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# Unique Identifier and Related Issues in the Gulf Shrimp Fishery Data

Gulf Council Meeting  
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**NOAA**  
**FISHERIES**  
SERO/SF/SSB

# Section 401 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act

- (a) STANDARDIZED FISHING VESSEL REGISTRATION AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.—The Secretary shall, in cooperation with the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating, the States, the Councils, and Marine Fisheries Commissions, develop recommendations for implementation of a standardized fishing vessel registration and information management system on a regional basis, and,
- (b) FISHING VESSEL REGISTRATION.—The proposed registration system should, at a minimum, obtain the following information for each fishing vessel—the name and official number or other identification, together with the name and address of the owner or operator or both; (2) gross tonnage, vessel capacity, type and quantity of fishing gear, mode of operation (catcher, catcher processor, or other), and such other pertinent information with respect to vessel characteristics as the Secretary may require; and (3) identification (by species, gear type, geographic area of operations, and season) of the fisheries in which the fishing vessel participates.

# Unique Identifier and Related Data Issues



- **Examples of issues affecting ability to conduct analyses**
  - Issues exist in 2011-2014 data but worsened thereafter as Gulf shrimp landings data became entirely based on state trip ticket data
  - About 1,200 vessel IDs in landings data from 2011-2014 could not be verified via CG and state boat registration or license data
  - Inability to uniquely identify vessels (CG doc and state registered), dealers and fishermen/businesses across states (different IDs)
  - Resulted in inability to accurately determine # of active/active permitted entities, and their respective activity levels (e.g., landings, revenues/sales, trips, etc.)
  - Shrimp size data often missing or invalid (e.g., resulting in higher prices for smaller shrimp or inability to determine price differences by size)

# Historical Attempts to Deal with Issues

- Data collected from dealers by port agents before 2002. Cooperative approach between NMFS staff and LA and AL fisheries staffs began when state trip ticket data began to be used in 2002.
- NMFS would find errors, suggest potential corrections when possible, and pass along to state data managers because NMFS could not correct the raw data.
- State data managers would work with dealers in LA and AL to correct errors. NMFS port agents also involved, particularly in FL, but could not compel dealers to comply (no federal dealer permit).
- Approach was often successful when dealers and data managers were cooperative, but unsuccessful when not.
- Sometimes led to different versions of the data being reported by federal and state agencies

# GSMFC Attempts to Find a Better Solution

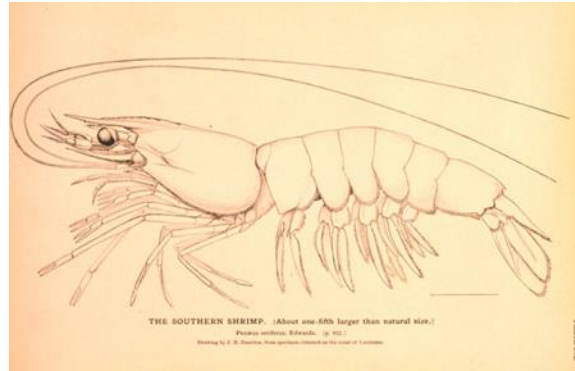
- Ad-hoc approach was not efficient and dependent on consistent and regular cooperation from all parties
- Project developed by GSMFC to build database housing all state and CG license and registration data for cross-reference and QA/QC purposes
- Project was not completed because some states fisheries agencies were unable to provide all of the requested data
- Thus, GSMFC does not have the ability to QA/QC vessel, dealer, or fishermen/business identifiers in the trip ticket data
- Cooperative approach subsequently broke down and QA/QC of identifiers in trip ticket data remains a challenge

# Implications for Management



- Shrimp and red drum are only federally managed fisheries in Gulf for which the Council and NMFS rely on state trip tickets for fishery dependent data
- Amendment 18 generally relies on data prior to 2015 rather than data from the most recent years, which is not desirable
- An economic analysis of the Texas Closure and potential modifications to that policy cannot be conducted until issues are resolved
- Inaccurate or missing size data also reduces accuracy of stock assessments
- Some of these issues also apply to the commercial sector of the red drum fishery and thus RD Am 5
- The lack of a comprehensive database regarding fishery participants hampers enforcement efforts by NMFS and the CG

# How Can the Council Help?



- Consider including Gulf shrimp dealers in existing federal dealer permit and electronic reporting requirements
- In coordination with GSMFC and NMFS, work to identify and fill data gaps, ensure consistency in data (e.g., shrimp size), and improve QA/QC of data
- Encourage more and better use of federal and state port agents in QA/QC process when feasible
- Encourage FIN to move towards a more modernized data management system