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**National Observer Program
FY 2010 Annual Report**



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Executive Summary

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) utilizes data from a variety of sources ranging from fishery-independent surveys to commercial and recreational fishery data to support its science-based stewardship of the nation's living marine resources. Of these, data collected by fisheries observers placed on board commercial fishing vessels through NMFS observer programs are considered one of the best sources of fishery-dependent data used in fisheries conservation and management.

The year 2010 was a time for change as NMFS implemented a 'National Catch Share Policy' (www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/domes_fish/catchshare/). Catch shares are a generic term for fishery management programs that allocate a specific portion of a total fishery catch to individuals, communities, or self-selected groups. Catch shares allow fishermen to decide when, how, and where to fish, taking advantage of favorable weather and market conditions. The sense of ownership provided by catch shares also creates an incentive for fishermen to conserve fish stocks. Implementing catch share programs requires the timely availability of high quality catch and bycatch data.

The additional requirements of monitoring catch share allocations will create new challenges for NMFS observer programs, similar to those created by sector management in other fisheries. Data needs for tracking individual allocations are very high. In addition, the data are needed in near-real time, so that fishermen do not exceed their allocations. During 2010, sector management was implemented in the Northeast multispecies fishery, and significant movement was made on implementation of trawl rationalization in the Northwest groundfish trawl fishery (scheduled for 2011). Both programs rely on expanded observer data collection programs. In this edition of the National Observer Program Annual Report, the implementation of these two new programs and their associated observer programs is further discussed.

Every year, NMFS depends on the best available science to evaluate management strategies that impact the long-term sustainability of resources and communities. Observer programs utilize funding from the Federal government and the commercial fishing industry to collect data critical to the decision-making process. In FY 2010¹, NMFS deployed more than 790 observers and collected data on more than 45 fisheries nationwide. During this same time period, Federal commercial fisheries observer programs received funding totaling \$58 million for observer coverage and program infrastructure.

This report contains a summary of funding and activities for NMFS observer programs in FY 2010.

¹ The federal fiscal year (FY) runs from September 30 – October 1 of the following year.

1. Introduction

Since 1972, observers have collected high quality data on commercial fishing activities in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and on the high seas. The NMFS utilizes fishery observers to collect data from U.S. commercial fishing and processing vessels, as well as from some shore-side processing plants. Fisheries observers are trained biological technicians who collect data to support a wide range of conservation and management activities. Today, there are fisheries observer programs in all six NMFS fisheries management regions (Northeast, Southeast, Northwest, Southwest, Alaska, and Pacific Islands).

Regional Offices and Science Centers in each NMFS Region are responsible for administering observer programs in their area. Each observer program is authorized by one or more of the following Federal mandates: the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA), the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), and the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Under the MSA, Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) are developed for each Federal fishery that requires conservation and management. The MSA provides Fishery Management Councils and the Secretary of Commerce with the authority to require that "one or more observers be carried on board a vessel of the United States engaged in fishing for species that are subject to the plan, for the purpose of collecting data necessary for the conservation and management of the fishery" (16 U.S.C. §1853 (b)(8)).

The MMPA also authorizes the placement of observers on board vessels engaged in commercial fishing operations that frequently take² marine mammals (16 U.S.C. §1383(e)). The NMFS uses observer data to quantify the impacts of fishing activities on marine mammal populations and to identify bycatch reduction measures.

In 2007, the NMFS Office of Protected Resources finalized a rule under the ESA that provides NMFS with the authority to place fisheries observers aboard vessels in state and federal fisheries operating in the territorial seas or EEZ where sea turtle interactions may occur. Observers will help determine whether existing measures to reduce sea turtle bycatch are working, or whether new or additional measures are needed. With this information, NMFS will be better positioned to address sea turtle bycatch problems. The first Annual Determination (AD) of fisheries to be observed under this rule was published in 2010.

Observer coverage may also be recommended for Federal fisheries as part of an ESA Section 7 biological opinion. Section 7 prohibits federal agencies from carrying out programs (such as authorizing fishery operations) that jeopardize the continued existence of threatened and endangered species.

² "Take" of a marine mammal is defined as: "to harass, hunt, capture, or kill, or attempt to harass, hunt, capture, or kill any marine mammal" (16 U.S.C. 1362).

On a global scale, international agreements (such as the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries) identify the agency's stewardship role in leading collaborative efforts to conserve and protect marine resources. International provisions in the reauthorized MSA also strengthened the U.S. commitment to monitoring and reducing bycatch. These provisions require the Secretary of State to "include statistically reliable monitoring carried out by the United States through observers or dedicated platforms provided by foreign nations of all target and non target fish species, marine mammals, sea turtles, and seabirds entangled or killed by large-scale driftnets used by fishing vessels of foreign nations that are parties to the agreement." The provisions further specify that "the taking of non-target fish species, marine mammals, sea turtles, seabirds, and endangered species or other species protected by international agreements to which the U.S. is a party is minimized and does not pose a threat to existing fisheries or the long-term health of living marine resources."

1.1 Program Structure

The NMFS' Office of Science and Technology coordinates observer programs at the national level through the National Observer Program (NOP). In addition to handling national program administration, budgeting, and planning, the NOP works with the regional observer programs to develop national policy and observer data quality standards. The NOP also provides regional observer programs with a forum to increase communication. Representatives from all regional programs and most NMFS offices participate in the National Observer Program Advisory Team (NOPAT), which serves as an advisory board to the NOP. The NMFS Science Board (composed of the six NMFS Science Center directors and the director of the Office of Science and Technology, who serves as the Board's chair) reviews NOPAT recommendations, with final decisions made by the Director of the Office of Science and Technology, Chief Science Advisor, and Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, when necessary.

Regional programs are responsible for the day-to-day operation of fishery observer programs. Program scientists determine the appropriate sampling protocols and necessary observer coverage levels for each fishery. In general, regional programs work with private contracting companies to recruit and deploy observers. In some cases, the fishing industry contracts directly with a private contracting company to provide observer coverage. The North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program, for example, is funded primarily by fishing industry members (industry pays for observer's salaries, travel costs, and insurance). The NMFS Alaska Fisheries Science Center administers this program and receives the data for near real-time management of the groundfish fishery. These data are also made available by the program to industry members. Regardless of an observer program's funding structure, all new observers are provided with training by NMFS in species identification, sampling methods, and safety. Following a fishing trip, observers are debriefed, and the trip's data are quality checked before being

entered into a database system and made available to regional fisheries biologists.

1.2 Use of Observer Data in Fisheries Management

The information compiled by observer programs supports the management and conservation of fisheries, protected resources, and ecosystems throughout the U.S. Observer data are also increasingly relied upon to monitor compliance with fisheries regulations. Information collected by fisheries observers is used for a wide range of assessment and monitoring purposes, including the following examples.

- In some fisheries, the amount of a specific fish species that can be caught is specified by a “total allowable catch” (or TAC) level. Observer data are used to project total catches for these species and to monitor the level of fishing activity so that the TAC is not exceeded.
- For each managed fishery or stock, the 2007 reauthorization of the MSA requires development of an Annual Catch Limit (ACL). The ACL is an annual numerical catch target that is set below the overfishing fishing level to ensure that overfishing will not occur. Setting an ACL for a stock requires scientific data on catch and bycatch.
- For many fisheries, estimates of fishing mortality and/or protected species interaction rates based on observer data are used for monitoring fishery performance and developing stock assessments.
- For stocks that are overfished and in a rebuilding plan, such as New England groundfish, preseason target catch numbers are provided to the management team. When the fishing season ends, observer data are evaluated to determine total mortality and correspondingly adjust the next season’s targets.
- The MMPA requires that levels of fishery-related serious injury and mortalities be monitored and reported in the annual stock assessment reports and used in assigning commercial fisheries to appropriate categories in the annual MMPA List of Fisheries (16 U.S.C. 1387).
- Observer data on marine mammal bycatch are used by NMFS Take Reduction Teams (TRTs) when developing Federally-mandated Take Reduction Plans (TRPs) to assist in the recovery or prevent the depletion of certain strategic marine mammal stocks.

1.3 Funding History for Observer Programs

Although NMFS has utilized fishery observers to collect data since 1972, the Office of Science and Technology’s NOP was not established until 1999. Prior to 1998, the majority of funding for regional observer programs was provided through indirect sources, such as Congressional allocations supporting fisheries management and protected resource legislation. Beginning in the

late 1990s, industry funds were also used to support domestic observer programs; the amount of industry funding has remained relatively stable.

