NOAA FISHERIES

Southeast Fisheries Science Center

Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Fishery Electronic Logbook Program

Providing Critical Shrimping Effort Data for the Benefit of the Fishery

ELECTRONIC LOGBOOK (ELB) DATA COLLECTION:

The Electronic Logbook Program is a mandatory program for commercial shrimpers in the Gulf of Mexico. Electronic logbooks are a simple GPS unit that records, time-stamps, and stores a fishing vessel's location at 10-minute time intervals. From these entries, vessel speed between locations can be used to determine vessel activity (i.e., stopped, fishing, or underway). These data are then used to estimate fishing effort for the fishery.

The Gulf of Mexico shrimp fishery is one of the nation's most economically valuable fisheries and the most valuable fishery in the Gulf. This program ensures that NOAA Fisheries has accurate estimates of the location and amount of time spent shrimp fishing, which is critical to the management of the fishery.

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Since 2014, the data have been automatically transmitted to NOAA Fisheries via 3G cellular network. However, as of December 2020, 3G networks have been phased out, and NOAA Fisheries must rely on industry participants to swap out SD cards on the devices in order to retrieve the data. We are exploring new methods of data collection and retrieval, but in the meantime, NOAA Fisheries will send participants a new SD card twice a year (in January and June). Participants must return used SD cards to NOAA Fisheries using a postage paid envelope or indicate if they have not been fishing. Compliance with the Electronic Logbook Program is mandatory. Failure to comply with the requirements in any way, including by not having the device powered on at all times when the vessel is in operation or not returning the SD card as requested can result not only in the non-renewal of the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Fishery Permit, but also potential law enforcement action and civil penalties.

HOW ARE THE DATA USED?

The data collected through the program are essential to:

- Assessing status of shrimp populations
- Providing fishing effort data
- Providing estimates of juvenile red snapper mortality
- Providing estimates of incidental sea turtle takes

The fishing effort data collected through this program are beneficial to the shrimping industry. The data serve as the fishermen's voice in identifying key fishing grounds to inform marine spatial planning for offshore wind energy, aquaculture, artificial reefs, or marine protected areas.

Questions?
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