



NOAA
FISHERIES

2022 Observer Program Annual Report

North Pacific Fishery Management Council's
Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee
May 10-11, 2023

2022 – COVID Constraints

- Observer deployments returned largely to “normal” for the 2022 fishing year
 - Some precautionary quarantine periods were still required for observers when close contact concerns arose or to match vessel protocols
- FMA maintained remote and hybrid observer training and briefing:
 - New trainees trained virtually and in-person with hands-on training focused on cold water survival and species identification and dissection
 - Trainings incorporated COVID safety protocols
 - Briefings for experienced observers were conducted entirely virtually



Overview

- **375** 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.
- Observers collected data onboard **336** fixed gear and trawl vessels and at **11** processing facilities for a total of **32,497** observer days.
- Observers and EM monitored **3,536** trips and **441** vessels



Amount of Catch Monitored – BSAI and GOA

- In the BSAI and GOA combined, 89.2% of pelagic trawl catch was on trips in the full coverage category and 10.8% was on trips in partial coverage
 - All partial coverage trips were in the GOA and 30.6% of their catch was monitored either by an at-sea or shoreside observer
 - Total monitoring of GOA pelagic trawl is higher if at-sea compliance EM is considered
- In the BSAI and GOA combined, 94% of non-pelagic trawl catch was on trips in the full coverage category and 6% was on trips in partial coverage
 - Partial coverage trips occurred in both the BSAI and GOA with 50.7% and 34.7% of their catch monitored, respectively
 - The Pacific cod trawl CV cooperative program (PCTC) will move many partial coverage trips into full coverage in 2024



Observer Cost - Full Coverage

- The total invoiced amount for full coverage observer days in 2022 was \$11,469,305 for 29,069 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 \$395
 - Average invoiced cost includes daily rate per observer day, transportation, and all other billed expenses
 - Both total invoiced dollars and days decreased in 2022 from 2021
 - Invoiced cost decreased by 7%
 - Invoiced days decreased by 11%



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
- Pelagic Pollock Trawl EM Exempted Fishing Permit costs are also not included in full coverage cost reports



Observer Cost – Partial Coverage

- Total expenditures for partial coverage observer deployments was \$4,428,624 for 2,968 observer days
 - Average cost of \$1,492 per observer day
 - Cost is inclusive of non-deployed day costs (training, debriefing, travel, quarantine days, and running the ODDS Help Desk for both observer and EM deployment)



Differences Between Full Coverage 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.



Electronic Monitoring - Partial Coverage

- Preliminary expenditures for **fixed gear** EM deployments was \$896,635
- EM operational costs include project coordination by EM vendors and image reviewers; data review, processing and analysis; equipment services; and field technical services
- Cost reflects only imagery review through March 15, 2022
- Using new EM Committee reporting categories, and amortized costs from past years which have not yet been accounted for are not included



Chapter 3:

Deployment Performance Review



NOAA
FISHERIES

2022 Deployment Strata

Full coverage:

1. FULL - Trips taken by vessels required to have, or opted into, full observer coverage;
2. EM TRW EFP - Trips in the full coverage trawl EM stratum;

Partial coverage EM:

1. EM HAL - Trips by vessels accepted into the EM pool and fished with hook-and-line gear
2. EM POT - Trips by vessels accepted into the EM pool and fished with pot gear
3. EM TRW EFP - Trips in the partial coverage trawl EM stratum

Partial observer coverage:

1. HAL - Trips using hook-and-line gear
2. POT - Trips using pot gear
3. TRW - Trips using trawl gear

Zero coverage:

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



Table 3-1. -- Number of total vessels (V), sampled vessels (v), total trips (N), and sampled trips (n) for each stratum in 2022.

Strata	V	v	N	n	Coverage				Meets expected?
					Expected	Realized			
Full	113	112	1,647	1,644	100.0	99.8			No - lower than expected*
EM TRW EFP	50	50	897	897	100.0				Yes
Full Coverage Total	145	144	2,544	2,541	100.0	99.9			

* Three trips were not monitored: one occurred on a vessel that had opted into full coverage and two were on vessels fishing HAL CDQ groundfish meeting the criteria for full coverage fishing. In each case they failed to obtain a full coverage observer.



Table 3-1. -- Number of total vessels (V), sampled vessels (v), total trips (N), and sampled trips (n) for each stratum in 2021. The coverage and 95% confidence interval columns are expressed as percentages of the total number of trips taken within each stratum.

