

C-2 Council motion

Observer Annual Report and 2024 Annual Deployment Plan/Partial Coverage Cost Efficiencies June 9, 2023

Observer Program 2022 Annual Report

The Council appreciates the 2022 Annual Report on the observer program and recommends the following:

- An abbreviated annual report on the 2023 deployment and a full annual report on the 2024 deployment.
- Future reports include data on the amount of catch monitored by electronic monitoring (EM) similar to data on observed catch.
- Future reports provide EM cost categories that include monitored days vs reviewed days.
- A summary of issues highlighted in the previous year's annual report and how they were addressed. For next year's report that would include EM image quality, new EM review protocols for pot vessels, and EM video review timeliness.
- Similar metrics for the pelagic trawl EM program and the fixed gear EM program, as practicable.
- Reintroduction of bias metrics as possible, for the next full annual report.
- Enforcement section: 1) Information on observer-on-observer harassment broken out from aggregate data; 2) a longer time series than only the previous year; 3) additional detail to help clearly identify the most important differences in numbers and rates between years; 4) annual data on the number of observer statements that result in violations.
- Highlight OLE's online training for ensuring a safe work environment for observers and NOAA's Workplace Violence Prevention and Response training options on the Council website.

2024 Annual Deployment Plan (ADP)/Cost Efficiencies Analysis

The Council supports the criteria for evaluation and the proposed stratification and allocation designs for the 2024 ADP, as well as the recommendations on pages 68-69 of the 2022 Observer Annual Report. Per EM deployment, this includes: 1) additional fixed gear EM vessels (30% coverage) in the EM pool in 2024 (up to 200 total vessels) provided they opt-in prior to November 1, 2023, additional funding for EM equipment is secured, and they meet the criteria in the ADP; and 2) support for additional pelagic trawl EM vessels in the EFP with 100% at-sea monitoring in addition to shoreside observer coverage.

The Council also supports:

- Continued evaluation of modifications to zero coverage for EM and observer strata, while maintaining the 40' LOA fixed gear threshold, to include fixed gear vessels that are high cost/low landings and/or fixed gear vessels that have not fished for groundfish in multiple years. If time is constraining, evaluate this only under the NMFS preferred stratification design and the allocation options other than equal rates.
- Evaluation of solutions to high cancellation rates of trips selected for observer coverage in the hook-and-line stratum such as: 1) having the next trip inherit the observer selected trip (as opposed to the next logged trip); and 2) increase the programmed rate in ODDS to achieve the target coverage rate. A look at whether trips selected for coverage comprised the majority of hook-and-line cancelled trips in 2022 and the preliminary 2023 cancellation rates may assist in determining whether to make a change in the 2024 ADP.

- The Council requests NMFS define the 'burden share' evaluation metric in such a manner that it could be applied to all strata in a consistent and meaningful way. If this metric is variable in what it is measuring among the strata, the Council recommends NMFS eliminate this metric.
- Evaluation of the monitoring designs and resulting coverage rates under high, medium, and low budget scenarios to be provided to the FMAC in advance of the October Council meeting.
- Consultation with fixed gear EM service providers on the cost of inactive vessels to determine how costs would scale to different budget scenarios.

The Council supports further investigation of video review protocols and/or increased staffing at Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission or other contracted solutions to minimize delays and better ensure timely EM data.