In 1999, the first Congressional funds were directly appropriated for observer program budget lines, and the NOP was established to coordinate U.S. observer program activities. In general, funding for observer programs has increased over time. The number of fisheries observed has increased as programs obtained the means to develop observer programs for new or experimental fisheries while maintaining established monitoring programs (Fig. 1).

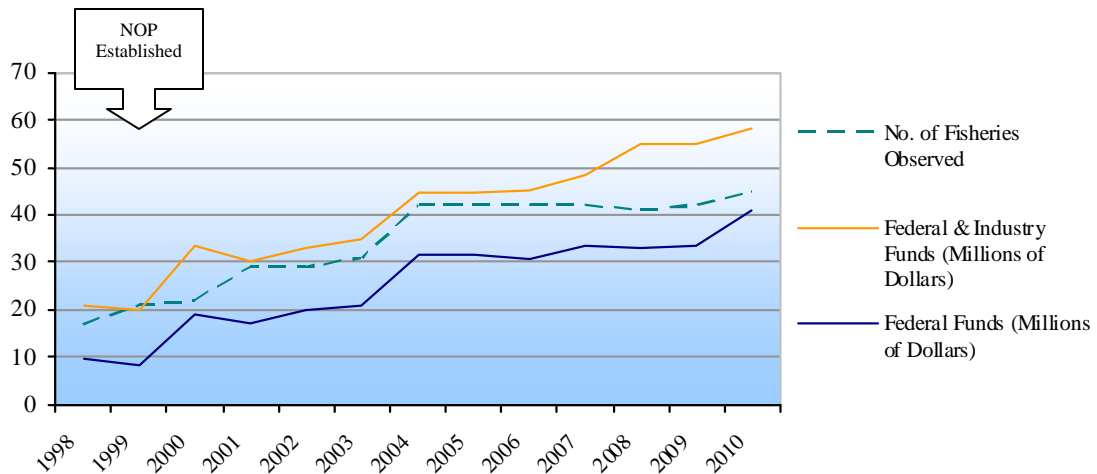


Figure 1. Overview of U.S observer program funding and observed fisheries from 1998-2010 (not adjusted for inflation).

2. FY 2010 Budget Summary

In FY 2010, total funding from all sources for Federal fisheries observer programs was approximately \$60 M for observer coverage and program infrastructure. This funding enabled regional observer programs to provide coverage for more than 68,000 days at sea in 45 fisheries (Appendix A provides a detailed breakdown of funding and coverage levels by program). The industry-provided portion of total funding in FY 2010 was \$14.8 M. Industry funds were used to support observer coverage of fishing vessels in the Northwest at-sea hake, Atlantic sea scallop, and Alaska groundfish fisheries.

The majority of funding for observer programs comes from Congressional appropriations. In FY 2010, Congressional funding for observer programs totaled \$41 M. All regions have at least one dedicated budget line supporting observer program activities except the Southwest, which has never had a dedicated budget line for observer programs. Although Alaska does have a Congressional line item, this is strictly for the program that covers Federal fisheries (the North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program). There is no

Congressional line item for the Alaska Marine Mammal Observer Program, which observes state fisheries. Funding is also available from two National budget lines (the “National Observer Program” and “Reducing Bycatch” budget lines), which are equally allocated to regional programs. In addition to direct budget lines, observer programs may receive funding from Federal appropriations supporting programs under the ESA, MMPA, and the MSA.

It is important to note that an observer program may be funded by more than one budget line, and a single budget line may support observer program activities in more than one region. Many observer programs are funded through a combination of funding sources in order to maintain sufficient observer coverage and infrastructure.

3. FY 2010 National Observer Program Activities

The NOP is supported by both permanent and temporary allocations from the Reducing Bycatch budget line to provide staff support and program infrastructure. Funding for specific activities of the NOP was also provided through the Atlantic Coast Observers and the National Observer Program Congressional budget lines (Appendix A provides details). The following section highlights some of the NOP’s activities in FY 2010.

3.1 National Highlights

Marine Debris Data Collection Partnership

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the National Ocean Service (NOS) Marine Debris Program (NOS/MDP) and the NMFS National Observer Program was signed by Ned Cyr (Director, Office of Science and Technology) and David Westerholm (Director, NOS Office of Response and Restoration). The agreement establishes a general framework under which NMFS regional observer programs may collect and provide marine debris information to NOS/MDP. This partnership provides a unique opportunity to collect critical information on the impacts (e.g. lost time from fishing, cost of repairs) of marine debris on U.S. commercial fishermen. Individual observer programs may elect to work with the NOS/MDP to develop a program-specific agreement; however, partnering with the NOS/MDP is on a completely voluntary basis.



*Fishing gear entangled in marine debris.
Photo credit: NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office.*

The policy is available online at:

<https://reefshark.nmfs.noaa.gov/f/pds/publicsite/index.cfm>.

Freedom of Information Act Requests

The NOP, with assistance from the regional observer programs, NMFS General Counsel, and the NMFS Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Office, responded to four FOIA requests in FY 2010. The two areas of interest were data confidentiality and observer employment policies. One FOIA request from Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) requested all documented cases of observer non-performance and misconduct including details of specific cases, NOAA policies governing observer evaluations and observer pay, and general data collection protocols governing observer reports.

Two FOIA requests from the Association of Professional Observers (APO) requested all written guidelines and/or rules given to staff of each NMFS observer programs and the National Observer Program with regard to public access to fisheries observer data and information from 1990 to the present, and all documents from the NMFS meetings or workshops on data confidentiality of fisheries observer data and information that took place in April 2003 and January 2008.

A fourth FOIA request was from an individual who requested documents pertaining to funding, coverage levels, and other aspects of observer programs.

In all of the cases, the NOP provided information to fulfill the requests, including written policies and guidelines, historic documents, workshop materials, and observer program manuals. In total, over 3,000 pages of responsive documents were provided to the requestors.

Electronic Monitoring Committee Meeting

The Electronic Monitoring Committee (EMC), a standing committee of the NOPAT, convened its second annual meeting on September 14-16, 2010 in La Jolla, California. Committee members include representatives from NMFS Regional Offices and Science Centers, Observer Programs, and Headquarters Offices.

Meeting objectives included:

- Determine the minimum requirements for an observer program's EM technology usage that can be applied at the national level;
- Select one or two items of the action plan's long-term projects and pursue to completion within one year;
- Identify commonalities between existing regional EM programs that can be standardized across all regional programs and used to improve their data collection/monitoring capabilities;

- Identify a feasible technology that can be developed for widespread use as an example of observer program goals (e.g. fillable PDF forms of observer data logs, or a computerized data entry system).

3.2 International Work

3.2.1 National Observer Program

Capacity Building – West Africa

The Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe (STP), located off the western coast of Africa, has many valuable marine resources within its large EEZ. Several species of sea turtles and marine mammals inhabit the surrounding waters. The country's fishing fleets consist primarily of the coastal artisanal or small-scale fishery and the industrial offshore fishery, which is operated by foreign fleets. To build fisheries management capacity in this region, NOP staff member Teresa Turk worked with the government of the STP to provide technical training through a six-day course entitled "Beginning Fisheries Management." The course, which was conducted in June 2010, provided students with important techniques and biological principles of conservation, management, and sustainable development of their marine aquatic environment. The students were employees from the STP Department of Fisheries, Institute of Maritime and Port Administration, STP Coast Guard, and non-government conservation organization members. NOAA staff were also able to learn about the country's fisheries management system, and identify areas for future collaboration, such as observer training.

3.2.2 Pacific Islands Observer Program

The Pacific Islands unique geographic location enables the regional observer program to provide aid and assistance to Pacific island nations as they develop new or enhanced observer programs. In FY 2010, the program worked with the following countries.

Vietnam: In the January 2010 observer training class, four representatives from the Republic of Vietnam audited the entire course. Representatives were employees of the government of Vietnam and the World Wildlife Fund.

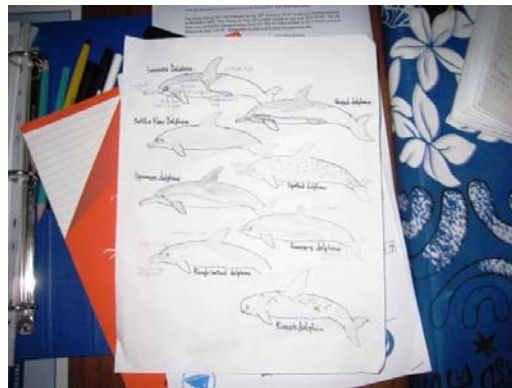
Federated States of Micronesia (FSM): In February and again in September, staff from the Pacific Islands observer program assisted with training observers from the FMS and from the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) regional observer program (ROP). The WCPFC ROP monitors fisheries for highly migratory species in the Western Pacific. Goals include collecting verified catch data, and monitoring the implementation of conservation and management measures adopted by the WCP.

Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI): Staff from the Pacific Islands observer program conducted portions of an observer training in Majuro for the RMI Observer Program and the WCPFC ROP.

Kiribati: A representative of the Pacific Islands observer program conducted portions of an observer training in Tarawa, Kiribati. The observers from this class will aid Kiribati in satisfying its national coverage requirements, as well as sub-regional requirements for the Fisheries Forum Agency (FFA) and the WCPFC.

Brazil: Bruno Giffoni, a representative of the Brazilian conservation organization "Fundacao Pro-Tamar"(Foundation for the Turtles) attended the September 2010 Pacific Islands observer program training course. Mr. Giffoni is working in collaboration with Dr. Yonat Swimmer to improve the Brazilian observer program.

Vanuatu: The Pacific Islands observer program sent two staff members to assist with an FFA observer training in Vanuatu.



(L) Observer training session held in Kiribati. Photo credit: NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office.

(R) Marine mammal identification training materials from Vanuatu observer training class. Photo credit: NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Observer Program.

Debriefing workshop

In addition to providing assistance with regional training, the Pacific Islands observer program hosted an observer debriefing workshop in Cairns, Australia. Delegates from FFA member countries' observer programs attended, as did representatives from FFA, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and WCPFC. Concerns with the FFA debriefing processes were identified, and potential solutions were identified. The SPC regional debriefing policy was updated with input from the group and the workshop. A follow-up workshop will be held in 2011.

4. Regional Observer Program Activities

Observer programs are administered by NMFS Regional Offices and Science Centers around the country (Fig. 2). The funding received by each program is used to conduct existing programs, develop observer programs for new or experimental fisheries, and to perform outreach to industry members and the public. Research priorities and observer coverage levels are determined by the regional programs. Coverage levels are influenced by available funding, the number of active participants in the fishery, fishing conditions, and program goals. For some fisheries, certain mandated coverage or FMP goals must be met. The following sections summarize the FY 2010 achievements of NMFS regional observer programs.

Visit the
National Observer Program at:
www.st.nmfs.gov/st4/nop/index.html
for an interactive map of U.S. fisheries observer programs.

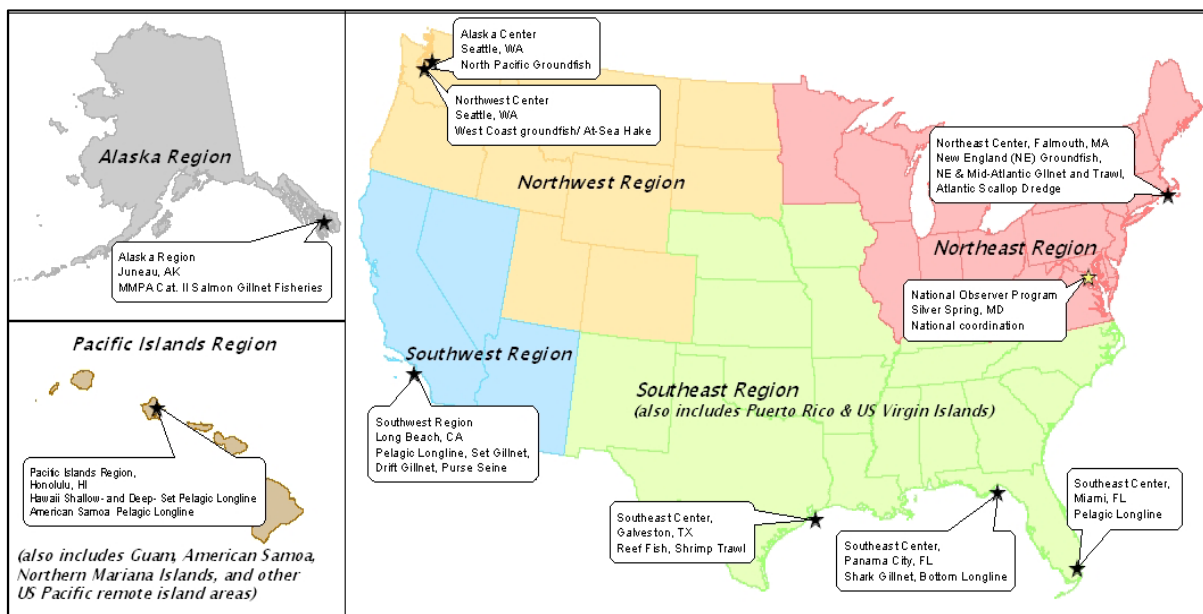


Figure 2. U.S. commercial fishery observer programs (2010) are located in each of six NMFS Regions (Northeast, Southeast, Alaska, Northwest, Southwest, and Pacific Islands), in either a NMFS Regional Office (“Region”) or Science Center (“Center”).

4.1 Alaska

FY 2010 Program Highlights: North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program (NPGOP)

In 2010 the NPGOP celebrated 20 years of observing the domestic groundfish fishery. *Three hundred fifty-one* NPGOP observers were trained, briefed, and equipped for deployment to vessels and processing facilities operating in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries. These observers collected data onboard 303 vessels and at 24 processing facilities for a total of 35,415 days at sea.

The data provided by NPGOP observers enabled the tracking of over 1,500 separate management quotas for Alaska groundfish. The program provides real-time catch estimation for North Pacific groundfish fisheries and is supported through combined NMFS and industry funding. The NMFS allocated approximately \$6,500,000 in observer program funds to the Alaska Fisheries Science Center in 2010, whereas the fishing industry contributed approximately \$13,000,000 to the overall program in payments to NMFS certified contractors for observer salaries, insurance, and travel expenses.

The NPGOP staff members also participated in several meetings of the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC), the NPFMC Observer Advisory subcommittee, and the NPFMC enforcement committee. Program staff have also contributed to several analyses supporting Council decision-making and work closely on many issues with the Alaska Regional Office's and the NPFMC's staff.

Maps of publicly available observer data from the NPGOP are available at: www.afsc.noaa.gov/fma/spatial_data.htm. These maps are designed to provide a better understanding of where groundfish are caught in the Aleutian Islands, Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska. Further information on the program can be found at: <http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/FMA/default.htm>

Observer Program Restructuring

The NMFS, the NPFMC, and the fishing industry made significant progress in addressing longstanding issues related to the structure, scope and funding for the NPGOP. In October of 2010, the Council took final action and selected a restructuring alternative. The restructuring will; 1) establish a system of fees from all vessels less than 100% covered, and 2) provide NMFS the authority to select observers for placement aboard fishing vessels as necessary. The restructured observer program will also implement observer coverage in the halibut fishery for the first time. As a replacement for the existing vessel length-based categories, the selected alternative proposes a two-tier system of coverage. Under the restructured program, NMFS will develop and implement a statistically designed vessel selection process for observer coverage on all vessels that are not covered 100% of the time. This will give NMFS flexibility to decide when and where to deploy observers. An ex-vessel value fee authorized under MSA Section 313(d) will be

implemented for all landings made by vessels with less than 100% coverage. The fee percentage (and the level of Federal funding, if available) will determine the program's budget and will directly affect coverage levels in the fisheries covered by the program and costs paid by industry. This action addresses a long-standing recommendation by the Department Of Commerce Office of the Inspector General, which directs NMFS to work with the North Pacific Council to establish a scientifically valid and unbiased vessel selection process for obtaining observer coverage.

The NPGOP is currently working with the NPFMC and their Observer Advisory Committee to develop the regulations that will implement these changes to the observer program. The rule-making phase of this project will be conducted in 2011 and 2012, with a potential implementation in 2013, depending, in part, on start-up funding being available. More information on restructuring can be found on the North Pacific Council website: www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/npfmc/current_issues/observer/observer.htm

United States Coast Guard (USCG) Report on the Alaska Ranger Sinking

The USCG final report on the sinking of the F/V Alaska Ranger in 2008 was released on December 20th 2010. Two observers from the North Pacific Program were on board this vessel and both were successfully rescued from life rafts by a commercial vessel, the F/V Alaska Warrior, assisting in the search and rescue. The USCG report specifically noted in recommendation 32 that "NMFS should be commended for ensuring fisheries observers are provided with personal EPIRBs and properly sized survival suits." The Commandant of the USCG concurred with this recommendation and noted that "an opportunity for more formal recognition will be explored." The report highlights the danger of commercial fishing and NMFS' concerted efforts to ensure fisheries observers are prepared to respond in emergency situations. The report noted other issues which NMFS is considering. This sinking was also documented in a 2010 book, *The Deadliest Sea* by Kaylee Thompson, which offers personal perspectives on this tragic event.

