Tab D

Shrimp Committee Report
January 24, 2022
Leann Bosarge, Chair

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

NMFS' Evaluation of Draft Approval Specifications for Reinstituting Historical cELB Program (Tab D. No. 4)

Dr. Walter presented the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) review of draft type-approval specifications for reinstituting the historical cellular electronic logbook (cELB) program for the Gulf shrimp fishery. As industry has voiced concerns about their scientific data being transmitted to the Office of Law Enforcement (OLE), Dr. Walter reviewed the logistics in either bringing a National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS) server online for data transmission or use of a Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) Server. He noted that NMFS would need to pay NESDIS or GSMFC to set up a cloud server, and access would have to be established for OLE so that they could access data at any time. Ms. Bosarge stated that she was under the impression that the GSMFC was already in the process of transitioning to a cloud server and that the NOAA - NESDIS facility had already completed its transition to the cloud, so she asked for elaboration on why NOAA would need to pay for a cloud server in either of these cases. Mr. Donaldson stated that the GSMFC is moving towards a cloud server, but is not there yet. Dr. Walter responded that funds would still be needed for the use of the NESDIS cloud server, even though NMFS and NESDIS are both part of NOAA. Ms. Bosarge also noted that efficiencies are gained by utilizing a GSMFC server as many of the cELB transmission related IT requirements in the presentation, such as security and firewall connections, are necessary for the various other fishery data which GSMFC already processes and transmits to NMFS.

Dr. Walter then presented information on scientific testing and vetting of vendors. For the current OLE vessel monitoring system (VMS) type approval process, Dr. Walter commented that NOAA OLE contracts with a global expert in Denmark, who performs VMS testing and provides recommendations, while the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) maintains a website of approved vendors as well as any additional requirements for vendors which may apply to specific fisheries. As an alternative to the historic shrimp electronic logbook program being transitioned to and overseen by OLE, Dr. Walter provided details for an alternative scenario where the program would be housed and overseen by the SEFSC. Under such a scenario, the SEFSC, as opposed to OLE, would maintain on its website the technical requirements for vendors wishing to provide a cellular electronic logbook, and the SEFSC would contract with a third-party vendor to carry out the testing of potential electronic logbooks for type approval. Dr. Walter stated this was seen as redundant and not an efficient use of taxpayer funds for one fishery.

Next, Dr. Walter discussed recommendations relative to implementation of the draft type-approval specifications for reinstituting the historical cellular electronic logbook program. Dr. Walter stated that the national VMS technical specifications should not be changed. Portions of the draft electronic logbook approval specifications are more stringent than what is required by the national VMS type-approval specifications. These more stringent requirements could be implemented by specifying them in the fishery management plan (FMP), to be required in addition to the national VMS type-approval requirements. Although specification of the more stringent requirements in the FMP allows for implementation of a portion of the draft cELB specifications, it does not address implementation of the portions of the draft cELB specifications which eliminate some of the OLE VMS type approval requirements. A committee member inquired if the FMP could also specify removal of requirements listed in the national OLE VMS type approval specifications, such as the additional location fix pings when the vessel crosses boundary lines or powers up/down the device, as location pings outside of the standard 10-minute interval ping rate are a deviation from the historical method of shrimp effort data collection and may be problematic for effort computations via the current algorithm. The FMP cannot remove requirements that have been specified in the national OLE VMS type approval specifications. Therefore, for full implementation of the draft cellular electronic logbook technical specifications, the alternative scenario, involving oversight and implementation of the draft cELB specifications via the SEFSC (slide 5) with data transmission through GSMFC or NESDIS, would apply.

Dr. Walter then presented a table summarizing additional requirements, over and above the national OLE VMS type approval requirements for vendors, which could be specified in the FMP. If the Council chooses to implement a VMS requirement for the Gulf shrimp fishery, it may also consider specifying these additional VMS requirements (slide 15 of the presentation) in the FMP.

Lastly, Dr. Walter stated that OLE would still have easy access to data, regardless of whether data are stored with a SEFSC server or an Office of Chief Information Officer server. Ms. Bosarge returned to the presentation slide explaining the steps if a national VMS process is not followed (slide 5) and stated that this avenue emphasizes the scientific purpose of this fishery's data collection program. Mr. Strelcheck stated that this avenue would be costly, not prevent OLE from accessing the data, and would be inconsistent with the Council requiring hardware and leaving it up to NMFS to determine the specifications.

