



North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Trawl EM Committee REPORT

August 21-22, 2019: Wednesday 1-5pm, Thursday 8:30am – 5pm

PSMFC Offices, 205 SE Spokane St. Suite #100, Portland, OR 97202

The Trawl EM Committee met to review progress on the current trawl EM program, discuss recommendations for the Council on the Exempted Fishing Permit application and cost metrics for trawl EM reporting.

Committee Members in attendance:

Bill Tweit (chair)	Heather Mann (MTC)	Chris Wilson (Satlink)
Julie Bonney (AGDB)	Mike Orcutt (AMR)	Caitlin Yeager
Ruth Christiansen (UCB)	Mike Simpson (Peter Pan- phone)	(Unalaska/Dogboat-phone)
Tom Evich (Fisherman)		

Agency staff in attendance:

NPFMC –Anna Henry	NMFS FMA Observer	PSMFC –
Diana Evans	Program –Mike Vechter	Dave Colpo
NMFS Alaska Region –	NMFS NOAA Office of Law	Courtney Paiva
Alicia Miller	Enforcement –Brent Pristas	Aileen Smith
Josh Keaton	NOAA General Counsel –	NMFS West Coast Region –
Maggie Chan	Tom Meyer (phone)	Justin Kavanaugh
Bridget Mansfield (phone)	ADFG – Rachel Baker	
Phil Ganz (phone)	(phone)	

Others in attendance:

Dan Falvey (ALFA)	Luke Szymanski (AIS- phone)	Abby Fredrick (Silver Bay Seafoods)
Charlotte Levy (AEB)		Brent Paine (UCB--phone)
Craig Rose (FNR)		

Strategic review of fishery monitoring committee roles

The meeting began with the Committee reviewing a draft document on a “strategic look at monitoring committees.” This document outlined the types of recommendations the Council makes to NMFS on monitoring, the types of actions frequently reviewed by the observer committees and which of these are more relevant to partial coverage or full coverage categories as well as the annual schedule that drives observer committee activities. The document outlined the current roles and membership of the observer committees and proposed revising Council committees to include: 1) Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee (FMAC) that meets once in May; 2) Formal FMAC Partial Coverage Subgroup that meets in September, and ad-hoc if necessary based on timeline requirements; 3) Trawl EM Committee that remains focused on designing a new trawl electronic monitoring program; 4) An annual non-Council opportunity for fixed gear EM participants, providers, fishermen representatives, reviewers, and agency to discuss technical issues encountered during the year that may need to be addressed for the upcoming year.

The document was edited to reflect Committee comments to include a summary of topics within the scope of each monitoring committee and a diagram of the reporting structure of each committee. **The revised document will be reviewed at the full FMAC meeting in September.**

EM cost metrics

The Committee heard a report on the cost metrics being developed in the fixed gear EM program. The current organization of fixed gear EM cost reporting is divided into four categories: 1) one time startup costs such as program software, VMP template development and other items that will not occur every year; 2) equipment and installation costs that are amortized across multiple years, 3) ongoing/recurring costs such as updating VMPs, field staff, vessel visits, 4) data review.

NMFS AKRO staff also provided a draft template of cost metrics based on national reporting guidelines. The Committee expressed concern that this template may not facilitate cost comparisons across observer/monitoring types and that it would benefit from metrics that specifically break out one time versus ongoing costs and identifying the differences between costs of a pilot program versus a fully developed program. **The Committee agreed that reporting based on the outline of the fixed gear program would be most effective, including an explanation for how these categories align with those provided in the NMFS cost template, and expressed their desire that NMFS staff communicate the Committee concerns about the draft template to NMFS HQ staff.**

2019 Trawl EM program

The Committee received updates on the current trawl EM program in the WGOA, CGOA and Bering Sea including budgets, equipment installation, hard drive shipping, and data review. The 2019 program includes 28 vessels in the CGOA-BS and 16 vessels (14 CVs and 2 tenders) in the WGOA. Current emphasis is being placed on increasing tender participation in the WGOA with two new tender vessels scheduled for equipment installations this fall. Numerous participants expressed the importance of communication and feedback between data review, agency staff, project managers and participants so that any issues that arise are addressed and adjustments are made in a timely manner. Participants also acknowledged processors for their help supplying and shipping data drives. **It seemed to the Committee that all aspects of the current trawl EM program are on track with the Council expectations for schedule and scope.**

