



NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Action Memo

File Number:Cons 15-042

Agenda Date10/5/2015

Agenda Number:C6

Dan Hull, Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director

SUBJECT:

Observer Program 2016 Annual Deployment Plan - Review

ACTION REQUIRED:

- Review draft 2016 Annual Deployment Plan (ADP)
- Receive Observer Advisory Committee (OAC) Report

BACKGROUND:

2016 Annual Deployment Plan

The Council is scheduled to review the draft 2016 Annual Deployment Plan (ADP), and provide recommendations to NMFS for the final 2016 ADP. During the Council's review of the 2014 Observer Annual Report, the Council requested that the 2016 ADP provide strata to deploy observers by gear (longline, pot, and trawl) and FMP area, and if necessary, consider operational sector (CV vs CP). The ADP is responsive to the Council's request, and includes both a detailed analysis of twelve different sampling designs (in Appendix B of the ADP), and a recommendation to deploy exclusively into the three gear strata in 2016 (regardless of vessel length or FMP area). Based on optimal allocation of observer days among the strata, the preliminary selection rates would be 29% for trawl vessels, and 14% each for hook-and-line and pot vessels.

The OAC met on September 17 and 18 in Seattle to discuss the 2016 ADP, and the OAC supports NMFS' recommendation to deploy observers by gear strata in 2016. The OAC also supports NMFS' recommendation to eliminate temporary exemptions for life raft capacity in 2016, given the EM selection pool option for small vessels, but does not agree with eliminating the exemption that prevents a small vessel from being selected for a third consecutive observed trip. The OAC also disagrees with the ADP's proposed changes to the Observer Declare and Deploy System (ODDS), but supports the other recommendations in the ADP. The OAC report, attached, captures the discussion and rationale for the OAC's recommendations.

The recommended deployment strata were also brought to the joint BSAI and GOA groundfish plan teams during their September 21-24 meeting in Seattle. The discussion can be found in the plan team minutes under agenda item C2.

Observer analytical projects

The OAC also reviewed the status of regulatory amendments and other analytical projects affecting the Observer Program (a status report on all such projects is included in the staff tasking agenda item E). The committee has recommendations in the attached report on the BSAI Trawl CVs Initial Review and the 100% Coverage for GOA Trawl Discussion Paper, agenda items C7 and C9, respectively. The committee also discussed projects on which work has not yet begun, including the observer insurance regulatory amendment and regulatory options in response to the Lead Level 2 observer shortage. OAC recommendations can be found in the meeting report. Background documents on the status of the observer insurance regulatory amendment update and the Lead Level 2 shortage are available on the NPFMC website at <http://www.npfmc.org/observer-program/>.

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Finally, at the request of OAC members, NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement provided an update on observer reports of violations relating to potential assault, sexual harassment, or intimidation/interference with observers, and potential failures to provide observers with reasonable assistance and/or restricted access. The information, which is attached, updates the report provided in June 2015 by including data from the first six months of 2015. The attachment