2025 Annual Report on the North Pacific Observer Program and Other NMFS Updates

North Pacific Fishery Management Council's

Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee

May 18, 2026

Chapters 1 & 2

Introduction and
Fees and Budget
Lisa Thompson

Overview - Observer Effort

- **258** individual observers were trained, briefed, and equipped for deployment to vessels and processing facilities operating in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries
  - 86 new observers; 172 experienced observers
- Observers collected data onboard **203** vessels and at **11** processing facilities for a total of **25,891** observer days
  - 23,884 full coverage; 2,007 partial coverage

Overview - EM Effort

- **176** vessels approved for the 2025 fixed-gear EM pool
  - 125 of these vessels submitted a VMP
- **137** selected fixed-gear trips for EM coverage
  - **123** fixed-gear EM trips reviewed
  - **57** longline and 66 pot trips reviewed
  - **14** trips were not reviewed by the end of the year
- **106** trawl vessels using pelagic gear participated in the first year of the regulated trawl EM program (full and partial coverage)
  - **2,072** trips reviewed (74%, as of April 22, 2026)

Amount of Catch Monitored – Pelagic Trawl

- For the BSAI and GOA combined, **89.9%** of pelagic trawl catch was on trips in the full coverage category and **10.1%**was on trips in partial coverage

- All partial coverage trips were in the GOA and **83.6%** of their catch was monitored either by an at-sea or shoreside observer

- The EM program for BSAI & GOA catcher vessels using pelagic trawl for pollock became a regulated program in 2025
  - 99.9% of EM shoreside deliveries monitored

Amount of Catch Monitored – Non-Pelagic Trawl

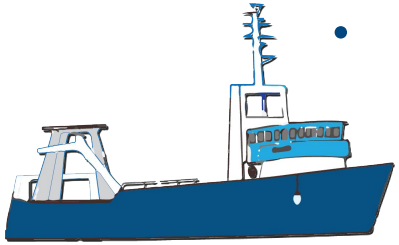
For the BSAI and GOA combined, **95.9%** of non-pelagic trawl catch was on trips in the full coverage category and **4.1%** was on trips in partial coverage

- Partial coverage trips occurred in both the BSAI and GOA with **42.7%** and **13.4%** of their catch monitored, respectively

Observer Cost - Full Coverage

The total invoiced amount for full coverage observer days in 2025 was $10,701,753 for 23,789 invoiced days

- Invoiced days differ from deployment days – the latter includes days for which the observer provider did not charge yet the observer was deployed
- Average cost per invoiced day was $450
- Average invoiced cost includes daily rate per observer day, transportation, and all other billed expenses
- Total invoiced costs decreased in 2025 from 2024
    - Invoiced cost decreased by 1.9%
    - Invoiced days decreased by 11.7%



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Electronic Monitoring - Full Coverage

- EM is used to supplement observer coverage in the following full coverage fisheries:
  - Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands non-pollock trawl catcher/processors
    - Additional EM required on these vessels if they are participating in deck sorting of Pacific halibut
  - Bering Sea pollock catcher/processors and motherships
  - Central Gulf of Alaska rockfish trawl catcher/processors
  - BSAI Pacific cod longline catcher/processors
- Vessels act as their own EM providers or arrange this service with a private company
- NMFS does not collect any cost information associated with these EM programs and costs incurred by the industry are not included in full coverage cost reports

Electronic Monitoring - Full Coverage

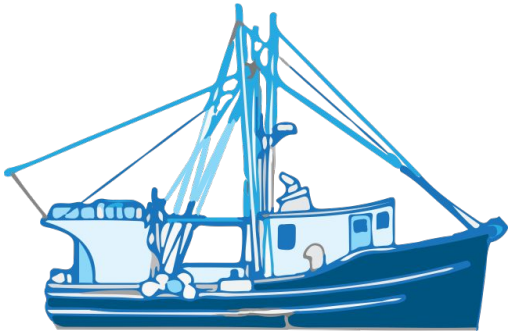
In 2025 - Trawl EM became a regulated program.

- Shoreside processors now have observers to monitor the offloads from catcher vessels carrying EM systems. These costs are included in the “full coverage” invoices.
- The Alaska Regional Office is now collecting a full coverage EM Review Fee from processors - to cover the EM Video Review costs.

Observer Cost – Partial Coverage

Total expenditures for partial coverage observer deployments was $2,481,100 for 1551 invoiced days

- Average cost of $1,600 per invoiced day
- Cost is inclusive of daily rate; reimbursable travel costs; non-deployed day costs (training, debriefing, and running the ODDS Help Desk for both observer and EM deployments)



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Electronic Monitoring - Partial Coverage

- **Partial coverage fees** support the EM operational costs including project coordination by EM vendors and image reviewers; data review, processing and analysis; equipment services; and field technical services, and shoreside observers (Trawl EM)
- **External funding**: $2M Community Directed Spending to replace aging hardware and to outfit new EM vessels
- Expenditures for **fixed gear** EM deployments totaled $1,500,643
- Expenditures for **Trawl** EM deployments totaled $1,038,972

Chapter 3

Deployment Performance Review

Geoff Mayhew

Changes Since 2024 ADP

- No changes to deployment design of at-sea observers and EM
- First year of regulated trawl EM
  - Changes from the EFP:
    - GOA: ⅓ → all shoreside deliveries monitored by observers
    - All trips fishing pollock exclusively with pelagic gear must be in EM, any trips fishing non-pelagic gear must be in at-sea observer strata (no opt-out)
- ODDS logging for trips in at-sea observer strata
  - No more cancellations by vessel users
  - Next trip in queue in inherits monitoring (not next trip logged)

2025 Deployment Strata

Full coverage:

1. *FULL* - Trips taken by vessels required to have, or opted into, full observer coverage;
2. *EM TRW BSAI* - Trips in the trawl EM stratum harvesting pollock with pelagic gear in the BSAI

Partial observer coverage:

3. *OB FIXED BSAI* - Trips using hook-and-line and/or pot gear fishing in the BSAI
4. *OB FIXED GOA* - Trips using hook-and-line and/or pot gear fishing in the GOA
5. *OB TRW BSAI* - Trips using trawl gear fishing in the BSAI
6. *OB TRW GOA* - Trips using trawl gear fishing in the GOA

Partial coverage EM:

7. *EM FIXED BSAI* - Trips by vessels in the EM pool and fished with hook-and-line gear
8. *EM FIXED GOA* - Trips by vessels in the EM pool and fished with pot gear
9. *EM TRW GOA* - Trips in the trawl EM stratum harvesting pollock with pelagic gear in the GOA

Zero coverage:

10. *ZERO* - Trips by jig vessels and vessels under 40 ft LOA

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Deployment Performance Scorecard

