

OAC subgroup on low selection rates in partial coverage

Preliminary workplan

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Purpose: to scope out short and long-term options to address low selection rates in partial coverage, and provide comments back to the OAC in September 2017.

Schedule:

- post-June Council meeting – agree on and distribute workplan to subgroup and OAC
- Week of July 1st – subgroup members to begin to circulate initial drafts of tasked items
- End-July – subgroup teleconference to discuss progress with tasks (public meeting)
- Early September – subgroup teleconference to finalize recommendations for the OAC (public meeting)

Workplan:

The intention is for the subgroup members to scope out a series of regulatory and/or non-regulatory options that may address low coverage rates in partial coverage. Only options that maintain the agency's current statistically-reliable random sampling model should be considered, to be continued through the use of ODDS. For each option, the subgroup will consider:

- the ability of the option to increase coverage rates;
- the requirements for implementing the option;
- the timeframe for having an effect;
- staff workload and resources involved;
- a preliminary pro/con evaluation of how the option would change incentives or differentially impact constituents; and
- next steps to continue to develop the option.

Options:

1. **Federal funding** – *lead: Chris Rilling*
 - a. Describe how Federal funding affects coverage rates (see bullets above)
 - b. look into opportunities under the current priority-based resource initiative for national observer programs
2. **Zero selection** – *lead: Dan Falvey, Jennifer Mondragon*
 - a. Describe how changes to the zero selection pool could affect selection/coverage rates
 - b. Look at existing information – vessel demographics prepared for the EM Workgroup, and 2010 analysis of catch by vessel length
 - c. Based on existing information, consider what further data queries are needed
3. **EM optimization** – *lead: Dan Falvey, Sam Cunningham, Abby Turner*
 - a. Describe how EM optimization could affect selection/coverage rates
 - b. Continue working with EM providers to estimate EM costs per vessel and per sea day
 - c. Think through how to align fleet demographics with a cost-efficient EM program design
 - d. Begin to draft a goal of the fixed gear partial fleet for number/type of boats in zero/trip/EM selection pools
 - e. Consider how best to balance observer coverage with EM to meet the multiple management objectives (e.g. biological sample collections for stock assessments).

4. **Voucher program** (hybrid observer fee / pay-as-you-go) – *lead: Nicole Kimball, Dan Falvey, support from Sam Cunningham*
 - a. Describe what members mean by a voucher program (and how a voucher program would affect selection rates)
 - b. Draft a brief description of the funding mechanism envisioned, and Chris Rilling will request review from NOAA GC about potential legal constraints
 - c. Begin to draft a strawman of differential pricing by location
 - d. Develop a qualitative description of the economic principles regarding vouchers and the potential for price setting and the challenges involved with choosing the “right” price by location.
5. **Monitoring cooperatives**– *lead: Julie Bonney, Abby Turner, support from Sam Cunningham*
 - a. Describe how monitoring cooperatives could operate to improve efficiencies that affect coverage/selection rates
 - b. Investigate which fleets might be candidates for monitoring cooperatives.
6. **Contract** – when draft Statement of Work is issued, subgroup may review in advance of OAC. Discuss in July.
7. **Raising the observer fee** – initial scoping to compare against the other options. Describe how many more observer days we would achieve by raising the fee to 1.5% - 2%, perhaps by gear sector.