

the
Mail Buoy

A publication of the Association for Professional Observers
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NPFMC Update:**JPA IMPLEMENTATION DELAYED (KD)**

At the February Council meeting the Council approved the third-party, Joint Partnership Agreement (JPA) observer program structure, whereby the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) would become the source for procuring all observers beginning in 1999. The existing program will continue through 1998. Remaining details of the JPA program were to be worked out by NMFS and PSMFC with input from the Observer Oversight Committee (OAC). The OAC meeting originally scheduled for March 16, however, was canceled.

After additional meetings between NMFS, PSMFC, NOAA GC, and Council staff during the April Council meeting, it has been determined that further work is necessary regarding the JPA between NMFS and the PSMFC. Until these issues are resolved, the OAC will be unable to fully address the additional issues raised by industry and by observer contracting companies. During the NMFS staff report at the April Council meeting an announcement was made that staff does not expect the JPA to be implemented by January of 1999, therefore, NMFS will have to roll over the existing program structure for an additional year. The JPA would be implemented in mid-1999 or in the year 2000.

A progress report for the JPA will be presented at the June Council meeting in Dutch Harbor as will any regulatory actions which need to be taken to rollover status quo regulation into 1999. PSMFC and NMFS have received numerous questions/concerns regarding the JPA from industry, contractors and observers which have not been adequately addressed in a public forum. The following is a summary list:

Industry Concerns:

- Cost containment. Can a fee based system be developed to compliment the JPA? Can a cost recovery fishery be established to fully fund or at least augment the costs?
- Is 30%/100% coverage scheme adequate? Should coverage be flexible based on a scientific/statistical need for data?
- Notice time to get an observer
- Supplemental programs requiring observer coverage (CDQ, possibly VBA)

Contractor Concerns:

- How will bid process work? Modules? Annual or quarterly process?
- Will all or any of the contractors exist in the future and if so, in what capacity? Will they be reduced to temp. agency status?
- Notice time from PSMFC to provide observers. PSMFC must understand the time constraints placed upon the contractors due to limited briefing and training schedules.
- EA/RIR did not assess impact on the contractors which should be considered 'Small Entities' in that process.

Observer Concerns:

- Will current contractors exist?
- Do we have a guarantee from PSMFC that our union contracts will be honored by any new contractors they may choose to subcontract with?
- Will PSMFC require a minimum of 65% retention of priors within the program? 80% would be even better.

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- Will PSMFC take over screening duties of NMFS regarding qualifications of observers? Will PSMFC allow contractors to release resumes to industry?
- Does the Service Contract Act (SCA) apply to the JPA? If not, why?
- Will observers be able to refuse a vessel for safety reasons and not fear that they won't have a job?
- Will there be flexibility in schedule, vessel assignments, contract length? The types of modules bid on by the contractors will have a significant impact on when observers work, who we work for, how long we work, etc.
- Will PSMFC provide any field support? If yes, how much? This includes number of personnel, housing facilities, access to draws, troubleshooting sampling problems, mediating disputes between observers and vessel personnel, etc.
- How will observers be treated in cases of family emergencies?
- Is the perceived conflict of interest problem between contractors & industry real?

If you have further comments, questions or ideas you wish to expound upon, please submit them in writing to 1) Dave Hanson, PSMFC, 45 SE 82nd Dr. , Suite 100, Gladstone, OR 97027; 2) Bill Karp, NMFS, Alaska Fisheries Science Center, BIN C15700, Bldg. 4, 7600 Sand Point Way, NE, Seattle, WA 98115-0070; 3) Sue Salvesson, Assistant Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS Alaska Region, 709 W. 9th St., P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802; and 4) Chris Oliver, Deputy Director, NPFMC, 605 West 4th Ave., Suite 306, Anchorage, AK 99501. I'd also appreciate it if you would carbon copy (cc) the APO so that we can represent you, the observers, at the OAC meetings.

How Many Years Does It Take to Fix the North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program?