Category	Metric	Score	Notes
Budget	Dollars Spent	=	
	Days Monitored	<	Fewer days monitored than expected
Monitoring Rates	ODDS selection	6/6	
	ODDS over time	6/6	
	Realized Rates	8/10	*EM FIXED GOA, EM TRW GOA*
Sample Quality	Temporal	4/6	*EM FIXED GOA, EM FIXED BSAI*
	Spatial	6/6	
	Neighborhood Index - Realized	6/6	
	Neighborhood Index - Programmed	5/6	*EM FIXED GOA*
Monitoring Effects	Various	5/6	*OB FIXED GOA*

Partial Coverage Monitoring Costs (**Table 3-1**)

	Fee Funds					
Partial coverage monitoring pool	Budget	Actual Cost	Difference		External Funds	Total Cost
At-sea Observer	$2,314,000	$2,205683	-$108,318	-4.68%	$0	$2,205,683
EM Fixed-Gear	$964,000	$1,014,760	$50,760	5.27%	$485,883	$1,500,643
EM Trawl GOA	$911,000	$819,033	-$91,967	-10.10%	$219,939	$1,038,972
Total	**$4,189,000**	**$4,039,476**	**-$149,524**	**-3.57%**	**$705,822**	**$4,745,298**

- Total fee-based expenditures matched closely with the budget: **underspent by 3.6%**
- Note that with the addition of EM TRW GOA in 2025, the budget allocated to At-sea Observer and EM Fixed-Gear were reduced relative to 2024, hence why monitoring rates were lower this year.
- **New to our cost reporting**: Additional monitoring costs supported by external funds

Partial Coverage Effort and Monitored Days (excerpt from **Table 3-2**)

Partial coverage monitoring pool	Total Trips (*N*)				Monitored/Reviewed Days (*d*)			
	Predicted	Realized	Difference		Predicted	Realized	Difference	
At-sea Observer	2,405	2,624	219	9.1%	1,127	827	-300	-26.7%
EM Fixed-Gear	955	987	32	3.4%	733	619	-114	-15.6%
EM Trawl GOA	926	956	30	3.2%	2.989	2,255	-734	-24.6%
Total	**4,286**	**4,567**	**281**	**6.6%**	**4,849**	**3,701**	**-1,128**	**-23.7%**

- Fishing effort by **number of trips (*N*)** was **slightly higher** than predicted for all three pools
- Number of **monitored days (*d*)** was **lower** than predicted for all three pools
- This indicates **fishing duration** (days per trip) was **overestimated** – This was identified and addressed for the 2026 Final ADP. More on this later regarding **monitoring effects**.
- **121.2** base at-sea observer days were unused at end of contract year in September 2025

Excerpt from **Table 3-6.** -- Number of total vessels, total trips, and sampled trips for f**ull coverage strata** in 2025

				Coverage		
Strata	Vessels	Trips/ deliveries	Sampled Trips/deliveries	Expected	Realized	Meets expected?
Full	91	969	969	100.0	100.00	Yes
EM TRW BSAI	63	1,871	1,871	100.0	100.00	Yes

Excerpt from **Table 3-6. --** Number of total vessels, total trips, and sampled trips for **partial coverage strata** in 2025

Strata	Vessels	Total trips/ deliveries	Sampled Trips/deliveries	Coverage		Meets expected?
				Expected	Realized	
OB FIXED BSAI	47	282	50	19.83	17.73	Yes
OB FIXED GOA	302	1,972	114	6.16	5.78	Yes
OB TRW BSAI	2	36	15	40.39	41.67	Yes
OB TRW GOA	30	334	53	15.45	15.87	Yes
EM FIXED BSAI	10	90	48	47.91	53.33	Yes
EM FIXED GOA	109	897	80	11.11	8.92	No - Lower
EM TRW GOA	43	962	961	100.00	99.90	No - Lower

Excerpt from **Table 3-5**. – ODDS Logged trips in each partial coverage stratum in 2025

Strata	Trip Disposition	Selected Trips	Total Trips	Actual (%)	Programmed (%)	p-value
OB FIXED BSAI	Initial selection	57	323	17.65	19.83	0.364
	Final	49	301	16.28	19.83	0.129
OB FIXED GOA	Initial selection	123	2,014	6.11	6.16	0.963
	Final	110	1,908	5.77	6.16	0.505
OB TRW BSAI	Initial selection	16	38	42.11	40.39	0.869
	Final	15	35	42.86	40.39	0.864
OB TRW GOA	Initial selection	58	406	14.29	15.45	0.583
	Final	53	330	16.06	15.45	0.761
EM FIXED BSAI	Initial selection	50	99	50.51	47.91	0.616
	Final	46	91	50.55	47.91	0.675
EM FIXED GOA	Initial selection	84	899	9.34	11.11	**0.100**
	Final	84	871	9.64	11.11	0.178

2025 ODDS Changes Update: Success

- 2023/2024 had very high cancellation rates within at-sea observer strata, especially for selected trips. Vessels delayed monitoring.
- **Response: In 2025, changed trip logging in at-sea observer strata:**
  - No more cancellations by vessel users
  - Next trip in queue in inherits monitoring (not next trip logged)
- Summarised from **Tables 3-3** and **3-4**. Cancellation rates halved, fewer inherits, and inherits that did occur didn't delay monitoring.

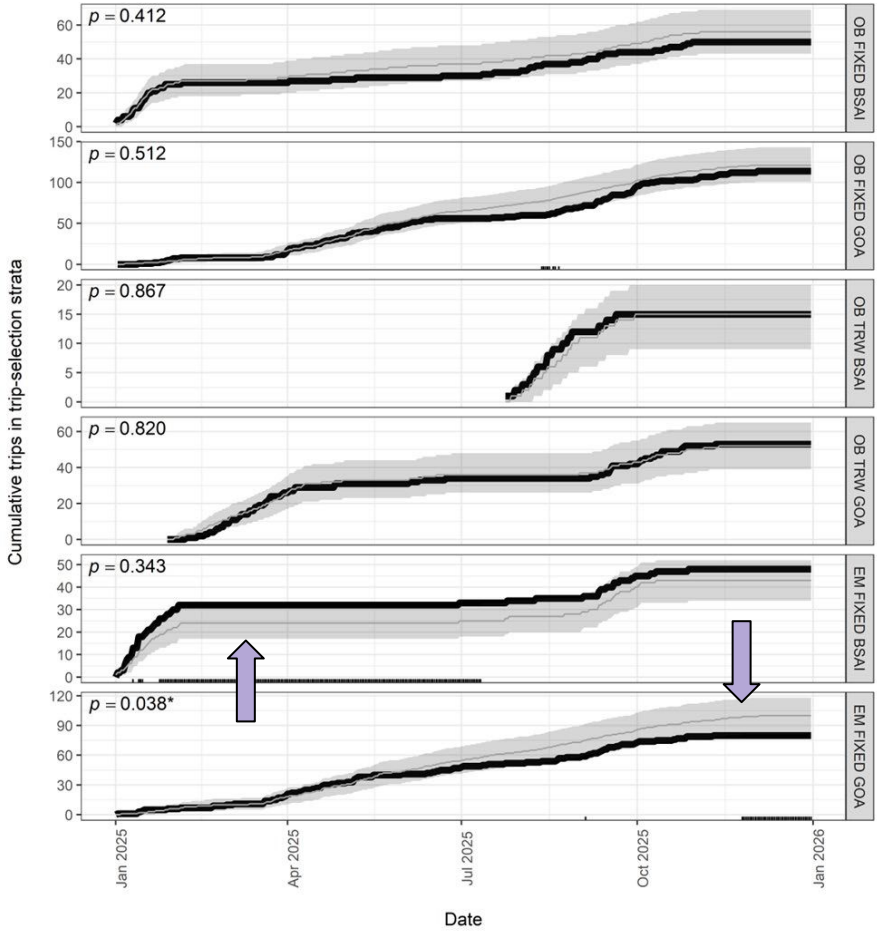
Year	Selected and canceled		Not selected and canceled		Total canceled by users	Trips monitored via inheritance	
2024	117	19.5%	147	6.7%	264	57	10.4%
2025	27	10.3%	96	3.9%	123	11	4.8%

