of contact will be for the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners.

Mr. Norberg responded that he and Mr. Jim Estes will coordinate the communication with the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners.

Vice Chairman Sole noted the nearly 30 years of research in the Bay and asked why cultching will not begin until 2022.

Executive Director Sutton responded that the environmental conditions and water flow dynamics of the Bay have changed over time and that taking the time to better understand the current conditions will help improve restoration success.

Vice Chairman Sole asked how we would evaluate whether the 300-bag threshold is achieved prior to the 2025 rule sunset.

Mr. McRae responded that bags per acre is a conversion from adult oyster density, which is collected during routine monitoring.

Chairman Spottswood asked if it is sufficient to look at a particular reef or if density would have to be measured throughout the Bay.

Mr. McRae noted that it is evaluated on each oyster bar but that the same metric would be used throughout the Bay.

Chairman Spottswood followed up on Mr. George's comment about aquaculture activities affecting restoration efforts.

Executive Director Sutton responded that continuing to allow aquaculture harvest would not impede restoration.

Vice Chairman Sole asked about aquaculture harvest practices and the use of tongs during aquaculture.

Mr. Norberg responded that the vast majority of aquaculture in the Bay occurs in cages in the water column but noted that there are some on-the-bottom aquaculture leases.

Vice Chairman Sole noted that the proposed rules do not impact aquaculture operation.

Commissioner Rood asked why it has taken so long to take action on this issue.

Mr. Norberg responded that FWC has taken many actions to improve this fishery so far but has not been successful.

Executive Director Sutton provided additional details about the restoration, enforcement, and management actions FWC has taken since 2013.

Commission Action

Upon a motion by Commissioner Barreto, seconded by Vice Chairman Sole and carried, the Commission approved staff recommendation and directed staff to proactively implement these conservation measures by Executive Order, effective August 1, 2020.

Draft Rule – Flounder

Ms. McCawley along with Ms. Shipley presented a draft rule proposal for flounder that would increase the minimum size limit for all harvesters to 14", reduce the recreational bag limit to five flounder, establish a November recreational harvest closure, establish commercial trip and vessel limits of 150 flounder when harvesting with allowable gear for all months except November, establish commercial trip and vessel limits of 50 pounds when harvesting with allowable gear in November, and extend all FWC flounder regulations into federal waters.

Public Comment

The following individuals addressed the Commission on this agenda item:

Mr. Bill George addressed the Commission with concern about the proposal because there is no stated population-size goal. He recommended the state be managed regionally so that areas being overfished can have stricter regulations without restricting the areas that are just declining, but not overfished as much. He suggested changing the size or the bag limit on the Gulf coast and implementing both changes on the Atlantic. He also noted concern with the use of "within or without Florida waters" in the proposed rule language because anglers may not understand what it means.

Mrs. Kellie Ralston with American Sportfishing Association addressed the Commission. She thanked staff for hosting workshops and working with stakeholders on this topic. She added support for staff recommendation but noted concern for the commercial trip limit and believes it needs to be more restrictive.

Mr. Mike Merrifield addressed the Commission on behalf of the shrimp fishery. He noted concern for extending regulations into federal waters because it would economically impact commercial shrimpers that sometimes catch flounder in their nets. He also noted concern that, if the current proposal is passed, vessels from other states may choose not to land their catch in Florida, affecting income for Florida wholesale dealers. He requested the Commission not extend the bycatch limit into federal waters or, if the regulation is extended, come up with a proposal that will not affect the commercial shrimp industry.

Mr. Trip Aukeman with Coastal Conservation Association Florida addressed the Commission. He noted support for staff recommendation except for the 150-trip limit for commercial fishers because it is a very high allowance. He also noted that other states that are concerned with flounder populations are investing in restocking programs.

Mr. Butch Olsen, Jr., Executive Director of the Port Salerno Commercial Fishing Dock Authority, addressed the Commission. He suggested the proposal, specifically the 14-inch minimum size limit and November closure, would cause an economic hardship for commercial fishermen in Martin, St. Lucie, and Indian River counties. He requested more time to continue working with staff on the proposal before rules are implemented.

Commission Discussion

Vice Chairman Sole asked for clarification on the commercial and recreational harvest. He noted that Commissioners received a lot of comments from the public about commercial landings and the proposed commercial trip and vessel limits are high. He asked if the commercial harvest data is correct.

Ms. McCawley responded that the commercial harvest data is correct and that recreational harvest accounts for 90% of annual harvest.

Vice Chairman Sole asked why there is a need to regulate this in federal waters as well as state waters.

Ms. Shipley responded that the offshore spawning aggregations are heavily targeted by both the commercial and recreational fishery.

Chairman Spottswood asked how the commercial sector targets the offshore spawning aggregations.

Ms. Shipley responded that the aggregations are most commonly targeted by spear.

Commissioner Nicklaus asked for clarification about the harvest method for flounder in federal waters. He noted that he does not believe there is a need to restrict the commercial fishery further than the proposal because commercial harvest accounts for a small portion of the total harvest. He also noted that he does not believe that shrimp trawls should target flounder but understands they may sometimes catch them when targeting shrimp. He noted that he supports the proposed size limit increase and decreased recreational bag limit.

