

Final Council motion
C-3 Observer Program
October 6, 2012

The Council recommends that the 2013 ADP be revised to reflect a priority for monitoring vessels managed under PSC limits in the trip selection pool. The Council recognizes that this would necessarily modify the equal probability sampling design such that higher observer coverage rates are provided in the trip selection pool, and lower rates in the vessel selection pool, compared to what is currently in the draft ADP.

The Council also asks NMFS to reconsider the continuous 3-month deployment for selected vessels in the vessel selection pool. NMFS should implement a 2-month deployment for selected vessels.

The Council requests that NMFS provide a strategic planning document for electronic monitoring (EM) that identifies the Council's EM management objective of collecting at-sea discard estimates from the 40' – 57.5' IFQ fleet, and the timeline and vision for how the EM pilot project in 2013 and future years' projects will serve to meet this objective, including funding.

The Council forwards the following AP recommendations:

The Council requests that NMFS and the BSAI Pacific cod catcher vessel trawl fleet work together to develop a mechanism to allow 100% observer coverage for the 2013 season, with the additional costs to be borne by the vessel owners.

The Council also recommends that all trawl fleets in the Gulf of Alaska have the option to voluntarily carry 100% observer coverage at some times in the seasons, also with additional costs to be borne by vessel owners.

1. <Outreach> Recommend that NMFS clarify how a release from observer coverage is granted, if the observer provider is unable to provide an observer.
2. <Outreach> Recommend that NMFS reconsider the timing requirements for requesting a release from observer coverage, and inspecting a vessel that has made that request.
3. <First year review> Recommend that NMFS consider that vessels in the vessel selection pool should either have the option to go into the trip selection pool OR all vessels should be in the trip selection pool.
4. The Council reaffirms its intent that crew members should not be displaced by the requirement to have an observer onboard.
5. <First year review> Recommend that the difference between coverage in the vessel and trip selection pools be evaluated.
6. <First year review> Request that NMFS provide information on catcher vessels that operate as catcher processors for a portion of the year.
7. <First year review> Recommend that NMFS insert cost effectiveness measures into the deployment plan, to prevent expensive deployments to remote areas for insignificant amounts of catch.

8. <*First year review*> Request that NMFS report to the Council on whether there are issues related to observer availability as a result of this program.
9. <*Outreach*> Clarify the procedure for releasing and acquiring observers for vessels that turn around trips on short notice.
10. <*First year review*> Recommend that NMFS report to the Council on other EM options that may be appropriate to replace or supplement human observers.
11. <*First year review*> The Council requests that the agency, during its first year review, identify detailed programmatic costs, and in addition, that the agency identify possible cost reductions as they relate to programmatic and deployment options.

The Council requests that the OAC and NMFS provide a discussion of recommended performance measures for this program.