Combination of **Tables 3-3** and **3-4**: ODDS Trip cancellations, waivers, and inherits in 2025

Strata	Selection	Logged	Canceled by			Selected Completed Trips			
			System	User		Total	Waived		% Inherited
OB FIXED BSAI	No	266	8	9	**3.5** %				
	Yes (Random)	57	2	4	**7.3** %	51	3	5.8%	**2.0** %
	Yes (Inherit)	1	0	0	**0.0** %	1	0		
OB FIXED GOA	No	1,891	76	21	**1.2** %				
	Yes (Random)	123	0	11	**8.9** %	112	4	1.8%	**1.8** %
	Yes (Inherit)	2	0	0	**0.0** %	2	0		
OB TRW BSAI	No	22	3	0	**0.0** %				
	Yes (Random)	16	0	0	**0.0** %	16	1	0.0%	**0.0** %
	Yes (Inherit)	0	0	0	**0.0** %	0	0		
OB TRW GOA	No	348	6	66	**19.3** %				
	Yes (Random)	58	0	12	**20.7** %	46	1	15.1%	**15.1** %
	Yes (Inherit)	8	0	0	**0.0** %	8	0		
EM FIXED BSAI	No	49	1	4	8.3 %				
	Yes (Random)	50	0	3	6.0 %	47	1	0.0%	1.6
	Yes (Inherit)	1	0	0	0.0 %	0	0		
EM FIXED GOA	No	815	20	11	1.4 %				
	Yes (Random)	84	1	34	4.8 %	79	3	9.5%	2.7
	Yes (Inherit)	9	0	1	11.1 %	8	0		

Sample Quality: Figure 3-3: Temporal patterns in sampling

- **When** trips were monitored
  - Observed OR
  - EM with review completed
- Rates for monitoring within the **at-sea observer strata** were **within their expected ranges** throughout the year
- ***EM FIXED BSAI*** started off high
- ***EM FIXED GOA*** fell **below** and remained low.
  - Initially low selection rate
    + Waivers
    + Hard drives not received



Sample Quality: Figure 3-4: Spatial patterns in sampling

- **No obvious issues** with the spatial distribution of monitoring coverage.
  - Some differences are expected, but no large-scale patterns were identified
  - Comparing with last year, no persistent patterns were identified

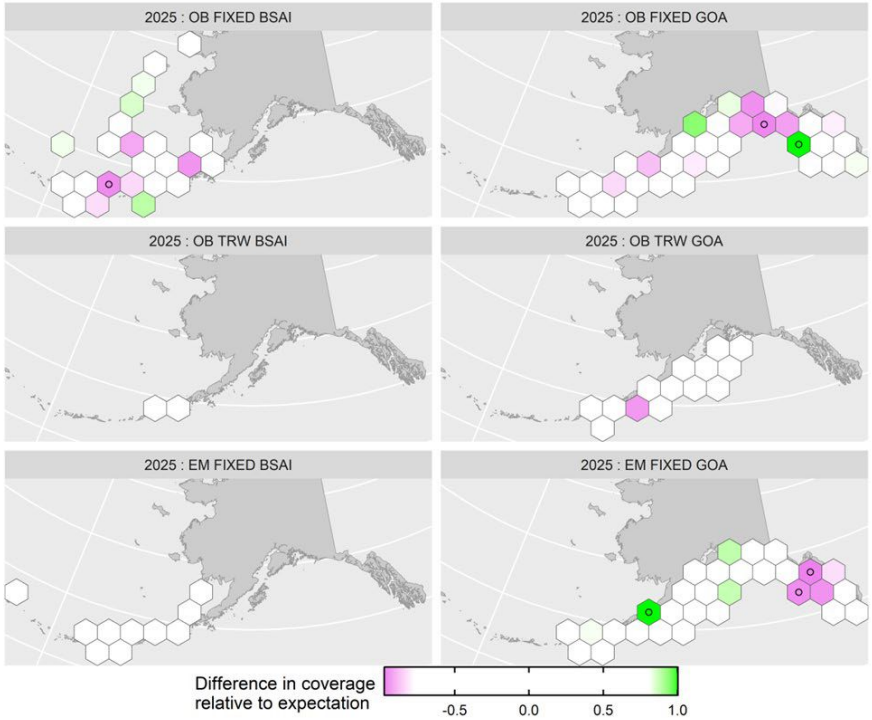
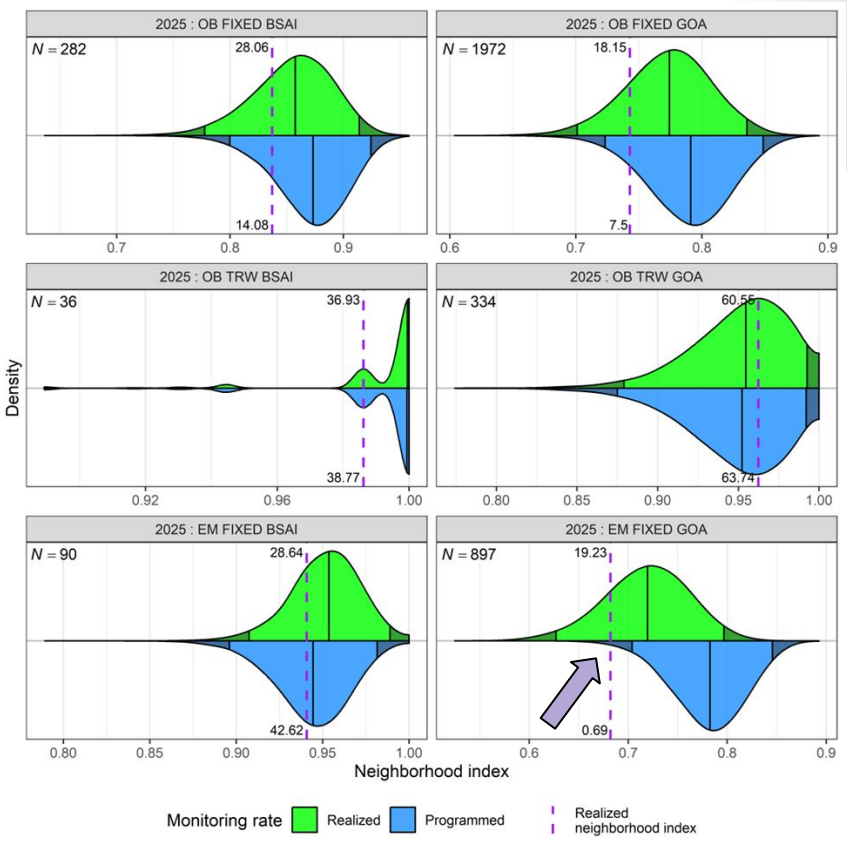


