

transmitting units and NOAA approved VMS communications service providers, or information regarding the status of VMS systems being evaluated by NOAA for approval, write to NOAA Fisheries Office for Law Enforcement (OLE), 8484 Georgia Avenue, Suite 415, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

To submit a completed and signed checklist, mail or fax it to NOAA Enforcement Southeast, 9721 Executive Center Drive North, Koger Building, St. Petersburg, FL 33702, fax: 727-570-5575.

For addresses regarding approved VMS, see the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section, under the heading VMS Provider Addresses.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For current listing information Mark Oswell, Outreach Specialist, phone: 301-427-2300, fax: 301-427-2055. For questions regarding status of evaluations, contact Jonathan Pinkerton, National VMS Program Manager, phone: 301-427-2300, fax: 301-427-2055. For questions regarding VMS installation or the installation checklist, contact Fred Kyle, Special Agent, or Beverly Lambert, Southeast Divisional VMS Program Manager, NOAA Enforcement Southeast, phone: 727-570-5344.

The public may acquire this notice, installation checklist, and relevant updates via the OLE/SE website <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ole/Southeast/SED/VesselMonitoringSystem.htm> Telephone requests can be made by calling 727-570-5344.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

NMFS issued a final rule on January 16, 2003 (68 FR 2188) to implement Amendment 5 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Shrimp Fishery off the Southern Atlantic States (Amendment 5) which was prepared by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council). That final rule established a limited access program for the rock shrimp fishery in the exclusive economic zone off Georgia and the east coast of Florida. The final rule requires an owner or operator of a vessel that has been issued a limited access endorsement for South Atlantic rock shrimp to ensure that such vessel has a NMFS-approved, operating VMS on board when on a trip in the South Atlantic. An operating VMS includes an operating mobile transmitting unit on the vessel and a functioning communication link between the unit and NMFS as provided by a NMFS-approved communication service provider. The VMS requirement is effective as of October 14, 2003, or 90

days after publication in the **Federal Register** of this notice listing the approved transmitting units and associated communications service providers, whichever is later. However, vessel owners and operators should not delay their purchase and installation of a mobile transceiver unit until the last day. Vendors may require extended periods of time to deliver a mobile transceiver unit and to complete its installation.

This notice provides a list of the currently approved VMS (mobile transceiver units and communication service providers) for the South Atlantic rock shrimp limited access fishery and sets forth the features of each VMS. The list of VMS approved by NOAA will be updated and revised as others are approved. The list will be published in the **Federal Register** and will be posted on the NMFS OLE website and will contain revisions when required.

Partial Reimbursement for Initial VMS Acquisition/Installation

Amendment 5 expressed the Council's intent that costs for an initial VMS acquisition and installation should not exceed \$1200, for a vessel owner who receives an initial rock shrimp limited access endorsement. In keeping with that intent, through December 31, 2004, NMFS will partially reimburse such a vessel owner up to \$775 for initial acquisition and installation of an approved VMS. The maximum \$775 reimbursement is based on the estimated cost of acquisition and installation of the least expensive approved VMS unit (\$1975) minus \$1200. If actual costs are less than \$1975, the reimbursement would be reduced accordingly; in some cases involving special circumstances pertaining to installation of the device, a somewhat larger reimbursement amount may be considered. An owner would be initially responsible for the entire cost. To receive the reimbursement, an owner must provide valid signed receipts for purchase and installation of an approved VMS to NMFS Southeast Regional Office, and confirm with NOAA Enforcement Southeast that the VMS is functioning. NMFS anticipates that most qualified vessel owners will acquire VMS as soon as possible; some may defer temporarily for a variety of reasons. No requests for reimbursement will be accepted after December 19, 2004, and no reimbursements will be granted after December 31, 2004. NMFS will provide additional details regarding the reimbursement procedures to qualified vessel owners.

II. Approved VMS Mobile Transceiver Units

INMARSAT-C Transceivers

The Inmarsat-C satellite communications VMS transmitting units that meet the minimum technical requirements for the South Atlantic Rock Shrimp Fishery are the Thrane & Thrane Fishery "Capsat" (part number TT-3022D-NMFS) and the Thrane & Thrane Fishery "Mini-C" (part number TT-3026-NMFS). The address for the Thrane & Thrane distributor (LandSea Systems) dealer contact is provided under the heading VMS Provider Addresses.

A. Thrane & Thrane TT-3022D-NMFS

The transceiver consists of an integrated GPS/Inmarsat-C unit in the wheelhouse and an antenna mounted atop the vessel. The unit is factory pre-configured for NMFS VMS operations (non-Global Maritime Distress & Safety System (non-GMDSS)). Satellite commissioning services are provided by LandSea Systems personnel.

Automatic GPS position reporting starts after transceiver installation and power activation onboard the vessel. The unit is a car-radio-sized transceiver using a floating 10 to 32 VDC power supply. The unit is configured for automatic reduced position transmissions when the vessel is stationary (i.e., in port). It allows for port stays without power drain or power shut down. The unit restarts normal position transmission automatically when the vessel goes to sea.

The outside antenna, model TT-3005M, is a compact omni-directional Inmarsat-C/GPS antenna, providing operation down to +/-15 deg. angles.

A configuration option is available to automatically send position reports to a private address, such as a fleet management company. Another available option is the ability to send and receive private e-mail and other messages with the purchase and installation of an input device such as a laptop, personal computer, or message display terminal.

B. Thrane & Thrane TT-3026-NMFS

The transceiver consists of an integrated GPS/Inmarsat-C unit mounted atop the vessel. The unit is factory pre-configured for NMFS VMS operations (non-Global Maritime Distress & Safety System (non-GMDSS)). Satellite commissioning services are provided by LandSea Systems personnel.

Automatic GPS position reporting starts after transceiver installation and power activation onboard the vessel.