Answer: Forever-Unless Observers Take Action –Editorial by Teresa Turk

Here we are once again--8 and 1/2 years later--with a groundfish observer program that costs at least \$10 million/year to prosecute with a huge Achilles tendon. That is a lot of money primarily shouldered by industry. At the April Council meeting almost every report presented by either industry or government agencies, observer data was the foundation of their argument or assessment. Since we are the substructure, the backbone, the cornerstone, the Atlas to almost every Council action, why are we not respected, honored and paid accordingly? The buck starts here and then passes us by. Why are there more regulations applying to observer behavior, standards of conduct and conflict of interests than there are for contractors or other NMFS observer staff especially in the field? Why are contractors allowed to be members of fishing associations and openly lobby in support of fishing companies? Aren't those conflicts of interests at least in appearance? Where are the regulations that encourage expertise in this field and improve data quality (e.g. appropriate sampling stations)?

For the first 5 years (1990-1995), the NMFS observer program improved the program as a whole amending the domestic program from the foreign days. At the Council level, NMFS focused on a the Research Plan, a fee based funding system, that assessed observer costs based on resource product retention. Once the Research Plan was defeated (6-5 vote) in September 1995, NMFS continued to fumble around with the problems within, not strengthen, the program at the much needed structural level. Rather NMFS embarked on a venture to demand more and more from its novice workforce (~70% of observers have worked less than 2 contracts)-creating ambiguous observer evaluations, prohibiting observers from working as an observer for 12 mos after working for a fishing company, and increasing briefing and debriefing days even though (prior to the Union agreement) observers were not compensated for this time.

Once the Council shelved the Research Plan, why didn't Steve Pennoyer or the Secretary of Commerce take action? This action was certainly in their purview. If they had stood tall then, observers would never have unionized and we would be a lot better off today. (See related pollock density article).

Last year, NMFS decided they had to do something for the program especially since observers were calling and writing letters. Suddenly the Third-party approach was resurrected and the Joint Partnership Agreement (JPA) with PSMFC sprung to life and was actually approved at the February, 1998 Council meeting (10-1 votes). Now we are told the JPA implementation will be delayed until mid 1999, 2000 or perhaps never. There are serious legal questions that must be resolved. The APO highlighted many of these questions early on at the OAC meeting and in letters to both agencies. How

many times do we have go on the merry-go-round? Once again, instead of repairing, changing or just starting over with the structure of the program, serious issues are not being addressed and will not be addressed until observers sue the agency (See related article on environmental groups suit) or go on strike.

The only significant reform made to the current groundfish program has been through the unionization process. Despite this time consuming task, observers made more headway to ensure data quality and expertise in one year than NMFS has in over 8 years. The union work was carried out by a handful of volunteers and with one paid union person (Mark Coles). The irony of this is that observers only became noticed on the radar screen when last fall the possibility of a strike was a threat. Why can't an agency take the logical and necessary steps to make this program work? If environmental groups need more ammunition in their arsenal of violations, look no further than the observer program for ample shortcomings in managing our nation's marine resources.

NMFS Alaska Region and Groundfish Observer Program Update:

NMFS OBSERVER PROGRAM TESTS AT SEA POLLOCK DENSITY FACTOR by Teresa Turk

During the 1996 Pollock "B" season and the 1997 Pollock "A" season in the Bering Sea, the NMFS chartered the F/T *American Triumph* and performed a scientific analysis to evaluate haul weight estimation procedures used by observers and to determine the density factors using bin and codend volumetric measurements. Total weight was calculated using a motion compensated belt conveyer also known as a "flow scale". Using three different statistical tests *in situ*, an average density yielded .98 t/m³ for bin volumes and 1.02 t/m³ for codend volumes. These results confirmed many observer reports that the old pollock density factor of .93 t/m³ was too low.

At the February Council meeting, NMFS presented these results and notified the fishing community that the new density factors would be applied to the 1998 pollock "A" season. Soon after the Council meeting, Steve Pennoyer rescinded his decision to employ the new scientifically tested and validated pollock densities. Outraged industry groups had questioned the results of the experiment. NMFS scientists responded to these comments and once again substantiated their conclusions at the April Council meeting.

No date has been given by Mr. Pennoyer for the accurate density factor to be employed for use in determining when the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) has been reached. Using the new accurate density factors would have reduced pollock catch by a mere 2% or 1/2 day of fishing. **Industry is only willing to stand behind science when it allows them to fish more. Yet when scientific results reduce their catch, they impede and discredit the institution. When will Steve Pennoyer champion conservation and accuracy instead of bending to the political banter of industry?**

[Editor's Note: A copy of the final report is available from NMFS. The bibliographic reference is: Dorn, M., S. Gaichas, S. Fitzgerald, and S. Bibb. 1997. Evaluation of Haul Weight Estimation Procedures Used by At-sea Observers in Pollock Fisheries off Alaska. AFSC Processed Report 97-07. 76p.]