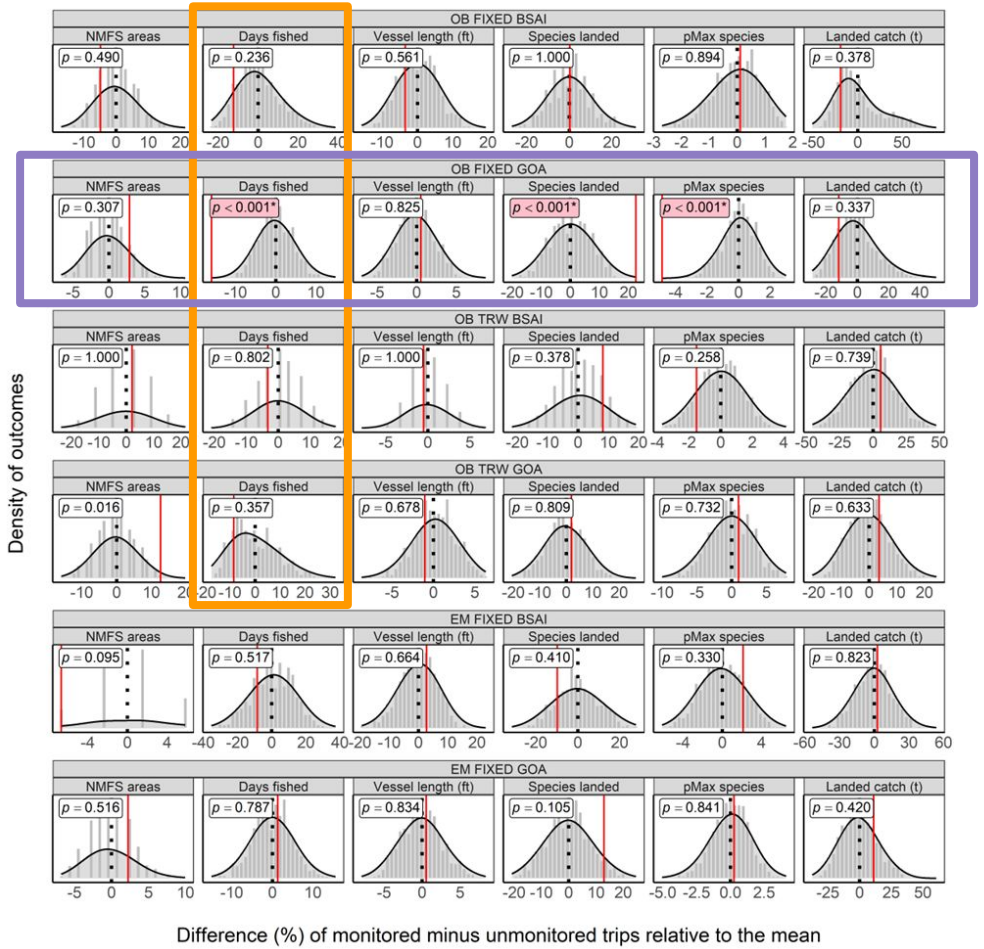
Figure 3-5: Spatiotemporal distribution of coverage

- **Neighborhood indices**: proportion of trips monitored or neighboring a monitored trip in space and time
- **Most strata achieved** proximity indices expected by the realized monitoring rates (green) and the rates planned by the ADP (blue)
- ***EM FIXED GOA*** had a **lower** index than expected by the ADP rates
  - Realized rates that were lower than planned, so fewer monitored trips led to less spatiotemporal coverage



Sample Quality: Figure 3-6 – Monitoring Effects

- Were monitored trips different from unmonitored trips?
- 5/6 strata had **no significant differences** in any metric
- ***OB FIXED GOA*** trips were **shorter**, had **more species**, and a **lower dominance** of the most common species when observed versus unobserved.
- Generally, observed strata had **shorter trip durations** when monitored. Also seen in 2024. This contributed to the overestimation of monitored trip durations in 2025



Figures 3-7 and 3-8. – Distributions of data timeliness and review timeliness

Data timeliness: Time between the end of a delivery and the availability of monitoring data for catch accounting.

- Due to a NMFS database coding error, there was a delay in the receipt of reviewed data by PSMFC, so data timeliness for the fixed-gear EM strata was inflated (Figure 3-3).
- Figure 3-4 provides the **review timeliness** (end of delivery to completion of review). Review times were **the same or less** than in 2024.

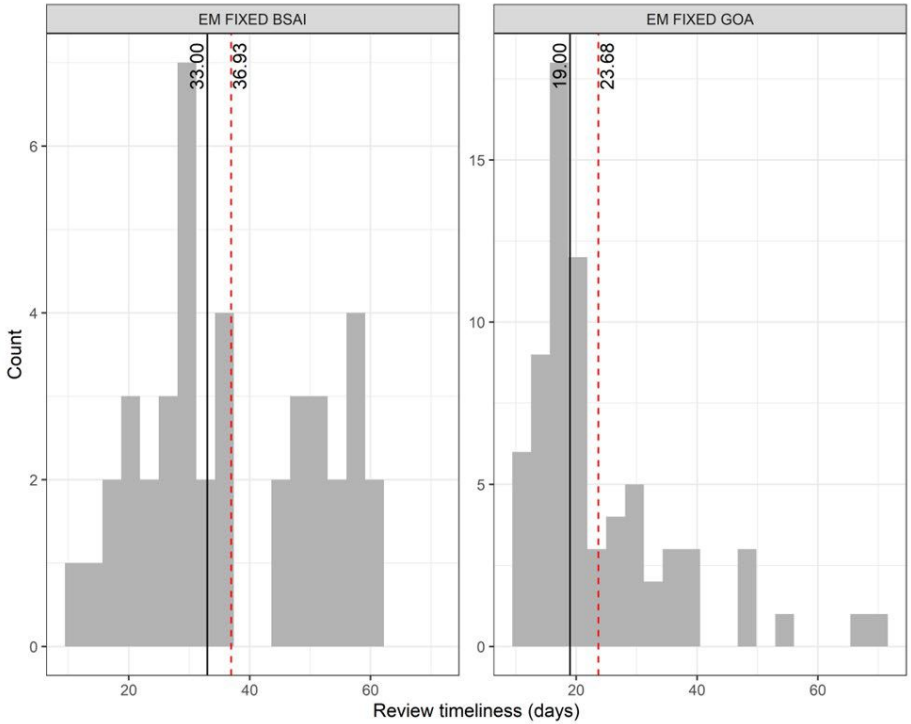


Figure 3-4. – Distributions of **review timeliness** in the *EM FIXED* strata

Chapter 4

Descriptive Information

Geoff Mayhew

Table 4-3. – Monitored catch[1] (Mon., metric tons), total catch, and percent monitored (%) of groundfish and halibut retained and discarded in the groundfish and halibut fisheries in 2025 in the **Gulf of Alaska**. Empty cells indicate that no catch occurred.