Chairman Spottswood noted discomfort with requiring someone to throw back bycatch that is already dead, especially if it is an edible fish, but that he understands the need for a bycatch limit to encourage shrimpers to move if they are catching large amounts of flounder.

Vice Chairman Sole asked staff to continue working with the shrimp industry on a compromise for federal waters bycatch as rulemaking moves forward.

Commission Action

Upon a motion by Vice Chairman Sole, seconded by Commissioner Lester and carried, the Commission passed staff recommendation and encouraged staff to continue working with the shrimp industry on the flounder bycatch in federal waters.

Staff Reports

Marine Fisheries Management Workplan

Ms. McCawley presented the proposed Division of Marine Fisheries Management Workplan for the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

Public Comment

The following individuals addressed the Commission on this agenda item:

Ms. Kellie Ralston commended staff for the organized list of items to work on over the next year and expressed support for the proposed workplan.

Mr. Eric Brazer, Deputy Director of the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance, addressed the Commission in support of the proposed workplan and added appreciation for the CARES Act being listed as a high priority item.

Mr. Aaron Adams with Bonefish Tarpon Trust (BTT) addressed the Commission to relay BTT's position that Western Dry Rocks is a special location that should have special regulations. In regard to permit, he asked that it be a recreational-only fishery and that the bycatch allowance in the pompano fishery be removed. He stated that there are many reports that permit is being found on restaurant menus outside of the Pompano Endorsement Zone and that harvesters are using the bycatch allowance as a loophole to intentionally target permit. He asked that FWC take a more in depth look at the permit fishery as whole. He applauded staff for including habitat on the workplan but asked that it to be moved to a high priority.

Mr. Bill Kelly addressed the Commission and applauded the work completed by staff during the previous year. He also requested that three items be added to the proposed workplan: transit of net-caught pompano, increase in retention of undersized lobsters used at attractants in the commercial fishery, and updates to the permission to pull rule.

Ms. Kate addressed the Commission regarding the harvest of sharks in Florida. She requested more protection for endangered species.

Commissioner Discussion

Commissioner Rood asked if there was a limit to the amount of time an item can be on a workplan.

Ms. McCawley responded that there is no time limit. She noted that some items are on for long timeframes, like the recent rule changes for Biscayne National Park that took 20 years to complete.

Vice Chairman Sole noted that sharks are on the workplan and asked what staff is looking to address on this topic.

Ms. McCawley responded that staff are planning to analyze data and reports of shark predation on other species. Staff could also consider modifying regulations in state waters. In the past, the Commission discussed potentially increasing the limit for some shark species in state waters.

Chairman Spottswood asked for clarification on endangered shark species being caught and harvested.

Ms. McCawley responded that endangered sharks cannot be harvested but noted that sometimes people believe that prohibited species are endangered or threatened. She clarified that prohibited from harvest in state waters does not necessarily mean they are endangered or threatened.

Vice Chairman confirmed that some species that are prohibited from harvest in state waters can be legally harvested from federal waters.

Executive Director Sutton noted that an overview of sharks could be presented at a future Commission meeting.

Chairman Spottswood addressed goliath grouper as a topic that, even though is not on the workplan, is still being researched.

Vice Chairman Sole asked staff to bring a report on the current research and a recommendation for goliath grouper prior to the end of 2021.

Mr. McRae noted that staff can return with a goliath grouper update by the end of 2021.

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC) and South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) Reports

Ms. Martha Guyas with the Division of Marine Fisheries Management, along with Ms. McCawley, presented reports from the GMFMC and SAFMC. Topics included red snapper, Gulf red grouper, Madison Swanson and Steamboat Lumps, Atlantic dolphin and wahoo, and other federal fisheries management issues.

Public Comment

The following individuals addressed the Commission on this agenda item:

Ms. Kellie Ralston addressed the Commission on various Gulf and South Atlantic Council items. The American Sportfishing Association encourages FWC to remain engaged and continue working with NOAA to ensure that state management of Gulf red snapper can continue. She thanked the Commission for its leadership and efforts to increase access to Atlantic red snapper and implementing best fishing practices in the South Atlantic. Lastly, Ms. Ralston noted that MRIP recalibrations are mathematical corrections to historical data, and reallocation conversations for species like Gulf red grouper and South Atlantic dolphin are necessary.

Captain Bill Kelly addressed the Commission with concerns about allocation of king mackerel in the Gulf. He requested the Commission ask the Gulf Council to review king mackerel allocations at an earlier date than the scheduled date of April 2025.

Mr. Trip Aukeman requested the Commission work with the South Atlantic Council to remove the longline dolphin fishery. He thanked Ms. Guyas for her work on reef fish in the Gulf.

Mr. Jim Zurbrick of Steinhatchee stated his concern about the reallocation discussions for red grouper in the Gulf. He noted that reallocation to the recreational sector would not be in line with the recent Presidential Executive Order for promoting American seafood. Mr. Zurbrick does not support reallocation to the recreational sector for red grouper, citing uncertainty with tracking of recreational catch.

