



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

NOAA Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

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## VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEM REQUIREMENT FOR GULF OF MEXICO REEF FISH FISHERY DELAYED UNTIL MAY 6, 2007

*Third Model Now Available*

NOAA Fisheries Service announces a 60-day delay until May 6, 2007, in the effective date for the Gulf of Mexico reef fish vessel monitoring system (VMS) requirements.\*

The delay is necessary to: (1) Resolve an unanticipated technological problem with one of the approved VMS units, and (2) allow vendors additional time to meet the demand for purchase and installation of VMS units that are currently backlogged.

Also, NOAA Fisheries Service Office for Law Enforcement (OLE) announces the Faria WatchDog 750VMS is now type-approved for use in the reef fish fishery of the Gulf of Mexico.

Current information and frequently asked questions on the VMS program including the type-approved units, Boatracs, Faria, and Thrane & Thrane, can be found at the Southeast Region's Website: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/vms/vms.htm>.

Additionally, OLE would like to remind reef fish permit holders of the availability of a VMS reimbursement program for the Gulf of Mexico reef fish fishery. These funds will be used to reimburse vessel owners and/or operators for the purchase

price of the VMS. **There are a limited amount of funds available for reimbursement. New VMS programs are being implemented around the United States in 2007, and these programs will be eligible for reimbursement through the same funds. Therefore, it is important to apply for reimbursement as soon as possible. Reimbursement requests will be handled on a first-come first-serve basis.** The reimbursable expense is the purchase price of the least expensive VMS unit type-approved for the reef fish fishery. Currently, the least expensive unit costs \$3,095.

For questions about VMS units, contact the VMS Support Center (phone: 888-219-9228) or the Southeast Region OLE, 263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, Suite 109, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701 (phone: 800-758-4833).

For questions regarding reimbursement applications, contact the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, 205 SE Spokane Street, Suite 100, Portland, Oregon 97202, phone: 503-595-3100, fax: 503-595-3232.

For questions regarding the 60-day delay contact Jason Rueter or Peter Hood at (727) 824-5305.

\*All vessels with Gulf of Mexico reef fish permits are required to have a type approved VMS unit operating onboard by this date. This new date replaces the original implementation date of December 7, 2006, and the first delayed implementation date of March 7, 2007.