

**Shrimp Committee Report
October 25, 2021
Leann Bosarge, Chair**

The Committee adopted the agenda (**Tab D, No. 1**). The Committee approved the minutes (**Tab D, No. 2**) of the August 2021 meeting as written.

Shrimp Focus Group Summary (Tab D, No. 4)

Dr. Freeman reviewed a draft summary of the Shrimp Focus Group meeting held on October, 21, 2021 and explained the process for selection to serve on the Shrimp Focus Group and what their corresponding expertise was for the Group. Dr. Freeman also reviewed the Shrimp Focus Group's charge and objectives drafted in the agenda. Then, he reviewed the Shrimp Focus Group's two recommendations.

The first Shrimp Focus Group recommendation centered around NMFS carrying out an evaluation of the potential implementation of draft approval specifications (Appendix D in the draft framework action) in order to continue the historical cELB program with a device similar to that currently utilized in the industry. The second Shrimp Focus Group recommendation concentrated on ensuring the scientific validity, accuracy, and functionality of data generated by current NOAA OLE type-approved cellular VMS devices as it relates to data use in shrimp effort calculations. Mr. Anson inquired what prompted the second recommendation, for cellular VMS testing in the Gulf shrimp industry, if the industry did not seem interested in VMS units. It was explained that testing of cellular VMS units in the Gulf shrimp industry would demonstrate the ability of location data produced by these devices to be accepted by the current Gulf shrimp effort algorithm and generate representative effort outputs. This testing will also help to understand if subsequent actions will be needed, such as modifications to the shrimp effort algorithm, in order to utilize data from currently type-approved cellular VMS devices as a replacement for 3G cELBs.

Mr. Strelcheck noted that the agency has had some hesitancy concerning testing VMS units in the Gulf shrimp industry, given industry opposition to VMS, but agreed that proof of concept is needed. He commented that the first recommendation seems to be at a crossroads with the second recommendation. He inquired, once testing from the second recommendation occurs, what the path forward would be for the Council. Mr. Anson asked how quickly the results from a pilot test from the second recommendation might be obtained. Mr. Strelcheck responded that it was uncertain how quickly that would happen. Ms. Bosarge noted that cellular VMS units should be tested with shrimp vessels targeting white, brown, and pink shrimp, as there may be differences in the number of location fix pings occurring due to boundary issues, given where those three different species are harvested.

The Committee recommends, and I so move:

To recommend that the Council request that NMFS fully evaluate and consider, to the maximum extent possible, the draft approval specifications for reinstating the historical cELB program for the Gulf shrimp fishery in recognition of the legitimate distinctions between a scientific data collection-oriented program and an enforcement-oriented program (see Appendices D and E in the draft Framework Action). NMFS shall provide their evaluation at a future Council meeting.

Motion carried without opposition.

The Committee recommends, and I so move:

To recommend that the Council request that NMFS arrange for the testing, as soon as possible, of a small sample of approved cellular VMS units programmed to ping every 10 minutes, on federally permitted commercial shrimp vessels operating in different regions of the Gulf of Mexico, to determine if the data generated is compatible with the current cELB algorithm. The testing protocol should be designed by NMFS, in consultation and cooperation with the Shrimp Data Collection Focus Group, VMS vendors, and the shrimp industry, to build industry support and buy-in.

Motion carried without opposition.

Dr. Freeman asked the Committee to provide direction to staff if the Shrimp Focus Group should be reconvened. Ms. Bosarge indicated that could be discussed during Full Council.

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

Dr. Freeman addressed the updates to the draft framework action, since the August 2021 Council meeting. The draft alternatives and the discussion of those alternatives have been updated to reflect the Council's motions, and Appendices D (Draft Technical Specifications for Historical cELB Program) and E (Comparison Table of cELB and OLE VMS Technical Specifications) have been added.

Ms. Bosarge commented that several issues for consideration remain: where the vessel position data will be transmitted; where the technical specifications will be posted; scientific pilot testing under the current alternatives (testing on Gulf shrimp vessels; ensuring that transmission works; ensuring that the transmitted data can be used in the Gulf shrimp effort algorithm and will provide accurate information). Ms. Bosarge also requested that the paragraph in the draft framework action on types of data be further considered by the IPT, to more fully describe the additional data collected and transmitted, over and above the 10-minute location pings, under Alternative 2. She noted that, in the discussion of the alternatives, there does not appear to be differences between Alternatives 2 and 3. However, under Alternative 3, data would go to an intermediate server and then to the SEFSC, and the intermediate server would not be associated with OLE. There are additional high-level differences between the two alternatives in the

Appendix E Comparison Table, which could be addressed in the body of this section of the document to better illustrate the differences between Alternatives 2 and 3.

Mr. Gill asked if only units under Alternative 2 were reimbursable, but that units under Alternative 3 would not be reimbursable. Mr. Strelcheck confirmed that only VMS units are reimbursable. Mr. Gill asked if funding would still be available in the future. Mr. Strelcheck stated that, to his knowledge, he was not aware of any programs that had not been able to access those funds.

Mr. Gill stated, for the purposes of Appendix C, that another cellular unit had been approved, and asked if that could be updated. Dr. Freeman stated that Appendix C could be updated to reflect approved units, with a more recent date.

Other Business

No other business was brought up by the Committee.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.