Commission Discussion

Vice Chairman Sole asked Ms. Guyas about current Gulf Council priorities and the timeline for reviewing king mackerel in 2025.

Ms. Guyas responded that the Gulf Council is current looking at red grouper reallocation as part of a suite of potential management changes as well as red snapper allocation. She noted that the Council could choose to take up king mackerel reallocation after the stock assessment is complete in the next few months.

Vice Chairman Sole noted that completion of a stock assessment should trigger a timelier review of the king mackerel fishery rather than waiting an additional three years to address it. He then asked about the dolphin longline fishery and the current progress on this issue.

Ms. McCawley responded that Florida council members have continued to support removal of the longline fishery in the Atlantic but have been outvoted. She noted that the amendment is slow-moving and other council members want to keep some portion of the longline fishery.

Chairman Spottswood asked Ms. McCawley about the current status of the dolphin fishery and what we are hearing from fishermen in Florida on the status of dolphin.

Ms. McCawley responded that there is not currently any stock assessment on dolphin, and there is nothing planned. She noted that available data indicate that the fishery is doing well. She also noted that Florida fishermen are saying the fishery is up and down and they are not seeing as many fish as they used to. She acknowledged that there are many life history characteristics we still don't know about dolphin and it's difficult to assess the fishery status.

Chairman Spottswood asked what would be needed to move forward with conducting a stock assessment for dolphin.

Ms. McCawley responded that this would likely need to be a federal stock assessment, which are typically scheduled 4 -5 years out and set through the SEDAR process. Because dolphin are highly migratory and pass through international waters, it has not been considered for a stock assessment at this time.

Vice Chairman Sole asked if dolphin was on the DMFM workplan to address.

Ms. McCawley said that dolphin is on the workplan but that it is likely to deal with the issues the Council is working on. She gave the example of stakeholder requests for smaller bag limits and smaller vessel limits at the Council level, which DMFM would bring forward to the Commission for state consistency at a later meeting.

Chairman Spottswood suggested digging into the data on the dolphin fishery to have a more productive conversation on longline fisheries and its impact on dolphin stock. He is interested in the correlation between harvest via longline fishery and the health of the fishery overall. He also asked for data regarding the size ranges of dolphin being caught in the longline fishery.

Mr. McRae responded that FWRI could pull together some of this information but acknowledged that dolphin has a wide distribution across international waters. He noted that dolphin is one of the most productive stocks, with early maturation and fast growth rates, so changes in the fishery may be due to distribution changes rather than productivity.

Staff Report – Marine Debris

Major Rob Rowe with the Division of Law Enforcement presented a report on Marine Debris. The presentation focused on the marine debris reduction efforts within FWC including marine debris research, removal, and prevention. Topics included an overview of efforts with marine debris and its impacts, FWC marine debris work, hurricane response funding and projects, and steps moving forward.

Commissioner Barreto noted a partnership with Ocean Conservancy leading up to the Superbowl in conducting beach clean-ups along the Miami beach area. He noted how important this topic is because there is a lot you don't see below the water line including potential impacts of plastics on species like sea turtles and fish and how that could affect humans. He asked staff to work with organizations like Ocean Conservancy with numerous resources on future clean-up efforts and thinks it would be a good area of work for the Agency to take on. He thinks the agency should put an emphasis on a campaign bigger than what has already been done and should lead some big clean-ups and emphasize partnerships.

Chairman Spottswood got to talk with some of the partners doing the clean-ups and thinks it's a great effort in raising awareness of the issues and trying to offset the impacts and that it's a great idea to get the Agency more involved in these efforts. He tasked Executive Director Sutton and team with coming up with some ideas moving forward.

Executive Director Sutton agreed that this is an important topic, accepted and embraced the challenge, and is ready to take it to the next level.

Vice Chairman Sole discussed the role of FWC in marine debris and suggested focus areas including derelict vessels, fisheries marine debris, storms and other areas within the Agency's wheelhouse.

Public Comment

The following individuals addressed the Commission on this agenda item:

Captain Bill Kelly addressed the Commission. He noted marine debris is an enormous issue in the Keys and discussed work with the University of Florida after Hurricane Irma went through South Florida and the Keys to document the damage caused by and distribution of marine debris. He also discussed removals completed and ongoing, partnerships and resources in the Keys and their importance as a marine debris reduction tool, and types of debris found.

Ms. Janet Luce, Project Manager with Atkins North America, addressed the Commission. She noted that Atkins has been an engineering consultant for FWC Boating and Waterways for many years and has participated in numerous FWC Derelict Vessel Programs. Ms. Luce offered potential assistance from Atkins, with FWC's marine debris efforts and discussed a proposal to DEP to assist with storm response. She was encouraged that FWC and DEP are putting mechanisms in place to respond efficiently and effectively and are situated to take advantage of federal disaster response funding opportunities. Speaking as a resident of Cocoa Beach, she noted the amount of debris from visitors and encouraged FWC's outreach efforts to connect with visitors. She also noted support for FWC's Stash the Trash campaign, continued crowd-sourced clean-up efforts, and FWC's overall marine debris reduction efforts and partnerships and suggested grants to local businesses to aid in clean-up efforts.