		Catcher/Processor			Catcher vessel: Partial Observer			Catcher vessel: Partial EM			Catcher vessel: Rockfish program			Gear total		
Gear[2]	**Catch**	**Mon.**	**Total**	**%**	**Mon.**	**Total**	**%**	**Mon.**	**Total**	**%**	**Mon.**	**Total**	**%**	**Mon.**	**Total**	**%**
HAL	**Retained**	1,778	1,877	**95%**	229	8,492	**3%**	335	3,458	**10%**				2,342	13,827	**17%**
	Discard	505	528	**96%**	165	8,478	**2%**	350	4,193	**8%**				1,020	13,199	**8%**
Jig	**Retained**				0	312	**0%**							0	312	**0%**
	Discard															
NPT	**Retained**	28,407	28,407	**100%**	1,781	13,321	**13%**				2,441	2,441	**100%**	32,628	44,168	**74%**
	Discard	2,046	2,046	**100%**	247	1,866	**13%**				174	174	**100%**	2,468	4,086	**60%**
Pot	**Retained**	360	462	**78%**	834	14,160	**6%**	558	5,656	**10%**				1,753	20,277	**9%**
	Discard	15	29	**51%**	17	353	**5%**	31	226	**14%**				63	608	**10%**
PTR	**Retained**	454	454	**100%**	4,634	26,024	**18%**	107,028	107,138	**>99%**	12,591	12,591	**100%**	124,706	146,207	**85%**
	Discard	64	64	**100%**	126	686	**18%**	434	434	**100%**	78	78	**100%**	702	1,261	**56%**

[1] Monitored reflects either trips with an observer, EM fixed gear trips for which some video was reviewed, or EM trawl trips where observers sampled shoreside. EM trawl trips also require 100% at-sea video monitoring for compliance with maximized retention requirements, but that monitoring is not reflected in this table.
[2] The gears fished are hook-and-line (HAL), jig, non-pelagic trawl (NPT), pot, and pelagic trawl (PTR).

Table 4-4. – Monitored catch[1] (Mon., metric tons), total catch, and percent monitored (%) of groundfish and halibut retained and discarded in the groundfish and halibut fisheries in 2025 in the **Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands**. Empty cells indicate that no catch occurred.

		Catcher/Processor			Mothership			Catcher vessel: Partial			Catcher vessel: Full			Gear total		
Gear	**Catch**	**Mon**	**Total**	**%**	**Mon**	**Total**	**%**	**Mon**	**Total**	**%**	**Mon**	**Total**	**%**	**Mon**	**Total**	**%**
Hook and Line	**Ret**	76,557	76,557	**100%**				83	483	**17%**				76,690	77,137	**99%**
	Dis	16,346	16,346	**100%**				40	200	**20%**				16,415	16,605	**99%**
Jig	**Ret**															
	Dis															
Non-Pelagic Trawl	**Ret**	308,096	308,096	**100%**	14,077	14,077	**100%**	549	1,276	**43%**	17,505	17,505	**100%**	340,226	340,954	**>99%**
	Dis	16,640	16,640	**100%**	682	682	**100%**	86	212	**41%**	767	767	**100%**	18,175	18,300	**99%**
Pot	**Ret**	2,860	2,860	**100%**				1,621	11,196	**14%**				6,406	17,618	**36%**
	Dis	57	57	**100%**				11	109	**10%**				113	292	**39%**
Pelagic Trawl	**Ret**	622,024	622,024	**100%**							562,126	562,126	**100%**	1,184,150	1,184,150	**100%**
	Dis	943	943	**100%**							551	551	**100%**	1,494	1,494	**100%**

[1] Monitored reflects either trips with an observer, EM fixed gear trips for which some video was reviewed, or EM trawl trips where observers sampled shoreside. EM trawl trips also require 100% at-sea video monitoring for compliance with maximized retention requirements, but that monitoring is not reflected in this table.

