

**Shrimp Committee Report
June 21, 2021
Leann Bosarge, Chair**

The Committee adopted the agenda (**Tab D, No. 1**), with the addition of a brief discussion regarding a recent Executive Order under Other Business. The Committee approved the minutes (**Tab D, No. 2**) of the April 2021 meeting as written.

Update on Effort Data Collection for 2021 (Tab D, No. 4 and 4a-b)

Dr. Gloeckner presented on the shrimp cellular electronic logbook (cELB) interim data collection process. The cELB units ceased transmitting in December 2020; however, the cELB units are still collecting data. The data will be manually collected by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (Science Center) via SD cards. Dr. Gloeckner reviewed the steps and timeline for maintaining the data collection. He added that the process of replacing bad cELB units has already begun and would continue in the fall after reviewing the data collected by the cELB units. He noted that the process of manual data collection via SD cards would be repeated in the fall and thereafter as needed.

Ms. Bosarge commented that the process was going well and being conducted in a timely fashion, including the postcard mailed in May to notify shrimpers of the manual data collection process and having the SD cards mailed to shrimpers this summer. Ms. Bosarge offered a suggested edit on the SD card removal instructions mailer that would explain to shrimpers how they would know if the cELB was powered up again properly. Ms. Bosarge inquired how many SD cards were in stock with the Science Center. Dr. Gloeckner will provide the requested information later.

Draft Framework Action: Modification of the Vessel Position Data Collection Program for the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Fishery (Tab D, No. 5 and 5a-5c)

Dr. Freeman reviewed the draft Purpose and Need statements. Mr. Dugas inquired why the satellite automatic identification system (AIS) was not considered. Ms. Bosarge noted that was a good point and may become clearer as the alternatives are discussed.

Ms. Bosarge noted that the Purpose statement should be clarified to refer to the expired '3G' cELB program and that a similar change should be made throughout the rest of the document. She also noted that the scientific needs of the data collection program have to be balanced with the financial burden on fishermen and, while noted in the document, it should be included in the Purpose statement.

Mr. Banks inquired if the phrase "to collect vessel position data" is needed. Mr. Diaz responded that reduction metrics for red snapper rely on effort estimation which uses vessel position data. Mr. Diaz commented that the reason for data collection is for science and not for law enforcement and asked if that could be reflected in the Purpose statement.

The Committee recommends, and I so move, **to modify the Purpose of the document to read:**

The purpose of this action is to transition from the expired 3G cellular electronic logbook program to a system that would maintain the Council's and NMFS's scientific ability to estimate and monitor fishing effort in the Gulf of Mexico shrimp fishery while minimizing the economic burden on the industry to the maximum extent practicable.

Motion carried without opposition.

Dr. Freeman next reviewed the alternatives under Action 1 and noted that '3G' would be added to the language of Alternative 1. Ms. Bosarge stated that Alternative 2 uses the technical specifications for devices already approved by NMFS for other fisheries and would apply them to the shrimping industry. The devices currently in place for the shrimp industry are cellular, while the vessel monitoring system (VMS) type-approved list includes both cellular and satellite-based devices. If cellular-based VMS devices are discontinued in the future, the shrimp industry would be required to use satellite transmission, which is far too costly for the industry. Ms. Bosarge recommended removing the reference to satellite devices from Alternative 2 as it is not a viable option for the shrimp industry at this time. Mr. Strelcheck responded that the intent is to include all possible options for the shrimp industry. Ms. Bosarge reiterated that satellite transmission would be too costly for the industry.

Ms. Levy noted that, for the for-hire component, the phrase "at a minimum" meant that fishermen could use a device that cellularly transmits at a minimum and that satellite transmission would be above the minimum. Ms. Bosarge responded that satellite transmission related language should not be considered in the alternative.

The Committee recommends, and I so move, **in Action 1, to revise Alternative 2 to read:**

Alternative 2. Modify the method to collect vessel position data. If selected, the owner or operator of a shrimp vessel with a valid or renewable moratorium permit would be required to install an approved vessel monitoring system (VMS) that archives vessel position and automatically cellularly transmits that data to the NMFS.

Motion carried with one in opposition.

Mr. Strelcheck noted that additional devices are currently being considered for VMS type-approval and other devices are in the development phase and may be certified in the future for use in the shrimp industry. He noted that having a VMS type-approval process that varies across fishing sectors would defeat the purpose of having a standardized list; however, exceptions to current requirements for a particular industry could be explored. Ms. Bosarge commented that the requirements were not written with the shrimp industry in mind. She stated, for instance, that the storage requirement of 1,000 position fixes would provide only a week of data for the shrimp industry, whereas it would provide more than a month of data for the reef fish industry. Mr.

Strelcheck recommended taking these concerns and revised technical specifications to the Office of Law Enforcement, instead of trying to incorporate them into the framework action. Mr. Diaz stated again that the shrimp industry operates very differently from other fisheries and therefore needs different technical specifications. Dr. Porch noted that the technical specifications are minimum requirements, as with storage for position fixes. Ms. Levy stated that the language of Alternative 2 currently is not overly restrictive and that, instead of adding another alternative, the agency needs to take into consideration the suggested changes to the technical specifications. Mr. Strelcheck noted that there was not information in front of him to comment on the proposed alternative. Ms. Bosarge noted that by adding an alternative which references technical specifications designed to collect shrimp effort data via a cellular electronic logbook, it would allow the Council to compare the requirements and potential ramifications of the two options in an open and transparent manner garnering feedback from the Council and stakeholders as the process continues.

The Committee recommends, and I so move, **in Action 1, to add an Alternative 3:**

Alternative 3. Modify the method to collect vessel position data. If selected, the owner or operator of a shrimp vessel with a valid or renewable moratorium permit would be required to install an approved electronic logbook that archives vessel position and automatically cellularly transmits that data to the NMFS.

Motion carried with one in opposition.

Dr. Porch added that if a unit transmits vessel position data, it is considered a VMS unit. Ms. Bosarge compared the electronic logbook devices currently utilized in the shrimp fleet to the definition of a VMS unit and noted in her opinion the current devices did not rise to the level of a VMS unit as it is currently defined in the regulations. Dr. Freeman then reviewed additional options for consideration, regarding to which vessels the requirements in Action 1 would apply.

Update on P-Sea Windplot Pilot Program (Tab D, No. 6)

Dr. Putnam presented an update on the P-Sea Windplot pilot program and noted that this is an industry-led solution to the expired 3G cellular transmission problem. LGL modified the P-Sea Windplot software to record the same information as the existing cELB program and to be compatible with the current method of calculating shrimping effort. LGL also devised a method to pair effort data with landings data for each trip, in an effort to provide more robust catch-per-unit-effort estimates. Similar to the historical program, the proposed program is designed to be a scientific data collection tool and not an individual vessel enforcement tool. Currently, LGL has tested the pilot program for at-sea functionality and has shown that it would provide the same effort information produced by the existing cELB program. The next steps would be (1) to automatically transmit ELB data and pair trip ticket information to a designated NMFS server and (2) to install the system on a subsample of the fleet.

Mr. Strelcheck noted that there had been concerns about aging computers and systems and their ability to run the software and asked if those concerns were being observed. Dr. Putnam stated

that the older computer systems took longer to install the modified P-Sea Windplot software, but that they had been able to get the software to run on all of the systems tested so far.

Other Business

The Committee was out of time, so the other business item regarding a recent Executive Order will be moved to Full Council.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.