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS SUE NMFS (TT)

Greenpeace, the Sierra Club and the American Oceans Campaign filed a lawsuit against NMFS last month. In a separate action, the Alaska Marine Conservation Council (AMCC) requested an investigation by the Inspector General of NMFS regarding the management of the fisheries in the North Pacific.

Both legal briefs claim NMFS has not protected Stellar sea lion critical habitat and other important species by violating the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska. The AMCC report goes on to highlight that NMFS has "allowed factory trawlers to underreport their groundfish catch" by not using the new density factors of .98 t/m³ for bin volume estimates and 1.02 t/m³ for codend volume estimates.

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For copies of the AMCC brief, contact : Peter Van Tuyn, 725 Christensen Drive #44, Anchorage, AK 99501 or email pete@trustees.org, (907) 276-4244

For copies of the Greenpeace et al. suit, contact: Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund, 705 Second Ave., Suite 203, Seattle, WA 98104

OBSERVER INPUT DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE! (KD) On January 16, 1998 Tim Greer asked the observers in his briefing to sign a petition requesting NMFS to mandate the contractors NOT release observer resumes and/or transcripts to fishing companies and vessels. Thirty-four observers signed—thank you! A willingness to provide resumes has been a condition of business for one fishing company in particular and can be used as a bargaining chip or threat for a vessel to change contractors. At least one contractor in 1994 had verbally requested NMFS make an official rule prohibiting this practice but no action was taken at that time. NMFS policy, as per a memo to contractors dated April 15, 1994, is to request the contractors not release this information without the written permission of the observer. The APO finds this unacceptable.

In addition to this practice being an invasion of privacy, release of personal information by contractors potentially compromises NMFS’ ability to meet the Observer Programs’ objectives and obligations. If observers feel that fishing company personnel can contact them or their family directly, discouraging the observer from making reports which might lead to enforcement action, observers are likely to feel pressured to not file such reports. NMFS receives copies of resumes/transcripts so they can verify the applicant complies with the experience & education requirements in regulation. Industry doesn’t need or have a right to any personal information.

If you suspect your vessel has a copy of your resume, let Shannon Fitzgerald at the Observer Program and the APO know immediately. The APO is taking two courses of action on this issue. First, this will be a negotiation item for all of the AFU negotiated contracts. Second, the APO will work to initiate a federal regulation so that your resumes go to NMFS only.

Now that we have NMFS’ attention on this issue we need your help changing some other regulations as well. Please sign & send the attached letters addressing the 90-day rule, establishing a minimum retention rate for observers, sample station guidelines/requests, etc... We need your support now more than ever.

SUMMARY OF NMFS QUESTIONNAIRE REGARDING CONTRACTORS (KD)

On January 21, 1998 the APO made a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to NMFS for the results of the final debriefing surveys completed in 1997. Seventy-five out of 514 observers deployed completed the optional, anonymous survey. The results pertaining to contractors are as follows:

QUESTIONS		AOI	DCI	FOA	NWO	SWI
Who was your contractor for this deployment?		15	2	16	13	29
Was this your first deployment with this contractor?	Yes	8		8	10	13
	No	7	2	8	3	16
How would you rate your contractor in their ability to describe the observer job and the terms of your employment or provide necessary information to you during you training or briefing?	Excellent	9		1	1	8
	Good	5		7	6	12
	Acceptable	1	1	3	4	6
	Marginal		1	3	2	3
	Poor			2		
How would you rate your contractor’s ability to provide salary, benefits, insurance and personnel services to you?	Excellent	3				3
	Good	4		5	1	6
	Acceptable	5	1	2	3	11
	Marginal	3	1	5	5	9
	Poor			4	4	
How would you rate your contractor in their ability to provide	Excellent	13		2	2	10