Fixed-Gear EM Image Quality

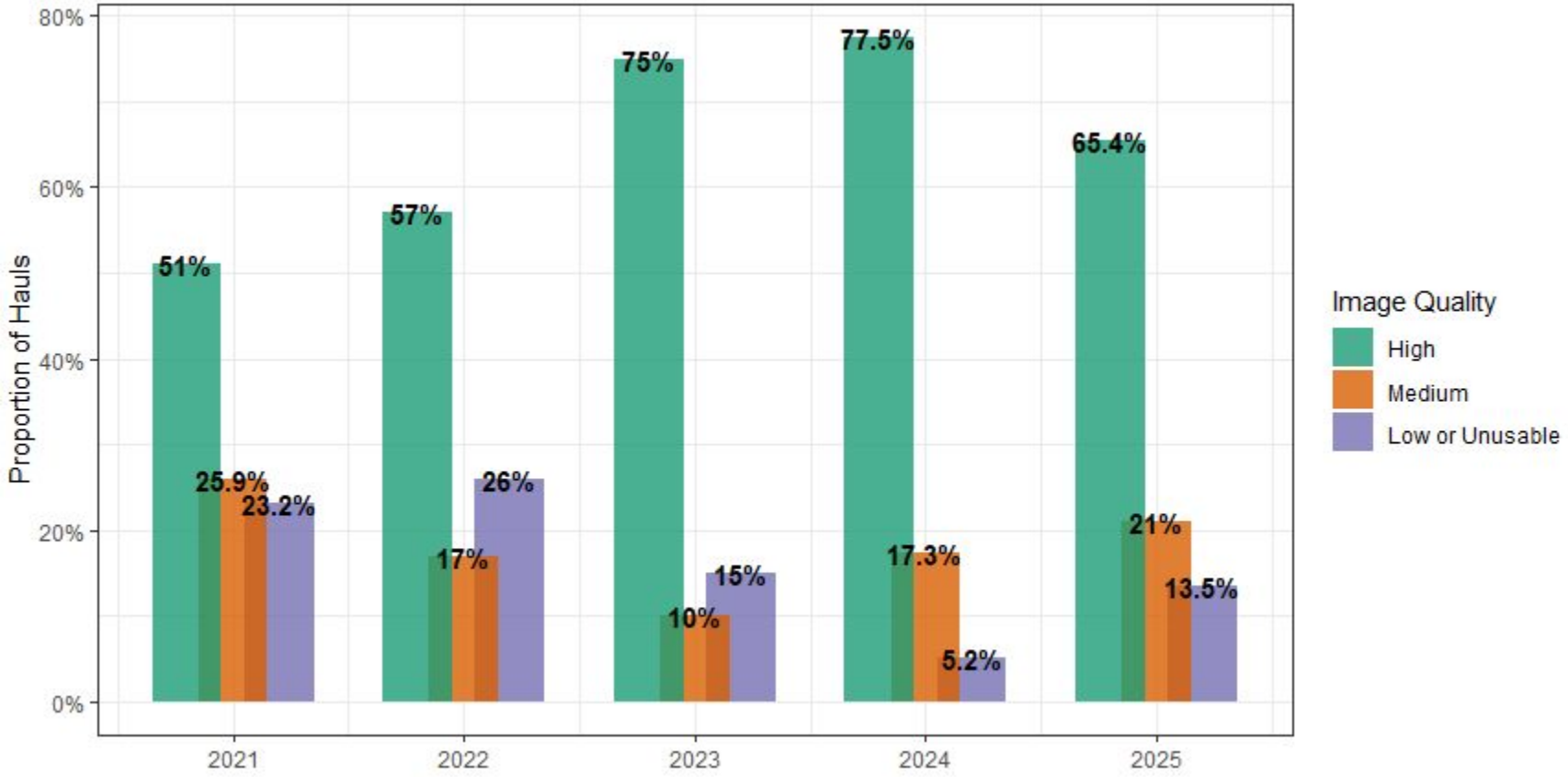
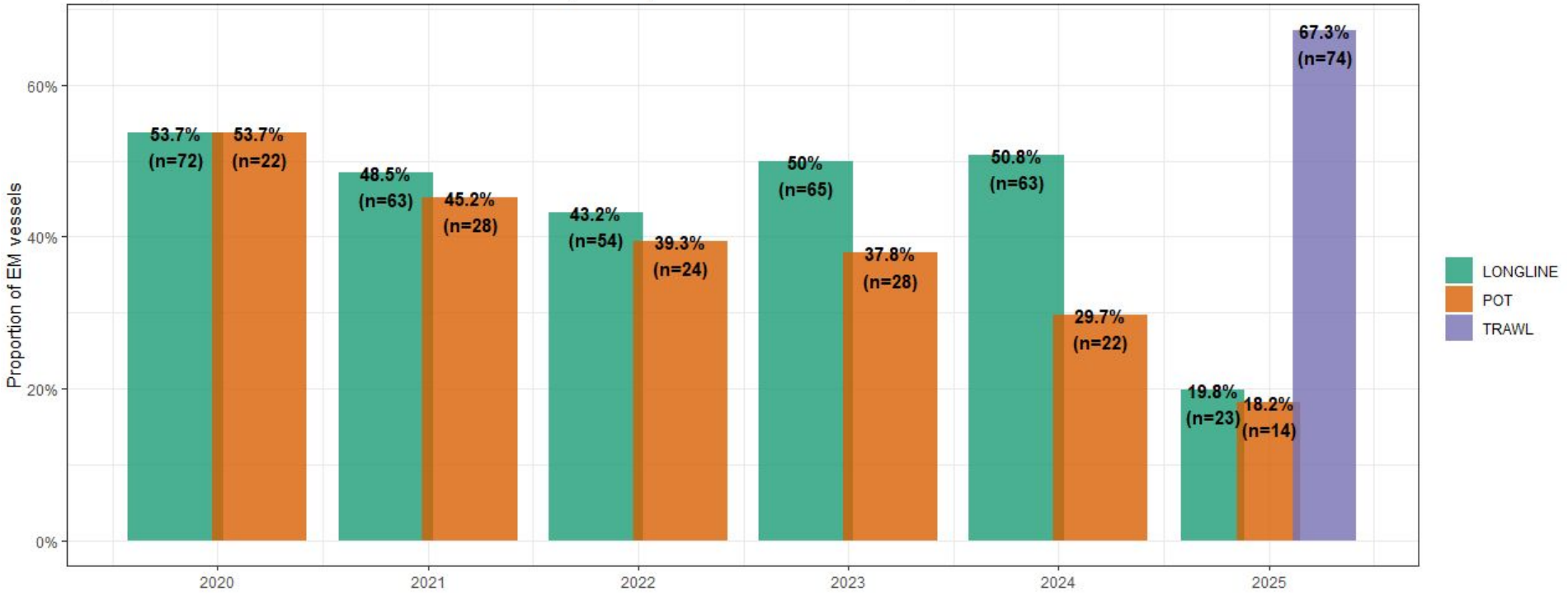


Figure 4-2 - Proportion of EM Vessels with at least 1 issue reported by video reviewers



Chapter 5

Compliance and Enforcement

Jaclyn Smith

Annual Observer Operation

- The 2025 Annual A-Season Observer Operation took place in Dutch Harbor.
- The operation focused on investigations involving sexual assault/sexual harassment of observers, hostile work environment, general health and safety of observers, interference/sample biasing, and failure to abide by catcher operational requirements.
- OLE collaborated with WVPR, FMA, and AWT during this operation.

OLE Highest Priorities

- The safety and security of observers continues to be OLE's highest priority.
- Under the "Observer Safety and Work Environment" category, subcategories "Food and Accommodations", "Safety", and Hostile Work Environment" saw rates of 2.42%, 1.23%, and 1.17% of observer days with a potential violation.
- Under the "Gear/Equipment Requirements" category, subcategory "Observer Sample Station" had a rate of 5.24% of observer trips with a potential violation.

Notable Rate for All Other Statements

- The highest rate for all other statement categories/subcategories was in the "Operational Requirements" category where nearly 15% (14.6 %) of observer-reported offloads had reports of "CMCP" subcategory potential violations (Figure 5-3).
    - "CMCP" potential violations occurred on 11.74% of offloads reported in the BSAI at Full Coverage processing plants, while 27.32% of offloads at GOA partial coverage processing plants were reported for potential "CMCP" violations (Figure 5-4).
- High rates were also reported in the "False Reporting" subcategory (3.32% of offloads), the "Marine Mammal" subcategory (2.26% of reported marine mammal interactions), the "GOA Salmon Bycatch" subcategory (2.01% of offloads), and the "Catch Weighing" subcategory (1.51% of hauls).

Trends Over Time

- Database used by observers to report potential violations was updated in July 2023
- Fully implemented in 2024; trends over time cover 2024 to 2025.
- Refer to Figures 5-5 and 5-6 for the two year trend; coming years will provide a better understanding of trends in potential violations.
- The most noticeable increase in in Gear/Equipment Requirements with “trips” as the occurrence unit.