Mr. Bill George addressed the Commission. He suggested that with a global movement away from traditionally plastic items that would, over time, degrade into microplastics, that FWC keep trap materials and related recommendations on the radar.

Mr. Jerry Sansom addressed the Commission. He reminded the Commission that the commercial fishing industry has worked 3 decades to help reduce marine debris, partnering with FWC, and look forward to doing more through improving industry practices. He also discussed the derelict vessel budget cuts, expressed interest in working with FWC more on derelict vessels, offered some potential partnership opportunities for marine debris clean-ups, and expressed appreciation for FWC's efforts.

Commissioner Discussion

Vice Chairman Sole asked about delays in post storm funding and associated response.

Major Rowe responded to address factors that play a role in post storm response including priorities for human health and safety, ESF-10 response, securing funding, and identification and coordination of respondents and agency roles. He noted that FWC doesn't have a formal marine debris program, and although an FWC marine debris coordinator position was recently created (July 2019), it is currently grant funding limited and suggested that the Agency could benefit from a full time coordinator position to continue inter- and intra- agency condition, partnership development and expansion, storm response and funding management, and continued marine debris reduction efforts overall.

Vice Chairman Sole expressed his support for Major Rowe's suggestion.

Chairman Spottswood asked about educational courses to LE staff in the Keys regarding at-risk vessels identification. He asked about vessel exercise status and asked for an update on efforts, particularly in relation to getting at-risk vessels off the water before a storm.

Major Rowe responded, agreeing on the multiple potential impacts of both derelict vessels and at-risk vessels. With regard to at-risk vessels, implementation of the Rule and that that part of the Statue is going well. He also expressed that conducting the vessel exercise/test isn't a problem, but there is continued work with local government to determine the next steps if the vessel should fail the test. FWC has created a toolkit for local governments to use to create an ordinance that would facilitate action by creating a mechanism for enforcement. FWC continues to monitor and provide expertise to ensure effectiveness once put in place.

Chairman Spottswood asked for an update on where things stand with ordinances in the Keys

Major Rowe responded that the Keys are doing well and FWC is continuing to work with them on the live aboard piece of the ordinance. He will double check on the specifics and get more details to Chairman Spottswood on the current status.

Chairman Spottswood offered his assistance with helping move the process forward.

Executive Director Sutton noted the opportunity and potential to grow this program and keep it in line with FWC's efforts and expertise, reiterating Vice Chairman Sole's previous sentiments on focus areas. He also noted that the derelict vessel money was not vetoed entirely and that funds are available and that FWC will continue derelict vessel removal work.

Chairman Spottswood asked for any remaining business for the day.

Executive Director Sutton noted that he forgot to thank Vice Chairman Sole for his assistance as the Budget Liaison for the Commission the past two years. He asked the Chairman if another Commissioner would like to step up and take on this role for the upcoming year.

Chairman Spottswood noted that Commissioner Hudson would be a good option for this and asked Eric to coordinate with the Commissioner since he was not present at this meeting.

Executive Director Sutton noted that this next year will be unusual in this process and asked that Vice Chairman Sole assist with the transition to Commissioner Hudson as the budget liaison.

Vice Chairman Sole agreed to assist with the handoff of this role to Commissioner Hudson.

Chairman Spottswood recessed the meeting at 3:06 pm

Thursday July 23rd Reconvene

Chairman Spottswood reconvened the meeting at 9:03 a.m.

Items Requiring Action

Draft Rules – Invasive Reptiles

Ms. Kristen Sommers with the Division of Habitat and Species Conservation presented a draft rule proposal for invasive reptiles.

Public Comment

The following individuals addressed the Commission on this agenda item:

Mr. Nick Atwood with Animal Rights Foundation of Florida addressed the Commission in support of the draft rules proposed by staff.

Mr. Bill George addressed the Commission. He noted concern that a restriction on green iguanas may cause issues considering there is already an established population.

Mr. Michael Cole addressed the Commission. He noted concern for the proposal because of his business that has been working successfully in Florida. He mentioned that the rules proposed today are flawed and bad for the State of Florida.

Mr. Anthony addressed the Commission. He noted that he has relocated from another state to Florida with the idea of increasing his legal business of pet trade. If changes are made as the proposed rules are suggested, it will cause a major impact to the business and educational aspect that includes these species.

Mr. William McAdam addressed the Commission. He noted that the record of licensees' violations are minimal, and he is requesting commercial use grandfathering for Conditional reptiles. He also commented that he is currently breeding pythons.

Ms. Kate McFall, Florida Director of the United States Humane Society, addressed the Commission. She noted support of the proposed rules and thanked staff and FWC for bringing this forward.

Ms. Nancy Michaelson addressed the Commission. She noted that she is in the business of breeding invasive reptiles and any rule changes would have a negative impact on her business.

Mr. Michael Vanostrand addressed the Commission. He suggested that making these changes will backfire and have a major impact on his business.