The Report of Investigation may be downloaded from the USCG's Office of Investigations and Analysis Web site at <http://homeport.uscg.mil>. Click on Investigations, then Marine Casualty Reports.

The Development of Amendment 91 to the Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Fishery Management Plan (FMP)

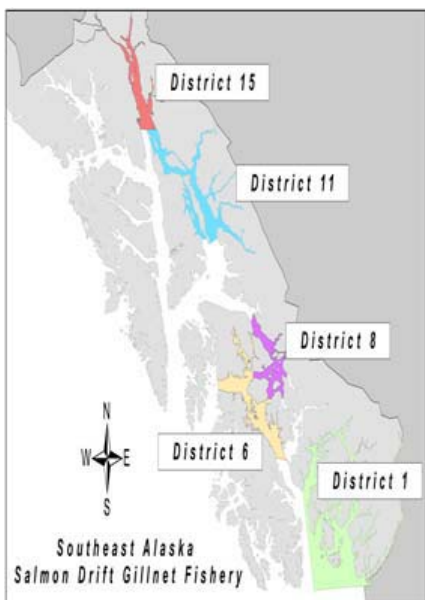
In 2010, the NPGOP was also actively engaged in the planning and rule-making to implement Amendment 91 to the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands FMP. This amendment implemented a cap on the bycatch of Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) in the pollock fishery and required an extensive re-working of the observer data collections to support the need for highly accurate counts of salmon. The program supports an extensive tissue collection from salmon that is used in genetic studies on the stock composition of the bycaught salmon.

Redesigned Bird Data Collections

The NPGOP released a redesigned data collection system in 2010; major changes were made to the information collected on seabirds. While the program has for many years included seabirds in the observer database, a considerable amount of other information on seabird interactions was recorded in hand written notes and comments. The practice of recording information in hand written notes made it very difficult to access, compile, and interpret the information. Observer program staff reviewed these data collections and established defined processes for the collection, recording, debriefing, and inclusion of seabird interaction data in the system. Beginning in 2010, NPGOP seabird information collections are now organized, quality control checked, and stored in a database accessible to end users.

FY 2010 Program Highlights: Alaska Marine Mammal Observer Program (AMMOP)

Of the fourteen MMPA Category II³ fisheries managed by the State of Alaska, eight have been observed by the AMMOP since its establishment in 1990, including the Prince William Sound drift and set gillnet fisheries (1990-91), the Alaska Peninsula drift gillnet fishery (1990), the Cook Inlet drift and set gillnet fisheries (1999-2000), the Kodiak set gillnet fishery (2002 and 2005), and the Yakutat set gillnet fishery (2007 - 2009). Data collected during these rotational observation periods are used in marine mammal stock assessments to estimate annual serious injury and mortality and to categorize fisheries in the annual MMPA List of Fisheries.



Map of Southeast Alaska gillnet fishery areas scheduled for observation beginning in 2012-2013.

Observations of the Southeast Alaska Gillnet Fishery

In 2010, preparatory work for 2012 observations of the Southeast Alaska drift gillnet fishery (approximately 480 active permits) was initiated. Because of the large geographic range of the fishery, its five management areas will be observed individually for two years, except for two adjacent management areas that will be observed together. The total time frame expected for observing this fishery will be eight years. A new sampling design approach has also been developed to increase efficiency of data collection and reduce cost. Data collected from this fishery will be important relative to concerns over humpback whale and harbor porpoise takes.

³ An MMPA Category II fishery has occasional incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals.

4.2. Northwest

In FY 2010, the Northwest Regional observer programs (West Coast Groundfish (WCGOP) and At-Sea Hake (ASHOP)) received \$6,448,985 in funding (Appendix A gives details). A total of 2,711 days at sea was observed in Northwest Regional fisheries. Fisheries observed in FY 2010 included the West Coast limited entry groundfish fisheries (trawl and fixed gear), at-sea hake, and state-managed and open-access fisheries. Observer salaries and benefits in the at-sea hake fishery are paid to private observer providers by fishery participants. The cost to at-sea hake participants for observer coverage totaled \$360,600 in FY10. In 2010, the program also experienced an increase in coverage in the pink shrimp fisheries (Oregon and Washington), an increase in open access activity in California, and a relatively storm free season, resulting in an overall increase in the number of observed days at sea.

The observer program also provided data to the Groundfish Management Team of the Pacific Fishery Management Council, enabling them to project fishing impacts throughout the year. Yearly observer data reports and summary analyses for many of these fisheries are available on the Northwest Fisheries Science Center's webpage: www.nwfsc.noaa.gov.

FY2010 Program Highlight

West Coast Groundfish: Trawl Rationalization

The NMFS has approved new catch share measures for the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Amendment 20 describes trawl rationalization and Amendment 21 specifies inter-sector allocations. The new regulations establish formal allocations for limited entry trawl participants and procedures for initial permit issuance, endorsements, and quota shares. These regulations are designed to increase net economic benefit, create individual economic stability, provide full utilization of the trawl sector allocation, consider environmental impacts, and achieve individual accountability of catch and bycatch.

Regulations implementing these changes were developed in 2010. Under this planned program, permit owners will be allocated a portion of the overall annual catch limit. These allocations, referred to as "individual trawl quotas" can be bought, sold, or traded. The trawl rationalization program replaces a system under which fishermen were subject to set catch limits for certain periods of time; fish caught in excess of these limits had to be discarded. The West Coast Groundfish Trawl Catch Share Program, also known as trawl rationalization, began January 11, 2011. Under the new program, 100% observer coverage is required on all vessels participating in the rationalized fishery. A proposed rule published in the Federal Register on August 31, 2010 (75 FR 53380) provides details of proposed observer coverage requirements.

Fisheries requiring coverage are:

- Shorebased Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Program—including trawl and non-trawl gear, Pacific hake (whiting) and non-hake;
- Motherships receiving deliveries of Pacific hake;
- Mothership catcher-vessels fishing for Pacific hake;
- Catcher-processors fishing for Pacific hake.

With the implementation of the West Coast Trawl Catch Share Program, the WCGOP will have observer coverage responsibilities in both the rationalized and non-rationalized fishery. The WCGOP will continue observing the limited entry fixed gear and open access fisheries. Observers will continue to be funded by NMFS, including sea days, gear, etc., and the WCGOP will continue to handle all logistics, trainings, and data quality assurance. Observers for the non-catch share fisheries will be supplied by one observer contractor through a grant with Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC).

In the Trawl Catch Share fisheries, the WCGOP and ASHOP will:

- Train observers;
- Ensure data quality;
- Supply observer gear including motion-compensated flatbed scales, laptops, safety and sampling gear;
- Maintain and store collected data;
- Analyze data

Vessels will contract with a North Pacific permitted observer provider for observer coverage. At this time, approximately 90% of the cost of observer sea days will be paid with federal funds.

Implementation of the Trawl Catch Share fishery represents a significant work load increase for the WCGOP. Trainings have increased significantly from one full observer training per year to at least eight full trainings per year. The amount of observer data collected and requiring entry and review will also increase significantly as coverage in the shoreside hake fishery, which previously had 100% video monitoring, increases to 100% observer coverage. Additional data will be collected in the fisheries new to the WCGOP, the shorebased hake and mothership-catcher vessel fisheries.

Data availability is a huge concern in catch share fisheries. Therefore, the program is working to increase efficiency in data collection. This task includes developing an off-line database module that will allow observers to enter their data on the vessels. In addition, the WCGOP is reviewing data documentation to streamline, simplify, and reduce errors. Finally, development of a "Draft Trip Summary Receipt" that can be given to the fishers concurrently with their landing receipts is underway.

4.3. Southwest

The Southwest Region receives the majority of its observer programs funds through the National Observer Program and Reducing Bycatch budget lines. In FY 2010 the Southwest Region Observer Program received \$1,131,483 for its observer programs. Funding was used to provide observer coverage for several fisheries along the Pacific Coast, including the California/Oregon pelagic drift gillnet fishery and the California pelagic longline fishery. In January 2010, the program expanded to include the California set gillnet fishery. During the summer of 2010 some trips in the small mesh gillnet fishery were also monitored using Take Reduction Program (TRP) funds. A total of 148 days at sea were observed in these fisheries.

