

**Summary for the  
Data Collection Technical Committee  
Tampa, FL  
June 6, 2016**

**Council and Staff**

Greg Stunz  
John Froeschke  
Doug Gregory  
Beth Hager  
Karen Hoak  
Emily Muehlstein  
Morgan Kilgour  
Carrie Simmons

**Panel Attendance**

Gregg Bray (online)  
Ken Brennan  
Randy Blankinship  
Mark Fisher  
Joe Jewell  
Ty Lindsey  
Nicole Smith  
Andy Strelcheck  
Dave Van Voorhees (online)

**Attendance-Others**

Roy Crabtree  
Nick Farmer  
Michael Kelly  
Rich Malinowski  
Gary Morgan  
Todd Phillips

**Background**

The Gulf Council (Council) received a presentation illustrating a decision framework about options to implement electronic reporting for federally permitted Gulf of Mexico for-hire vessels at their April 2016 meeting. The Council requested additional review and input from their Data Collection Technical Committee (Committee) about this flowchart and how to develop a for-hire electronic reporting program. The Committee met June 6, 2016 and discussed a range of options for a new for-hire reporting program that aimed to balance data needs, costs, industry burden, and technology needs.

**Overview of Southeast Region Headboat Survey eLog reporting**

Ken Brennan gave a demonstration on the Southeast Region Headboat (SRH) eLog system. The SRH eLog has been on line since Jan 1, 2013 and has significantly improved logbook reporting and data processing for headboats in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. He showed the functionality and capabilities of the electronic reporting system which has enabled the Southeast Region Headboat Survey (SRHS) to produce not only more timely annual estimates, but also wave estimates that were not possible using the previous paper-based reporting system. The demonstration showed how an owner/captain manages their vessel's account, creates and submits trip reports, and accesses past trip reports. Other key features displayed were the administrative

capabilities for improved record keeping and quality control measures that are incorporated within the system to reduce errors and improve accuracy. Many of these examples will be considered for use in the development of a charter vessel electronic reporting system.

### **Summary of LA Creel for-hire data collection program**

The LA Creel program monitors approximately 800 charter captains for their for-hire effort survey (state and federally permitted). This differs from the MRIP survey because LA Creel has determined that captains are a better source for reporting charter trip activity than a vessel owner. LA Creel conducts weekly effort surveys in which they draw 30% of their ROLP (Recreational Offshore Landing Permit- required to harvest red snapper, yellowfin tuna, billfish, wahoo, and other offshore species ) holders and 10% of those captains that do not possess a ROLP. During Federal red snapper season they draw 100% of their ROLP captains and 10% of their non-ROLP. The LA Creel for-hire survey collects total number of saltwater charter trips taken per day (up to 3), number of paying clients per trip, dates of each trip, basin in which majority of fish were harvested (if no harvest, then basin of majority of time spent fishing), and public or private launch used. LA Creel utilizes a web reporting option for those captains with valid email address on file. All other captains are contacted by phone. In 2015, 1,798 charter trips were surveyed dockside, of that number only 157 instances of drawn charter captains were encountered.