Adapted from Table 5-3. -- Investigative Status of Statements

Highest Priority Statements	Investigative Statuses		
Observer Safety and Work Environment	**Total # of Statements: 69**	Transferred to another agency: 7 Summary Settlement: 0 Written Warning: 4 Compliance Assistance: 9	Closed, no additional info: 1 Lack of evidence: 5 Lack of resources: 0 No violation: 16
	Investigation continues: 27		
Interference with Duties	**Total # of Statements: 40**	Transferred to another agency: 0 Summary Settlement: 1 Written Warning: 0 Compliance Assistance: 7	Closed, no additional info: 2 Lack of evidence: 4 Lack of resources: 0 No violation: 7
	Investigation continues: 19		
Operational Requirements And Gear/ Equipment Requirements	**Total # of Statements: 65**	Transferred to another agency: 1 Summary Settlement: 3 Written Warning: 2 Compliance Assistance: 13	Closed, no additional info: 5 Lack of evidence: 6 Lack of resources: 3 No violation: 12
	Investigation continues: 20		

Cooperative Relationships

- Prior to the start of the 2025 fishing year, OLE held several individual outreach meetings with various vessel companies. OLE also provided multiple Ensuring a Safe Work Environment for Observers training sessions. These meetings and sessions were completely voluntary and highly encouraged. There were fewer meetings in 2025 than in 2024.
- In 2025, there were 50 statements submitted that resulted in compliance assistance provided rather than the issuance of a formal enforcement action. Compliance assistance was found to be acceptable due to several mitigating factors such as single isolated incidents with no priors, self identification of the potential violations and immediate steps to resolve, and collaborative efforts to immediately resolve the issues when notified by an observer.

Chapter 6

NMFS Recommendations
Lisa Thompson

NMFS Recommendations for 2027 Draft Annual Deployment Plan

Deployment Design

- Continue proximity allocation method for the partial coverage strata (except for trawl EM)
  - For the Trawl EM stratum in the BSAI, all offloads from Trawl EM trips are to be sampled for salmon, halibut, and biological data, In the GOA, NMFS recommends maintaining the sampling rate where all EM deliveries are monitored for salmon and halibut PSC and 33% are sampled by shoreside fishery observers for biological data.
  - The agency will continue to monitor the complete sorting and accounting of salmon, with specific attention in the Western GOA during the B Season and likely develop additional 10 mechanisms, such as CMCP modifications, for ensuring accuracy of salmon accounting in 2028.
- Implement any suggested changes to the ADP after the Center for Independent Experts (CIE) Review in June of 2026.

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NMFS Recommendations for 2027 Draft Annual Deployment Plan

- Maintain current stratification based on monitoring method (Observer, EM Fixed Gear, EM Trawl), Fishery Management Plan (BSAI, GOA), and gear type (Fixed, Trawl):
  - Observed fixed gear trips in the GOA (*OB FIXED GOA*)
  - Observed fixed gear trips in the BSAI (*OB FIXED BSAI*)
  - Observed trawl gear trips in the GOA (*OB TRW GOA*)
  - Observed trawl gear trips in the BSAI (*OB TRW BSAI*)
  - EM fixed gear trips in the GOA (*EM FIXED GOA*)
  - EM fixed gear trips in the BSAI (*EM FIXED BSAI*)
  - EM trawl gear deliveries in the GOA (*EM TRW GOA*)
  - Zero-coverage (under 40, jig, troll gear)

NMFS Recommendations for 2027 Draft Annual Deployment Plan

Improve trip closing in ODDS for 2027.

- Automated reminders to close or cancel pending trips that have surpassed planned fishing dates.
- NMFS is considering requiring a landing report ID, trips to be closed in the order they were logged, and/or other information to close fixed-gear strata trips to improve record keeping.

NMFS Recommendations for 2027 Draft Annual Deployment Plan

EM Video Review

- Continued collaboration with PSMFC to monitor video review progress and enable a review strategy that will result in EM video review times that result in the most useful information for the most number of trips for a given cost.

- Continued collaboration with PSMFC to develop specific prioritization rules that can be used to allocate review effort to the fisheries, gear types, times and areas that are the most dependent on EM data for management needs.

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NMFS Recommendations for 2027 Draft Annual Deployment Plan

Fixed-Gear EM

- Maintain an EM selection pool composed of up to 176 fixed gear vessels, which would maintain the size of the EM pool from 2026.
- Prioritize placement in the EM selection pool based on vessel size, fishing effort, minimizing data gaps, and cost efficiency
- For vessel operators with repeated problem causing data loss, NMFS may disapprove Vessel Monitoring Plans and the vessel may be removed from the EM pool
- The agency will continue to review the cost effectiveness of individual EM vessels and criteria to remove vessels from the fixed-gear EM pool or deny vessels from the trawl EM category. Criteria for continued inclusion in these EM programs will be specified in the 2027 ADP.

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NMFS Recommendations for 2027 Draft Annual Deployment Plan

EM Development

- Continue to collaborate with industry partners on EM development and cost efficiency projects
- Work with FMAC and PCMAC to develop priorities and potential grant proposals to National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- For budget planning during the development of the Annual Deployment Plan, NMFS needs advance notice by processing plants accepting trawl EM pollock deliveries from catcher vessels of their needs for partial coverage observers in the upcoming fishing year.
    - Regulations at 50 CFR 679.51(b)(3)(i) **require notice by November 1** of the year prior to the year in which they intend to receive deliveries from catcher vessels or tender vessels in the trawl EM category

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Acknowledgements

Thank you to the AFSC, AKRO, and PSMFC staff who worked on the 2025 Annual Report and the 2026 Annual Deployment Plan.

Thank you to the observers, observer providers, captains, crew members, EM providers, video reviewers, and agency staff who make fishery-dependent data collection possible.