Strata	V	v	N	n	Coverage		95% Confidence		Meets expected?
					Expected	Realized	Lower	Upper	
Partial coverage EM									
EM HAL	118	63	658	133	30	20.2	17.2	23.5	Preliminary data**
EM POT	50	34	349	85	30	24.4	19.9	29.2	Preliminary data**
EM TRW EFP	40	33	526	160	33.3	30.4*	26.5	34.5	Yes
Partial coverage observed									
HAL	299	122	1,346	196	19.0	14.6	12.7	16.6	No - lower than expected
POT	172	100	1,163	211	17.5	18.1	16.0	20.5	Yes
TRW	72	53	725	210	29.7	29	25.7	32.4	Yes
Zero coverage	310	0	1,599	0	0.0	0.0			Yes
Partial Coverage Total	974	441	8,910	3,536			39.7% Trips: 45.3% Vessels		

* Trawl EM EFP requires cameras at-sea on 100% of trips and shoreside sampling by observers on all trips in the BSAI and a random selection of trips in the GOA. This table evaluates shoreside sampling goals to collect biological samples and census counts of salmon and halibut PSC.

** Sampled trips and realized coverage rates reflect video review through April 10, 2023.

Table 3-4. -- Monitored catch¹ (metric tons), total catch, and percent monitored (%) of groundfish and halibut retained and discarded in the groundfish and halibut fisheries in 2022 in the Gulf of Alaska. Empty cells indicate that no catch occurred.

Gear	Catch	Catcher/Processor			Catcher vessel			Catcher vessel: Rockfish program			Gear total		
		Monitored	Total	%	Monitored	Total	%	Monitored	Total	%	Monitored	Total	%
Hook and Line	Retained	2,533	2,626	96%	2,041	16,095	13%				4,574	18,721	24%
	Discard	770	807	95%	1,145	11,462	13%				2,221	12,269	18%
Non Pelagic Trawl	Retained	30,935	30,935	100%	2,634	7,673	34%	4,295	4,295	100%	37,864	42,903	88%
	Discard	3,889	3,889	100%	245	628	39%	363	363	100%	4,496	4,879	92%
Pot	Retained	692	771	90%	3,584	17,712	20%				4,276	18,483	23%
	Discard	9	12	81%	105	596	18%				114	607	19%
Pelagic Trawl	Retained	2,327	2,327	100%	39,648	129,701	31%	10,393	10,393	100%	52,368	142,421	37%
	Discard	167	167	100%	341	996	34%	174	174	100%	682	1,337	51%

¹ Monitored reflect either trips with an observer, EM fixed gear trips for which some video was reviewed, or EM trawl trips where observers sampled shoreside.

Table 3-5. -- Monitored catch¹ (metric tons), total catch, and percent monitored (%) of groundfish and halibut retained and discarded in the groundfish and halibut fisheries in 2022 in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands. Empty cells indicate that no catch occurred.

		Catcher/Processor			Mothership			Catcher Vessel			Gear Total		
Gear	Catch	Monitored	Total	%	Monitored	Total	%	Monitored	Total	%	Monitored	Total	%
Hook and Line	Retained	85,493	85,493	100%				249	1,915	13%	85,742	87,411	98%
	Discard	17,422	17,422	100%				160	1,201	13%	17,582	18,624	94%
Non Pelagic Trawl	Retained	342,512	342,512	100%	23,482	23,482	100%	9,111	18,070	50%	375,105	384,064	98%
	Discard	27,113	27,113	100%	1,220	1,220	100%	632	1,139	56%	28,965	29,471	98%
Pot	Retained	3,792	3,792	100%				3,926	20,816	19%	7,718	24,607	31%
	Discard	92	92	100%				84	644	13%	176	736	24%
Pelagic Trawl	Retained	494,511	494,511	100%	95,208	95,208	100%	475,561	475,561	100%	1,065,281	1,065,281	100%
	Discard	1,590	1,590	100%	286	286	100%	500	500	100%	2,376	2,376	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.



NOAA
FISHERIES

2022 Observer Annual Report

Chapter 4 – Enforcement and Compliance

Data Analysis Methods

- A “statement” is a potential violation reported to FMA and OLE
 - Each statement submitted by an observer may contain multiple occurrences of potential violations.
- The frequency of potential violations is based on a rate of occurrences per 1,000 deployed days.
- OLE Priority: Inter-personal is calculated occurrences per assignment rather than deployed days.
 - OLE prioritizes any activity that may pose a threat to an observer and their data.
- OLE takes reporting trends into consideration when planning outreach, patrols, and other operations.
- Refer to page 56 of the Annual Report for more specifics on data preparation.



Trends in Reporting

OLE Priority: Inter-personal (unwanted, unwelcome behavior)

Assault

- CP/MS NPT GOA OA: 0.33 per assignment
- CP/MS NPT BSAI A80: 0.02 per assignment
- There were no assaults reported in 2021

Sexual harassment

- CP/MS NPT BSAI A80; MS/CP PTR BSAI AFA; CP/MS HAL BSAI OA; and CV HAL GOA OA **each** had a rate of 0.07 per assignment
- CP/MS PTR BSAI CDQ and CV POT BSAI OA **each** had a rate of 0.05 per assignment
- Multiple incidents involve repeated unwelcome advances towards observers that persisted after requests for the behavior to cease.
- NOAA has recently released a Notice which reiterates that owners and operators may be charged jointly and severally liable for incidents involving sexual assault and sexual harassment of observers.
- Occurrences of Sexual Harassment per assignment declined from 2022 to 2021 by 33%.



