Chairman T. Switzer called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. The following members and others were present:

**Members**
- John Mareska, ADCNR/MRD, Gulf Shores, AL
- Jill Hendon, USM/GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS
- Ted Switzer, FWC/FWRI, St. Petersburg, FL
- Brett Falterman, LDWF, Grand Isle, LA
- Fernando Martinez, TPWD, Corpus Christi, TX
- Christian Jones, NOAA Fisheries, Pascagoula, MS

**Others**
- Eric Hoffmayer, NOAA/NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
- Darin Topping, TPWD, Rockport, TX
- Jimmy Sanders, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
- Julien Lartigue, NOAA Restore Science Program, Pascagoula, MS
- Read Hendon, USM/GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS
- Travis Williams, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
- Mark Albins, USA/Dauphin Island Sea Lab, Dauphin Island, AL
- Gary Fitzhugh, NOAA/SEFSC, Panama City, FL
- Trevor Moncrief, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
- Wade Hardy, MDMR, Biloxi, MS

**Staff**
- Jeff Rester, *SEAMAP/Habitat Program Coordinator*, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
- Dave Donaldson, *Executive Director*, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
- James Ballard, *Sport Fish Restoration/ANS Coordinator*, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
- Ashley Lott, *Staff Assistant*, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

**Adoption of Agenda**
J. Mareska moved to accept the agenda. F. Martinez seconded and the motion passed.

**Approval of Minutes**
J. Mareska moved to approve the SEAMAP minutes from the March 14, 2017 meeting as submitted. J. Hendon seconded and the motion passed. The summary of the conference call in July was approved as well.

**Administrative Report**
J. Rester reported that since the conference call in July, SEAMAP has completed the Bottom Longline Survey and the Fall Plankton Survey. A few partners are still trying to finish up the
Vertical Line Survey. The Fall Shrimp/Groundfish Survey began a couple of weeks ago and is currently ongoing. SEAMAP published the 2017 SEAMAP Annual Report to the Technical Coordinating Committee which discusses SEAMAP FY2017 survey activities in the Gulf of Mexico. SEAMAP has also published the 2016 SEAMAP Environmental and Biological Atlas of the Gulf of Mexico. The Atlas provides a summary of all 2016 SEAMAP sampling activities. **J. Rester** pointed out that we are now as caught up as possible with the Atlas publication and this is due to everyone sending in there data in a timely manner. Please continue to do so. **J. Rester** asked that if partners are not able to complete any assigned stations for the Fall Shrimp/Groundfish Survey, to please let us know so someone else may be able to sample that station. **J. Hendon** had a question, because of the hurricanes, they are not able to do their stations until November. She would like to know if in the future, can they go and do their stations before Florida in late September. Per **J. Rester**, this is outside of the historic time frame and would like to stay in this time frame. **J. Rester** also mentioned the Annual Joint Meeting with the South Atlantic and Caribbean was held in July. They would like to make these meetings more substantive, do more collaborations, and make the meeting more productive. This will be discussed later on the agenda.

**SEAMSP Vertical Line Survey Power Analysis**

**M. Albins** from the University of South Alabama, Dauphin Island Sea Lab gave a presentation on the SEAMAP Vertical Line Database. He found many errors in the data: missing data, duplicate data, hook number/hook size data blank. He feels that we need to go back to the beginning of the pipeline and check the data against the field data sheets. The main take away from this presentation was that over the years, there has been differences in sampling protocol and differences in sampling design among the state partners. That and the overall data consistency and quality need to be addressed. He is more than happy to help with these tasks by providing detailed reports of the issues and/or working with our data people to track down and fix the problems.

**Use of Spectra Line in the Vertical Line Sampling**

**J. Hendon** gave a presentation on the Vertical Line Survey Gear Comparison, comparing the use of spectra line to the SEAMAP rigs. They fished an equivalent number of spectra and SEAMAP stations, used cut squid as bait and used a standard one minute fish for both line types. This was done on August 22, 2017 with the results being no catch. **J. Hendon** would like to continue with this experimental test and to get enough data for a pilot study. If SEAMAP is ok with it, she would like to use unused plankton funds to fund this experiment because they are not doing plankton sampling. She will move ahead with sampling in the spring and will use a smaller hook type and squid as bait and will actively fish for two minutes per line type based on suggestions from the Subcommittee. She will keep in touch with C. Jones, E. Hoffmayer and J. Rester regarding the funding.

