

**Regional Electronic Technology Implementation Plan: April 2018 Update
Pacific Fishery Management Council Meeting, Portland, OR**

Upcoming Pacific Fishery Management Council and NMFS WCR Actions

Integrating Electronic Monitoring in the West Coast Trawl Fishery

The West Coast Regional Office (WCRO) is developing a final rule to implement EM in the whiting mid-water trawl and fixed gear fisheries, which is expected to publish in April 2018. At that time, they will transition vessels from exempted fishing permits (EFPs) to regulations before the start of the whiting season on May 15th. WCRO is also developing a proposed rule to implement EM for the non-whiting mid-water trawl and bottom trawl fisheries. The Council took final action on these regulations in November 2017 and the regulations are scheduled to be effective January 1, 2019.

The bottom trawl regulations will include a method for estimating Pacific halibut discard mortality on bottom trawl EM vessels based on the amount of time the fish was on deck before discarding. This method was reviewed by the Council at the November 2017 meeting and has been approved by the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee and the International Pacific Halibut Commission. This new method of estimating halibut mortality is expected to make EM more feasible for bottom trawl vessels, which would otherwise be charged 90% mortality for all halibut bycatch.

NMFS, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the Council continue to work on improvements to the EM program, including developing a method for subsampling video to audit logbooks, and preparing for third-party video review to begin January 1, 2020.

Electronic Monitoring in the Drift Gillnet Fishery

At its September 2017 meeting, the Council revised its purpose and need for increased monitoring in the drift gillnet fishery to collect information on bycatch in order to inform future discussions on monitoring. WCRO staff have been analyzing the Council's preferred alternatives and the Council will discuss these results at its June 2018 meeting.

The WCRO is developing a pre-implementation project for the 2018-2019 season to collect information on the feasibility of EM as a supplement to NMFS-funded observer coverage in the drift gillnet fishery. The results of such a project may open a path for addressing the Council's concern regarding observer bias in existing drift gillnet coverage.

Electronic Monitoring in the Commercial Rockfish Fishery

The Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFS) is looking to test low-cost, small-scale, and transferrable EM systems to supplement observer coverage in the nearshore commercial rockfish fishery in Oregon and California. It has contracted FlyWire to deploy 5 EM systems in California in spring of 2018.

Electronic Reporting in the Observer Program

The West Coast Groundfish Observer Program is live testing Observer Program Technology Enhanced Collection System (OPTECS) software and ruggedized tablets on trawl vessels and continues development of similar software (the first of its kind) for fixed gear fisheries.

Vessel Movement Monitoring

The Council took final action on measures to improve vessel movement monitoring in West Coast fisheries in April 2016. WCRO will be undertaking proposed and final rulemaking this year to implement the Council's recommendations, with a target implementation date of approved measures January 2019.

Related Activities

Electronic Fish Tickets

California Department of Fish and Wildlife continues development and roll-out of electronic fish ticket requirements for all California commercial buyers. Use of e-tickets will become voluntary in July 2018 and mandatory in July 2019.

Electronic Technologies Working Group (ETWG)

NMFS's national ETWG will be having its annual in-person meeting May 7-11 in Portland, ME. This workgroup is composed of NMFS Regional and Headquarters staff, as well as representatives from the Office of Law Enforcement and General Counsel, that work on EM and ER projects across the country. The workgroup has regular conference calls to coordinate EM/ER implementation, share lessons-learned, and discuss national policies and priorities (e.g., data storage, costs, data confidentiality).

2018 NFWF Funding

NFWF selected 12 projects to fund in 2018 as follows:

- Alaska - \$1,071,000 - EM
- West Coast - \$305,000 - ER
- Gulf of Mexico - \$767,000 - ER and EM
- Caribbean - \$258,000 - ER
- Greater Atlantic - \$1,204,000 - EM, machine learning, and ER
- National - \$40,000 – Communications

More information about these projects is available on NFWF's website:

<http://www.nfwf.org/whoweare/mediacenter/pr/Pages/nfwf-announces-grants-from-the-electronic-monitoring-and-reporting-grant-program-2018-0109.aspx>

Meetings and Workshops

NMFS and Council staff will attend national and international meetings this year with EM/ER and machine learning symposia to share lessons-learned with other ET programs:

- International Fisheries Observer and Monitoring Conference in Vigo, Spain (June 2018)
- ER session for recreational fisheries at the American Fisheries Society meeting in Atlantic City, NJ (August 2018)
- EM session at the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas in Hamburg, Germany (September 2018)

ET Policy Development

NMFS is currently working on three national policies related to implementation of ET:

- A draft policy directive for cost allocation of EM programs was presented to the Council Coordinating Committee (CCC) on February 28, 2018 and the Pacific Council is scheduled to discuss this draft policy at its June meeting. The policy is expected to be finalized in fall 2018.
- A draft policy on the record retention schedule for EM video imagery that is held by NMFS (i.e., a federal record) and a separate policy on the schedule for video imagery that is held by third parties, on behalf of industry. NMFS expects to engage the Councils and public on both of these policies, once drafts are developed.