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Alaska Groundfish and Halibut Monitoring Programs

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NPFMC Plan Team Meeting
8 September 2020

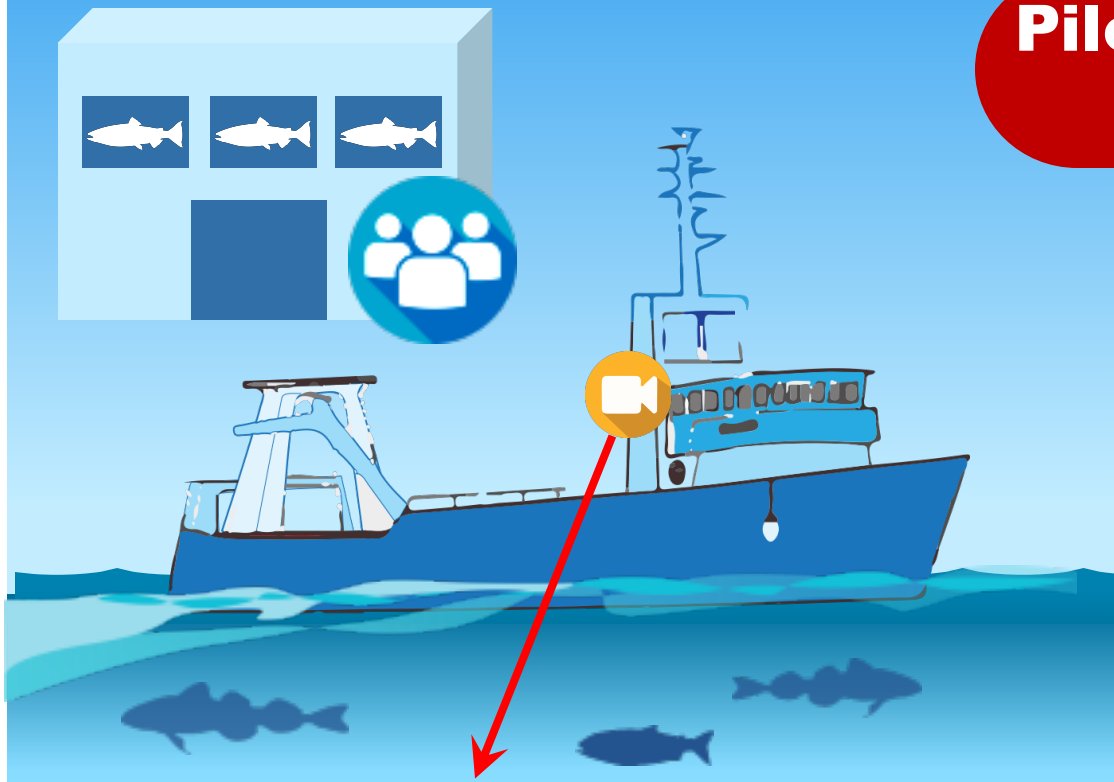
2020 Annual Deployment Plan

- The deployment rates for 2020:
 - Trawl – 20%
 - Hook-and-line – 15%
 - Pot – 15%
 - Fixed Gear EM – 30%
- ***NEW*** Pelagic Pollock trawl EM EFP
 - 42 vessels in BS and GOA
 - Full EM coverage for compliance with low-to-no discard only
 - Biological data to be collected at processing plant





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Pilot Program: Partial & Full Coverage – Pollock pelagic trawl vessels



Primary Objective:
monitor compliance

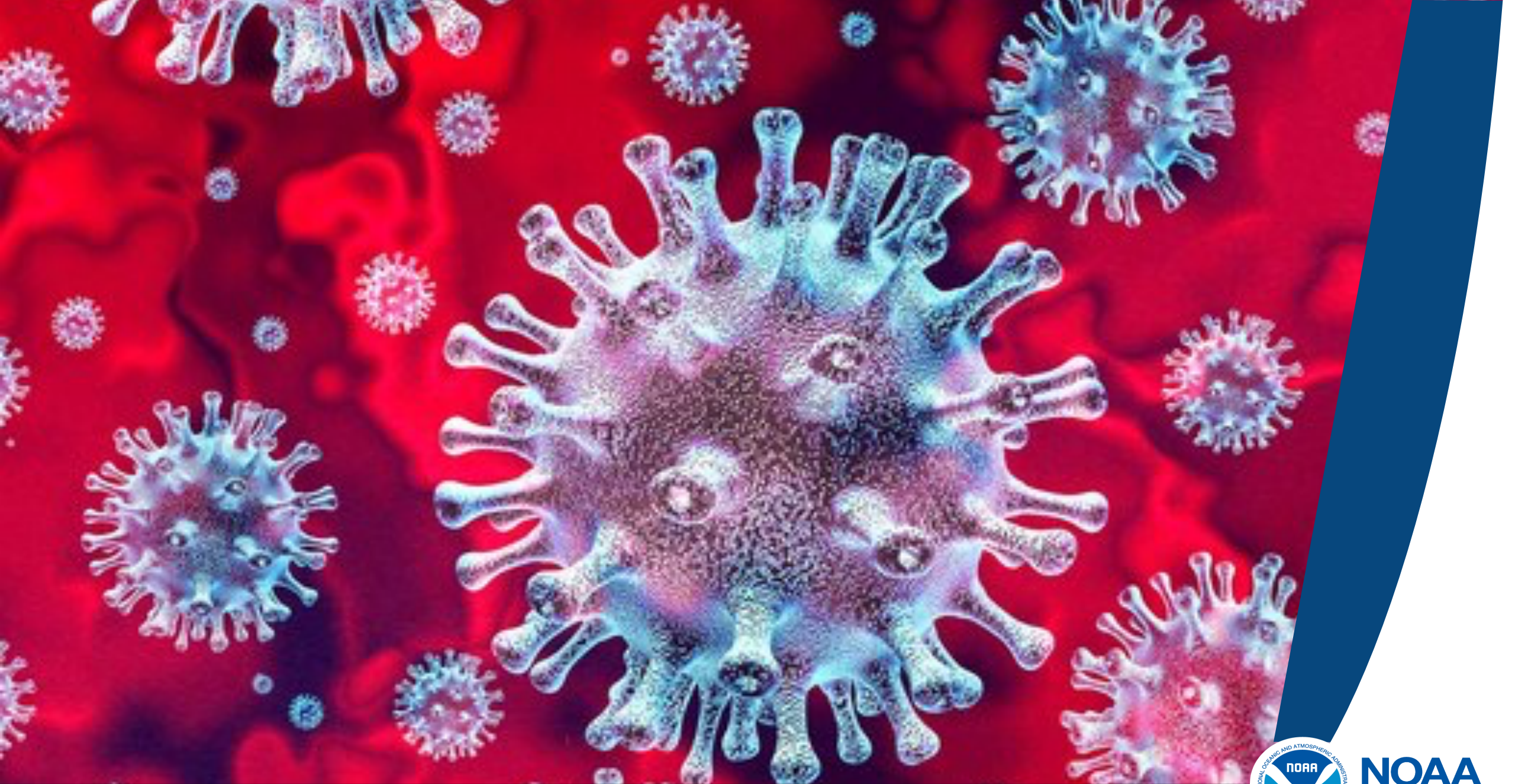
-  Observers in processing plants randomly sample deliveries to collect catch & biological data.
-  Video for compliance monitoring
 - Video monitoring to ensure retention (few discards).
 - Vessels chose to have EM on their boats instead of observers.

