

Status of analytical projects related to the Observer Program

	Priority	Name	Description	Due Date/Target Date
Program Level Analytical Projects	1	Annual Deployment Plan	Deployment strategy for observers in 2015	Draft ADP was released on 9/10/14. OAC and Plan Teams have reviewed. SSC, AP, and Council will review October 2014.
	2	Supplemental Environmental Assessment	Court ordered EA to address the risk to data quality that may result from decreased observer coverage and the point at which the observer coverage rate becomes too low to generate reliable, high quality data.	Schedule for the Supplemental EA will be presented to the Council at its October 2014 meeting under agenda item B2.
	3	Annual Report	Descriptive information and analysis of effectiveness of observer deployment in 2014 and continued development of performance metrics.	June 2015
	4	Electronic monitoring research	Fieldwork and research for developing electronic monitoring technologies.	SSC review of study design in Feb 2015; fieldwork in 2014-2015; results presented to Council in Oct 2015.
	5	Analysis of catch and bycatch estimation methods	Ongoing analysis of catch and bycatch estimation methods including of evaluation of design-based and ratio estimators; incorporate variance from at-sea sampling through to the trip-level; and then assess post-strata definitions.	Target is to develop variance algorithms in 2015 and conduct evaluation of post-strata in 2016.
Individual Projects	6	GOA trawl bycatch	Implementation planning and analysis for catch monitoring and observer coverage requirements for transferable halibut and salmon PSC allocations, including for vessels delivering to tenders.	Discussion paper that includes consideration of these elements will be presented to Council in October 2014. NMFS staff will continue to contribute to analysis through Council final action, staff tasking for on-going implementation planning and rulemaking will continue until implementation.
	7	CDQ small boat Pacific cod fishery	Revise requirements for observer coverage, permitting, catch monitoring, and catch accounting in small boat CDQ fisheries.	Council final action in October 2014. Implementation planning and rulemaking 2014-2015.
	8	Monitoring issues related to salmon bycatch in the BS pollock fishery	Update analysis of several issues related to handling, sorting, retention, and counting of salmon in the BS pollock fishery and proposed revisions to Atlas requirements.	Council initial review in December 2014. Internal review deadlines for draft analysis required partial completion of this project in summer 2014.
	9	Halibut PSC – decksorting	Project would use flow scales and/or EM on deck to pre-sort halibut to potentially reduce mortality on C/Ps in the Bering Sea. Goal is to conduct fishing under the EFP in 2015 and 2016. The project will involve (1) coordination with industry to develop the study design, (2) evaluation of the EFP application, and (3) preparation of the appropriate NEPA analysis (CE or EA).	Industry will report on “proof of concept” study in October 2014. Deck sorting alternative may need to be separated from BSAI halibut PSC reduction analysis. Council review of EFP application targeted for April 2015 and, if approved, fishing under the EFP would start in summer 2015.

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Individual Projects)	10	Observer coverage on vessels delivering to tenders in 2014	In June 2014, the Council requested analysis of data about observer coverage on deliveries to tenders in the first part of 2014 before proceeding with further analysis of proposed regulatory revisions.	Unless prioritized higher, analysis will be included in 2014 Annual Report (for presentation in June 2015).
	11	Small catcher/ processors	Expand allowances for small catcher/processors to choose partial observer coverage.	Council review of proposed alternatives (proposed criteria and thresholds for analysis) targeted for December 2014.
	12	Observer coverage for BSAI trawl catcher vessels	Allow trawl catcher vessels in the BSAI Pacific cod fishery to choose to be in full coverage.	Unknown – no staff currently available to work on this project, given other priorities.
	13	Observer coverage on vessels delivering to tenders	Revise allowance for catcher vessels to make multiple deliveries to a tender on a single “trip” for purposes of observer coverage; revise regulations to allow observers to be deployed from tender vessels.	Unknown – no staff currently available to work on this project, given other priorities.
	14	Lead level 2 observers	Prepare a discussion paper identifying regulatory and non-regulatory alternatives to develop an adequate pool of fixed-gear lead level 2 qualified observers.	See 9/8/14 letter from NMFS to Freezer Longline Coalition for non-regulatory approaches. No staff currently available for further development of regulatory approaches, given other priorities.
		IFQ in multiple areas	Revise monitoring options for fishing IFQ in multiple regulatory areas on the same trip.	Council considered in February 2014 but did not task staff with further analysis of the issue.
		<i>De minimus</i> IFQ	Exempt/release from observer coverage vessels or trips with small amounts of IFQ.	Council considered in February 2014 but did not task staff with further analysis of the issue.
		IFQ fee assessment	Use standardized annual prices for fee assessment for IFQ.	Council considered in February 2014 but did not task staff with further analysis of the issue.