Mr. Phil Goss, President of US Ark, addressed the Commission. He noted that the current lawsuit is related to the Florida affiliation of US Ark. He suggested that the legislature that passed these statute changes were misinformed. He asked that business owners who have worked with FWC over the past 10 years be grandfathered in for future activities.

Ms. Rene Caperell addressed the Commission. She noted that her family moved to Florida to build and grow the reptile business that they had established.

Ms. Jordan addressed the Commission. She noted concern about COVID-19 impacts on zoos and in person educational experiences.

Mr. Robert Boyer addressed the Commission. He noted he has a current reptile business and added concern that those pet owners are not going to be willing to give up their animals.

Mr. Gary Fishman addressed the Commission. He commented that as a resident of Florida, he is fed up with seeing these invasive species destroy the land and habitat that costs the state and other homeowners money to repair the damage caused. He noted support for FWC proposed rules and the Legislature and Governor for taking this action and moving it forward.

Mr. Kyle Atwood addressed the Commission. He asked that staff work with breeders to create secure ways to house animals.

Mr. Tim Wolfe addressed the Commission. He noted that he is a small business owner in Florida who follows all the rules and restrictions to hold a permit for invasive reptiles. He asked the Commission to allow grandfathering in for those who are current permit holders.

Mr. Larry Sellers addressed the Commission. He represents US Ark, Florida Chapter, and noted that permit holders have a substantial interest and worked with the FWC to develop Conditional species rules. They are concerned with public comment being accepted after drafts are formed and presented and that they will have a significant impact to businesses. He believes there is no need to rush rulemaking and decide on final language after public workshops.

Ms. Cali addressed the Commission. She noted that she works with FWC and rescues these types of animals from the wild and uses them for educational purposes and then works to find homes for them with permit holders. She also noted that she wants to work with FWC on the issues.

Mr. Pete Bangray addressed the Commission. He suggested that if these rules are approved, it will have a negative impact on small business owners.

Ms. Elizabeth Wisneski addressed the Commission. She noted that she is a member of US Ark, Florida Chapter. She expressed her concern with the indoor housing requirement; asking the FWC to work with industry on the rules including with workshops.

Mr. Evan Martiz addressed the Commission. He noted that he has invested a lot of money to build a business for educational purposes. If these rules are approved, it will negatively impact his business.

Ms. Karen Red addressed the Commission. She noted that exotic wildlife cause human health and safety concerns and suggested that there is a positive solution to reduce these impacts to Florida.

Mr. Mike Barrera addressed the Commission. He noted opposition to the proposed rules. He claimed discrimination against permit holders who are not AZA affiliated organizations. He also believes that PIT tags are cost prohibitive to pet owners and amnesty won't be able to handle a large influx of pet iguanas/teguas.

Ms. Alise Bennett, Staff Attorney at Center for Biological Diversity, addressed the Commission. The center strongly supports this staff proposal because it has a scientific background and is an effort to protect the habitat of the State of Florida for native species for future generations.

Mr. Mark Burton addressed the Commission. He noted that species that are already established can't be eradicated and it's important to not create rules that inhibit people from collecting them from the wild and exporting them out of Florida. He also noted that prevention is key for species that are not yet established here.

Mr. Steven Tillis addressed the Commission. He asked that the educational use animals be grandfathered into use by permit holders.

Mr. Rian Gittman addressed the Commission. He commented that these proposed rules are wrong, and the industry will fight tooth and nail against any changes.

Mr. Chris Tenerozi addressed the Commission. He noted that his work with reticulated pythons has been going on over 20 years. These rules are going to have a negative impact on business owners who have followed the rules and regulations.

Ms. Amy Pritchard with Ambassadors of Nature addressed the Commission. She noted concern for housing requirements for the species in these rules.

Mr. Silas Harrington addressed the Commission. He noted opposition to the rule that businesses can't operate out of a home.

Mr. Austin Harris addressed the Commission. He noted coordination during the Legislative Session to help educate legislators on the businesses throughout the state on properly managing invasive reptiles. He expressed his concern with loss of business from tegu limitations. He noted that he works closely with FWC, allows FWC to use their facility to train incoming officers.

Mr. Patrick addressed the Commission. He stated that the permit system that is in place works and raises the standards for qualified keepers and does not agree with a ban on any of these species.

Mr. Bryan Borkin addressed the Commission. He stated his concern with the impacts to business and believes that the rules have been pushed forward without consideration for industry and environment.

Commissioner Discussion

Commissioner Rood noted that she understands the situation that small business owners are in but believes that the issue is out of our hands because the legislature has spoken.

Ms. Norton noted that FWC's authority is independent of the legislature and commissioners can make the rules that are believed to be the best for Florida's fish, wildlife and habitat.

Executive Director Sutton noted that these rule proposals are independently derived by the staff.

Vice Chairman Sole asked about the rule language related to educational opportunities.

Ms. Sommers responded that for both conditional and prohibited species, you have to meet the same bar for public exhibition. Last year, FWC updated the rules and definitions of what requirements a permit holder would need to have in order to qualify for that.

Vice Chairman Sole commented that the Conditional Species Permit (CSP) has been working well. He asked for clarification on these comments. He asked if it was successful in managing these species.