Summary observer program reports for the drift gillnet fishery are posted online at: <http://swr.nmfs.noaa.gov/psd/codgftac.htm>.

FY 2010 Program Highlights

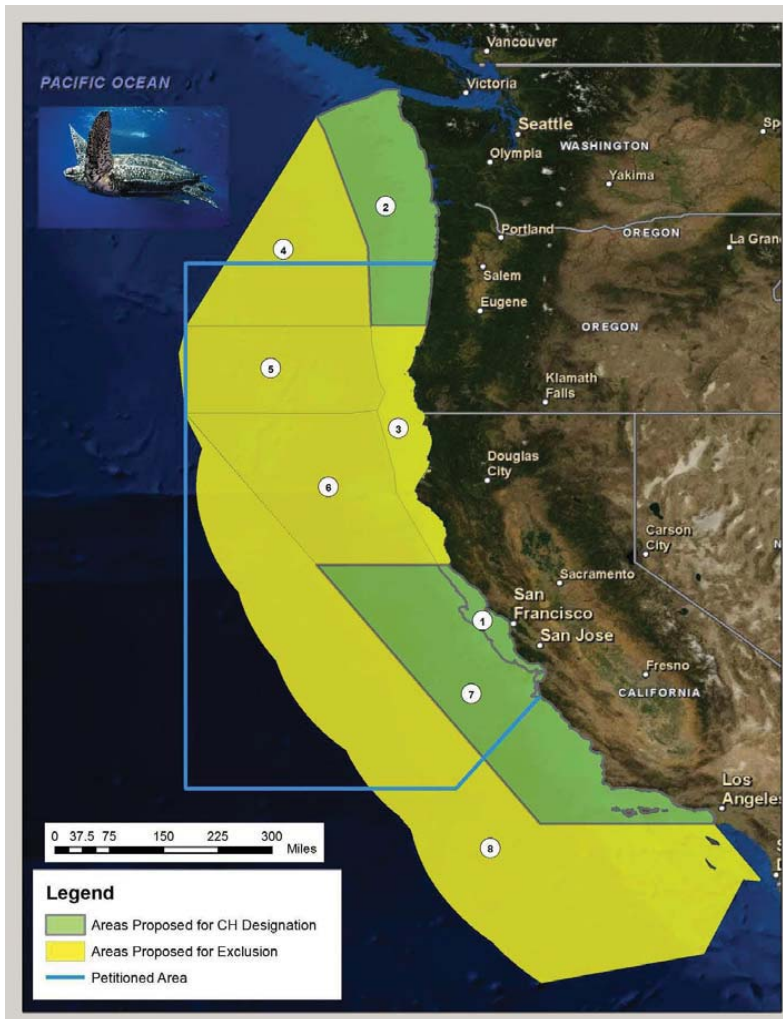
Highly Migratory Species

Summarized from the Pacific Council's winter 2010 newsletter (<http://www.pcouncil.org/>)

In 2010, the Pacific Fisheries Management Council recommended a change to Federal regulations for swordfish caught incidentally in the deep-set tuna longline fishery. These regulations were proposed for consistency with similar regulations in the Western Pacific. Fishermen from both regions are active on the same fishing grounds; limits on swordfish retained would depend on the type of hook being used, and whether observers are present. If a vessel is carrying an observer, there would be no limit on the number of swordfish caught since unanticipated problems resulting from higher swordfish retention would be fully monitored and could be addressed as needed.

Designating Critical Habitat for Endangered Sea Turtles

In 2010, NMFS published a proposed rule to designate critical habitat in the U.S. West Coast EEZ for the endangered leatherback sea turtle. This action was in response to a petition from several conservation organizations. Critical habitat is defined in the ESA as areas whose physical and biological features are essential to the conservation of a species, and which may require special management considerations or protection. Three areas are proposed for designation covering approximately 70,000 square miles. Information on sea turtle sightings and interactions collected by the Southwest Region Observer Program was utilized in identifying areas for potential designation. Comments on the proposed rule were due in April, 2010.



Map of proposed critical habitat area for leatherback sea turtles in the U.S. Pacific EEZ. Map courtesy of the Pacific Fisheries Management Council.

4.4 Pacific Islands

The \$7,571,128 in funding received in FY 2010 for the Pacific Islands fishery observer programs supported coverage for three fisheries: the Hawaii pelagic longline tuna fishery (deep-set), the Hawaii pelagic longline swordfish fishery (shallow-set), and the American Samoa pelagic longline fishery. A total of 6,209 days at sea was observed. Work also continued on updating and integrating the Pacific Islands observer data system with the longline data system (Appendix A provides details).

All of the Pacific Islands observer programs focus on monitoring interactions between commercial fisheries and sea turtles (e.g. loggerhead, leatherback, and green sea turtles), sea bird, and marine mammals. Data and specimens collected by observers are provided to the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center after careful review by observer program staff. These data are used by Center biologists for stock assessment evaluation and to calculate official bycatch estimates for marine mammals and sea turtles, which are provided in quarterly reports.

Reports from the Pacific Islands Region Observer Program are available online at: http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/OBS/obs_qtrly_annual_rprts.html.

FY 2010 Program Highlights

Increased Observer Coverage in American Samoa

The Pacific Islands regional observer program received additional funding in 2010, and increased observer coverage in the American Samoa longline fishery to a range of 7-12% in 2010. Interactions with endangered and threatened sea turtle species have been reported, even at the previously lower levels of coverage. Additional information is necessary to conduct an ESA Section 7 consultation to determine the impact of this fishery's bycatch on sea turtles. However, the increased data collection is dependent on the additional funding received.

Currently, the program uses the majority of its funds to meet required coverage levels in the shallow- and deep-set Hawaiian longline fisheries.



*American Samoa – harbor.
Photo credit: NMFS Pacific Islands Regional*

False Killer Whale Take Reduction



False killer whale.
Photo credit: NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office.

In January 2010, NMFS established a Take Reduction Team (TRT) to address the incidental mortality and serious injury of false killer whales (*Pseudorca crassidens*) in the Hawaii-based deep-set and shallow-set longline fisheries. The main source of data for estimating mortalities and serious injuries of marine mammals incidental to the Hawaii-based longline fisheries is from the Pacific Islands observer program. Data

collected by fishery observers can be used to determine the rate and severity of false killer whale-longline fishery interactions, as well as the distribution and genetic structure of the population. This information was critical to developing TRT measures, and will be important in evaluating their success.

The final False Killer Whale TRP, with more information on observer program related-data collection recommendations, can be found at:
www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/interactions/trt/falsekillerwhale.htm.

Also in 2010, NMFS completed a status review of false killer whale stocks that determined that the Hawaiian insular false killer whale is a genetically distinct population (referred to as the "Hawaiian insular" population). After evaluating threats facing the species, and considering efforts being made to protect the Hawaiian insular population, NMFS determined that the Hawaiian insular population is declining and is in danger of extinction throughout its range. Observer data, particularly tissue samples taken from incidentally caught whales, as well as fishery-independent samples, were used in establishing that separate populations of false killer whales occurred in Hawaiian waters. In the future, observer coverage will remain critical to monitoring this population.

Information on the false killer whale status determination and designation of the Hawaiian Insular population can be found at:
www.fpir.noaa.gov/PRD/prd_false_killer_whale.html.

4.5 Northeast

In FY 2010, the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program (NEFOP) received a total of approximately \$17,022,406 in program funding, including \$1,423,500 in industry funding for the Atlantic sea scallop industry-funded observer program. In the scallop fishery, to help offset the costs of observers, the industry also used 189,985 pounds and 95.5 days-at-sea in observer set asides. Over 12,400 sea days were observed through six monitoring programs: New England groundfish trawl and sink gillnet fisheries; Mid Atlantic coastal gillnet fisheries; New England and Mid-Atlantic small mesh trawl fisheries; Mid Atlantic *Illex* squid trawl; New England and Mid-Atlantic large mesh trawl fisheries; and the Atlantic sea scallop dredge fishery (Appendix A provides details). The New England Fishery Management Council's Multispecies FMP includes mandatory observer coverage requirements for several fisheries: the NEFOP provides this coverage in addition to collecting data on gear performance and characteristics and monitoring experimental fisheries. Reports from the NEFOP are posted at: www.nefsc.noaa.gov/femad/fishsamp/fsb/.

