

Trawl Electronic Monitoring Workgroup - Minutes

May 15, 2018, NOAA AFSC, Seattle, WA

Workgroup: Bill Tweit (Chair)

Appointed trawl members: Julie Bonney (AGDB), Ruth Christiansen (UCB), Tom Evich (F/V Karen Evich), Jared Fuller (SWI), Howard McElderry (AMR), Heather Mann (MTC-phone), Chris Wilson (DOS), Caitlin Yeager (UFC/DC)

Agency: Council – Elizabeth Figus, Diana Evans, Sam Cunningham (phone)
NMFS AFSC – Jennifer Ferdinand, Mike Vechter (phone), Lisa Thompson, Shannon Fitzgerald
NMFS Alaska Region – Jennifer Mondragon, Jennifer Watson, Alicia Miller
National Observer Program – Brett Alger, Lisa Peterson (Knauss Fellow)
NOAA Office of Law Enforcement – Brent Pristas
NOAA General Counsel – Tom Meyer, Alisha Falberg (Enforcement)
Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission – Courtney Paiva, Dave Colpo, Jennifer Cahalan
ADFG – Trent Hartill
IPHC – Claude Dykstra

Others attending included: Mike Orcutt (AMR), Luke Szymanski (AIS-phone), Dane McFadden (AMR-phone), Brett Iwataki (Techsea; Observer), Brent Paine (UCB), Jim Johnson (DSFU), Michael Lake (AOI), Troy Quinlan (Techsea), Helena Delgado (Satlink), Abby Turner-Franke (NPFA-fixed gear EMWG member)

The Chair opened the afternoon portion of the meeting with introductions, a welcome to new members, and a discussion of the agenda.

Trawl EM program: Overview of EM Workgroup cooperative approach

The Council recognizes how important it is to develop the most cost efficient, accurate estimates of bycatch in Gulf trawl, and has directed the reconstituted EMWG to be their tool for addressing that. The Chair described the cooperative research approach used by the fixed gear EMWG and recommended the same approach for the trawl EMWG.

Diana Evans presented the fixed gear EMWG cooperative approach to EM development, from proof of concept → a pilot program → operational testing → pre-implementation → a mature program. Fixed gear members put a lot of work into this concept, and for each stage identified: how many vessels it might apply to; how data would be used; how to identify costs; and, what a ‘typical’ timeline may be. The idea is to go through the stages of approach. Ms. Evans explained the arc of EM development for trawl will not necessarily be identical to that of fixed gear, but key aspects may remain, including: creating the trawl workgroup; creating some type of research plan; testing EM through pre-implementation; and, developing regulations. Building trust and credibility between industry and agency is key so no one feels forced into a program. This starts at the EMWG with the determination of monitoring objective(s). *Ms. Evans proposed that to ensure completion of a workplan for 2019, the trawl EMWG should schedule an August meeting and an October or November meeting.* Ms. Evans also mentioned that there is no ADP for full coverage, but any program would need an administrative and regulatory component and may or may not have a grants/contract component depending on structure. The full set of tools for EM is likely laid out in the fixed gear EM analysis and the trawl EMWG just needs to choose which tools fit in each fishery.

The fixed gear EM program design makes use of flexibility while providing an enforceable backbone through regulations. The ADP is a product of that flexibility and is a powerful tool that provides opportunity for making changes that do not have to go through regulatory processes. The trawl EMWG may decide annual guidance analogous to the ADP would be useful, even for full coverage. NMFS staff mentioned they used the ADP for translating between fleets and the agency may be able to think differently about the ADP to think about how it might be applicable to cooperatives and other structures. An EM provider said the timeline is important and there are steps to go through in the process of creating an operational program.

Summary of ongoing work relevant to trawl

The EM Workgroup received presentations from Craig Rose, Brent Paine, Ruth Christiansen, and Jared Fuller about ongoing EM work relevant to trawl. Mr. Rose provided two presentations, the first updating the

EMWG on work developing camera chutes for accounting halibut releases from trawl catches, and the second introducing a new project (started in May 2018) comparing humans and EM video monitoring to account for salmon bycatch from trawl deliveries to Kodiak processing plants. Mr. Paine presented lessons learned from the Pacific whiting fishery on the west coast. Ms. Christiansen presented information related to efforts of the Bering Sea pollock CV fleet regarding EM, including an original draft EFP and pilot work undertaken in 2018 to gather baseline information. Mr. Fuller provided a brief overview of EM work on the F/V Karen Evich in the western Gulf.

Mr. Paine said industry in the whiting fishery had tremendous support from their region and Council for EM development. Seventeen vessels fishing pollock in the Bering Sea have the whiting EM system now, so if Alaska trawlers want to copy the whiting system, most development work is complete. Mr. Paine asked why Alaska trawlers are not using an EFP, as they did in the whiting fishery. NMFS staff explained that because of the way partial coverage was set up, there was no need to alter how things were done in fixed gear EM development. The agency was able to use flexibility under ADP to do this. The Chair agreed.