Ms. Sommers noted that the CSP did allow for commercial use for certain species in the past. Prior to the Lacey Act being re-interpreted, these species could not be sold across state lines. Now that has changed, it created a new market.

Executive Director Sutton noted that it is hard to measure successful programs when there are millions of species of animals that have escaped and noted that one violation is too many.

Vice Chairman Sole thanked Executive Director Sutton for that information. He then asked if a risk analysis was completed on these conditional species being moved to prohibited list. He suggested that additional stakeholder work needs to be done prior to any rules being approved as final.

Ms. Sommers commented that there has been a lot of staff work on certain species in Florida that are included in these recommendations, and that all of these species are high risk.

Vice Chairman Sole noted that he would like some of the comments heard today addressed and would like to have had more public comment.

Commissioner Nicklaus commented that he's concerned with the lack of cooperation with the industry. He made a comparison between iguanas and lionfish, with how we encourage people to capture lionfish and is concerned about impacting industry members that export wild caught tegus/iguanas out of Florida. He suggested possible stronger enforcement.

Chairman Spottswood asked what a bearded dragon is.

Ms. Sommers responded that it is like an iguana but not quite as large. She mentioned that the comment from the public was asking that bearded dragons should be looked at as well, but she says it is not of concern at this time.

Chairman Spottswood noted that activities in the past have allowed the state to get to this current situation. He noted the cost for management and also the environmental damages that these species are causing. He asked if there was an analysis on what the true damages are as a result of these species, because he believes that the damages must be in the billions. He expressed concern with not allowing exportation.

Commissioner Barreto noted that a lot of the comments heard were from industry stakeholders who are following the rules and requirements. However, there is an issue with people who purchase these species and those are the individuals who have caused problems in the past with illegally releasing them into the wild. He believes that we should not have nonnative animals competing with native species in Florida he is also concerned with exporting things we don't want here to other states.

Commissioner Lester noted support for staff recommendation to take action as soon as possible. Florida is unique and it should be our priority to protect the state. Our first priority is to protect the environment of the state. Florida is uniquely endangered when these species get loose. He believes that it may seem that we're moving quicker than we normally do, but Florida has a bigger problem than other states have, and he believes immediate action is needed.

Executive Director Sutton commented that the presentation today is draft. He highlighted the ideas to workshop exceptions, grandfathering and exportation with the stakeholders. He noted that given the science and ecology we strongly stand by the current recommendations.

Chairman Spottswood agrees that workshops need to happen.

Vice Chairman Sole noted that we need to make sure we do this the correct way.

Chairman Spottswood noted that the workshops can still happen, moving forward, and make changes to proposed rule.

Commissioner Barreto echoed that moving forward with this draft rule will help the workshops and stakeholder meetings.

Commissioner Nicklaus asked for staff to provide an analysis on the different environments and where can they live. Thinking about exportation of different species and where they can survive.

Commission Action

Upon a motion by Commissioner Lester, seconded by Commissioner Barreto and carried, the Commission passed staff recommendation.

Draft Rule – Imperiled Species Program Permitting Guidelines

Ms. Claire Sunquist-Blunden with the Division of Habitat and Species Conservation presented a draft rule proposal related to Imperiled Species Permitting Guidelines.

Public Comment

The following individuals addressed the Commission on this agenda item:

Mr. Allen Hale addressed the Commission. He expressed his concern for Gopher Tortoises.

Mr. Kent Wimmer, Senior Representative with Defenders of Wildlife, addressed the Commission. He provided support for staff proposal.

Commission Discussion

Chairman Spottswood asked for clarification between the listing status.

Ms. Sunquist-Blunden responded that the rule changes affecting listing status changed in 2017. These proposals are adopting guidelines to better define harm and harassment.

Vice Chairman Sole noted that these are ways to allow the public to ensure reduced impact to imperiled species.

Commission Action

Upon a motion by Vice Chairman Sole, seconded by Commissioner Rood and carried, the Commission passed staff recommendation.

Draft Rule – Gopher Tortoise Permitting Guidelines

Ms. Melissa Tucker, Deputy Director of the Division of Habitat and Species Conservation, presented a draft rule proposal for Gopher Tortoise Permitting Guidelines.

Public Comment

The following individuals addressed the Commission on this agenda item:

Mr. Craig Diamond with the Florida Chapter of the Sierra Club addressed the Commission in support of staff recommendation.

Ms. Laurie Macdonald addressed the Commission with support, in general, for the staff recommendations. She noted concern with the blanket exception related to agriculture and silviculture activities.

Mr. James Modica with Modica and Associates addressed the Commission. He noted support for a majority of the proposals presented by staff. He noted concern for ATV surveys as proposed.

Mr. Allen Hale noted support for staff proposal. He mentioned an app that can be used to document gopher tortoises in the area. He asked for details on the total mortality when moved to a recipient site.

Mr. Thomas Connolly addressed the Commission. He requested the Commission only approve the draft rules with removal of the ATV language. He requested that the ATV language be reviewed and continue to be workshopped with permitted agents.

Mr. Kent Wimmer addressed the Commission in support of staff recommendations.

