

Coos Bay Trawlers' Association, Inc.

PO Box 5050
7960 Kingfisher Dr.
Coos Bay, OR 97420
Phone (541)888-8012
Fax (541)888-6165
E-mail ctrawl@mail.coos.or.us
A Non-Profit Organization

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PFMC

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Jerry Mallet
PO Box 25
600 S Walnut St
Boise, ID 83707-0025

re: Total Catch Implementation Committee

The PFMC has acknowledged the fact that it does not have enough scientific information to properly manage west coast fisheries. The Coos Bay Trawlers' Association, Inc.(CBTA) agrees with their view of insufficient data. The Council's Total Catch Determination committee's solution is to create an observer program that is perceived to help provide better information on which to base management decisions. The Coos Bay Trawlers' Association, believes that a project of gathering data must be approached as a collaborative project.

There are several reasons why we believe this data collection endeavor should be designed as a collaborative research project. First and foremost is the need for fishers to have ownership in the project, after all, the outcome of the project will directly affect them either negatively or positively. If the group that stands to be affected by the outcomes play an important part in the project, then the outcomes and effects will be understood by all participants and therefore more readily acceptable. Secondly, federal money earmarked for this project is insufficient to carry out an observer only data collection program. In order to gather the data in a timely manner, universal logbook entries, that would standardize the needed data and codes, should be required of all commercial fishing sectors (including charter boats) for all ports selected for sampling. This would accomplish a 100% coverage rate for the sampled ports, for all gear types, for each and every trip they make for as long as the project needs to be carried out. So a collaborative data collection project is a gear neutral project, everyone is included. The logbook information would be required to be turned in to the port biologist at the same time fish tickets are turned in.

Another important piece of this data collection project that should be in place before actual collection begins is the designation of a central computer system that would be required by the project even with a 100 percent observer program. The computer system would allow immediate downloading into the system as soon as the data sheets were turned in. This would allow quick analysis of the data and the performance of the vessel.

How can the data of a collaborative collection project be verified? This is where the certified observers are deployed. Each port to be sampled could have a number of certified observers assigned and their jobs would be to go out on fishing vessels to verify the data that is collect by the vessels. Their trips could be randomly selected, and would be just for one trip no matter how