Funding

NMFS staff mentioned the partial coverage fee money might be used for GOA trawl EM development after the proof of concept phase, but until then the trawl EMWG will need to compete for funds elsewhere (like the fixed gear EMWG did). Competitive funds include:

- NFWF
 - Fisheries Innovation (application period currently open)
 - EM (RFP expected during the summer 2018)
- NOAA
 - Fisheries Information Systems RFP (final proposals due in early June 2018)
 - Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program
 - Saltonstall-Kennedy
 - Cooperative research funding
- Match Funds
 - Moore Foundation
 - Kingfisher Foundation

The Chair noted *if the EMWG does not hit the June NFWF deadline for the western Gulf, they may be a year delayed in implementation*. Mr. Paine mentioned that the Bering Sea pollock fishery is not seeking competitive funding, and industry is willing to cover program costs. NMFS staff said there are ways to allow industry to cover agency time costs as well. One EMWG member asked whether Bering Sea CVs might be used to advance trawl EM development past the proof of concept stage for the Gulf. The Chair confirmed that was the Council's vision for reconstituting the EMWG to focus on trawl. The groups that most need work on funding are Gulf groups, who have the least development and the least ability to self-fund. Another member reminded the group the GOA has different constructs in the central and western regions.

The whiting fishery secured NFWF grant funds. One EMWG member asked about how service providers should assist with grants, leading to a discussion about best practices for securing funding. The Chair explained in the long-term the Council prefers diversity in providers; in the short-term the Council will support proposals directed to the strategic plan, the Council, and the region. One member mentioned it bothered him in the fixed gear EMWG that there was no discussion about whether service providers could be involved in specific pieces of EM work. He would like to see discussion about opportunities for service providers, who participate in the EMWG at their own expense. Providers can help with proposals and will want to work on any that are successful. *Hopefully trawl EMWG members can bring clear ideas about how to move forward with funding to the next meeting*. Two members pointed out small trawl vessels do not have capacity to write grants or pay others to do so in the western Gulf. Ms. Evans said previous successful grant applications have been those tied directly to Council plans, so *a critical first step is for the reconstituted EMWG and the Council to sign off on objectives and a workplan*.

Trawl monitoring objectives for the Bering Sea and GOA

EMWG members recommend the Council adopt the following preliminary monitoring objectives for developing EM on trawl vessels:

Objective 1: Improve salmon accounting

- Through shoreside monitoring; this is a key GOA issue, and the EMWG envisions addressing pollock before expanding to other trawl fisheries

Objective 2: Reduce monitoring costs

- Develop cost efficiencies and free up money for other priorities
 - i. Partial coverage: frees money for use elsewhere; perhaps savings if decreases fee
 - ii. Bering Sea full coverage: saves money for industry

Objective 3: Improve monitoring data (broader version of Objective 1)

- Focus on choke species (including PSC) and protected species (e.g., seabirds)
- Achieve more comprehensive coverage

Discussion about tentative trawl EMWG objectives also included discussion about incentives for EM that exist in different areas, including:

- BS pollock (decrease costs for salmon accounting)
- WGOA pollock/cod (stable salmon accounting against PSC cap; small vessel observer hardship for long tender trips)
- CGOA (stable salmon accounting against PSC cap)

The Chair mentioned groups have already started to work in these areas, but the Council remains interested in a diversity of approaches. The objectives, workplan, and timing may be different for different projects.

Workplan and timing for future EMWG meetings

The Chair noted that Ms. Evans outlined the 5 steps of EM development in the fixed gear fleet, and he solicited feedback from the trawl EMWG members about whether they think those steps are a good starting point for their workplan. This was received positively by EMWG members, and one member pointed out that early on it may be useful to take time to characterize all the trawl fisheries in question.

The Chair asked whether the trawl EMWG plans to focus on EM for catch accounting, for compliance, or both. One member noted being comfortable with compliance on pollock but with flatfish that might have some more discards it might be more about catch accounting. Another member added catch accounting for bottom trawl in the western Gulf is feasible and could solve the issue of accountability for extended tender trips. The member reminded EMWG members that trawl in Kodiak is not the same as trawl in the western Gulf. ADFG staff thought this could be approached in terms of a hierarchy where pollock in the Bering Sea and GOA are ripe for EM compliance, while some other fisheries remain to be determined. A fixed gear EMWG member mentioned that seabirds work is an exception to that hierarchy and is not difficult to get working on, even with mostly compliance EM.

Council staff recommended the next meeting be at least a 2-day meeting, with fleet demographics and other projects, to ensure time for an objectives conversation. *A goal for 2019 could be to come up with a cooperative research plan for trawl clearly describing projects and objectives. That plan would go before the Council in December at the latest. Council staff agreed to share the workplan template from the fixed gear EMWG. Different sectors may want to arrive to the next meeting with a template filled in. If each sector could bring forward ideas about incentives and priorities, creating the workplan would be easier.*

Scheduling & Other issues

The trawl EMWG recommends holding their next meeting August 23-24, in Seattle, WA, to complete a workplan for 2019 and to develop proof of concept programs, with hope of getting some of that work going in the field in 2019. The trawl EMWG plans to revisit whether and how to provide recommendations for the updated regional implementation plan, receive a staff presentation about seabirds, discuss long-term funding plans, and receive updates about funding applications and ongoing EM pilot work.