

**Shrimp Committee Report  
November 4, 2024  
Chris Schieble, Chair**

The Committee adopted the agenda (**Tab D, No. 1**). The Committee then approved the August 2024 meeting minutes (**Tab D, No. 2**), with the addition on lines 32-33 of page 17 that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission has a 3% overhead rate.

***Draft Shrimp Framework Action: Modification of the Vessel Position Data Collection Program for the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Fishery (Tab D, Nos. 4a-c)***

Dr. Freeman presented on the draft shrimp framework action, focusing on the Interdisciplinary Planning Team's (IPT) recommended changes to the language of the alternatives.

A Council member inquired why the shrimp industry is opposed to inclusion of satellite VMS with Alternative 2. Dr. Freeman explained that industry members had expressed concerns that satellite VMS devices are more costly than cellular VMS (cVMS) devices for industry. He noted that all devices currently used in the Early Adopter Program are cellular VMS. Dr. Froeschke added that satellite VMS transmits continuously, whereas cVMS archives data before transmission, and he commented that industry might prefer their data be transmitted in bulk and not in real time. A Committee member stated that, if the proposed language is adopted for Alternative 2, owners/operators will face a cost decision on whether to select a VMS device that uses cellular or satellite transmission. He added that some SPGM permit holders operate in fisheries that require satellite VMS and that those owners/operators would be required to install two VMS devices if Alternative 2 does not allow for the option of satellite VMS.

Some Committee members stated that they would prefer the Shrimp Advisory Panel (AP) weigh in on the IPT's proposed language changes to the alternatives before the Committee adopts those changes. Dr. Freeman responded that a poll had been sent to the Shrimp AP with proposed meeting dates in December 2024 and January 2025, in anticipation that the Shrimp Committee may wish to convene the Shrimp AP before the January 2025 Council meeting. A Committee member inquired about the impacts to the proposed action schedule, which has the Council taking final action on the draft shrimp framework action at its April 2025 meeting, if the language of the alternatives is further modified at the January Council meeting. Dr. Freeman responded that it may delay final action by at least one Council meeting, as Chapters 3 and 4 would need to reflect the language of the alternatives. Mr. Strelcheck, another Committee member, responded that Council members should not delay action and should recommend changes to the draft framework action. He stated that feedback from the Shrimp AP has already been received at previous Council meetings and questioned if the Council would receive significant new information from the Shrimp AP at this point.

Mr. Dettloff (SEFSC) and Dr. Gloeckner (SEFSC) then presented on the survey design and estimated costs for position-recording devices in the Gulf of Mexico shrimp fleet, as seen in Tab D, No. 4c.

A Committee member inquired if there was information available on the monthly satellite VMS transmission fees. Dr. Gloeckner responded that satellite VMS transmission fees are not included in the presentation, but that he is aware of the transmission fees for a satellite/cellular hybrid device, which is \$349 annually. A Committee member responded that the \$349 annual transmission fee seems low. Dr. Freeman added that, for that particular hybrid device, data is sent via cellular transmission and the satellite option only covers distress alerts.

Dr. Simmons then inquired if a type-approval process for Alternative 2 exists. Dr. Gloeckner responded that the type-approval process is specific for each fishery and has yet to be established for the Gulf shrimp fishery. Dr. Simmons asked if the process for the Early Adopter Program via a contractor could be considered as the type-approval process for this fishery. Dr. Walter (SEFSC) stated that the type-approval process needs to be perpetual, so the agency must set the specifications and allow for future type approvals when vendors request it.

A Committee member noted that Alternative 2 allows owners/operators to be eligible for national reimbursement of VMS devices and that Alternative 3 is more expensive for both the industry and NMFS. He then asked if NMFS has the funds to fully support Alternative 3. Dr. Walter responded that the agency does not currently have funds appropriated to support Alternative 3. In response, a Committee member then inquired if Alternative 3 would be viable if selected as preferred. A Committee member stated that the agency would have to decide to approve or disapprove the framework action based on whether the agency could fund the preferred alternative. Dr. Walter added that the agency does have funding to fully support Alternative 2. Dr. Walter then emphasized that Alternative 2 has fewer costs to both industry, due to the reimbursement program, as well as to the agency.

Dr. Frazer inquired as to the economic value of the Gulf shrimp fishery. Dr. Walter responded that the value of wild-caught Gulf shrimp sales was \$329 million in 2022 and dropped to \$204 million in 2023. A Committee member asked if those values were for shrimp from federal as well as state waters, but that information was unavailable at the time.

Dr. Freeman proposed that the Committee entertain the idea of motions for the individual alternatives and the IPT's recommended language changes. He then explained that the strike-through language for Alternative 1 would not be removed from the document, but simply moved into the discussion of Alternative 1.

The Committee recommends, and I so move, **to adopt the language in Action 1, Alternative 1 per the IPT's recommendation.**

**Alternative 1:** No Action - Maintain the current method to collect vessel position data through the cellular electronic logbook (cELB) units supplied by NMFS. NMFS would collect the memory cards from the units via mail.

*Motion carried with no opposition.*

Dr. Freeman then reviewed the IPT's rationale for the proposed changes to Alternative 3. A Committee member inquired why the Committee was considering changes to an alternative that does not have agency funding to support it. Another Committee member responded that the shrimp industry is highly supportive of Alternative 3 and that this is the first Council meeting where NMFS has provided detailed cost information on Alternatives 2 and 3.

The Committee recommends, and I so move, to approve the revised language in Action 1, Alternative 3 with the recognition that funding is currently unavailable.

**Alternative 3:** Implement a cellular VMS (cVMS) requirement for the Gulf shrimp fishery that provides archived position data compatible with the SEFSC's shrimp effort algorithm. If selected by the SRD, the owner or operator of a vessel with a SPGM would be required to install a NMFS-approved cVMS that archives vessel position when on a shrimp fishing trip in the Gulf and automatically transmits those data via cellular service to a non-OLE NMFS server. NMFS-approved cVMS would be type-approved through a process external to 50 C.F.R. § 600.1501.

*Motion carried with no opposition.*

Dr. Freeman then reviewed the IPT's rationale for the proposed changes to Alternative 2. A Committee member noted that the last two sentences proposed by the IPT should be moved into Alternative 2's discussion. Another Committee member requested clarification if Alternative 2 required hybrid cellular/satellite VMS devices. A Committee member stated that the proposed wording would allow owners/operators to select either cellular or satellite VMS devices and would provide industry with more options. Committee members discussed whether the description of archived data should be retained in Alternative 2. Ms. Levy (NOAA GC) recommended that archiving of data be described as the minimum requirement for VMS in Alternative 2.

The Committee recommends, and I so move, to approve the following language in Action 1, Alternative 2.

**Alternative 2:** Implement a vessel monitoring system (VMS) requirement for the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) shrimp fishery that provides, at a minimum, archived position data compatible with the SEFSC's shrimp effort algorithm to a NMFS server. If selected by the Science and Research Director (SRD), the owner or operator of a vessel with a Gulf shrimp moratorium permit (SPGM) would be required to install a type-approved VMS unit (50 C.F.R. § 600.1501).

*Motion carried with no opposition.*

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.