

ADVISORY PANEL
Motions and Rationale
October 3-7, 2023 - Anchorage, AK

C2 Observer 2024 Annual Deployment Plan

The AP acknowledges the receipt of the 2024 Draft Annual Deployment Plan including the Partial Coverage Cost Efficiencies Analysis, and the PCFMAC Committee Report and appreciates the significant amount of time and effort that has been invested into the cost efficiencies analysis in order to give us the 2024 ADP.

The AP supports the following PCFMAC recommendations for the 2024 ADP:

1. Fixed stratification by FMP area and NMFS should make a clear statement that while boats must declare in ODDS which areas their predominant catch will occur, they are allowed to continue fishing in both the BSAI and GOA on the same trip.
2. Proximity allocation scheme, unless the CWB approach is able to be revised for 2024.
3. NMFS should run the CWB allocation approach without the legacy EM hardware costs for both fixed gear and trawl EM prior to the December 2023 Council meeting.
4. Trawl EM should maintain a 33% shoreside sampling frame for 2024 since industry is obtaining outside funding that does not affect the partial coverage observer budget.

The AP supports the following PCFMAC recommendations to continue work for the 2025 ADP.

5. NMFS should further determine what specific level of biological data is needed for stock assessment to be incorporated into the 2025 ADP.
6. NMFS should further explore the appropriate time/space scale for biological samples in order to explore a revised hurdle and an analysis of how to effectively deploy days in addition to that hurdle for the 2025 ADP.
7. If unable to run CWB allocation approaches without legacy EM hardware costs for both fixed gear and trawl EM prior to the December 2023 Council meeting for incorporation into the 2024 ADP, it should be further explored for the 2025 ADP.

The AP also supports the PCFMAC's recommendations for the following proposals moving forward in the 2024 NFWF Electronic Monitoring and Reporting Grant Program:

- Real Time Data - electronic logbooks for GOA fixed gear halibut and sablefish.
- North Pacific Fisheries Association - Evaluation and testing of alternative catch handling protocols for single pot EM.
- Saltwater Inc - Proposal to test using EM to monitor sorting line for salmon and further observer tool efficiencies.
- Alaska Groundfish Data Bank's proposal to test Trawl EM for all targets and both pelagic and non-pelagic gear in the CGOA Rockfish Program.
- AGDB and Aleutians East Borough's proposal to help cover partial coverage costs for the final year of pollock trawl EM EFP.

Amendment 1

The AP supports the FVOA pilot project as a way of gaining information and PCFMAC suggestion that the proposer select a PI who could write a cooperative research grant proposal and coordinate the project

Amendment passed: 15/0

Rationale in Favor of Amendment:

- *This pilot project could potentially create both flexibility and cost savings for vessels departing from ports that are less rural and have a larger observer base that would not need to travel to join the vessel. The savings on travel and lodging would potentially greatly decrease the daily observer "at sea cost."*
- *There has been extensive public comment from FVOA regarding this option and the AP agrees that coordinating a grant proposal to move this forward is the best next step.*

Main Motion passed : 15/0

Rationale in Favor of Main Motion:

- *The fixed FMP stratification scheme provides benefits since pot and longline strata will now be combined into a single strata. This more closely aligns with how fixed gear vessels are operating and conducting trips which streamlines the strata and prevents confusion.*
- *The proximity allocation scheme provides benefits by distributing sampling across space and time, which reduces data gaps, and provides ability to detect monitoring effects.*
- *While the AP recognizes the Agency's need to include actual costs that they have paid into future cost estimates, the AP heard public testimony and there was discussion at the September PCFMAC committee meeting echoing concern for the current trawl and fixed gear cost estimates. The cost weighted boxes approach does have merits, but the AP would request further revision to the cost estimates before it is utilized in an ADP. If that can't be done for 2024, it should be included in the 2025 ADP.*
- *The AP received public comments both written and spoken, in addition to recommendations from both the PCFMAC and NMFS that Trawl EM should maintain the 33% shoreside sampling rate in 2024 since industry is seeking NFWF funding to cover costs and it will not affect the partial coverage budget for 2024.*
- *There was discussion at the PCFMAC and notes in the presentation about exploring the appropriate time/space scale for biological samples in order to explore a revised hurdle and an analysis of how to effectively deploy days in addition to that hurdle for the 2025 ADP.*
- *NMFS should further determine what specific level of biological data is needed for stock assessment to be incorporated into the 2025 ADP.*
- *Although there is no perfect monitoring scheme that will check all of the boxes, it is important to prioritize the reliability of Chinook PSC estimates and pursue allocation schemes that minimize the coefficients of variation, and thus the precision and reliability of Chinook PSC estimates, given the Council priorities of Chinook PSC accounting, as evidenced by one of the main objectives of creating the pelagic pollock Trawl EM program.*
- *Given current market conditions and extremely low ex-vessel prices, it's critical to continue to meet the observer program objectives but continue to find efficiencies that will create resilience in the face of lower partial coverage fee revenues and significantly reduced available funds in the partial coverage budget for the foreseeable future.*
- *Support was echoed for all the projects mentioned at the September PCFMAC meeting specifically applying for 2024 NFWF funds.*