Update on West Coast Whiting Program

NMFS West Coast Region staff provided an update on the west coast whiting EM program. Discussion focused on the particulars of data flow, confidentiality and storage and the process of moving from an EFP to a final rule. Additionally, the Committee heard from participants in the whiting program regarding recent enforcement actions and the potential impacts on future vessel participation. **The Committee did not recommend any changes to the current NPFMC program based on their review of the west coast program.**

2020 Trawl EM program planning

Applicants updated the Committee on NFWF grant applications. The 2019 grant application for the BS-CGOA focuses on funding for shoreside observers for EM vessels, training crew on EM systems so they can provide basic technical services and developing an electronic logbook that streamlines data flow between vessels and data reviewers. The Committee encouraged providers to coordinate efforts on electronic logbooks and acknowledged that there may be improvements from the NMFS eelogbook but to ensure that data from any logbook can be integrated into NMFS regulatory systems. The WGOA application focuses on funding for additional CV and tender participants as well as shoreside observer

costs. The Committee discussed the importance of utilizing any possible efficiencies in shoreside observer coverage.

Participants stressed that the EM program is a learning experience and feedback and outreach to vessels is critical. To facilitate this, EM program managers will develop written information in the form of FAQs or “dos and don’ts” as a resource for participating vessels.

NMFS AKRO staff updated the Committee on the current status of the EFP application. NMFS is currently drafting a Federal Register notice for public comment on the application that is scheduled to overlap with the October Council meeting. NMFS staff stressed that the process has been a positive, collaborative effort with the NMFS Regional Office, Science Center and Principal Investigators on the application.

Because the draft EFP application was under review by NMFS ARKO/FMA staff at the time of the meeting, the Committee did not have a final EFP application to review. Based on their current understanding of the EFP application the Committee made the following recommendations:

1. **The EFP is experimental** and should strike a balance between enforceable provisions and an experimental approach.
2. **The EFP should allow for flexibility** to learn lessons and build provisions to adapt.
3. **The EFP is a collaboration** both internally, between different NMFS offices and branches and between NFWF grant applicants as well as between NMFS and applicants.
4. **The EFP is consistent with the Council objectives** of how EM trawl should proceed and how to measure success.
5. **The Committee appreciates that the design of the EFP is structured as adaptive management so that lessons from the first year can be applied to future years.**

The Committee discussed other plans and outstanding questions moving forward with the 2020 Trawl EM Program. NOAA enforcement commented on chain of custody requirements for hard drives and tracking methods. A primary concern is to be able to track the location of hard drive between departing the vessel and arriving at reviewer. The fixed gear program use of tracked mailers sufficiently fulfills this requirement but each plant and fishery’s specific protocols may differ.

NMFS staff updated the Committee on agency concerns regarding loss of biological samples of marine mammals on vessels without observers. Continued dialog is encouraged between applicants and NMFS staff on marine mammal and seabird reporting requirements. NMFS staff confirmed that all participating EM vessels are part of the prohibited species donation program and do not require additional permits from IPHC to retain halibut under the maximized retention program. State permitting requirements will be determined as part of the EFP process. The Committee also heard an update on current research on the automated detection of salmon in unsorted pollock catches in processing plants.

The Committee discussed the Cooperative Research Plan and its value as a document that provides information that is not only specific to the Trawl EFP but as a broader outlook on the use of EM technology, developing regulations and how the effort and financial support of the current program can benefit future programs. **Council staff will coordinate with the Committee Chair and other members on how to revise the EM Cooperative Research Plan to be most useful for the Council moving forward.**

Other issues

The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission EM review team provided the Committee the opportunity to observe the EM review process for multiple gear types and EM programs. Reviewers were very helpful and patient explaining their process and answering questions; Committee members appreciated the opportunity to learn about this part of the EM process.

NMFS regional office staff provided an update on the agency approach to the ADP and ODDS regarding EM vessels. In the WGOA, communication regarding which vessels EM and non-EM tenders can accept fish from will be critical.

The Committee encouraged participation in upcoming national EM workshops hosted by NOAA Fisheries, noting that NOAA would like to attract diverse participation, including fishermen and other stakeholders as well as fisheries that may have less familiarity with EM.

The Committee agreed that the next meeting should be scheduled in June 2020 (potentially in conjunction with the June Council meeting) for a mid-season check-in on the 2020 trawl EM program. This meeting would include a draft report from PSMFC on data review. A teleconference meeting can be scheduled if needed to address any unexpected issues that may arise prior to the 2020 season.