

**C-5 Observer Annual Deployment Plan**  
**Council Motion**  
**October 14, 2020**

The Council supports using the three gear-based deployment strata (hook-and-line, pot, and trawl) and allocation scheme of 15% plus optimized allocation based on discarded groundfish, halibut PSC, and Chinook salmon PSC for the 2021 Observer Annual Deployment Plan (ADP). Observer coverage rates resulting from this approach and the final budget are expected in the final 2021 ADP in December. The Council also supports:

- maintaining the current coverage/selection rates for vessels carrying electronic monitoring (30% fixed gear; 100% trawl gear)
- due to COVID-19, continuing to deploy observers from select ports throughout Alaska consistent with the revisions to the 2020 ADP
- the ability for NMFS to release a vessel or trip from observer coverage on a case-by-case basis
- the proposed zero selection pool
- the criteria to determine new potential participants in the fixed gear electronic monitoring pool if funding is insufficient to accommodate all new requests

The Council recognizes that COVID-19 has disrupted efforts on several Council priority tasks related to achieving cost efficiencies in the observer program. The Council recommends NMFS develop an abbreviated Annual Report on 2020 deployment and requests an updated timeline for the following analyses related to cost efficiency: 1) integration of electronic monitoring into the determination of baseline observer coverage necessary in fixed gear to meet data gaps, including exploration of existing data sources to provide information on average weights of discards and biological data for stock assessments; 2) re-evaluation of the 'zero selection' pool criteria; and 3) re-evaluation of the bias metrics.