Ms. Kate McFall addressed the Commission in support of staff recommendations.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Rood asked if there is a way a UTV could be used on surveys.

Executive Director Sutton noted that there were some good points made about survey methodology and that as we continue to update guidelines in the future, we want to make sure we're making common sense decisions on survey methods.

Vice Chairman Sole noted that the Guidelines need to be adopted by rule and would take rulemaking to change them in the future. He asked staff to review the safety issue for using ATV vs. UTVs. He asked how Florida is doing with regard to recovery of the species.

Ms. Tucker responded that Florida is doing a great job.

Commission Action

Upon a motion by Vice Chairman Sole, seconded by Commissioner Barreto and carried, the Commission passed staff recommendation with a provision that Executive Director Sutton can approve minor revisions to address the safety of ATVs.

Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda

The following individuals registered to speak on items not listed on the agenda:

Mr. Daniel Vossen addressed the Commission regarding adverse effects of the Everglades based on the single species management for the Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow. He noted concerns for water management in South Florida.

Mr. "Alligator" Ron Bergeron addressed the Commission. He thanked each Commissioner and FWC staff for representing the people of Florida in managing fish and wildlife for the benefit of people. He provided an update on some of the construction efforts that are almost finished to help move water south. He committed to work as a Board member of the South Florida Water Management District along with the Federal partners and State partners on positive change related to the Everglades.

Chairman Spottswood thanked Mr. Bergeron for his efforts on making progress on this topic because of how intricate and intertwined these waterways and habitats are.

Commissioner Barreto thanked former Commissioner Bergeron for his passion and involvement regarding restoration of the Everglades.

Vice Chairman Sole thanked former Commissioner Bergeron for his role as a partner working with the Board of the Water Management District.

Mr. Jon Bob Carlos addressed the Commission. He noted concern for mismanagement in the Everglades due to a single species that is federally protected.

Mr. Richard Martinez addressed the Commission with thanks for holding these public meetings and allowing the public to participate in such an easy to use platform. He echoed the concerns of previous speakers regarding management of the Everglades by reviewing only 1 species in mind.

Mr. Lee Caplones addressed the Commission with additional comments on the Federal mismanagement of the Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow.

Ms. Jade addressed the Commission with a request to change a portion of the Intracoastal near Jupiter Narrows to a no wake zone. She asked for additional enforcement in this area.

Ms. Alise Bennett addressed the Commission regarding the diamond back terrapin. She requested that Commission consider terrapin by-catch devices on all traps.

Mr. Kyle Archecky addressed the Commission echoing the comments of previous speakers with concern of single species management of the Everglades.

Mr. Shawn McCann addressed the Commission echoing the comments from the previous speaker.

Mr. Shannon Turbeville addressed the Commission regarding the Weeki Wachee river in Hernando County. He noted that a study has been done on the river showing damage to the river caused by individuals getting in and out of their boats and walking along the river bottom. He requested FWC work with the Water Management District and County officials to restrict access. He asked this to be a future meeting agenda item.

Mr. John Rosier with the Everglades Coordinating Council addressed the Commission regarding the death of the Everglades because of the Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow and single species management.

Ms. Linda Bailey addressed the Commission regarding a request to change the speed zone for ¼ of a mile of water near Jupiter Narrows.

Mr. Mike Collins addressed the Commission regarding the Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow.

Ms. Jenna Notty addressed the Commission regarding the Jupiter Narrows and a speed zone to make it safe for all stakeholders.

Mr. Matt Taylor addressed the Commission echoing the previous comments about the Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow and the damage caused by the federal management of this species to the Everglades.

Ms. Nyla with the Florida Foundation addressed the Commission echoing the comments on the Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow and Everglades restoration.

Mr. Gene Dumpkin, Water Resource Director for the Miccosukee Indian Tribe, addressed the Commission regarding the Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow.

Ms. Katrina Shadix, Director of Bear Warriors United, addressed the Commission. She thanked FWC LE staff for investigating a shooting death of a bear cub. She also noted concern that the Legislature did not allocate any funding to the Bear Proof trash container program. She added that her organization is working to provide assistance to citizens in retrofitting trash cans to be bear proof.

Mr. Jim Abernathy addressed the Commission regarding an area north of the Cato Bridge. He noted that he is concerned for the fast speed zone and the danger to animals and humans using the area. He requested the Commission consider a slow speed zone in the area.

Mr. James Rigby addressed the Commission regarding an item that was on the Consent Agenda.

Vice Chairman Sole advised that this item was already passed and that comments for this time are for items not on the agenda.

Executive Director Sutton asked the stakeholder to reach out to Mr. George Warthen, Director of the Division of Hunting and Game Management to discuss this issue.

Mr. Cary Bittle addressed the Commission regarding the single species management in the Everglades.

Mr. Jack Pollard addressed the Commission echoing comments regarding Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow and conflicts with water management in the everglades. He suggested captive breeding as a solution.

Mr. Eric Kimmel addressed the Commission in support of the previous comments on Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow management.

Mr. John Conti addressed the Commission regarding the Everglades issues previously discussed by several speakers.