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logistic support, including travel arrangements, housing and per diem during your contract?	Good	2	2	5	4	13
	Acceptable			3	4	4
	Marginal			3	2	2
	Poor			3	1	
How would you rate your contractor in their ability to maintain communications with you while you were deployed, including the availability of contractor staff to help with your questions and needs, 24 hours a day?	Excellent	11		2		12
	Good	2	1	4	8	10
	Acceptable	2	1	7	3	6
	Marginal				2	1
How would you rate your contractor in their ability to help you with any problems that you experienced, including problems with logistics and travel, as well as any problems with observer harassment or concerns that you may have had about vessel safety? (one SWI did not answer)	Excellent	11	1	1		10
	Good	2		8	6	11
	Acceptable	2	1	4	7	5
	Marginal			1		2
How would you rate your contractor overall? (one NWO did not answer)	Excellent	8		1	1	5
	Good	6	1	6	5	14
	Acceptable	1	1	4	4	10
	Marginal			2	1	
Did your contractor ask you to perform duties other than those that were defined by observer training?	Yes			2		
	No	15	2	14	12	28
	Maybe				1	1
Did your contractor ask you to perform anything that was contrary to your judgment or training?	Yes			1		
	No	15	2	15	13	28
	Maybe					1

Alaska Fisherman's Union Update:

Those of you who are now officially AFU members should have received a newsletter recently describing additional benefits of becoming an AFU member and a questionnaire regarding health insurance options. If you haven't received it, you should call Mark Coles to confirm he has your correct mailing address.

The AFU also needs to hear from you regarding 1999 contract negotiations. All contractors except AOI will be renegotiating the full contract. The top things that we think need work are...hostage pay situation, matching AOI's wage scale for 1999, health plan, inclusion of both crab and groundfish days when calculating pay grade, and pay for all debriefing days regardless of field days if NMFS deems it necessary. The AFU is also looking for volunteers to be on the negotiating committee. Ideally, negotiations will begin in late summer.

ADF&G UPDATE (edited by L. Boyle):

The new CDQ crab program went into effect on March 23, 1998; the program is approved through 2000. For 1998, the CDQ crab harvests will be 3.5% of the open access harvest. This will increase to 5% in 1999 and 7.5% in 2000. The first CDQ crab fishery is targeting opilio tanner crab. The Observer Training Center (OTC) in Anchorage conducted a crab training class in March; ten observers flew to Dutch Harbor for the training practicum which occurred concurrent with the Olympic opilio fishery closure. Only catcher vessels are participating in the CDQ crab fisheries for the six CDQ groups. Since 100% observer coverage is required on all crab catcher vessels participating in the CDQ fisheries, the observer requirements have been waived for floating processors. Crab catcher/processor vessels will not be participating. There are 20 observers out for opilio CDQ, 8 of them from the new class. Other crab CDQ fisheries this year will be St. Matthew blue king crab, Pribilof red and blue king crab in September, Bristol Bay red king crab in November, and bairdi Tanner crab if there is a

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season. In the future CDQ groups will be eligible to harvest up to half of their opilio allotment prior to the start of the January 15 open access fishery. The remainder of their allotment will be taken after the open access fishery is completed. Norton Sound will have their own red king crab CDQ with small, local boats and there are no plans for our observers to be involved up there. The Dutch Harbor office of ADF&G will increase it's observer workload by a third over 1997.

The proposal to modify the Shellfish Observer Program into a fully state-run program will be addressed next spring at the Spring, 1999 Board of Fisheries. Proposals for this change and other statewide king & Tanner crab issues were due April 10, 1998.

View From the Oregon Coast - Enhanced Data Collection Project by Keith Matteson

Out with my dog in the sandy fields behind the beach at lunch time, the wind feels warmer every day. We're starting to see the sun now, and I wear shoes more often than rubber boots on land. The hops are up, and the lawn needs mowed. Change of the seasons. *And change is in the groundfish fishery on the west coast, too.* Our observers have all been reassigned to new boats, we've moved to an improved version of the electronic scale, and we've started giving out some incentives for boats volunteering for the project.

Three new boats have volunteered to carry observers; one each in Bellingham, Astoria, and Coos Bay. Each of these boats will carry an observer for a minimum of two months. We've been a bit lucky finding volunteers, considering many are turning to shrimp or whiting (hake) for the summer. While we will ride along for a shrimp trip if the boat assigned decides to fish for both shrimp and groundfish, we are primarily focused on groundfish trawl discard information.

