



C5 Observer 2022 Annual Deployment Plan

October 2021 Council Meeting

Action Memo

Council Staff: Sara Cleaver
Other Presenters: Jennifer Ferdinand (AFSC), Geoff Mayhew (PSMFC)
Action Required:

1. Review the Draft 2022 Annual Deployment Plan (ADP).
2. Receive Partial Coverage Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee (PCFMAC) Report.
3. Provide recommendations to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for the final 2022 ADP and other recommendations as necessary.

BACKGROUND

(a) Draft 2022 Annual Deployment Plan:

The Council is scheduled to review the Draft 2022 Annual Deployment Plan (ADP) for the partial coverage category of the North Pacific Observer Program and provide recommendations to NMFS for the Final 2022 ADP. The Final ADP is posted every year in December. The ADP explains how NMFS intends to assign fishery observers and electronic monitoring (EM) to groundfish and halibut vessels fishing in the partial coverage category.

Recall that NMFS outlined a plan in April 2021 at the Partial Coverage Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee (PCFMAC) to complete a comprehensive analysis of the Council's cost efficiency priorities in the partial coverage observer category. This analysis would be conducted in 2022, for review in 2023, and incorporated into the 2024 ADP. To enable staff time for this analysis, NMFS recommends carrying forward the major analytical components of the 2022 ADP into 2023, effectively creating a two-year deployment plan.

As of September 1st, 2021, NMFS has returned to a trip-based approach to deploying observers across the State of Alaska and recommends the trip-based approach be utilized in 2022 and 2023. NMFS also recommends deploying into a fixed gear EM stratum and three observer strata defined by gear type (hook-and-line, pot, and trawl). NMFS analyzed four different allocation scenarios for partial coverage observer deployment and recommends an allocation strategy of an adjusted 15% plus optimization based on discarded groundfish, halibut PSC, and Chinook PSC. This allocation strategy ensures a 95% probability of achieving the 15% threshold. Vessels under 40 ft, those fishing with jig gear, or those participating in other EM innovation research (e.g., the current Pelagic trawl EM EFP) would be placed in the zero selection pool.

The agency will be able to maintain the current fixed gear EM pool of 169 vessels in 2021. If additional funding is available, the draft ADP proposes adding new fixed gear EM vessels based on the following criteria: vessels that are already equipped with EM systems; vessels that are cost effective for EM and unlikely to introduce large data gaps; and vessels 40-57.5 ft LOA where carrying an observer is problematic due to bunk space or life raft limitations.

(b) Partial Coverage Fishery Monitoring and Advisory Committee Report:

The Council's [PCFMAC met virtually](#) on September 17, 2021 to discuss the Draft 2022 ADP, receive an update on the partial coverage integrated analysis, and other issues.