Mr. Ron Bradley addressed the Commission regarding frozen fish for food being stored on houseboats and violations stated by Law Enforcement.

Ms. Tracey Marinello addressed the Commission requesting water lettuce to be classified as a native species and not eradicate it.

Mr. Scott Wilson speaking for Save Florida Lakes and Waterways and also Anglers Voice, addressed the Commission regarding Aquatic Plant Management.

Ms. M.B. Hague, President of the Jupiter Inlet Foundation, addressed the Commission. She noted concern for the Jupiter Narrows speed zone and danger to fish, wildlife and people in this area.

Mr. Newton Cook addressed the Commission thanked FWC and SFWMD for working with stakeholders on duck hunting on the STA's. He noted future wounded warrior hunts that are planned. He then commented on Everglades restoration and effects from the species management of Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow.

Mr. Travis Thompson addressed the Commission in support of the changes for Everglades restoration with the single species management. He also thanked the Commission for using technology to conduct these virtual meetings to ensure stakeholder coordination on many different topics.

Mr. Mike Melton addressed the Commission with thanks for hosting this virtual meeting. He noted concern for the Everglades because of single species management.

Mr. Rae Rocher addressed the Commission with comments regarding Everglades restoration.

Mr. Rick Birella addressed the Commission echoing comments from previous speakers on Everglades restoration and single species management.

Mr. Charles Howard addressed the Commission regarding water quality and aquatic plant spraying.

Mr. Bill George addressed the Commission regarding resident license verification. He thanked the Commission for funding the nuisance alligator program.

Mr. Mark Barton addressed the Commission regarding the consent agenda item on Electric Bicycle rules.

Vice Chairman Sole commented that this consent agenda item has been voted on already by the Commission. He asked Mr. Barton to reach out to Mr. George Warthen and continue to provide feedback on this topic.

Mr. Josh Vanstoyk addressed the Commission meeting regarding Everglades damages.

Mr. Steve Clitchell addressed the Commission regarding decline of Everglades and water quality for local waterbodies.

Ms. Geri Block addressed the Commission regarding Jupiter Narrows and the safety issue for humans and marine life.

Mr. Craig van der Heiden, Director of Fish and Wildlife with the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians, addressed the Commission with a request for whole ecosystem management in the Everglades.

Mr. Anthony Tridente addressed the Commission regarding Flounder.

Vice Chairman Sole noted that these comments should have been provided during that agenda item.

Mr. Mike Elfenbein addressed the Commission regarding Everglades declines based on single species management.

Mr. Tom VanOat addressed the Commission regarding the Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow.

Mr. Matt addressed the Commission regarding the Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow.

Future Agenda Items

Dr. Thomas Eason, Assistant Executive Director, provided an update to the Commission on future agenda items.

Chairman Spottswood noted there will be more work on the FKNMS between now and the next meeting, so there may need to be an agenda item in October.

Commissioner Rood noted concern for boating speed zones.

Vice Chairman Sole added comments that Jupiter Narrows is a very unique part of the coastline and he feels that the speed zone is not appropriately placed. He noted that FWC has completed an analysis, but it does not show the amount of congestion that has been reported.

Executive Director Sutton responded that staff are reviewing this particular issue again and will report back to the Commissioners.

Vice Chairman Sole asked Dr. Eason to think about a presentation on Sharks within the next few meetings.

Chairman Spottswood asked for a refresher on the Everglades as a potential panel discussion.

Vice Chairman Sole added that Executive Director Sutton should continue to work on a solution that is neither let the Everglades die or let the federal species die.

Executive Director Sutton thanked the Commission for this direction. He agrees to continue working with the Federal Government and the stakeholders to work on solutions.

Chairman Spottswood discussed a potential Leadership Summit in the future.

Commissioner Barreto noted that he has spoken with Executive Director Sutton on this topic and his request for Executive Director Sutton to be a leader to bring together the partners for a better solution now rather than later.

Commissioner Exchange

Chairman Spottswood opened the floor for Commissioner Exchange.

Vice Chairman Sole thanked staff for organizing these virtual meetings. He appreciates the speakers who have called in to the meeting. He then noted a recent experience that he was involved in with citizens and marine turtle permit holder to rescue a turtle.

Commissioner Barreto thanked the Chairman and Vice Chairman for running a great meeting. He also thanked staff for preparing and presenting the items on the agenda. He added his sympathies for Officer Keen and the friends and family of that individual who was taken too soon.

Commissioner Lester thanked staff for all the prep work for making this virtual meeting so smooth. He highlighted some freshwater fishing opportunities throughout the state.

Commissioner Rood thanked staff for the effort put into the meeting.

Chairman Spottswood thanked staff for all the work that went into organizing the meeting.

Commission Administrative Matters

The next regularly scheduled Commission meeting is set for October 7 - 8, 2020, in Destin, commencing at 8:30 am each day.

Adjournment

Chairman Spottswood adjourned the meeting at 2:59 p.m.

Robert Spottswood
Chairman

Eric Sutton
Executive Director

Respectfully submitted:

Lisa Davis
Commission Assistant

DRAFT