

**Shrimp Committee Report
August 19, 2024
Chris Schieble, Chair**

The Committee adopted the agenda (**Tab D, No. 1**) with the movement of Agenda Item VI before Agenda Item V and with the addition of Discussion of National Seafood Strategy under Other Business. The Committee then approved the minutes (**Tab D, No. 2**) of the April 2024 meeting as written, with the word ‘receive’ changed to ‘remove’ on page 34.

Review of the Expenditures of the FY23 Funds for the Early Adopter Program for Shrimp cVMS and Update on the Early Adopter Program for Shrimp cVMS (Tab D, No. 4a)

Dr. Lowther (SEFSC) reviewed NMFS’ expenditures of the Fiscal Year 2023 funds for the Early Adopter Program with the Gulf of Mexico federal shrimp fleet. He then provided an update on installations of cVMS devices to-date and discussed the data status from those devices.

A Committee member inquired about the Fiscal Year 2024 funds for the Early Adopter Program and if it would be included in the President’s 2025 budget. Mr. Strelcheck stated that it is included in both the House and Senate’s budgets. Dr. Simmons asked when the SEFSC would be able to determine a valid statistical design for sampling of shrimp vessels and if it could occur before the next round of funding for the Early Adopter Program. She noted that information would also be needed for the draft shrimp framework action to know the extent to which costs to industry would be defrayed. Dr. Lowther responded that they intend to have that information in October 2024. He added that some of the vessels selected for inclusion in the data collection program would have devices installed from the Early Adopter Program. Dr. Simmons asked if the 2013 and 2016 sample sizes for the cellular electronic logbooks could be analyzed for robustness in design and if a determination could be made on similar application for the sample size of cVMS devices. Dr. Lowther responded that analysis could be conducted. Dr. Porch added that, with periodic resampling, a growing number of vessels with devices through the Early Adopter Program would eventually be selected, such that all vessels may eventually participate in the data collection program.

A Committee member inquired why NMFS Headquarters requested an additional \$61,000 in M&A for FY 24 funds. Dr. Porch responded that NMFS Headquarters provided updated direction on how M&A is to be applied. The Committee member then asked for clarification on problems vendors faced with the Application Programming Interface. Dr. Lowther responded that initially a security upgrade resulted in one vendor not being able to transmit through the Application Programming Interface (API). A subsequent Oracle upgrade in anticipation of the SEFSC move to the cloud is now preventing all vendors from transmitting through the API. Dr. Lowther indicated that these problems are being investigated and were not unexpected given the difficulty and complexity of standing up a new program.

A Committee member asked when the draft shrimp framework action would return to the Committee and if it would be slated for final action at the January 2025 Council meeting. Dr.

Freeman stated that he anticipated the document being on the agenda for the November 2024 Council meeting. Dr. Simmons added that, due to issues with obtaining permit numbers which are needed for completion of the document, it would be difficult to determine when final action could be taken.

Recap of Southeast Shrimp Strategy and Planning Meeting (Tab D, No. 6a)

Ms. Picariello (TX Sea Grant) presented on the Southeast Shrimp Strategy and Planning meeting held March 30-April 1, 2024. A Committee member inquired if Delcambre Direct in Louisiana could be applied in other geographic areas. Ms. Picariello responded that the volume of shrimp with offshore vessels poses a difficulty for direct marketing. She added that location of where vessels dock can also be a hindrance for availability to the public. Another Committee member stated that availability of resources to initiate a program such as Delcambre Direct can also be an obstacle to overcome.

Update on Shrimp Futures Project (Tab D, No. 5)

Dr. Gervasi (SEFSC) provided an update on the Shrimp Futures Project, covering the objectives and timeline.

Update on Timing of Reinitiation of Section 7 Consultation (Tab D, No. 7)

Ms. Lee (SERO) provided an update on the reinitiation of the Section 7 consultation for the Southeast shrimp fisheries.

Dr. Freeman inquired if the population viability analyses (PVA) are what would be presented to the SSC. Ms. Lee responded that the bycatch estimates and PVAs could be presented to the SSC. She added that this is an effort to keep the Council engaged in the consultation process. Dr. Froeschke commented that many of the analyses require scaling up to the entire size of the industry and inquired how that scaling can occur without information on the Gulf permit numbers. Ms. Lee responded that bycatch estimates are based on effort, not on the number of vessels. Dr. Froeschke noted that effort is estimated for a sample of the industry and then scaled up for the entire Gulf fleet. A Committee member inquired how the diminishing fleet size is being incorporated into the analyses. Ms. Lee stated that 2023 data is what will be used, unless 2024 data becomes available before completion of the consultation. Dr. Simmons inquired if pink shrimp fleet effort information from SEDAR 87 would be used primarily, for interaction with smalltooth sawfish. Ms. Lee reiterated that the biological opinion would be based on the latest best available shrimp effort data.

Other Business – Discussion of National Seafood Strategy

A Committee member noted that, at the January 2024 Council meeting, a presentation on the National Seafood Strategy was received. He requested an updated presentation be given at the November 2024 Council meeting. He stated that a pilot example was shown during the presentation at the January 2024 Council meeting and would also like an update on that pilot example at the November 2024 Council meeting.

The Committee recommends, and I so move, **to request that NMFS provide an updated presentation on the National Seafood Strategy as well as the pilot program example during the Shrimp Committee at the November 2024 Council meeting.**

Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.