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**NEW COOPERATIVE STUDY TO EXPLORE EFFORT IN
THE GULF OF MEXICO SHRIMP FISHERY**

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) is pleased to announce that a new cooperative study will be conducted with the shrimping industry to better understand and measure shrimp fishing effort. Effort is a term that describes the number of hours or days fishers actually spend harvesting seafood. NOAA is an agency of the U. S. Dept. of Commerce.

This multi-year study will entail the use of Electronic Logbook (ELB) technology developed by LGL Ecological Research Associates, Inc. of Bryan, Texas, during a pilot program funded under contract from the Gulf & South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, Inc.

“When the study is completed, we expect to have many new and more efficient ways to measure effort in the shrimping industry,” said Dr. James Nance, Chief of NOAA Fisheries’ Galveston Laboratory Fishery Management Branch. “This study’s primary objective is to enhance our ability to measure bycatch in the shrimping industry and to better estimate its impact on other fisheries,” added Nance. Bycatch is the harvesting or incidental catch of fish or other organisms other than the species targeted a fishery.

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“From NOAA Fisheries’ perspective, cooperative studies like this are critical to building consensus and identifying ways to keep America’s fisheries sustainable,” added Nance. “We commend all members of the shrimping Industry for their willingness to tackle the issue of bycatch head-on and look forward to doing everything possible to contribute to the success of this study.”

Dr. Benny J. Gallaway of LGL Ecological Research Associates will coordinate the industry’s involvement in this study. According to Gallaway, “this study, along with the new approach NOAA Fisheries has implemented for conducting stock assessments, points towards a new era in fisheries management. Industry has been made a part of the process from field investigations to assessment. The fisheries, as well as the managers and fishermen, all stand to benefit.”

“We will soon announce a series of port meetings to describe the new program and its importance,” continued Gallaway. “We urge everyone who can to attend and also urge everyone who is asked to carry an ELB to do so. This is industry’s chance to be a part of the solution to effort estimation problems, a chance we can’t afford to miss. The ball is in our court.”

This and other Southeast Regional news releases and fishery bulletins are available on the region's Internet home page: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/>

NOAA Fisheries provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public. To learn more about NOAA Fisheries, please visit: www.nmfs.noaa.gov.

The Commerce Department’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation’s coastal and marine resources. To learn more about NOAA, please visit <http://www.noaa.gov>.

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