

Status of analytical projects related to the Observer Program

	Priority	Name	Description	Due Date/Target Date
Program Level Analytical Projects	1	Annual Deployment Plan	Deployment strategy for observers in 2015	Final ADP will be released the week of 12/8/2014.
	2	Supplemental Environmental Assessment	Court ordered EA to address the risk to data quality that may result from decreased observer coverage and the point at which the observer coverage rate becomes too low to generate reliable, high quality data.	A draft Supplemental EA will be released for public review on May 8, 2015.
	3	Annual Report	Descriptive information and analysis of effectiveness of observer deployment in 2014 (including vessels delivering to tenders) and continued development of performance metrics.	The 2014 annual report will be released in mid-May 2015, reviewed by the OAC in May, and by the Council at its June 2015 meeting.
	4	Electronic monitoring research	Fieldwork and research for developing electronic monitoring technologies.	SSC review of EM cooperative research study design in Feb 2015; fieldwork in 2014-2015; results presented to Council in Oct 2015. Pre-implementation planned for 2016.
	5	Analysis of catch and bycatch estimation methods	Ongoing analysis of catch and bycatch estimation methods including of evaluation of design-based and ratio estimators; incorporate variance from at-sea sampling through to the trip-level; and then assess post-strata definitions.	Target is to develop variance algorithms in 2015 and conduct evaluation of post-strata in 2016.
Individual Projects	6	GOA trawl bycatch	Implementation planning and analysis for catch monitoring and observer coverage requirements for transferable halibut and salmon PSC allocations, including for vessels delivering to tenders.	Preliminary analysis scheduled for April 2015. Staff will continue to contribute to the analysis through all phases of Council consideration.
	7	CDQ small boat Pacific cod fishery	Revise requirements for observer coverage, permitting, catch monitoring, and catch accounting in small boat CDQ fisheries.	Council and NMFS staff are revising the analysis in preparation for Council final action, which currently is scheduled for February 2015.
	8	Monitoring issues related to salmon bycatch in the BS pollock fishery	Update analysis of several issues related to handling, sorting, retention, and counting of salmon in the BS pollock fishery and proposed revisions to Atlas requirements.	Council initial review in December 2014. Additional NMFS staff work needed on economic analysis of regulatory amendments proposed in section 2.6. Priority of this project will depend on Council scheduling of final action.
	9	Halibut PSC – decksorting	Project would use flow scales and/or EM on deck to pre-sort halibut to potentially reduce mortality on C/Ps in the Bering Sea. Goal is to conduct fishing under the EFP in 2016 and 2017. The project will involve (1) coordination with industry to develop the study design, (2) evaluation of the EFP application, and (3) preparation of a categorical exclusion.	Industry will submit draft application to NMFS for review in December 2014. Deck sorting alternative now separated from BSAI halibut PSC reduction analysis. Council review of EFP application targeted for June 2015 and, if approved, fishing under the EFP would start in 2016.

	Priority	Name	Description	Due Date/Target Date
	10	Small catcher/processors	Expand allowances for small catcher/processors to choose partial observer coverage.	Discussion paper released on 11/28/14. Council review of proposed purpose and need and alternatives in December 2014.
	11	Observer coverage for BSAI trawl catcher vessels	Allow trawl catcher vessels in the BSAI Pacific cod fishery to choose to be in full coverage.	Unknown – no staff currently available to work on this project, given other priorities.
	12	Observer coverage on vessels delivering to tenders	Revise allowance for catcher vessels to make multiple deliveries to a tender on a single “trip” for purposes of observer coverage; revise regulations to allow observers to be deployed from tender vessels.	Unknown – no staff currently available to work on this project, given other priorities.
	13	Lead level 2 observers	In October 2014, the Council encouraged the Freezer Longline Coalition and observer providers to meet to try to resolve issues with the supply of fixed gear lead level 2 qualified observers. The Council requested that NMFS attend this meeting and assist with identifying solutions.	LL2 workgroup met in November. Council to review workgroup report before tasking further action.
		IFQ in multiple areas	Revise monitoring options for fishing IFQ in multiple regulatory areas on the same trip.	Council considered in February 2014 but did not task staff with further analysis of the issue.
		<i>De minimus</i> IFQ	Exempt/release from observer coverage vessels or trips with small amounts of IFQ.	Council considered in February 2014 but did not task staff with further analysis of the issue.
		IFQ fee assessment	Use standardized annual prices for fee assessment for IFQ.	Council considered in February 2014 but did not task staff with further analysis of the issue.

Revised 12/4/14.