Pollock Pelagic Trawl EM EFP January – March 2020

	OFFLOADS	OFFLOADS W/ SALMON COUNTS	OFFLOADS W/ POLLOCK BIOLOGICAL DATA	TARGET OFFLOADS W/ POLLOCK BIOLOGICAL DATA	POLLOCK LENGTHS	TARGET POLLOCK LENGTHS	POLLOCK OTOLITHS	TARGET POLLOCK OTOLITHS	OFFLOADS WITH SPECIES COMP DATA	TOTAL SPECIES COMP SAMPLES	TARGET SPECIES COMP SAMPLES
AFA	220	220 (100%)	217 (99%)	100% (220)	16,645	22,000	414	440	177 (80%)	546	660
OA/GOA	206	64 (31%)	17 (8%)	30% (62)	737	9,270	403	1,539	4 (2%)	5	185

- FMA overtasked shoreside observers
- Communications between plant personnel and observers was challenging
- EM EFP participants made iterative improvements throughout the year and we're seeing improvement in the AFA B & GOA C&D seasons





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COVID-19 Impacts to Monitoring

- March 24, 2020 NOAA Fisheries issued an emergency rule allowing observer coverage waivers if:
 - Local, State, or national governments, or private companies or organizations that deploy observers pursuant to NMFS regulations, restrict travel or otherwise issue COVID-19-related social control guidance, or requirement(s) addressing COVID-19-related concerns, such that it is inconsistent with the requirement(s) or not recommended to place an observer(s); or
 - No qualified observer(s) are available for placement due to health, safety, or training issues related to COVID-19.
- Observer coverage for partial coverage vessels was waived on March 26
 - Waiver for vessels operating from the port of Kodiak was lifted on April 20
 - Waiver for vessels operating from 13 additional ports was lifted on June 28 with a redesigned Deployment Plan



2020 Reintroduced Partial Coverage

- Port fidelity with observers completing port-specific 14-day quarantine periods
 - Quarantine pay negotiated and added to contract
- 14 ports: Akutan*, Dutch Harbor/Unalaska, False Pass, Homer, Juneau, Ketchikan, King Cove*, Kodiak, Nome, Petersburg, Sand Point, Seward, Sitka, and Yakutat
- Shoreside observers being deployed to ensure COVID-19 protocols can be followed while limiting data loss
 - Plant coverage days negotiated and added to contract



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COVID-19 Impacts to Monitoring

- Full coverage provides the vast majority of observer data (more than 90 percent of coverage days).
 - Data loss associated with the waiver will impact fisheries harvested by the partial coverage sector
 - The Pollock Trawl EM EFP helped mitigate COVID-19 related data loss, but had impacts of its own
- Processing Plants – Vessel observers cannot enter most processing plants to collect biological samples. Several processors will have more observers present in the summer and fall Pollock fisheries to help complete data collections.
- The full coverage model supports a tight observer-vessel relationship, despite logistics burdens of travel, quarantine, testing, etc.
 - Full coverage most easily enables an observer safety model that is the same as that for the crew.



Expectations for the 2020 Observer Data Set

- Suspended annual fish & crab training and testing could lead to more identifications being recorded at higher taxonomic groupings (e.g., skate unidentified rather than Aleutian skate)
- Increased use of briefing waivers limits our ability to make mid-year sampling changes; opportunities for agency-observer interaction is reduced.
- Completion for 2021 stock assessment purposes will be delayed due to less-efficient remote debriefing requirements.
- Fewer biological data samples will be available due to both COVID-19 related trip releases and observer workload associated with the trawl EM EFP
- Species composition gaps in the partial coverage sector data – especially on Sablefish and Pacific Halibut targets



Questions?