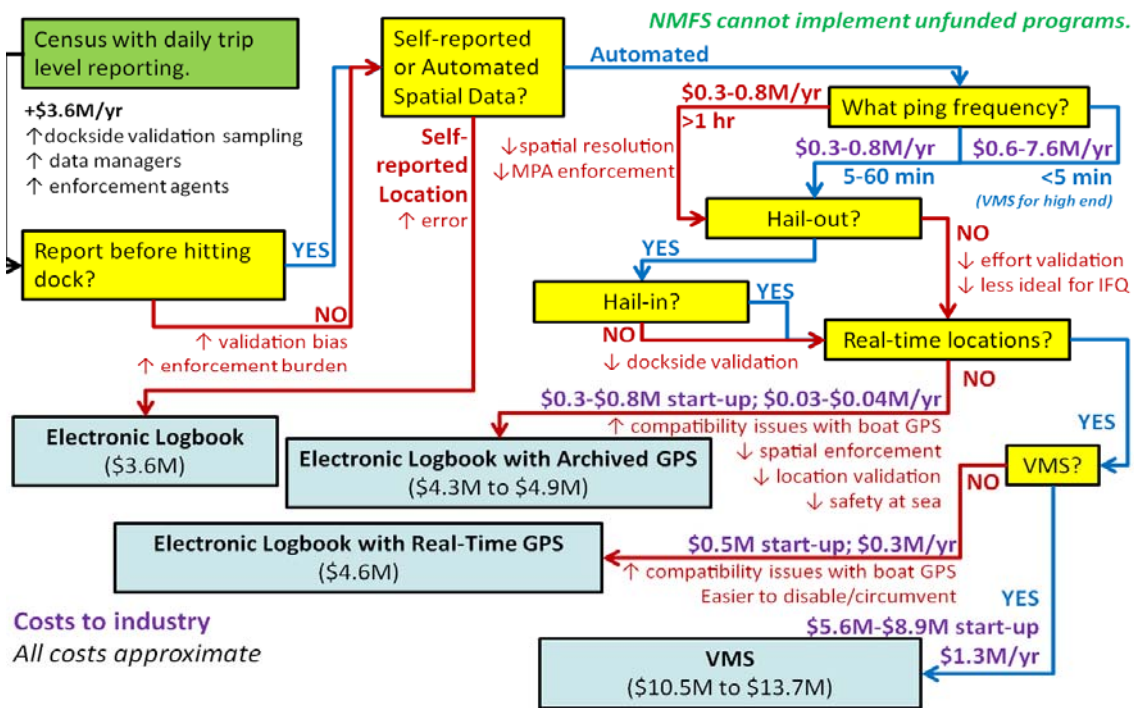
### **CLS America: Current and emerging technologies in data reporting**

CLS America made a presentation on technology trends in electronic reporting, and detailed the pros and cons of various approaches. The presentation featured new products, like the satellite logbook that can send real-time catch reports from anywhere, but is not a VMS. This is an entirely new product that combines the advantages of mobile application technology and coverage everywhere, not just within cell phone range. CLS America also explained why the current price estimates for equipment and service are artificially high, and why the actual costs for equipment, installation and service can be much lower than the working estimates. CLS America is currently

heading up the Gulf Charter Electronic Logbook Project with 250 volunteer vessels around the Gulf already sending in electronic forms.

**Review Proposed Electronic Reporting Program flowchart**

Nick Farmer (SERO) presented a flowchart describing potential electronic reporting programs emphasizing decision points, tradeoffs, and cost of various program choices (Figure 1). The Committee discussed the decision points identified in the presentation to provide consensus based recommendations to the Council.



**Figure 1.** Flowchart describing some decision points regarding the design of a for-hire electronic reporting program for federally permitted for-hire vessels in the Gulf of Mexico.

***Is a census with daily trip level reporting the appropriate framework?***

The Committee reviewed the Gulf Council's preferred Action 1 Alternative 4 (charter vessels), and Action 2 Alternative 4 (headboats) in the January 2016 "Modifications to Charter Vessel and Headboat Reporting Requirements" that would require federally permitted for-hire vessels to submit fishing records to the SRD for each trip via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software) prior to arriving at the dock. The

committee discussed the program objectives and agreed that a census with trip level reporting best meets the need for timely data, improved validation, and an unbiased estimate of catch and effort. The committee also agreed that the reporting requirements should be the same for both charter vessels and headboats.

