



C5 Observer 2021 Annual Deployment Plan

October 2020 Council Meeting

Action Memo

- Council Staff: Dr. Kate Haapala, Diana Evans, Anna Henry
- Other Presenters: Dr. Craig Faunce (AFSC), Geoff Mayhew (AFSC/PSMFC), Jennifer Ferdinand (AFSC)
- Action Required:
1. Review the draft 2021 Annual Deployment Plan (ADP)
 2. Review Partial Coverage Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee (PCFMAC) and Trawl EM Committee Reports
 3. Provide recommendations to NMFS for the final 2021 ADP
 4. Provide other recommendations based on the PCFMAC and Trawl EM Committee reports, as necessary

BACKGROUND

The Council is scheduled to review the Draft 2021 Annual Deployment Plan (ADP), and provide recommendations to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for the final 2021 ADP. The ADP explains how NMFS intends to assign fishery observers and electronic monitoring (EM) to groundfish and halibut vessels fishing in the partial coverage observer category in the North Pacific.

NMFS' 2021 recommendation is to continue to utilize a port-based approach for partial coverage deployment, like the redesigned 2020 Deployment Plan which responded to COVID-19 impacts on monitoring. NMFS also recommends deploying into a fixed gear EM stratum and three observer strata defined by gear type (hook-and-line, trawl, and pot). As with 2020, NMFS recommends the same deployment allocation strategy among observer strata of a baseline 15% selection rate in all strata with additional observer days allocated using an optimized strategy focusing on monitoring discarded groundfish, and halibut and Chinook PSC. 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 anticipates lower fee revenues in 2021 but 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.

The Council's [PCFMAC met virtually](#) on September 16th, 2020 to discuss the Draft 2021 ADP and other issues. The PCFMAC report will be posted to this agenda item once it is available.

The Council's [EM Trawl Committee met virtually](#) on September 17th, 2020 to review progress on the current trawl EM program, discuss recommended changes for 2021, and review the draft NMFS Alaska Regional Electronic Technologies Implementation Plan update for 2020-2024. The draft ET Implementation Plan will also be presented to the FMAC for review and comment at their meeting next year. The Committee recommends the Council continue to pursue implementation of a trawl EM program by 2023, and outlines milestones to achieve that goal.