

Electronic Monitoring Workgroup - Minutes

September 8, 2015 meeting, teleconference

Workgroup: Bill Tweit (chair)

Appointed: Dan Falvey (ALFA), Don Lane (NPFA), Howard McElderry (Archipelago Marine Research), Nancy Munro (Saltwater, Inc.), Bernie Burkholder (F/V Northern Endurance), Jeff Stephan (UFMA)

Agency: Dave Colpo (PSMFC), Sam Cunningham (NPFMC), Jane DiCosimo (NMFS NOP), Claude Dykstra (IPHC), Diana Evans (NPFMC), Alisha Falberg (NOAA GC Enforcement), Trent Hartill (ADFG), Bruce Leaman (IPHC), Tom Meyer (NOAA GC), Alicia Miller (NMFS AKR), Jennifer Mondragon (NMFS AKR), Brent Pristas (NOAA OLE), Chris Rilling (NMFS FMA), Kim Rivera (NMFS AKR), Matt Robinson (NPFMC), Farron Wallace (NMFS FMA)

Others attending included: Adam Batty, Kathy Hansen

The Chair opened the meeting with introductions and a discussion of the agenda.

Review of draft 2016 Pre-implementation Plan

The Workgroup walked through the draft 2016 pre-implementation plan as amended at the July Workgroup meeting, and made additional edits to the document. **The Workgroup's recommendations for 2016 are captured in the Draft 2016 EM Pre-implementation Plan, dated 9/16/15**, which will be presented to the Council in October. Specific decision points from that document are not duplicated in these minutes. In addition, the Workgroup also identified the following areas for future discussion relating to the 2016 program:

- resolve how vessels will pre-register for the EM program deployment periods;
- revisit 2015 data review protocols, to see whether changes are required for 2016. The data review subgroup of the EMWG will schedule a meeting to discuss the protocols, and also whether and how subsampling of the video review in 2016 should occur. It may be helpful to evaluate how to expand EM data from observed to unobserved vessels within the EM pool prior to that discussion.

There was also discussion about components of the program that may be appropriate for pre-implementation years, but might not be allowed in a regulated program. These issues need to be addressed in the development of the EM analysis:

- Discuss what options are available when an EM system breaks at sea. NMFS has alerted the EMWG that in a regulated program, vessels may have to stop fishing if the equipment breaks. This may drive program design options, for example in terms of allowing operators to be responsible for their own equipment.
- Monitor how often vessels choose to fish in deployment periods for which they did not pre-register in 2016. This represents a bias in the sampling frame, and the Workgroup needs to discuss options for this scenario.
- Discuss how incentives can be built into the Alaska EM program, given that everyone pays the observer fee, and EM is not a cost savings to the individual. The 2016 vessel scorecard is a starting point for this discussion.

Other EM research

The EMWG also discussed other EM projects for 2016, and relative prioritization. To some extent, this is captured in Section 13 of the Pre-implementation Plan, but other points include:

- Pot research: industry members of the EMWG expressed a strong priority for funding pot research with any remaining funds that may be available after funding the longline 40-57.5 ft vessel pre-implementation plan. There are barriers, however, to funding the existing NPFA/Saltwater pot EM projects with NMFS EM funds in 2016. NMFS is investigating alternative options for 2017. The EMWG as a whole supports the goal of having the pot research sufficiently complete such that analysis of EM on pot gear can be folded into the Council's EM analysis, for implementation in 2018. Within the existing funding constraints, analytical and other support is being offered to the pot research projects in 2015 and 2016.
- Stereo cameras: the EMWG endorsed NMFS' proposal to test the stereo cameras in 2016 on a dedicated group of 3-5 longline vessels 40-57.5 ft, rather than as part of the pre-implementation fleet of 60 vessels. These vessels would also be placed in the EM selection pool, and subject to a zero percent probability of selection for human observer coverage. There was disagreement about how much of the available funding should be spent on stereo camera research, especially if the funding trades off, for example, with expanding EM research on pot vessels (note, however, the funding barriers for 2016).
- E-logbooks: the EMWG has previously discussed testing e-logbooks in the program, but a barrier for fishermen is the IPHC requirement that vessels must still have a paper logbook onboard, thereby requiring either duplication or an onboard printer. ALFA offered to work with IPHC and NMFS to submit a proposed exemption to the IPHC regulations to allow for trial testing on volunteer vessels in 2016.
- Data loggers: the EMWG discussed the utility of using data loggers (PSMFC or other) to capture sensor data when a camera is not onboard, and agreed to revisit the issue before data logger systems are field tested. It may be productive for the conversation to have evaluated the existing field data to see how well the sensors alone are capturing fishing events, and to consider how the data would be used in catch accounting.
- Longline <40 and ≥58 ft: The EMWG continues to support beginning field work on the <40 ft longline fleet, but further development is needed first on a project plan for an appropriate design. An evaluation of the demographic profile of these vessels is an important first step. Given other EMWG priorities with respect to developing the EM analysis, work on an <40 ft fieldwork design may have to wait. The EMWG also acknowledges that fieldwork for the ≥58 ft longline vessels needs to stay on the list, but it is currently a lower priority.

Budget

The EM Workgroup requested a subgroup of agency members and funders to finalize the budget for the 2016 program, consistent with the Workgroup's discussions. The subgroup was directed to 1) understand and accommodate the cost of the 2016 pre-implementation program; 2) decide how much to hold back for a project reserve for 2017; and 3) determine how to distribute any remaining funds among other EM projects. The projects in line for funding are primarily stereo camera work and pot cod work, and perhaps at some lesser level, data loggers and 5 <40 volunteer vessels (with a caveat about needing to identify the fieldwork objective before deploying on those boats). This subgroup met on September 11, 2015, and finalized the budget allocations that are included in Section 14 of the 2016 Pre-implementation Plan. The group also added in a provision for a mid-year budget evaluation, given the potential for variability in the budget estimates resulting from random selection.

Scheduling

The EM Workgroup agreed to hold their next meeting on November 2-3, 2015, in Anchorage. The agenda will include: 1) resolving outstanding discussion items for the 2016 fieldwork, and 2) discussing alternatives and decision points for the EM analysis, including a timeline for individual studies, such as the decision points in the roadmap for using EM data in catch accounting. It was also noted that there may be some limited contract funding available for one such study from a previous NFWF grant.