FY 2010 Program Highlights

Northeast Multispecies Groundfish Monitoring

Under Amendment 16 to the Multispecies Groundfish FMP, management measures shifted from an effort control process to an output-based process. These regulations became effective on May 1, 2010 as part of a broad suite of measures to meet MSA annual catch limits and allocation requirements. This implementation is a step to help end overfishing and rebuild overfished groundfish stocks, increasing the value and sustainability of fishery resources in the region.

Under the new management approach, fishermen are able to choose to fish under the existing days-at-sea and trip limits management measures or to join a "sector" and fish with quota allocations and increased monitoring and reporting requirements. The term "sector" was defined under Amendment 13 to the Multispecies FMP in 2009 as a group of self-selecting fishermen participating in a fishery. Sector members are granted a percentage allocation (referred to as an Annual Catch Entitlement, or ACE) for the majority of stocks managed under the Multispecies FMP. Generally the ACEs are allotted based on catch history. Quota can be sold or traded between sectors. Sectors were also given the responsibility for hiring their own managers to track the incoming data and to report back to NMFS and sector members on catch amounts in relation to the ACEs.

To adequately manage quotas, all catch, including landings and discards, must be accounted for in weekly and annual reports. Extensive monitoring requirements including vessel monitoring systems (VMS), increased observer coverage, dealer and landings reports, and dockside landings monitors are necessary to facilitate the new management system. The existing NEFOP was expanded to include a new component of "at-sea monitors," whose data could

be used to estimate total catch by calculating and applying a discard ratio. Although both the at-sea monitors and the traditional fisheries observer program are managed by the NEFOP, data collection duties for the at-sea monitors were reduced to promote cost savings and allow for higher overall coverage levels. In 2010, the program trained 100 new at-sea monitors to supplement the existing observers.

Because the sector programs rely on the availability of data in real time, the information collected by observers and at-sea monitors is entered into an electronic data collection system. The data are transferred directly to the sector manager on a weekly basis. The sector manager can then determine whether the sector is nearing its catch limits. The Northeast Fisheries Science Center also receives the data for use in stock assessments and protected species bycatch analyses.

Implementation of sectors in FY 2010 was not without its difficulties. Some fishermen felt that their allocations were not enough to make a successful living from. The demands upon NMFS staff, both in the regional office and science center, and upon the observer program (which increased coverage requirements from 8% to 38%), were significant. Although the new management system has created a number of challenges, NMFS and Council staff continue working with the industry to effectively implement and manage groundfish sectors.

4.6. Southeast

In FY 2010 Southeast Regional observer programs were allocated \$6,641,212. A total of 4,909 sea days were observed by the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico shrimp otter trawl; Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean pelagic longline; Gulf of Mexico reef fish; shark gillnet and shark bottom longline observer programs (Appendix A provides details).

Reports from the shark gillnet and shark bottom longline observer program are posted on NMFS Panama City Laboratory's webpage: www.pclab.noaa.gov/content/60_Observer_Programs/Observer_Programs.php; while reports from the Pelagic Observer Program can be found at www.sefsc.noaa.gov/pop.jsp. The Galveston laboratory's publications (shrimp trawl and reef fish observer programs) can be found at www.galveston.ssp.nmfs.gov/publications/index.asp

FY 2010 Program Highlights

Deepwater Horizon

The Deepwater Horizon oil spill began in April 2010. As part of NOAA's response, and in order to monitor the impacts of the spill upon wildlife and fisheries, the SEFSC deployed eight observers from the Galveston programs to work on projects involving sea turtle and marine mammal damage assessment and for sea turtle rescue work. The SEFSC also deployed observers to work on seafood safety, collecting fish samples for tissue

analysis from 186 sets. The SEFSC hired and trained new observers so that observer coverage required under fisheries regulations could be maintained.

More information on NOAA's Deepwater Horizon response can be found at: www.response.restoration.noaa.gov/dwh.php?entry_id=809

Expanded observations of the Southeast Reef Fish Fishery

All sea turtle species are listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA. Bottom longline gear used in the Gulf of Mexico takes sea turtles as bycatch. Data from observer coverage during 2006-2008 showed a level of turtle interactions exceeding authorized levels in the reef fish fishery. The SEFSC reef fish observer program and the shark bottom longline program began expanded observer coverage in the Gulf of Mexico in March, 2010. A temporary increase in funding for the reef fish fishery allowed for coverage increases from 1% to 3%, supporting better estimates of sea turtle bycatch. The increased observer coverage will also help to ensure the continued operation of the reef fish fishery in the long term, without jeopardizing sea turtles.

Research activities

SEFSC observers were also deployed on three science projects in the Southeast during 2010. First, observers were provided to the SEFSC's Beaufort, North Carolina laboratory to help in data collection activities on commercial reef fish vessels. The objective was to determine whether red snapper from high-current, continental shelf-break waters are, on average, more abundant, older and larger than those from shelf waters. A total of 96 hauls were observed on commercial longline vessels, and over 200 biological samples were collected. Second, observers were provided to the Seafood Alliance (www.seafoodchoices.com/home.php) to collect data from for-hire vessels in the same locations as a fishery independent reef fish video monitoring program. The observer data will be used to verify data collected using the video system. Once calibrated, data collected through the video system can be used in assessment activities. Third, a project funded under the Bycatch Reduction and Engineering Program (BREP) utilized observers in the commercial bottom longline fishery to deploy hook timers and archival satellite tags to determine alternate fishing practices that will aid in reducing the bycatch and mortality of prohibited dusky shark, endangered smalltooth sawfish, and sea turtles.

5. Looking Ahead: NMFS Observer Programs' 2011 Goals

In FY 2011, work on implementing the National Catch Share Policy and evaluating its impacts will continue. The first full year of data from the Northeast Multispecies sector program will be available. At least one new catch share program (Northwest Groundfish Trawl) will become operational. Catch share programs for other fisheries are being considered, and progress towards implementation is also expected in the coming year. Fisheries observer programs will continue to provide the data on catch and bycatch necessary to monitor the quotas under which catch shares are managed. Work on identifying new electronic monitoring technologies to further enhance fisheries coverage will also continue. NMFS observer programs will also continue to work in the international community, using their 40-plus years of experience to help developing countries build stronger monitoring programs and promote sustainable use of marine resources abroad as well as at home.

APPENDIX A: NMFS Fisheries Observer Programs Funded in FY 2010

Regional and National observer program activities are funded through a number of dedicated Congressional budget lines (Table A1). The Reducing Bycatch line is split between the Office of Science and Technology for observer activities and the Office of Sustainable Fisheries for bycatch technology research. The Office of Science and Technology portion of the Reducing Bycatch line, along with the National Observer Program line, are equally allocated to the regional programs and used for observer coverage, program infrastructure, and National Bycatch Report development. The National Observer Program retains some funds from these lines to support national program activities. Other Federal funds may be used to support observer program activities, including monies appropriated by Congress to support the MMPA, MSA, and ESA.

Table A1. Congressional budget lines supporting observer programs, FY 2010

	Budget Line Item	Line Total	
A portion is allocated to regional programs (See Table A2)	National Observer Program	\$8,814,177	
	Reducing Bycatch	\$1,756,745	
	West Coast Observers	\$5,047,947	
	North Pacific Marine Resource Observers	\$5,726,268	
	Hawaii Longline Observer Program	\$7,092,900	
	New England Groundfish Court-Ordered Observers	\$8,685,306	
	East Coast Observers	\$354,645	
	Atlantic Coast Observers	\$3,480,516	
	South Atlantic/ Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Observers	\$1,831,167	
	<hr/>		
		Total Congressional Funding (all sources)	\$42,789,671

Table A2. Detailed National and Regional observer program funding (FY 2010).

