

C3 – Observer Program Annual Report

- The SSC *finds* that the deployment of observers in 2018: aligned well with the ADP, including the new 15%+Optimization hurdle model; provided critical catch and effort data for management; involved a significant EM component in select gear strata; and saw a decrease in reports of improper/illegal behaviors.
- The SSC also *finds* that, despite these successes: observer effects continues to be noted for several performance metrics; program funding remains volatile from year to year; inheritance of trip coverage after cancellation is generating temporal sampling bias; and a rigorous evaluation of the utility of data derived from EM is still needed.

C3 – Observer Program Annual Report (continued)

- The SSC *recommends* that:
 - The 15%+Optimization hurdle model continue to be employed with the existing gear and tender status strata
 - An analysis of the effects of observed sampling bias on catch and PSC estimation be performed to assess the level of impact
 - An analysis of the comparability of EM- and observer-derived be performed, focusing on detectability and error rates
 - Outreach efforts to captains, crews, and processors about the importance of cooperating with and respecting observers continue
 - The Council continue to consider novel funding models for the program
 - The Council consider use of EM on vessels <40' LOA