



The Shrimp e-Advocate

BREAKING NEWS

APRIL 2010

The Southern Shrimp Alliance (SSA) is a non-profit alliance of members of the U.S. shrimp industry in eight states committed to preventing the continued deterioration of America's shrimp industry and to ensuring the industry's future viability. SSA serves as the national voice for the shrimp fishermen and processors in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas.

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BREAKING NEWS

Shrimp Industry Fishing Effort Research Program

It has come to our attention that there may be a misunderstanding concerning the Southern Shrimp Alliance's annual submission of an appropriations request to Congress to continue funding for what is known as the "Shrimp Industry Fishing Effort Research Program". The Southern Shrimp Alliance hopes that the following information will provide a correct understanding of this program and SSA's role in it.

What is this program?

- This is one of the most important and beneficial federal scientific research programs to the domestic shrimp fisheries.
- This program funds the manufacture and installation on offshore shrimp vessels of electronic logbooks (ELBs) as well as the collection and analysis of data recorded by the ELBs. To date ELBs have been installed on over 500 offshore shrimp vessels and the program goal is to fully equip all or a statistically reliable sample of the offshore fleet in the Gulf and South Atlantic.

What is this program used for?

- Data collected and analyzed under this program provides a very precise picture of the temporal and spatial distribution of fishing effort in the offshore shrimp fleet which is then used by the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Gulf and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils for fishery and bycatch management purposes. Such information and management is applied fleet-wide; not on an

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individual vessel basis.

- One of the principal management uses of this information has been to ensure the offshore shrimp fleet's compliance with federal regulations that require that fleet to reduce its bycatch of red snapper in juvenile red snapper habitat areas by 74 percent as part of the federal red snapper rebuilding plan.
- Similarly, data generated by this program has also been used by the National Marine Fisheries Service to reevaluate its bycatch estimates for the overfished blacknose shark stock in the Gulf and South Atlantic shrimp fisheries.
- The federal government also uses this data to evaluate proposals to issue permits for siting artificial reefs and offshore aquaculture facilities.

How does this program benefit the shrimp fishing industry?

- In both cases of red snapper and blacknose shark bycatch, the information generated by the Shrimp Industry Fishing Effort Research Program helped prevent the imposition of substantial, financially-crippling time-area closures on the shrimp fisheries by the federal government.
- It is fully expected that information provided by this program will also be utilized by the National Marine Fisheries Service for addressing future management responses to emerging bycatch issues in the shrimp fisheries and that this will help minimize or eliminate the need for additional bycatch reduction regulations on the shrimp fisheries.
- Precise information regarding the location of shrimp fishing effort assists the federal government, the Gulf and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils and the shrimp industry in preventing artificial reefs and offshore aquaculture facilities from being located in shrimp fishing grounds and

interfering with shrimp fishing operations.

What is SSA's involvement in this program?

- SSA has submitted a funding request for this program each year beginning with fiscal year 2005 for two reasons:
 - 1) because this program is of such vital importance to the survival and federal management of shrimp fishing industry, and
 - 2) because funding has not been included in the President's annual budget request to Congress.
- For the same reasons SSA has submitted a request to Congress again this year to continue funding for this program in Fiscal Year 2011 in the amount of \$1.5 million.
- Congress is currently in the early stages of developing FY2011 appropriations legislation including the bill that would provide funding for this critical program.

How much money has been provided by Congress to fund this program?

- Since fiscal year 2005, Congress has appropriated \$ 5.8 million for this program according to the following breakdown:

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| FY2005: | \$ 1,100,000 |
| FY2006 | \$ 2,300,000 |
| FY2009 | \$ 200,000 |
| FY2010 | \$ 2,200,000 |

Who receives the money Congress has appropriated?

- 100% of the \$ 5.8 million provided by Congress to fund this program was provided to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA) to implement this program.
- None (\$ 0) of the \$ 5.8 million provided by Congress to fund this program has ever been provided directly or indirectly to the Southern Shrimp Alliance, its members or staff, or anyone in the shrimp industry-- and the same holds true for any future funds

provided by Congress.

- The National Marine Fisheries Service is entirely responsible for implementing this program and typically contracts with LGL Ecological Services for assistance with the manufacture and installation of the ELBs, as well as with data retrieval and analysis.

Which vessels are selected for ELBs ?

- There is no financial benefit to a shrimp vessel owner for having an ELB installed on its vessel other than the overall regulatory benefits of the program described above. Vessel owners are not provided any compensation for having ELBs installed on their vessels.
- SSA has absolutely no knowledge of or role in decision regarding which vessels are equipped with ELBs.
- The decision over which vessels are selected for ELBs is made by the federal/contract scientists on a random basis without any knowledge of or regard to whether the vessel is or is not a member of the Southern Shrimp Alliance.