

Status of analytical projects related to the Observer Program

	Priority	Name	Description	Status/Due Date/Target Date
	1	Annual Deployment Plan	Deployment strategy for observers in 2016.	Draft 2016 ADP released Sep 2015. Plan Team and OAC review Sept 2015. SSC, AP, and Council review October 2015. Oct-Dec complete final ADP.
	2	Electronic monitoring research	Fieldwork, research, and planning for developing electronic monitoring technologies.	The 2016 pre-implementation plan will be presented to Council in October 2015.
	3	Analysis of catch and bycatch estimation methods	Ongoing analysis of catch and bycatch estimation methods including of evaluation of design-based and ratio estimators; incorporate variance from at-sea sampling through to the trip-level; and then assess post-strata definitions.	Target is to provide catch and variance estimates in June 2016 and conduct evaluation of post-strata starting in 2016.
	Projects in NMFS Development or Review (Council has taken action; staff work continues until completion)			
	4	Halibut PSC – decksorting	The Alaska Seafood Cooperative (AKSC) submitted an exempted fishing permit application for 2015 that allows AKSC to evaluate how often vessels use alternate halibut handling methods designed to reduce halibut mortality, when the alternate methods are available as an option. A different EFP application may be submitted later in 2015 for additional research starting in 2016.	Fishing under the EFP began in May 2015. Council update on fishing under the EFP is scheduled for October 2015. NMFS staff is working with AKSC on timing and development of the 2016 EFP.
Individual Projects	5	BSAI Amd 109 – CDQ small catcher vessel fishery	Revise requirements for observer coverage, permitting, catch monitoring, and catch accounting for catcher vessels $\leq 46'$.	Council final action in Feb 2015. FMP amendment/proposed rule under development by NMFS.
	6	BSAI Amd 110 – BS salmon PSC	As part of a larger action, revise requirements for handling, sorting, retention, and counting of salmon in the BS pollock fishery and expansion of requirements for computer and ATLAS software to catcher vessels less than 125' LOA while participating in BS pollock fishery.	Council final action in April 2015. FMP amendment/proposed rule under development by NMFS.
	7	GOA Amd 102 - Partial coverage for small catcher/processors	Revise allowances for small catcher/processors to choose to be in the partial observer coverage category.	Council final action in June 2015. FMP amendment/proposed rule under development by NMFS.
	Projects in Council Review (Council has tasked staff and scheduled review at a future Council meeting)			
	8	Observer coverage for BSAI trawl catcher vessels	Analysis of alternatives for placing all AFA trawl catcher vessels in full coverage for BSAI fisheries (Alt. 2) or allowing BSAI trawl catcher vessels currently in partial coverage to voluntarily select to be in full coverage (Alt. 3).	Council review of initial draft analysis in October 2015.

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9	GOA trawl bycatch	Implementation planning and analysis for catch monitoring and observer coverage requirements for transferable halibut and salmon PSC allocations, including for vessels delivering to tenders.	Council review in October 2015.
10	100% coverage for trawl catcher vessels in the GOA	Council's Feb 2015 motion requests that a discussion paper outline the effect on Observer Program fee revenues, potential cost impact for AFA and non-AFA trawl vessels as a percent of ex-vessel revenue and daily observer costs, identify observer providers currently supplying observers to full coverage, and assess any observer availability issues.	Council review in October 2015.
11	Observer coverage on vessels delivering to tenders	Revise allowance for catcher vessels to make multiple deliveries to a tender on a single trip for purposes of observer coverage; revise regulations to allow observers to be deployed from tender vessels.	Analysis tasked to Council staff with initial review tentatively scheduled for February 2016.
<i>Proposed projects</i>			
	Lead level 2 (LL2) observers	In June 2014, the Council tasked a discussion paper to look at regulatory and non-regulatory solutions to LL2 observer qualification requirements. Additional Council direction on non-regulatory solutions was provided in October 2014.	No specific staff currently tasked to discussion paper on regulatory solutions.
	Observer provider insurance requirements	In May 2015 NMFS determined that some observer provider insurance requirements in § 679.52(b)(11)(vi) are inapplicable and should be removed or revised.	NMFS letter affects regulations in Alaska, W. Coast, and Greater Atlantic regions. Plan for determining appropriate insurance requirements should be addressed at a national level because the outcome affects multiple regions. National Observer Program Advisory Team (NOPAT) will discuss at Oct 2015 meeting.
	IFQ in multiple areas	Revise monitoring options for fishing IFQ in multiple regulatory areas on the same trip.	Council considered in February 2014 but did not task staff with further analysis of the issue.
	<i>De minimus</i> IFQ	Exempt/release from observer coverage vessels or trips with small amounts of IFQ.	Council considered in February 2014 but did not task staff with further analysis of the issue.
	IFQ fee assessment	Use standardized annual prices for fee assessment for IFQ.	Council considered in February 2014 but did not task staff with further analysis of the issue.