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

Dr. Freeman noted that the interdisciplinary planning team had suggested rephrasing an 'approved electronic logbook' to an 'approved device' in Alternative 3 and requested feedback from the Shrimp Committee. Ms. Bosarge responded that she prefers the current phrasing because it helps clarify the purpose of the program to collect the raw effort data. Mr. Strelcheck stated that it does not collect effort data. Rather, the raw data goes into an effort algorithm. Therefore, he views the current wording as misleading. Ms. Bosarge commented that logbook effort data was formerly collected by port agents conducting interviews with fishermen and that

today the paper logbooks filled out by port agents have been replaced with logbook hardware/software aboard the vessels paired with a mathematical algorithm, both of which are part of generating effort estimates.

Ms. Bosarge requested that Mr. Wallace quickly review the background information on evaluating cellular VMS on Gulf shrimp vessels. Mr. Wallace stated that the units would be tested for 30 days. Mr. Gill commented that, from what he had observed during the Shrimp Advisory Panel (AP) meeting, the shrimp industry would be volunteering to participate but noted that no vessels were listed as volunteers in Mr. Wallace's presentation update. Mr. Perret (Shrimp AP Chair) commented that an AP member requested a Louisiana vessel be added to the potential deployment schedule, but he did not see that on the presentation update. Mr. Wallace commented that the schedule is a draft and that they would be open to volunteers from any Gulf state, but that they had not had time to phone or email any members of industry. Dr. Walter commented that they need industry support for testing; otherwise, the decision process will be solely driven by the results from the R/V Caretta. Ms. Bosarge responded that there are many avenues for disseminating a request for volunteers, such as the Southern Shrimp Alliance and Sea Grant agencies in the Gulf states. Ms. Muehlstein suggested the Council's communication channels and Outreach and Education Technical Committee as avenues for requesting volunteers. Dr. Freeman requested a generic email from Mr. Wallace's office for disseminating, and Mr. Wallace replied that he could supply Council staff with that. Mr. Strelcheck also offered outreach on the part of the Southeast Regional Office.

Dr. Freeman referred to a slide from Dr. Walter's presentation and asked if the Committee wanted Council staff to incorporate a 10-minute ping rate, minimum number of position fixes, and mandatory at-sea testing. Mr. Gill responded in the affirmative. These could be incorporated into the updated draft framework action relative to Alternative 2 (implementing a VMS requirement in the Gulf shrimp fishery) as Alternative 3 is supported by the draft cELB technical specifications (Appendix D) which already include these requirements. Another committee member asked if there should be a specific reference to the draft type approval specification for reinstituting the historical cELB program (Appendix D) in Alternative 3. Ms. Bosarge also stated that, for Alternative 3, the written discussion section of chapter two in the amendment should follow the 3 bullet points from Dr. Walter's presentation that discusses not following a national VMS process as well as the potential avenues for transmitting cELB data to NESDIS or GSMFC as an intermediary before subsequent transmission to the SEFSC. Likewise, the written discussion surrounding Alternative 2 would describe data transmission to OLE. Dr. Simmons responded that finalization of the framework amendment may need to occur after the pilot work had been completed by the SEFSC on shrimp vessels as it was unclear how Council staff would address them in the near term in the framework action.

Mr. Schieble asked that Council staff provide a timeline for preferred alternatives and public hearings. Dr. Freeman stated that, in its current form of a framework action, the document would not be taken for public hearings but that a public comment video would be made for the Council website and that industry members could provide written comments online and verbal comments during Council meetings. Dr. Freeman also commented that the Committee needs to determine if it wants to wait for testing of cellular VMS, as noted in Mr. Wallace's background information, and for testing of Council funded research of the P-Sea WindPlot software program.

Mr. Gill replied that there was no reason to have testing if the Committee were not to wait for the results.

Dr. Simmons stated that proposals had been received for testing the P-Sea WindPlot software program after re-advertising with additional technical and data specifications and that a decision would potentially be made and announced by March 1, 2022.

Summary of the Shrimp Advisory Panel Meeting (Tab D, No. 6)

Dr. Freeman discussed the remaining motions from the Shrimp AP. The first motion was for the Council to receive, at its January 2022 meeting, an evaluation by NMFS of the draft approval specifications from the draft shrimp framework action. Dr. Freeman noted that it had been accomplished by Dr. Walter's presentation earlier in the Shrimp Committee. Dr. Freeman then reviewed the AP's motion requesting an annual update from the Office of Protected Resources to the Shrimp AP and Gulf Council on sea turtle take and on turtle excluder device compliance. Ms. Lee (Office of Protected Resources) responded that sea turtle take estimates would only be generated on a 5-year basis and could not be provided annually. Mr. Perret then provided additional information on behalf of the Shrimp AP. He asked that the Council stayed informed of the potential offshore wind energy development through the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, and he noted that the AP was pleased with the transparency in development of the NOAA Aquaculture Opportunity Areas Atlas.

Other Business

No other business was brought up by the Committee.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.