Trends in Reporting

OLE Priority: Inter-personal (unwanted, unwelcome behavior)

Intimidation, coercion, hostile work environment

- PLANT GOA OA: 1.03 occurrences per assignment
- PLANT BSAI OA: 0.84 occurrences per assignment
- CP/MS PTR BSAI AFA: 0.75 occurrences per assignment
- Multiple reports in these sectors involved observers intimidating or creating a hostile environment for other observers.
- There were frequently attempts to resolve these situations while the observers were still deployed.
- There was a 243% increase of occurrences per assignment in Intimidation, Coercion, and Hostile Work Environment from 2021 to 2022.



Trends in reporting

OLE Priority – Safety & Duties

- Interference/sample biasing
 - CP/MS NPT BSAI A80: 30.2 occurrences per 1,000 deployed days
 - CP/MS NPT BSAI CDQ: 25.9 occurrences per 1,000 deployed days
 - The vessels involved in both categories were the same. The allegations involved mechanical biasing of the observers' samples. The majority of the issues were resolved when the vessels made factory improvements during shipyard.

Protected Resources and Prohibited Species

- Gulf of Alaska Salmon saw 54 occurrences involving salmon being inaccessible to observers at shoreside plants and 20 occurrences when observer-reported salmon numbers didn't match the fish ticket
- HAL IFQ saw 27 occurrences of undersized halibut not being released properly
- CP NPT saw 64 occurrences of mishandling halibut during deck sorting and 65 occurrences in the factory
- Occurrences per 1,000 deployed days involving Prohibited Mishandling increased from 2021 to 2022 by 40%



Outreach letters & Meetings with Industry

- Outreach letters
 - Observer Work Environment
 - Impacts to Observer Data
 - CP Operational Requirements
 - Amendment 80 Requirements
 - Halibut Deck Sorting Requirements
 - Catcher Vessel Requirements
- Voluntary Online Training – Ensuring a Safe Work Environment for Observers
- Meetings with vessel companies
 - 22 meetings in total – discussions focused on current issues detected in the fishing fleet in general and in specific sectors.



Compliance Assistance, Written Warnings, Summary Settlements, Cases Forwarded for Prosecution

- Compliance Assistance
 - 52 cases
 - 142 individual statements
- Written Warnings
 - 7 cases
 - 21 individual statements
- Summary Settlements
 - 17 cases
 - 29 individual statements
- Forwarded for Prosecution
 - 2 cases
 - 4 individual statements



NOAA
FISHERIES

2022 Observer Annual Report

Chapter 5 – NMFS Recommendations



NOAA
FISHERIES

NMFS Recommendations for 2024 Draft Annual Deployment Plan

Deployment Design:

- Continue work on cost efficiency integrated analysis.
- Evaluate 3 stratification opinions and 4 allocation methods
- Account for PCTC implementation and trawl EM
- Continue evaluation of Zero Coverage using criteria that are predictable from year to year
 - Look at fixed-gear EM vessels that have not fished for groundfish in multiple years
- Evaluate high cancellation rates in HAL stratum
 - Potential approaches: review ability to log 3 trips, or mask selection results until current trip is realized, or increase programmed rates in ODDS.



NMFS Recommendations for 2024 Draft Annual Deployment Plan

Changes to ODDS:

- Modify ODDS to ask operators of vessels greater than 56ft with a history of fishing for CDQ groundfish to alert them they are in full coverage.
- Incorporate PCTC into ODDS to alert vessels that they are in full coverage.



NMFS Recommendations for the 2024 Draft Annual Deployment Plan

Fixed Gear EM:

- Maintain the size of the 2022 fixed gear pool (172 vessels)
 - As funds are available, expand up to Council's recommendation of 200 vessels.
- Prioritize placement in EM pool by:
 - Vessels size; fishing effort; vessels unlikely to introduce data gaps; and cost efficiency
- Continue to notify operators of VMP non-compliance.
 - NMFS may remove vessels with repeated problems.



NMFS Recommendations for the 2024 Draft Annual Deployment Plan

Trawl EM EFP:

- Continue the pelagic trawl EM EFP
- Support increasing the number of participants and continuing efforts to improve processor participation and support.
- Support combination of federal and NFWF funds to cover costs in 2024.

Collaborate with industry on EM development Projects:

- Testing EM on trawl catcher vessels participating in the CGOA rockfish program;
- Real time electronic logbook data collection and reporting in Alaska's groundfish and halibut fisheries; and
- Improving and enhancing EM Data in Western GOA.



Questions?



NOAA
FISHERIES