

Council Motion
D1 Observer Update
June 10, 2020

2020 Annual Deployment Plan

The Council appreciates and supports NMFS's response thus far to COVID-19 relative to the observer program. Full coverage fisheries have been maintained, a majority of the pelagic trawl fleet is covered under trawl electronic monitoring (EM), and all partial coverage catcher vessels operating out of Kodiak are subject to observer coverage under the existing annual deployment plan. In considering resuming partial coverage for the remaining fleets in 2020, which are primarily fixed gear, the Council recommends NMFS strongly consider tradeoffs of the concerns outlined in the May 2020 FMAC report against the utility of limited data that may be collected. If NMFS proceeds, the Council recommends the following:

- Reintroduce partial coverage using trip selection out of a select number of key ports (e.g., in addition to Kodiak)
- Maintain the current coverage/selection rates for vessels carrying EM
- Given the limited opportunities for outreach, focus on communicating proposed changes to affected fleets

2021 Annual Deployment Plan

The Council recommends a high priority is placed on developing a 2021 Annual Deployment Plan (ADP) that provides necessary data while being responsive to continued COVID-19 challenges and Council priorities. The Council reiterates the January 2020 Council priorities relative to the 2021 ADP, including: 1) continuation of the trawl EM EFP; 2) integration of electronic monitoring into the overall monitoring of fixed gear; and 3) evaluation of different criteria to define the 'zero selection' pool to meet data needs and improve cost efficiency.