Fisheries Observed	Fleet Size	Authority to Place Observers	Season of Operation	Funding Amount	Funding Source	Program Duration	Target % Coverage	Actual % Coverage	Target Sea Days	Actual Sea Days	Number of Observers
PACIFIC OCEAN											
North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program, Alaska Fisheries Science Center, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115-0070											
Program Manager: Martin Loefflad, 206-526-4195, martin.loefflad@noaa.gov, website: http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/refm/observers/											
Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Trawl, Longline and Pot Fisheries	303 vessels / 24 shore plants	MSFCMA (50 CFR 679.50)	year-round	\$492,162	National Observer Program	1973 - present	100% vessels >125 ft.	100% vessels >125 ft.	Defined by regulation (35,000)	35,415	351
				\$412,396	Reducing Bycatch						
				\$5,693,800	Obs/Trn-North Pacific Marine Resource Observers/ North Pacific Observer Program ¹						
				\$0	Fisheries Management Program						
				\$13,000,000	Industry Funding						
Data to assess the current actual coverage in the 30% fleet are not available, and compliance with the requirement has been an enforcement function. The North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program uses observer days rather than observer sea days, because the coverage regulations require observers to be stationed at shoreside plants as well as on vessels. ¹ Portion of budget line used to support management activities											
Alaska Marine Mammal Observer Program, Alaska Regional Office, P. O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668											
Southeast Alaska drift gillnet fishery	480 permits	MMPA Cat. II (50 CFR 229)	May - Oct	\$370,823	National Observer Program	0	0	0	0	0	0
				\$2,942	Reducing Bycatch						
Alaska Regional Office				\$13,000	Obs/Trn-North Pacific Marine Resource Observers/ North Pacific Observer Program ¹						
Program Manager: Bridget Mansfield, 907-586-7642, bridget.mansfield@noaa.gov, website: http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/protectedresources/observers/mmop.htm											
TOTAL ALASKA REGION OBSERVER PROGRAM FUNDING (CONGRESSIONAL): \$6,985,123											
TOTAL ALASKA REGION OBSERVER PROGRAM FUNDING (INDUSTRY): \$13,000,000											
TOTAL ALASKA REGION OBSERVER PROGRAM FUNDING (ALL SOURCES): \$19,985,123											

Fisheries Observed	Fleet Size	Authority to Place Observers	Season of Operation	Funding Amount	Funding Source	Program Duration	Target % Coverage	Actual % Coverage	Target Sea Days	Actual Sea Days	Number of Observers
West Coast Groundfish Observer Program, Northwest Fisheries Science Center, 2725 Montlake Blvd East, Seattle, WA 98112-2097											
Program Manager: Janell Majewski, 206-860-3293, janell.majewski@noaa.gov; website: http://www.nwfsc.noaa.gov/research/divisions/fram/observer/											
West Coast Groundfish Limited Entry Fleets (trawl and fixed gear)	179 trawl, 190 longline, 30 trap permits	MSFCMA (50 CFR 660)	year-round	\$669,299	National Observer Program	2001 - present	10-20%	15-25%	1,900	2,711	43
				\$5,029,165	Obs/Trn-West Coast Observers						
State Managed and Open Access Fisheries (includes California halibut trawl, nearshore rockfish, pink shrimp, prawn and open access fixed gear fisheries)	approx. 1,000	MSFCMA (50 CFR 660)	year-round	included in groundfish		2001 - present	<1 - 10%	3 - 8%	500	751	included in groundfish
At-Sea Hake Mid-Water Trawl Fishery	15 vessels	MSFCMA (50 CFR 660)	May - Dec	\$189,921	Reducing Bycatch	1975 - present	100%	100%	Defined by regulation (100% coverage, 2 observers)	1,772	31
				\$200,000	National Observer Program						
				\$360,600	Industry Funding						
TOTAL NORTHWEST REGION OBSERVER PROGRAM FUNDING (CONGRESSIONAL): \$6,088,385											
TOTAL NORTHWEST REGION OBSERVER PROGRAM FUNDING (INDUSTRY): \$360,000											
TOTAL NORTHWEST REGION OBSERVER PROGRAM FUNDING (ALL SOURCES): \$6,448,985											

Fisheries Observed	Fleet Size	Authority to Place Observers	Season of Operation	Funding Amount	Funding Source	Program Duration	Target % Coverage	Actual % Coverage	Target Sea Days	Actual Sea Days	Number of Observers
Southwest Region Observer Program, Southwest Regional Office, 501 West Ocean Blvd, Long Beach, CA 90802-4213											
Program Manager: Lyle Enriquez, 562-980-4025, lyle.enriquez@noaa.gov, website: http://swr.ucsd.edu/hcd/fishobs.htm											
California/Oregon Pelagic Drift Gillnet Fishery	40 vessels	MMPA Cat. I (50 CFR 229), MSFCMA (50 CFR 660)	Aug - Jan	\$513,838	National Observer Program	1990 - present	20%	14%	244	148	7
				\$53,962	MSA						
California Pelagic Longline Fishery	1 vessel	MSFCMA (50 CFR 660)	Nov - May	\$187,367	Reducing Bycatch	2001 - present	100%	100%	160	127	2
				\$22,521	EASA Biological Sampling						
Southern California Set Gillnet	50 vessels	MMPA Cat. II (50 CFR 229)	Jan - Dec	\$53,962	National Observer Program	1990 - 1994,	20%		83	73	4
Southern California Small-Mesh Drift Gillnet	30 vessels	MMPA Cat. II (50 CFR 229)	Jun - Sep	\$40,450	National Observer Program	2002 - 2005, 2010	20%		50	17	2
SWC Data Management and Bycatch Estimates				\$9,383	Obs/Tm-New England Groundfish						
				\$250,000	National Observer Program						
TOTAL SOUTHWEST REGION OBSERVER PROGRAM FUNDING (CONGRESSIONAL): \$1,131,483											
TOTAL SOUTHWEST REGION OBSERVER PROGRAM FUNDING (INDUSTRY): NA											
TOTAL SOUTHWEST REGION OBSERVER PROGRAM FUNDING (ALL SOURCES): \$1,131,483											

Fisheries Observed	Fleet Size	Authority to Place Observers	Season of Operation	Funding Amount	Funding Source	Program Duration	Target % Coverage	Actual % Coverage	Target Sea Days	Actual Sea Days	Number of Observers
Hawaii Fisheries Observer Program, Pacific Islands Regional Office, 1601 Kapiolani Blvd, Honolulu, HI 96814-4700											
Program Manager: John Kelly, 808-973-2935, john.d.kelly@noaa.gov, website: http://swr.nmfs.noaa.gov/pir/index.htm											
Hawaii Pelagic Longline Fishery	164 vessels with permits (112 active)	MSFCMA (50 CFR 660)	year-round	\$6,885,565	Obs/Trn-Hawaii Longline Observers	1994 - present	20% Tuna	20%	Fleet Dependent	6,209	60
							100% swordfish	100%	Fleet Dependent	3,341	60
American Samoa Pelagic Longline fishery	30	MSFCMA (50 CFR 660) in Jan. 2005	year-round	\$244,844	National Observer Program	2005-present	20%	7-12%	Fleet Dependent	764	2
				\$0	Hawaii Sea Turtles	2009 present					
Program support for the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission	NA	NA	year-round	\$187,290	Reducing Bycatch	2008	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Developing and Adapting LODS to Enable the Integration of Observer and Logbook Data	NA	NA	year-round	\$129,740	National Observer Program	2007 - present	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Maintenance and Upgrading LODS for Hawaii and Amer Samoa Pelagic Longline Fishery	NA	NA	year-round	\$123,688	National Observer Program	2007 - present	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
TOTAL PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION OBSERVER PROGRAM FUNDING (CONGRESSIONAL): \$7,571,128											
TOTAL PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION OBSERVER PROGRAM FUNDING (INDUSTRY): NA											
TOTAL PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION OBSERVER PROGRAM FUNDING (ALL SOURCES): \$7,571,128											

ATLANTIC OCEAN, GULF OF MEXICO, CARIBBEAN

Fisheries Observed	Fleet Size	Authority to Place Observers	Season of Operation	Funding Amount	Funding Source	Program Duration	Target % Coverage	Actual % Coverage	Target Sea Days	Actual Sea Days	Number of Observers
Northeast Fisheries Observer Program, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, 166 Water Street, Woods Hole, MA 02543-1097											
Program Manager: Amy Van Atten, 508-495-2266, amy.van.atten@noaa.gov, website: http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/femad/fsb/											
New England Groundfish Trawl and Sink Gillnet Fisheries (also shrimp trawl, bottom longline/tub, herring mid-water pair trawl, whiting trawl)	1,052 trawl vessels and 474 gillnet vessels and 46 longline	MSFCMA (50 CFR 648); MMPA Cat. I, II, III (50 CFR 229)	year-round	\$8,618,323	Obs/Trn-New England Groundfish	1990 - present	30% coefficient of variation on bycatch species; 30% for groundfish common pool; 38% for groundfish sectors; 20% herring	Coverage rates are close to target coverage	Targets are set by SBRM (April through March), based on CV and adjusted for funding availability and/or resource set-aside	6,849	195
				\$3,848,066	National Observer Program						
Mid-Atlantic Coastal Gillnet Fishery (includes monkfish, dogfish, and several state fisheries)	>670 vessels	MMPA Cat. I (50 CFR 229)	year-round	\$1,423,597	Marine Mammal Observers	1994 - present	30% coefficient of variation on bycatch species (SBRM)	<8%	see above	1,146	included in groundfish
NE and Mid-Atlantic Small Mesh Trawl Fisheries (squid, mackerel, butterfish)	719 permits	MMPA Cat. II (50 CFR 229.7); MSFCMA (50 CFR 648)	year-round	\$1,521,628	Atlantic Coast Observers	2001 - present	30% coefficient of variation on bycatch species (SBRM)	<8%	see above	755	included in groundfish
Mid-Atlantic Illex Squid Trawl Fishery	76 permits	MSFCMA (50 CFR 648); MMPA Cat. II (50 CFR 229)	year-round	\$0	Included in Atl. Coast Observers	2004 - present	30% coefficient of variation on bycatch species (SBRM)	<5%	see above	170	included in groundfish

