

Data Collection Committee

June 20, 2016

Greg Stunz – Chair

Update on Commercial Electronic Reporting Pilot Program

Dr. Ponwith gave a presentation describing a pilot project using electronic reporting technology on commercial vessels participating in Gulf, South Atlantic, and Highly Migratory Species fisheries. In this pilot study, fisheries data are collected at the ‘set’ rather than ‘trip’ level greatly improving the resolution of these data. The pilot program uses eLog software that has been well-received by industry, and this software could also allow reporting in other sectors for dually permitted vessels. The program and infrastructure is being expanded to allow vessels to voluntarily participate in this program beginning in 2017. Consideration is necessary regarding funding requirements for this program, and a cost analysis is being prepared by the SEFSC staff for presentation to the Council at an upcoming meeting.

Discussion of 2016 Appropriations for Gulf of Mexico Research

Dr. Ponwith provided an update on 2016 appropriations for Gulf of Mexico reef fish research. Full research proposals are due on by July 15, 2016 and the objective of this research is to estimate absolute abundance of red snapper on both artificial and natural reefs in the Gulf. This work is anticipated to provide an independent estimate of abundance that will be compared to the existing approach.

For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program Recommendations and Modifications to Charter Vessel and Headboat Reporting Requirements

Dr. Froeschke provided a summary of the June 6, 2016 technical committee meeting. The committee discussed options to implement electronic reporting in Gulf for-hire fisheries and made the following recommendations:

- A for-hire census program that includes all federally permitted for-hire vessels
- Trip level, electronic reporting of catch and effort
- Start of trip notification and submission of catch information prior to returning to the dock
- Location data would be collected passively through a device (e.g., GPS enabled tablet or equivalent)
- Ping frequency of approximately 30 minutes
- Location data could be archived and transmitted later or enhanced with real-time location capability
- The proposed program would be integrated into existing dockside validation programs with a target implementation of January 1, 2018

The committee recommends and I so move to accept the recommendations of the Data Collection Technical Committee and have staff include in the Generic For-Hire Electronic Reporting Amendment.

Mr. Fischer requested additional discussion and input from the National Marine Fisheries Service about the minimum data elements necessary in this program. Council staff has provided a list of data elements currently collected in the Southeast Region Headboat Survey and a list of core variables being considered during the development of the South Atlantic Council's for-hire electronic reporting program.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my report.