In early 1996, we moved to an electronic platform scale-all stainless and built like Sherman tanks. These big uglies proved to work extremely well, but the big, heavy external battery was an Achilles heel. Last month, we started converting to an indicator unit which has internal batteries and is ten pounds lighter. So far, it has worked well. If anyone out there is looking for scale alternatives, I'll be glad to show you our solution.

We have started giving out fleece sweaters and vests with our logo embroidered on to skippers who carry an observer at least three months, and hats to the crew members and to those who give our project significant assistance. They must be earned, no giveaways. So far, the reception has been great. We hope that the added visibility will create greater interest from the fishing fleet and increase participation as we head into the final year of this project.

As for the future, and what it holds for observers on the west coast, that's a subject of great interest and speculation. There has been a committee set up by the Pacific Fisheries Management Council to look at ways to implement a mandatory observer program here on the US west coast. What will come of this, I can't be sure, but it's certainly a step forward toward the gathering of much needed information about what is occurring in the fishery. Observers could play a big role in how this comes about by providing input to this committee. [*Editor's note: The Committee has not been appointed as of date of publication. I'll keep you updated regarding meetings once it's established.*]

Comments on Observer Program Workshop by Keith Matteson

Major kudos should go to the organizers of the three-day Canada/US Observer Program Workshop which was held in Seattle, March 10-12. I had the opportunity to attend, and was quite encouraged by the discussion of common problems, and solutions, shared by observer programs in many different parts of the world. Brief descriptions were given of programs from all regions, and case studies were made of the Alaska and Canadian west coast models, among others. Most of the discussion involved upper level management and data handling issues. I was heartened by the honest acknowledgment of problems and the open discussion of how they might be resolved, or completely avoided, but there were omissions that I sincerely hope will be addressed in future workshops.

First, communications between observers and programs needs to be an agenda topic. As a field coordinator, I depend heavily on the input of observers to help me solve problems; I can't do it without them. There is a wealth of knowledge out

there just waiting to be tapped. At the same time, observer morale can be greatly boosted by making observers feel like they are an integral part of the program and that their opinions and suggestions are valued and used.

Second, observers must be invited to the next workshop to provide ground-level input into the discussions. Many times during the latter part of the workshop, I heard participants wishing there were more observers present to give input. As I stated above, the depth of knowledge and experience they bring to bear is huge and widely varied. Observers must not be left out of discussions. To ignore observers or to take them for granted is a waste of a great resource.

Overall, I think the workshop was a great success, and I mean these criticisms only as suggestions on how to improve. I'm looking forward to doing this again, I only hope we don't have to wait five years for it!

To Your Health....

My year was going so well....I felt good, my assignments were going well, I was meeting my financial goals and I was planning for some time off in the new year. Then it happened....

At the time, I didn't realize that what I was experiencing was a symptom. It began in August as an unusual "monthly cycle" (the GIRL thing). I wasn't alarmed, these things vary and I felt fine, but I made a mental note of it. When in September and again in October I experienced unusual "cycles", I decided that I would make an appointment to discuss these sudden changes with someone, when I returned to Seattle.

My four month contract was over at the end of October. My appointment was on Friday morning, I had been back in Seattle for a week and I was due to fly back to Anchorage for briefing on the following Monday. The possibility that the clinician would find something that would change the course of my immediate future and my ability to work, never crossed my mind.

When I discussed the reason for my visit with the clinician, she suggested that I had tumors. (Yeah, right!). During the exam, she was quickly able to point out the large, semi-hard mass in my lower abdomen. My education on fibroid tumors began. As many as 20 - 40% of women age 30 something - to the age of menopause, get these tumors and, guess what, **MOST** women don't know they have them. The mass in my lower abdomen (the tumors were actually in my uterus), was thought to be about a year old. The size of the mass was equivalent to my being 21 weeks "pregnant" and removing it would require major surgery.

I left the clinic in a daze. I have TUMORS????!!!! Being in that 30 something age group, never having had a major illness or needing surgery, I thought that life would continue on in this fashion indefinitely. I've been healthy...I feel fine I don't look like I need to have surgery..... I'm flying to Anchorage on Mondayshould I tell my employer ?? My family ?? WHY ME ??????

