NWFSC Observer Program Considerations for EM/ER implementation

Jon McVeigh
Fisheries Observation Science (FOS)
PFMC April 2014
Observer Data Supports

• Stock Assessments
• Bycatch and total mortality estimates
• Protected species management
• Fisheries research
• In-season quota management for IFQ/IBQ
Core Observer Program sampling requirements to support robust science

- Unbiased, random sampling of fleets/fisheries with spatial distribution
- Ability to quantify and sample
  - IFQ species
  - Non-IFQ Groundfish
  - Certain non-groundfish species
  - Protected Resources
- Continued access to catch while sampling aboard vessels with EM systems
Scientific Observer Coverage

- Observers provide needed protected resource and biological data
- Observer sampling at sea provides tow by tow species level data and biological samples
  - Species complex data lost by mixing of tows
- Different sectors will have different needs for scientific observer coverage
Observer Program Considerations

• For now, assumption is a 20-30% coverage level for scientific observer coverage on EM vessels
  • Continued research is needed for development of new sampling plans for scientific data collection with EM

• Observer and EM programs will need to continue to evolve together to address the needs of managers and fishers
  • Both need to continue to be adaptable, flexible and responsive
Observer Coverage and Sampling Design

- Fishing sectors are currently sampled at the fleet level, not at the individual vessel level
  - Likely require new trip notification requirements for vessels
  - Advanced declarations for use of EM or observers will allow for the observer program and providers to ensure adequate observer availability (ALTs 2 & 3 Options A and B)
EM implementation process

• Process is not as big of a concern as is the timeline
• Implementing a new sampling program will be a challenge for a Jan, 1 2015 start
• Observer workforce needs will be unclear until the number of participants is known
EM Alternative considerations

• Discard Requirements – Alternatives 2 & 3
  • Alternative A – Maximized Retention
    • Could reduce observer coverage levels/need
    • More sampling may be needed shoreside
EM Alternative considerations

• EM has the ability to easily collect certain data pieces that will be very useful for management
  • As EM moves forward opportunities to capture and report new and useful data should be seized

• Data Transfer Process – Alternatives 2&3
  • Logbooks or electronic logbooks
  • Electronic logbooks move ER along on the west coast
Observer providers

- Existing west coast observer providers should be considered and consulted regarding EM

- Observer provider participation may change with reduced demand for observers
Data Format, Infrastructure and Availability

- Data and data formats for EM will likely be used by fishery managers and other stakeholders.
- Data will also need to be shared through systems.
- IT and Data management should be involved with building EM programs.