

Project Title: Refining Electronic Monitoring for Implementation on Small, Fixed-Gear Pacific Cod Boats in Alaska

(#47976)

Recipient: North Pacific Fisheries Association Inc.

Project Description: Test and gather electronic monitoring data on small pot boats fishing for Pacific cod in the Gulf of Alaska. Project will field test two strategies to estimate discard weights and further refine a strategy to improve data capture and review efficiencies using electronic monitoring.

Project Location: Homer and Kodiak Alaska with field testing in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA), Western and Central Regulatory Areas

Abstract: The North Pacific Fisheries Association Inc. will continue to refine and test electronic monitoring strategies for the small boat, fixed gear Pacific cod fishery in the Gulf of Alaska. Under a previous National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant, the grantee successfully tested the use of electronic monitoring on small pot boats fishing for Pacific cod. Initial findings from that project show that over 97% of the fish caught can be enumerated and identified to the species level using electronic monitoring. These findings have garnered support from fishery managers and the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council, but further field research is needed to put this fishery on the path to full scale implementation. Specifically, research is needed to determine a cost effective means of capturing bycatch, or discard, weights using a commercially available electronic monitoring system.

This project will field-test two approaches for accurately assessing discard weights: 1) create a visual reference on the sorting table that will facilitate estimates of lengths from video imagery (lengths would be used to calculate weights), and 2) use fish counts and average species weights to estimate total bycatch weights.

The project will also test the integration of radio frequency identification with electronic monitoring as a tool to delineate fishing effort at the pot level, and selectively trigger recording, which could reduce the cost of data collection, archiving, and review.