

Agenda Item 10,d
September 1978

NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

PILOT OBSERVER PROGRAM FOR THE TROLL SALMON FISHERY OFF ALASKA

Contract No. 78-9

PRELIMINARY REPORT

September 12, 1978

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PRELIMINARY REPORT
OCEAN TROLL FISHERY OBSERVER PROGRAM

The observer program was scheduled to begin in May, but because of a problem with approval of the program by the administration because of an overload of fiscal years between the Council and State we did not actually have observers in the fishery until July.*

The first year of this program was viewed as a pilot project. We have not previously had a program designed specifically to collect data from onboard observations on a large scale and so we viewed the program as a learning experience for us and for the fishermen.

We began by contacting several fishermen to find placement for the observers and then selected vessels on the basis of where they anticipated they would be fishing. We found that we had to accept the boats on an available basis because many of the boats did not want observers on board. Some of the reasons given for not wanting observers on board were: no room available, fisherman did not want us to know what he caught, fisherman felt that cooperation would lead to restriction of his fishing activity, etc.

We found that the boats that did take observers were very cooperative, did not mistrust our intentions and were anxious to have observers aboard.

* Council funded. ADF&G sponsored the following observer trips in May and June:
May - 1 Fairweather Grounds, inner and outer banks
1 Noyes Island (Area 104)
June - 1 Fairweather Grounds, outer banks
1 Fairweather Grounds, inner and outer banks

We were fortunate in that the observers we hired were exceedingly amicable and no personality conflicts were reported.

We have to date had 16 observer trips of lengths varying from 2 days to 12 days.** Most trips were of approximately 8 day duration. One hand troller in Sitka agreed to take an observer out for a trip and we agreed. The vessel was large for a hand troll boat (40 feet) and we were interested in getting an idea of relative efficiency between power troll and hand troll gear.

The data collected from observer trips as well as biological samples and scale samples will be analyzed this fall and the data will be stored on computer tapes to facilitate future reference.

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- ** May - 1, Fairweather Grounds, inner and outer banks
1, Noyes Island (area 104)
- June - 1, Fairweather Grounds, outer banks
1, Fairweather Grounds, inner and outer banks
- July - 1, Fairweather Grounds, outer banks
1, Fairweather Grounds, inner banks
4, Coastal, Districts 13 & 14 & 16
- August- 1, Fairweather Grounds, outer banks
1, Fairweather Grounds, inner and outer banks
3, Coastal, Districts 13 & 14 & 16 (including 1 hand troll vessel)
- Sept. - 1, Coastal, District 16