**Review of 2017 Vertical Line Sampling and Planning for 2018 Sampling**

**J. Rester** wanted to review the 2017 vertical line sampling and to find out how many stations each partner could sample for 2018. **J. Mareska** stated that they could not find four sites, but had alternate sites. Sampling is still ongoing and he has not heard of any complaints thus far. He stated that Alabama can do 29 stations per season again for 2018. **B. Faltermann** stated that the season went well for Louisiana. They were able to sample 98 out of 100 stations. However, for 2018, would want to look at the budget before committing to sampling the full shelf. **F. Martinez** stated that Texas has sampled 51 out of 60 stations so far and they are on track to finish the remaining stations by the end of the month. Station selection worked very well this time. They only could not
find one station. **D. Topping** pointed out that since the grids are so close, they are not getting any artificial reefs. Texas stated that for 2018, since the grids are so close, they will be able to go up to 70 sites. **J. Rester** asked that he be kept updated as to new potential sampling sites so the sampling universe can be refined and updated.

**Proposed 2018 SEAMAP Sampling**

**J. Rester** wanted to review with the states what surveys they can participate in for 2018. **T. Switzer** noted that the NOAA tax may be reduced, trying to make the tax more consistent, around 5-6%. If this happens, it will bring SEAMAP close to the 2014 budget. **T. Switzer** stated that Florida will do close to what they did in 2017. Looking at 10-14 days for the summer and fall survey and a full vertical line time drop. For the past 20 years, Florida has done a spring bait fish survey. This spring, they are looking into doing a calibration cruise to compare this bait fish survey with the SEAMAP survey and hopefully will fold the bait survey into the SEAMAP survey. They are also exploring, at no cost, incorporating the fishery acoustic survey into SEAMAP. **J. Hendon** reported that Mississippi will do the same as they did in 2017. They will participate in the summer and fall trawl, fall plankton and bottom longline and maintain the archiving center for the invertebrates. And if it is ok with SEAMAP, will do the experimental survey added on to days already out. **J. Mareska** stated that Alabama will do the summer and fall trawl, fall plankton, three seasons of bottom longline and two seasons of vertical line. **F. Martinez** stated that Texas will do the bottom longline and vertical line. For the vertical line, they can increase to 70 stations. **B. Falterman** stated that Louisiana will do everything they did in 2017, but wants to look at the budget before committing to getting the full western half of the shelf during the Vertical Line Survey.

**2017 SEAMAP Joint Annual Meeting and Planning for the 2018 Meeting**

The Joint Annual Meeting with the Caribbean and South Atlantic was held in July. At the meeting, they discussed making the meeting more productive. The group would like to have presentations, talks, tours and organize a social event. The group would like to explore having the joint meeting at more centralized locations. The Gulf is hosting the next joint meeting during the week of July 23 in the Tampa/St. Petersburg area. **T. Switzer** noted that we want to make sure the Gulf has funding for everyone to attend. May need to look at not having the October SEAMAP meeting and just doing a SEAMAP meeting in March and the Joint meeting in July. **G. Fitzhugh** wanted to let the Subcommittee know that he is cohosting a fishery reproduction workshop the first week of April 2018, Marvels 3. He is encouraging all to come.

**2018 Shrimp/Groundfish Survey Station Selection Process Update**

**E. Hoffmayer** is working to revamp how we do station selection for the trawl survey. In the past, areas were blocked off, but selected stations and then did a complicated procedure to see where hangs/sponges have been and then throw out bad stations without any replacement. He hopes by summer 2018 to have the new station selection process, where areas are buffered ahead of time with realistic buffers. **E. Hoffmayer** stated that he hopes to have the new version of FSCS in place for the summer trawl survey. **J. Rester** wanted to discuss taxonomic name changes and how to handle. A trawl workgroup meeting may need to be held to look at these issues. **E. Hoffmayer** stated that they are looking at changing the biocode system and moving to something more flexible. J. Rester, E. Hoffmayer and David Hanisko will have some informal discussions on biocodes and name changes and bring back to the Subcommittee and/or workgroup at a later date.
Election of Chair
J. Hendon moved to nominate T. Switzer as Chairman. F. Martinez seconded and the motion passed. J. Mareska moved to nominate J. Hendon as Vice-Chairman. The motion passed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:47 p.m.