Fisheries Observed	Fleet Size	Authority to Place Observers	Season of Operation	Funding Amount	Funding Source	Program Duration	Target % Coverage	Actual % Coverage	Target Sea Days	Actual Sea Days	Number of Observers
Atlantic Sea Scallop Dredge Fishery	233 vessels	MSFCMA (50 CFR 648)	year-round	\$1,423,500	Industry Funding	1999 - present	2-13% depending on permit type, area fished, and turtle takes	Coverage rates are close to target coverage	see above	2,250	included in groundfish
				\$187,292	Reducing Bycatch						
NE and Mid-Atlantic Large Mesh Trawl Fisheries (summer flounder, bluefish, monkfish, dogfish)	>1,000	MSFCMA (50 CFR 648)	year-round	\$0	Included in Atl. Coast Observers and Groundfish	1998 - present	30% coefficient of variation on bycatch species (SBRM)	<5%	see above	1,239	included in groundfish
TOTAL NORTHEAST REGION OBSERVER PROGRAM FUNDING (CONGRESSIONAL): \$15,598,906											
TOTAL NORTHEAST REGION OBSERVER PROGRAM FUNDING (INDUSTRY): \$1,423,500											
TOTAL NORTHEAST REGION OBSERVER PROGRAM FUNDING (ALL SOURCES): \$17,022,406											

Fisheries Observed	Fleet Size	Authority to Place Observers	Season of Operation	Funding Amount	Funding Source	Program Duration	Target % Coverage	Actual % Coverage	Target Sea Days	Actual Sea Days	Number of Observers
Southeast Fisheries Observer Programs - Programs are managed in separate laboratories as indicated below.											
Southeast Shrimp Trawl Observer Program, Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Galveston Laboratory, 4700 Avenue U, Galveston, TX 77551-5997											
Program Manager: Elizabeth Scott-Denton, 409-766-3571, elizabeth.scott-denton@noaa.gov, website:http://galveston.ssp.nmfs.gov/galv/research/management.htm#observer_program											
Southeast and Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Otter Trawl Fisheries (including rock shrimp)	approx. 1,511 (GOM) and 544 (SA) USCG federally permitted vessels, unknown number of state vessels, ~105 rock shrimp vessels	Voluntary through July 2007; Mandatory - July 2007 MSFCMA (50 CFR 635)	year-round	\$234,741	National Observer Program	1992 - present	2%	~2%	1,728	1,641	25
				\$1,821,908	Obs/Trn-South Atlantic and Gulf Shrimp Observers						
				\$220,000	Obs/Trn-Atlantic Coast Observers						
Atlantic Pelagic Longline Observer Program, Southeast Fisheries Science Center, 75 Virginia Beach Dr, Miami, FL 33149-1003											
Program Manager: Lawrence Beerkircher, 305-361-4247, lawrence.r.beerkircher@noaa.gov, website: http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/											
Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean Pelagic Longline Fishery	70-80 active vessels	MSFCMA (50 CFR 635); MMPA Cat. I (50 CFR 229); ATCA	year-round	\$1,293,958	Obs/Trn-Atlantic Coast Observers	1992 - present	8% by vessel sets	~10%	740 vessel sets	1,517	10 (regular season), 23 enhanced bluefin coverage
				\$354,645	Obs/Trn - East Coast Observers						
				\$1,100,000	Enhanced Bluefin Tuna						

Fisheries Observed	Fleet Size	Authority to Place Observers	Season of Operation	Funding Amount	Funding Source	Program Duration	Target % Coverage	Actual % Coverage	Target Sea Days	Actual Sea Days	Number of Observers
Southeast Shark Driftnet Observer Program & Shark Bottom Longline Observer Program, Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Panama City Laboratory, 3500 Delwood Beach Rd, Panama City, FL 32408											
Program Manager: Dr. John Carlson, 850-234-6541, john.carlson@noaa.gov, website: www.wefscpanamalab.noaa.gov/shark/observersBLL.htm											
Southeast Shark and Coastal Teleost Gillnet Fishery	4-23 vessels with directed shark permits	MMPA Cat. II (50 CFR 229); MSFCMA (50 CFR 635)	year-round	\$357,579	Obs/Trn-Atlantic Coast Observers	1998 - present	100% shark strike, 38% shark drift, 5% shark and teleost sink net	100% shark strike, 38% shark drift, 5% shark and teleost sink net	100% shark strike, 38% shark drift, 5% shark and teleost sink net	398	4
Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Directed Large Coastal Shark Bottom Longline Fishery	251 directed shark permits (as of Oct. 2002)	MSFCMA (50 CFR 635)	Year-round-Open until quota is filled	\$0	F/ST - Expand Stock Assessment	1994 - present	100% sandbar shark research fishery; 4-6% non-sandbar shark fishery	100% sandbar shark research fishery; 4-6% non-sandbar shark fishery	130 sandbar shark research fishery; 98 non-sandbar shark fishery	186	4
				\$390,000	National Observer Program						
				\$0	Fisheries Research and Management Program - SF Funding						
Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Fishery Observer Program, Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Galveston Laboratory, 4700 Avenue U, Galveston, TX 77551											
Program Manager: Elizabeth Scott-Denton, 409-766-3507, elizabeth.scott-denton@noaa.gov											
Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Fishery	Approx. 843 permitted USCG documented vessels	mandatory	year-round	\$204,905	Reducing Bycatch	2006 - present	3%	3%	947	1,167	25
				\$663,476	National Observer Program/MARFIN						
TOTAL SOUTHEAST REGION OBSERVER PROGRAM FUNDING (CONGRESSIONAL): \$6,641,212											
TOTAL SOUTHEAST REGION OBSERVER PROGRAM FUNDING (INDUSTRY): NA											
TOTAL SOUTHEAST REGION OBSERVER PROGRAM FUNDING (ALL SOURCES): \$6,641,212											

National Observer Program, Office of Science and Technology, 1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910												
Manager: Chris Rilling, 301-713-2363, chris.rilling@noaa.gov, website: http://www.st.nmfs.gov/st1/nop												
Science & Technology	NA	NA	NA	\$384,632	Reducing Bycatch	1999-Present	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Science & Technology	NA	NA	NA	\$222,584	National Observer Program	1999-Present	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
HQ Observers	NA	NA	NA	\$766,299	HQ Observers	1999-Present	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

TOTAL OBSERVER PROGRAM CONGRESSIONAL FUNDING	\$41,032,926	
Total Reducing Bycatch	\$1,756,745	
Total National Observer Program*	\$8,457,056	
TOTAL OTHER CONGRESSIONAL FUNDING	\$2,546,118	
TOTAL INDUSTRY FUNDING	\$14,784,100	
TOTAL OBSERVER FUNDING - ALL FUNDING SOURCES**	\$60,119,889	Totals may not sum due to rounding

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF SEA DAYS TARGETED - Does not include programs that target permits, sets, or trips instead of sea days	41,796
ACTUAL NUMBER OF SEA DAYS OBSERVED - Includes days deployed for electronic monitoring, does not include programs that target permits, sets, or trips instead of sea days.	68,646

TOTAL NUMBER OF OBSERVERS - Does not include deployments for electronic monitoring	790
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* National Observer Program funding is included in the Total Observer Program Congressional Funding line above (\$41,032,926) but is shown separately here for clarity. Therefore, the Total Observer Funding – All Funding Sources is the sum of all items above it except National Observer Program (which is already included in the Total Observer Program Congressional Funding).



U.S. Secretary of Commerce
Gary Locke

Administrator of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
and Undersecretary of Commerce
Dr. Jane Lubchenco

Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
National Marine Fisheries Service
Eric Schwaab
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U.S. Government - 2010