I contacted my employer and my folks that same day. Against the advice of the clinician and physician at the clinic, I still wanted to work. It was a long weekend. By Sunday night, I was half packed to go out to sea and half packed to go home. Slowly and reluctantly, I came to the realization that my health had to come first. As a child, I would drag my feet (literally) when I was faced with something I didn't want to do, hoping to avoid the inevitable. Although I've outgrown that habit, my drive home felt like that.

During the 1 hour and 20 minute surgery, my breeding status was permanently revoked. The surgeon was not able to remove the tumors without destroying my uterus. Care to guess what the surgery and 3 days in a standard hospital room cost ??? How about (approx.) \$24,000 (the bills are still coming in). That's an expensive 8 inch scar!! And that doesn't even begin to take into account the amount of lost wages during my recovery. The time it takes to return to normal activities is 4 - 6 weeks. Complete recovery takes 3 - 5 months. Being able to lift a 50 kg basket of fish falls into the latter category.

Because my health problem was not caused by or affected by the fact that I worked, my employers insurance would not cover my medical expenses. Fortunately, I've carried my own insurance since graduating from college, although I can't take credit for that foresight. Until now, I often thought that the premiums I paid were an

unnecessary financial burden and, more than once, I seriously considered allowing my policy to lapse. But this one procedure and hospital stay has more than made up for the seven years of premiums that I've paid. After considering the circumstances surrounding my health problem, my employers insurance paid what my insurance didn't, or about \$4000, plus a small stipend during my recovery.

The bottom line is that health and medical problems don't just happen to **other** people. Each and every one of you need to take an active role in your own health care; which should include securing personal insurance, even if that means having a high deductible, and having a physical exam regularly. Because we work on a contract basis, personal insurance is generally not provided by the contractor. You shouldn't be lulled into a false sense of security, just because your employer has "insurance" for you. That insurance may only cover job related injuries and illness and it obviously won't cover you when you are not actually on contract. There are numerous situations in which you may not be covered by your employers insurance and even a relatively brief stay in the hospital could prove to be financially devastating. If you don't have your own insurance, you should seriously consider getting some.

As part of taking an active role in your health care, each of you should treat yourself to a full physical exam at least once a year, consider it routine maintenance. Early detection of any health problem is the key. If my tumors were discovered sooner, they could have been removed by a far simpler and less expensive procedure. Most cities have "clinics" of various kinds, where you can get lower cost physicals. Often the fees at these clinics are on a sliding scale, based on how much you earn. Or you can seek out a physician that you can develop a rapport with. If you do move around a lot, get a copy of the medical report so that you can keep better track of your medical history. And finally, some of you may have family medical problems that you will have to pay particular attention to. For those of you who don't know your family medical history (you know who you are), you have all the more reason to get a regular check - up.

Be safe out there!!! Adios from the sidelines.

[Editor's Note: The author wishes to remain anonymous. I want to express y deepest gratitude for the courage it took to write this article. I'm not sure I would have been as rational about the experience. Thank you for the reminder to 'Take care of ourselves'.]

JOB OPPORTUNITES

See also <http://www.converger.com/waterjobs/> for links to lots of jobs.

Fishery Biologist. Closes 5/13/98. Salary: GS-7. 1 position in Anchorage/5 positions in Seattle-NMFS Observer Program. For full announcements visit www.rdc.noaa.gov (Job Opportunites). The Vacancy numbers are W/NMF/98267.CM; W/NMF/98268.CM; W/NMF/98269.CM.

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE TECHNICIAN (FISHERIES); Open period: 4/15/98 - 5/12/98; series/grade: ZT-0404-ii (equivalent to GS-5 through GS-8); salary: annual \$19,969 to \$35,610 (+22.5% cost of living); Vacancy number: W/NMF/SWR/98224.LN; Duty station: Honolulu, HI; Number of vacancies: 16. These are permanent (full-time seasonal) positions with the NMFS as sea-going observers in the Hawaii pelagic longline fishery targeting swordfish and tunas. Observer data is required to assess the incidental involvement of protected species with the fishery. Incidentally taken species include sea turtles, seabirds (mainly albatross), and marine mammals. Observers also collect data on fishing effort and fish life history. For full vacancy announcement, call the NOAA job line at (206) 526-6294, or see web page at: <http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/webvas/pb0404ii.In1>

Temporary General Biologist/Fisheries Observer (30-40 positions). Johnson Controls has an excellent opportunity for 30-40 temporary Fisheries Observers to perform contract work for up to four months this summer. Qualified individuals must have at least a BS degree (or near completion) in biology or a related field. Boat experience and a working knowledge of Gulf of Mexico offshore fishery species is desired. The candidate will be collecting data aboard offshore commercial shrimp vessels which can be a difficult and hazardous environment. Trips can vary in length from 1 to 60 days. Individuals must be in excellent health and possess excellent communication and people skills. Starting salary will be \$10 an hour and overtime paying \$15 an hour.

