

C-1 Council motion
2023 Observer Annual Report & 2025 Annual Deployment Plan
June 8, 2024

2023 Annual Report

The Council appreciates the 2023 Annual Report on the observer program and recommends the following, in addition to SSC recommendations as practicable:

- Future annual reports should include the cost and number of full coverage observer days in the executive summary.
- Continue efforts to attempt to include data on the amount of catch monitored by electronic monitoring (EM) similarly to data on observed catch.
- Continue to provide a summary of issues highlighted in the previous year's annual report and how they were addressed. The 2023 annual report was informative regarding issues previously identified including EM image quality and EM video review timeliness.
- Given changes to the database used by observers to report potential violations in 2023, the Council supports OLE not including trends over time periods that are not comparable.

2025 Annual Deployment Plan (ADP)

The Council supports the following recommendations for the 2025 ADP:

- For the partial coverage program, use the 2024 proximity allocation method (except for pelagic trawl EM) and the following strata for deployment: (observer, EM fixed gear, EM trawl), Fishery Management Plan areas (BSAI, GOA), and gear type (fixed, trawl)
- For pelagic trawl EM, maintain 100% EM at-sea monitoring and the 33% sampling rate of EM deliveries by shoreside observers
 - Continue to evaluate shoreside sampling priorities to balance observer workloads
 - Work with EM service providers and industry to budget for pelagic trawl EM
 - Modify the ODDS system to include pelagic trawl EM
- Maintain fixed gear EM selection pool of up to 177 vessels. As additional funds are available, increase the number of fixed gear vessels in the EM selection pool up to 200. If needed, prioritize placement in the EM selection pool based on vessel size, fishing effort, minimizing data gaps, and cost efficiency. Remove vessels with repeated problems causing data loss from the EM pool.
- Improve EM video review times:
 - NMFS collaborate with PSMFC to establish a video review selection rate and review strategy to improve EM video review times to result in the most useful information for the most number of trips for a given cost
 - NMFS work with the Partial Coverage Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee to develop prioritization rules that can be used to allocate review effort to the fisheries, gear types, times, and areas most dependent on EM data
 - NMFS conduct an assessment of any management impacts of delayed/missing fixed-gear EM data
- To reduce temporal bias resulting from trip cancellations, NMFS work with the Partial Coverage Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee to develop an ODDS trip cancellation policy that will not

significantly impede industry, affords adequate time to deploy an observer, and reduces impacts to coverage rates and non-random monitoring

Funding delays

The Council recommends sending a letter to NOAA expressing concern with delays in the transfer of observer fee revenue, cost recovery funds, and pelagic trawl EM start-up funds to AFSC and NMFS due to the new Commerce Department financial system. The letter should also express concern with the 2022 and 2023 sequestered portion of the observer fees not yet being transferred and available for observer deployment.