***Should vessel operators report before returning to dock?***

The Committee recommends that vessels report their trip information prior to returning to the dock. While this could be burdensome, this is considered the “gold standard” of data validation in that the self-reported information must be submitted prior to any dockside intercept survey that could occur. This would ensure that no reporting bias occurs as a result of being intercepted or not. The Committee discussed that this could be burdensome for some operators (e.g., headboats with large number of vessels and catch) and that weather or other conditions could prevent report submission prior to returning in some instances. However, the Committee discussed that protocols could be developed to handle these limited situations. Some Committee members noted the potential burden this could cause for vessel operators and protocols (and reporting software) would need to be flexible as the program is developed and implemented. The Committee also discussed that the dockside intercept protocols would need modification to integrate with existing programs and additional work is necessary to determine the appropriate sample size for intercepts.

***Should location data be self-reported or automated using a GPS enabled device?***

The Committee discussed how location data should be collected and reported. The SRHS currently collects primary area fished as a self-reported attribute. However, this protocol is inadequate to independently evaluate effort (i.e., did a trip occur or not) and the location data is subject to mis-reporting. The Committee recommends using a GPS enabled reporting device that collects location data and reports these data to the minimum precision necessary as part of the trip report.

***If using automated location data, is real-time or archived spatial data preferred?***

The Committee discussed that real-time spatial data are not necessary to meet the

minimum standards of the data collection program however, this feature could aid in efficiency of compliance monitoring, allocation of personnel to conduct interviews and biological data, and improve safety at sea of for-hire vessels. The Committee discussed that several technology options should be certified for use including the use of vessel monitoring system technology (VMS).

***If using automated location data, what ping frequency is appropriate?***

The Committee considered the frequency that location data would be collected from the GPS enabled device. Ping frequency should be rapid enough such that a reasonable determination of the area fished (and depth) can be determined and that a trip can be reliably distinguished from the data. However, location data should not be collected too frequently such that operating costs would be excessive and/or privacy of fishing locations would be compromised. To balance these concerns the committee recommended approximately 30 minute intervals (e.g., 8 location records on a 4 hr trip).

***Should hail out/hail in notifications be required?***

The committee discussed pre- and post-trip notifications at length. The Committee agreed that a 'start-trip' notification should be made to declare that a trip was going to occur along with landing location and anticipated return time. However, there was less agreement on if the return trip notification is necessary or if simply submitting the trip report is adequate. This requires additional consideration including what information is required to be submitted on the trip report prior to returning to the dock. Options that include reporting 'selected' trip information at sea but submitting the full logbook could later be discussed however, this approach negates the benefits of improved validation of the data when trip reports are required to be submitted before returning.

***What range of technology should be considered?***

The Committee discussed that a range of technologies could be used. The program recommended by the Committee could be accomplished with an electronic logbook with archived GPS. However, devices capable of transmitting real-time GPS or VMS units should also be permitted as many vessels already are equipped with this technology.

*What timeline for development and implementation of an electronic reporting program is appropriate?*

The Committee discussed the need for improved for-hire fisheries data but acknowledged that implementation will take a year or more to implement. Rule-making and comment will have to occur (i.e., 6 mos. or more) and technology and infrastructure will have to be built to the necessary specifications. This program will require additional agency staff that can be time consuming to hire. Lastly, it makes sense to implement at the beginning of a calendar year rather than mid-year. From the perspective, 2018 would be the earliest implementation possible but could extend beyond that if unanticipated delays occur or if funds are not available to administer the program.

**Summary of Recommendations**

The Committee supports a for-hire census program with trip level reporting of catch and effort. The recommended program would include trip notification and submission of catch information prior to returning to the dock. Location data would be collected passively through a device (e.g., GPS enabled tablet or equivalent) with a ping frequency of approximately 30 minutes. This ping frequency would balance the need for spatial information with the privacy concerns of vessel operators as it would be sufficient to establish regions of fishing (and depths) but not exact fishing locations. Location data could be archived and transmitted later or enhanced with real-time location capability. However, the Committee discussed that real time location data was not necessary to achieve an un-biased estimate of catch and effort. The proposed program would be integrated into existing dockside validation programs with a target implementation of January 1, 2018.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.