Draft Framework Action: Modification of the Vessel Position Data Collection Program for the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Fishery

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Outline

- Overview of Council Timeline To-Date
- Review P&N Statements
- Discuss Changes to Alternatives 2 and 3
- Review Differences between Alternatives 2 and 3
- Tentative Timeline

Council Timeline To-Date

- Sept '20 Council mtg: received presentation from Science Center that 3G cellular coverage for cELBs discontinuing effective 1/1/21. New shrimp effort data collection methods are warranted.

- Nov/Dec '20 Council mtg: following a presentation from Dr. Benny Gallaway, motion for letter to Science Center supporting development, implementation, and funding of a P-Sea WindPlot Program (navigation software) that would acquire and transmit shrimp fishing effort.
  - Council conducted competitive RFP in 2021 for $350,000 to test P-Sea WindPlot
  - Final results from LGL (Council-funded contractor) presented at April '23 Council mtg; recommendation from LGL to not further invest in P-Sea WindPlot as method to record shrimp vessel positions for calculating effort

Council Timeline To-Date

- April ‘21 Council mtg: motion directing staff to begin a Framework Action to set up reporting requirements for the expiring 3G cELB program to transition it to a new platform for effort reporting of the Gulf of Mexico federal shrimp fishery

- Oct ‘21 Council mtg: motion for NMFS to test a sample of approved cVMS units on federally permitted commercial shrimp vessels
  - 1st deployment in 2022, which tested Faria and NEMO alongside cELB units; 2nd deployment in 2023, which tested ZEN and NEMO (solar-powered) alongside cELB units; results presented at April ‘23 Council mtg

Council Timeline To-Date

- April ‘23 Council mtg: motion to bring back draft Shrimp FA after NMFS completes side by side testing of cELB units with a minimum of the following devices: NEMO (hard-wired to vessel), ZEN VMS, and Nautic Alert Insight X3
  - Results presented at Oct ’23 Council mtg

Purpose and Need Statements

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

- The need is to base conservation and management measures on the best scientific information available and to minimize bycatch to the extent practicable, as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and minimize interactions with protected species as required by the ESA.

Action 1

- Modify the Method Used to Collect Vessel Position Data for the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Fishery

- Note: The types of data and amount/timing of data collection would not vary between alternatives. Consistent with current requirements, the permitted vessels selected to participate must also provide the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS): the size and number of shrimp trawls deployed for each set, and the type of bycatch reduction device and turtle excluder device used in the nets. As set forth in Amendment 13 (GMFMC 2005) and 50 C.F.R. § 622.51, compliance with these requirements and the requirement to submit vessel position data is required for permit renewal.

Action 1

- **Alternative 1:** No Action - Maintain the current method to collect vessel position data through the cellular electronic logbook (cELB) units supplied by NMFS. ~~Prior to December 7, 2020, the owners or operators of selected vessels were responsible for the cost of cellular service necessary to transmit the data. Currently, because 3G cellular transmission is no longer possible,~~ NMFS ~~will~~ would collect the memory cards from the units via mail.

Action 1

- 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.

Action 1

- IPT rationale for changes to Alternative 1:

- The text with strikethrough can be moved to the discussion and/or to the economic analyses.

Action 1

- Old version (prior to Nov '24 Council meeting):

- Alternative 2: Implement a cellular vessel monitoring system (cVMS) requirement for the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) shrimp fishery that provides archived position data compatible with the SEFSC's shrimp effort algorithm. If selected by the Science and Research Director (SRD), the owner or operator of a shrimp vessel with a valid or renewable Gulf shrimp moratorium permit (SPGM) would be required to install a type-approved VMS unit (50 C.F.R. § 600.1501) that archives vessel position when on a shrimp fishing trip in the Gulf and automatically transmits that data via cellular service to NMFS.

Action 1

- New version (Nov ’24 Council motion with this language):

- 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).

Action 1

- IPT rationale and Council discussion:

- Due to vessels with a SPGM permit as well as other permits that require a satellite VMS, it would be burdensome to require those vessels to have 2 VMS devices onboard, as well as pay for 2 transmission fees. Instead, having 'VMS' allows owners/operators to have a choice of which device they want, instead of specifying cellular only.
- Remove text of 'shrimp' and 'valid or renewable' as descriptor of permits, as they are not needed; it's a matter of any owner/operator of a vessel with a SPGM permit being selected.

Action 1

- Alternative 3: Implement a cellular VMS ~~ELB~~ (cVMS~~ELB~~) 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 ~~shrimp~~ vessel with a ~~valid or renewable~~ SPGM would be required to install a NMFS-approved cVMS~~ELB~~ that archives vessel position when on a shrimp fishing trip in the Gulf and automatically transmits those data via cellular service to a ~~SEFSC or Office of Science and Technology~~ non-OLE NMFS server. NMFS-approved cVMS~~ELBs~~ would be type-approved through a process external to ~~not be type-approved based on regulations at~~ 50 C.F.R. § 600.1501.

Action 1

- 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.

Action 1

- IPT rationale for changes to Alternative 3:

- Retain cellular only option and non-OLE NMFS server, as this alternative originated from industry input.
- Refer to cellular ELB as cellular VMS, as that is what the devices would be.
- Remove text of ‘shrimp’ and ‘valid or renewable’, as they are not needed; it’s a matter of any owner/operator of a vessel with a SPGM permit being selected.
- The Council in April ‘24 changed ‘non-OLE NMFS’ server to ‘SEFSC or Office of Science and Technology’. Recommend changing that back, as it limits potential future changes where the data may be stored, and simply recognize that any NMFS server outside of OLE could be the data recipient.
- State that the process for type-approval is external to 50 C.F.R.

Primary Differences Between Alts 2 and 3

	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
Allowed Data Transmission Type	Both cellular and satellite	Cellular only
Data Recipient	NMFS (NOAA OLE) server	Non-OLE NMFS server*
Initial VMS Device Reimbursement through Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission and NOAA OLE	Yes	No
Additional NMFS Costs from not utilizing 50 C.F.R. § 600.1501	No	Yes**

- *OLE would be able to access these data.
- **These will be detailed in Chapters 3 and 4. Mr. Dettloff will also be covering this aspect in his presentation momentarily.

Tentative Timeline and Next Steps

- Tentative timeline for Council:
  - Bring the draft framework action back to the Council at its January 2025 meeting.
  - Prepare Chapter 3 (and likely Chapter 4) of the draft framework action.
  - If Chapter 4 is prepared in time for January 2025 Council meeting, Council can consider selecting a preferred alternative based on those analyses.
  - Final action anticipated at April 2025 Council meeting.

Questions?