



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Southeast Fisheries
Science Center

NOAA Fisheries and the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission are encouraging the early adoption of a new system to modernize shrimp effort data collection.

The new system will increase the quality and efficiency of data collected to describe the Gulf of Mexico shrimp fleet, and reduce burden on the shrimping industry.

The program is seeking volunteers to adopt these new devices at no cost through September 2024. Support through the early adopter program is available on a first come, first serve basis.

NOAA Fisheries Seeks Help to Modernize Shrimp Data Collection

New Shrimp Effort Monitoring Program Seeks Early Adopters

OVERVIEW AND BENEFITS

The new system involves installation of cellular Vessel Monitoring System units on board federally-permitted shrimp vessels in the Gulf of Mexico shrimp fleet. These devices will transmit data directly to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center via cellular networks. This will allow scientists to measure shrimping effort more accurately and efficiently. The new system also provides direct benefits to the shrimping industry. Depending on the device installed, shrimp vessel owners can choose to access applications that allow them to track their boats in near real-time, if within cellular range, and save them for comparison.

How to Sign Up

The new devices are now available at no cost for a limited number of participants. The program will cover the cost for a limited number of new units, installation and maintenance, and 2 years of cellular service for the new device. We are seeking volunteers through September 2024. Support through the early adopter program is available on a first come, first serve basis. Early adopters must possess a federally permitted shrimp vessel. Interested parties should contact LGL Ecological Research Associates:

Nathan Putnam

Email: nputman@lgl.com

Cell: (205) 218-5276

DATA COLLECTED

The new devices track time-stamped vessel position to determine how much time is spent towing nets versus steaming to fishing grounds. This is converted to an estimate of effort, in tow days. These data are used directly in stock assessments to estimate red snapper bycatch and are essential to meet sea turtle conservation requirements. Position information also helps scientists identify important shrimping grounds. This helps determine where certain activities may take place such as deploying artificial reefs, or developing aquaculture and offshore wind infrastructure.



Frequently Asked Questions

WHY IS THIS CHANGE OCCURRING?

Shrimp effort data was historically logged through a cellular electronic logbook system. These devices transmitted time-stamped vessel position data through a 3G cellular network to our scientists. Since 3G cellular technology was shut down in December 2020, shrimpers have been physically sending in memory cards for data retrieval.

HOW DID THIS COME ABOUT?

With funding from Congress, NOAA Fisheries worked with the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission and LGL Ecological Research Associates to test the new system. They outfitted commercial shrimp vessels with new devices alongside the existing ones and found their effectiveness comparable.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE NEW AND EXISTING SYSTEMS?

The new and existing devices collect the same data. The new system will automatically transmit the data to NOAA Fisheries through current cellular networks. This is an improvement upon the current process, which requires vessel owners to manually remove memory cards from their device and mail them to NOAA Fisheries for data retrieval. Volunteers for the early adopter program will have a choice among multiple devices, some of which allow vessel owners to see and save vessel positions using vendor applications.

DO SHRIMPING VESSELS NEED TO HAVE BOTH DEVICES INSTALLED ON BOARD?

It is not necessary to have an electronic logbook to volunteer for a new device. Early adopters must possess a federally permitted shrimp vessel. Shrimping vessels with an existing electronic logbook will need to maintain the old system for compliance purposes. Participating in this early adopter program is encouraged as this will allow us to compare the new and old systems.

WHAT WILL THE NEW SYSTEM COST FOR NON-EARLY ADOPTERS?

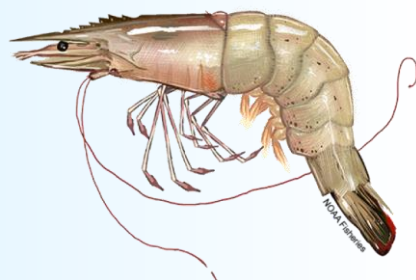
Standard expenses for systems vary. The cost for the new device, including fees for installation and transmission, could cost upwards of \$3,000 plus cellular service charges. Volunteers for this early adopter program will have costs covered for the new device, installation and maintenance, and 2 years of cellular service.

I'M A SHRIMP VESSEL OWNER/OPERATOR. WHY WOULD I WANT TO PARTICIPATE?

By participating, you will help NOAA Fisheries maintain the sustainability of the Gulf shrimp fishery and important shrimping grounds. If you choose, you can access and store the data from your vessel(s) for your own purposes and choose the device that best suits your needs. You will be able to do this at no cost to you.

WHEN WILL OTHER SHRIMP VESSELS (NON-EARLY ADOPTERS) BE REQUIRED TO INSTALL THESE NEW UNITS?

At this stage, no requirements are in place for use of the new devices in the Gulf of Mexico federal shrimp fishery. Shrimp vessel owners should stay up to date on any changes to federal shrimping regulations through mail notifications and Fishery Bulletins.



Contact Us

- Sign up: **Nathan Putnam**
(205) 218-5276, nputman@lgl.com
- Science: **Alan Lowther**
(305) 209-7586, alan.lowther@noaa.gov
- Media: **Meaghan Emory**
(786) 909-6079 meaghan.emory@noaa.gov



Gina M. Raimondo
U.S. Secretary of Commerce

Richard W. Spinrad
Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere

Janet Coit
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries

October 2023

www.fisheries.noaa.gov

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

**National Marine
Fisheries Service**
Southeast Fisheries Science Center
75 Virginia Beach Dr.
Miami, FL 33149