Individuals with the above experience are requested to submit resumes (including name, address and phone numbers) to:

Johnson Controls
NOAA/NMFS

Mississippi Laboratories
3209 Fredric St
Pascagoula, MS 39567
Fax: (228) 769-9200
email: staylor@triton.pas.nmfs.gov
Please no phone calls

Johnson Controls promotes a drug-free work environment. Women, minorities and the disabled are encouraged to apply. An equal opportunity employer.

Observer Trainer Position Available

The Observer Training Center will be hiring a full-time, 9-month Training Specialist, to begin July 1, 1998. The Training Specialist must have a Bachelors Degree in Biology or Natural Sciences and have a minimum of 90 days experience as a fisheries observer. Experience teaching or training, good verbal and written communication skills, and a strong background with computers are preferred.

The trainer will work closely with the OTC's current trainers in offering classes and briefings for groundfish observers and classes for crab and scallop observers. Approximately 300 observers are trained each year at the OTC. Trainers also prepare teaching materials and maintain a fish lab and gear room.

This is a non-faculty professional position that includes full benefits from the University of Alaska Anchorage. Salary is approximately \$1,400 bi-weekly.

For a copy of the vacancy announcement, call (907) 257-2770. Position closes May 15, 1998.

FISHERIES OBSERVER. Alaskan Observers, Inc. will have 2-3 positions covering vessels in an experimental tuna fishery in the Indian Ocean. Work will start in late June & last approx. 3 months. For more information call Dave Edick at 206-283-7310.

A coalition of Washington's leading environmental organizations seek the services of a full-time **Wild Salmon Campaign Coordinator**. Currently, the governor's Joint Natural Resource Cabinet is developing a recovery plan to address recent and anticipated listings of salmonids under the Endangered Species Act. The Salmon Coordinator will play a key role helping to design and implement a statewide campaign aimed at mobilizing public support for a strong and effective state plan that recovers healthy, sustainable, and harvestable runs of wild salmon and steelhead. **Responsibilities:** The Salmon Coordinator will work with a steering committee to develop and implement a campaign plan. The Salmon Coordinator would be responsible for: coordinating the commitments and decision-making of the steering committee, developing public education materials; disseminating material to a large and diverse audience; coordinating targeted media outreach; developing and facilitating a speaker=B9s bureau and training volunteers. Periodic travel required. The Salmon Coordinator will be housed in Seattle and work closely with the steering committee. **Qualifications:** Candidates must have hands on experience designing and implementing an environmental campaign. Candidates should be able to demonstrate experience in grassroots organizing; proficiency in a wide range of communication techniques; familiarity with current state environmental issues; familiarity with statewide media and; an ability to work in partnership with coalitions. Candidates must be flexible, self-motivated and have the ability to execute complex assignments in a timely manner. Fundraising experience is desirable. **Compensation:** We anticipate the campaign position running at least through the end of 1998. The position is contractual with compensation depending upon qualifications. Limited travel and expense funds provided. Continuation of the position contingent upon success of project and procurement of additional funds. **To Apply:** Send cover letter, resume, references and a short writing sample to: Salmon Coordinator Search, c/o Washington Environmental Council, 615 Second Avenue, Suite 380, Seattle, WA 98104 **Deadline:** May 11th, 1998

Participating groups include: Friends of Earth NW, People for Puget Sound, National Audubon Society - Washington State Chapter, Sierra Club Cascade Chapter, Save Our Wild Salmon, Washington Environmental Council, Washington Environmental Alliance for Voter Education and WashPIRG.

VOLUNTEER FLIGHT DIRECTOR. LightHawk, an international non-profit environmental advocacy organization which uses flight to educate press and decision makers about public and private land issues is seeking a qualified individual to manage flight scheduling department and Volunteer Pilot Corps.

