

Status of analytical projects related to the Observer Program

Priority	Name	Description	Status / Due Date / Target Date
Program-level Projects			
1	Annual Report / Annual Deployment Plan	Every year, an Annual Report of the preceding fishing year and an Annual Deployment Plan (ADP) for the upcoming fishing year are prepared.	The final 2024 ADP will be presented to the Council in December 2023. An abbreviated 2023 Annual Report will be presented to the FMAC in May and to the Council in June 2024. The agency will resume full Annual Reports beginning in 2025 with the 2024 Annual Report.
2	Trawl CV EM Development	Engage with the Trawl Electronic Monitoring Committee (EMC) to develop EM for compliance monitoring on pelagic trawl catcher vessels. Research projects include EM for compliance monitoring of full retention in pollock fisheries including tender vessels in the Western Gulf as well as EM to support alternate methods of dockside salmon accounting.	This project was identified by the PCFMAC cost efficiencies subgroup as the first priority. Vessels began fishing under the EFP in January 2020. The Council took final action at their October 2022 meeting by recommending that this become a regulated program. Regulatory implementation is planned for 2025 and fishing under an EFP is anticipated until then.
3	Improve integration of fixed gear EM data with observer data	In April 2019, the Council tasked the partial coverage cost efficiencies subgroup to continue to develop ideas related to how to best integrate the different monitoring tools, such as dockside monitoring, EM, and monitoring cooperatives.	This project was identified by the PCFMAC cost efficiencies subgroup as the second priority. <i>This project is being considered as part of the integrated partial coverage analysis.</i>
4	Reevaluate the zero selection stratum	In April 2019, the Council tasked the partial coverage cost efficiencies subgroup to continue to develop ideas related to how to best integrate the different monitoring tools, such as dockside monitoring, EM, and monitoring cooperatives.	This project was identified by the PCFMAC cost efficiencies subgroup as the third priority. <i>This project is being considered as part of the integrated partial coverage analysis.</i>
5	Biological Data Assessment	The AFSC is conducting an assessment of the current way biological information collected by observers is used in stock assessments. The result of this project is to provide the scale and scope of data needs in the current program. The Council has identified evaluation of gaps in biological samples due to implementation of EM as one of their top 2022-2024 research priorities.	Information has been collected from stock assessment authors. Initial analyses related to reducing biological data were presented to the PCFMAC as part of the Draft 2021 ADP. <i>Ongoing development of this element is being considered as part of the integrated partial coverage analysis.</i>
6	Shoreside Sampling	In May 2019, the FMAC partial coverage subgroup identified information needed to scope the next steps toward an integrated and cost efficient partial coverage monitoring	<i>This project is being considered as part of the integrated partial coverage analysis.</i>

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		program. Shoreside sampling was identified as one tool to be considered.	
7	Explore alternative approaches to evaluate monitoring effects	In June 2018, NMFS recommended and the Council supported reassessing the performance standards used to evaluate monitoring effects in the Annual Report and explore alternative approaches.	NMFS staff have had a manuscript reviewed on this topic, the results of which inform how current metrics behave in evaluating monitoring effects. Changes to monitoring effects work are expected going forward and will be communicated as they progress.
8	Identify best practices for estimating species weight when it is unavailable for a monitored haul	Catch estimates for EM and observer data rely on weight measurements from observed hauls. This project would identify the best methods for assigning weights when they are unavailable.	Methods have been updated to use average weights from the current year instead of average weights from the prior year. Further work on this project is slow due to work on higher priority projects.
9	Agency ODDS Subgroup	In June 2018, NMFS recommended and the Council supported the formation of an Agency Subgroup to document how ODDS operates and identify alternatives for improvement. Changes could include improvements to the linkage between ODDS and eLandings, changes to allow vessels that also fish trawl gear to be placed in the EM selection pool, and the trip cancellation and inherit process.	Starting in 2022, NMFS recommended that all ODDS trips be closed using the existing pull down menu that lists landing reports associated with each vessel. This has yet to be implemented.
10	Analysis of catch and bycatch estimation methods	Analysis of catch and bycatch estimation methods, including evaluating design-based and ratio estimators; and incorporating variance from at-sea sampling through to the trip level.	Development of variance estimators has been completed and was included as Appendix C of the 2019 Annual Report, which NMFS published in December 2021. Work continues to evaluate post-stratification methods in CAS. Currently, Machine Learning methods are being tested to explore different stratification schemes that better utilize available data.
Regulatory Projects in NMFS Development or Review (Council has taken action or major work at current stage is NMFS's responsibility)			
11	Pot CP Monitoring Changes	In February 2021, NMFS informed the Council of the need to modify observer experience requirements for observers deployed on Pot CP vessels.	At its February 2023 meeting, the Council passed a motion in favor of additional monitoring requirements for Pot CPs, including the need for at least one Level 2 observer on board at all times.
12	Record keeping regulatory changes	Observer Provider Portal and Small CP request process changes.	NMFS would develop an RIR and regulatory change in consultation with the FMAC and the Council. No staff have been assigned to this project yet.