Other NMFS Updates

NOAA FISHERIES

Budget Update

2025 Challenges

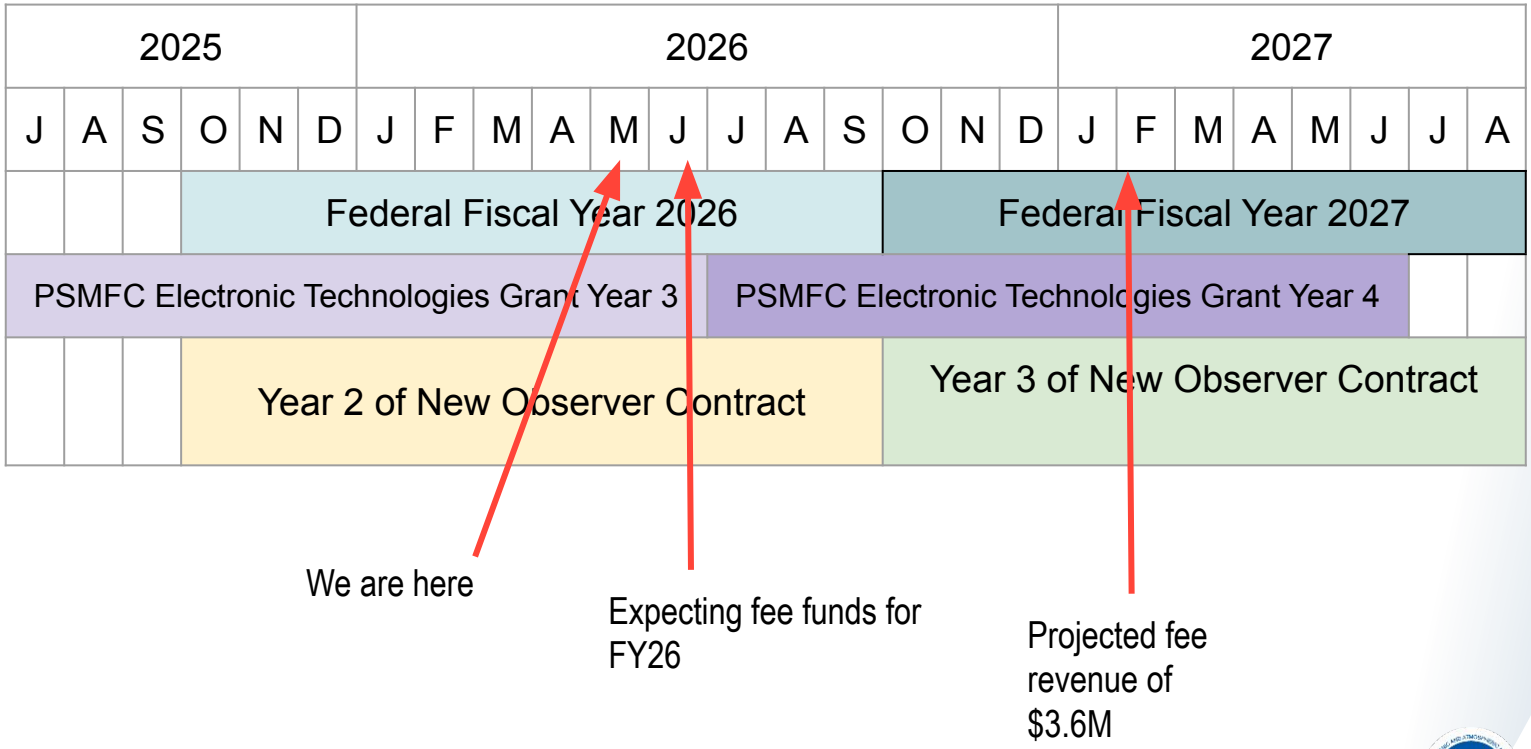
- NOAA Fisheries transitioned to a new financial system in 2024, new processes are still being established
- Enacted federal allocations started to arrive in FMA mid-April, still waiting on some of the remaining Observer Fee and FY24-25 of Sequestration.
- Contracts and grants still require higher-level approvals, leading to longer process times.

Budget Update

Expected Funding Available for Partial Coverage

2026 Observer Fee (revenue generated from 2025 landings)	$2.975M
2023 Sequestered Observer Fee	$229,120
2024 Sequestered Observer Fee	$242,047
2025 Carry Over Observer Fee	$1,682,193
Deobligation from past contract	$555,393

Fishing Year, Fiscal Year, Grant Year, and Contract Year



2026 Observer Data Collection Changes

- Runway Alaska -FMA Photo project.
  - FMA Project (need updated photos)
  - Must use NMFS issued camera
- Shark ID Addendum
  - Identifying unusual shark species.
- P.Cod Genetics -Fin Clips
  - Jan-Apr 2026
  - Collected from Female P.cod.
- Sunflower Sea Star
  - Now has a species Code and is needed for ID purposes.

MSA Confidentiality of Information

- The final rule was effective on 01-16-2025.
- You can find the rule on Regulations.gov under NOAA-HQ-2023-0146.
- A Confidentiality Advisory Team has completed a survey of data users and will take 6 months to develop and propose policy.

Remote Observer Debriefing Update:

Debriefing statistics for January through September 2025.
During this period, there were 312 total debriefings:

- In-person debriefings: 255
- Eligible for remote debriefing: 75
- Completed remote debriefings: 57

Overall, 18% of all debriefings were conducted remotely, though 24% of observers were eligible to do so. The primary reason cited for declining a remote debriefing was that the observers were already in town and preferred to meet in person.

Recommended 305(d) E.O. 14276 Deregulatory Actions (observer related)

- Modify observer “qualified candidate” requirement to allow for field experience with dichotomous keys in lieu of extensive course work.
- Modify the observer provider projected observer assignments requirements to meet agency needs and with realistic expectation of deployment information.
- Observer sample stations and unobstructed passage

Recommended 305(d) E.O. 14276 Deregulatory Actions

Monitoring

- Removing the requirements for the Kodiak CMCP Rockfish Program Specialist
- Remove Kodiak as a inspection location for scales
- Clarification on scale requirements including state certification, Serial numbers, and documentation requirements
- Modify transiting in Trawl EM implementation (a vessel does not need to have EM on when transiting the GOA from or to Washington)
- Clarify the disposition of PSC for Trawl Em participants (psc to meal quick fix)

Recordkeeping and Reporting

- Shoreside processor check-in/check-out forms
- Definition of printing documents to accept electronic versions ("print to PDF")
- Remove duplicative regulations on DCPL for motherships (eLandings)
- Modernize Electronic Logbook regulations

Multi-factor authentication (MFA) Requirement

Update: MFA for Applications (login.gov)

- NMFS expects to have the infrastructure in place for the AFSC to deploy MFA for all public-facing applications mid 2026. (We will have one year to implement)

What could this mean?
Any industry member using a public facing application (ODDS) will need a login.gov account to access the application.

Annual Reporting in 2027

- In response to fewer Council meetings, the team explored online dashboard; however, that **increases** our workload.

- Hybrid 2-Phase Reporting
  - **For FMAC & 2nd Council Meeting**: Comprehensive oral report and detailed slide deck
    - Will contain enough information to assess and discuss previous year and improvements for the next ADP
  - **Final report published**: After 2nd Council mtg, but before PCFMAC mtg

- Also note that the initial ADP presentation is a Draft ADP

BACKUP SLIDES

Differences Between Full and Partial Coverage Costs

- Partial coverage observer salaries are subject to Federal Acquisition Regulations, Fair Labor Standards Act, and Service Contract Act requirements, and applicable Department of Labor Wage Rate Determination which establish minimum wage and benefits for observers, including overtime.
- Travel costs and expenses in partial coverage are reimbursed per the Government's Travel Regulations. These include specified *per diem* rates which are paid regardless of actual expenses.
- Partial coverage observers are deployed out of small, remote port locations which increases travel and lodging costs.
- Partial coverage travel costs are increased due to the 72 hour timeframe in which partial coverage vessels log trips.
- Partial coverage observers are often deployed on a vessel for one trip which is significantly shorter (one to five days) than the typical deployment for full coverage observers (60 to 90 days), requiring more travel between vessels.