The successful candidate for this position will have three years experience in project management and event planning, excellent organizational skills with attention to detail and follow-up, and the ability to work independently while being an active member of a dedicated team.. Knowledge of aviation and a general understanding of conservation issues a plus.

Responsibilities include evaluating and scheduling all conservation flight requests, managing 150 volunteer pilots, pilot recruitment, planning annual meeting and regional events.

Full-time.\$28-30,000 DOE + benefits.

Resume and cover letter to:

General Manager
LightHawk
2915 E Madison Street, Suite 306
Seattle, WA 98112
Fax: 206-860-2836.

Natural Resource Program Coordinator, WA Dept. of Natural Resources, Mt. Vernon. Closes 5-6. Salary: \$2713-3471/mo. Opening available with the Watershed Stewards in Partnership funded for 2 yr period from date of appointment. Will provide on-site consultation and educational program to non-industrial, private, forest landowners and coordination of fisheries habitat enhancement and watershed restoration projects in three watershed areas in NW WA. For more information contact Personnel @ 360-753-3758, Recruitment #1680280CSSG.

Land Tech. 1 & 2, WA Dept. of Natural Resources Seasonal, temporary. Looking for scuba divers for the Geoduck Program. For more info. contact Personnel at 360-753-3758, Recruitment # 1180580CS and #180590CSSG.

Lab. Tech. 2. Northwest Biological Science Center, Seattle. Closes 5-4. Salary \$1741-2140/mo. Full-time position in fish immunology lab. Assist in maintaining inventories of lab supplies and preparation of stocks of media and reagents. Participate in cooperative research projects with personnel from other disciplines and in field work that often requires wading in cold water, getting wet, pulling, bending, and lifting heavy objects. For more info. contact Staff Employment: 206-685-2728 or 1320 NE Campus Parkway. Reference #R9126.

Natural Resource Specialist. The Willapa Alliance, South Bend, WA. The Alliance is a non-profit, community organization which brings together community stakeholders and seeks creative ways to ensure the long-term health of Willapa's community & ecosystem. For further information contact Joan Kaczmarek @ 360-875-5195 or visit their website at: www.willapabay.org/alliance.

Marine Biology Tech. State University of NY, Stony Brook. Project is in Long Island Sound working on kelp bed ecology and restoration. Salary: \$12-15/hr DOQ. For more info contact Dr. Val Gerard at 516-632-8675 or email: vgerard@notes.cc.sunysb.edu.

Field Assistant, UW School of Fish. 2 positions available in AK for summer. Will assist in a study of reproductive success of pink salmon in the Tongass Nat'l Forest in SE Alaska on Chichagof Is. For more information contact Bobette Dickerson, 488 Fisheries Ctr, 206-543-7745 or email: bobette@fish.washington.edu or Dr. Tom Quinn, 450 Fisheries Ctr., 206-543-9042 or email: tquinn@fish.washington.edu.

Groundfish Observers, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission. Closed 4/30/98 but call for more info. Anyway if you're interested. Salary:\$10.25/hr. Primary goal is to develop accurate rates of discard for the commercial groundfish trawl fishery off the Pacific coast. Will accompany fishing crews on each trip a vessel makes during a period up to 4 months; determine total amt. of discard for each tow during at trip; determine the species composition of the discard for each tow;

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assess survival rate of halibut discarded; collect samples of fish from both discard and retained catch. Requires previous observer experience. Submit Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission employment application (www.psmfc.org) or phone 503-650-5400. OR, submit State of Oregon employment application to Keith Matteson, ODF&W, 2040 SE Marine Science Dr., Newport, OR 97365. Ph: 541-867-4741 or Fax: 54-867-0311.

The Texas Marine Mammal Stranding Network is looking for an **Education Coordinator**. Initially this position will be part-time (with no benefits), but with the hope of converting it to a full-time position in the fall of 1998. Ideally this individual would have a B.Sc. in Biology (preferably with some marine mammal experience) and 1 to 2 years of teaching experience. This person will be responsible for overseeing and developing our Public Outreach Programs and Museum Exhibit. Salary will be 49% of \$16K per year, converting to a 100% time position this fall. Interested individuals should contact either Graham A.J. Worthy (worthyg@arctic.tamug.tamu.edu) or Mr. Lance Clark, Operations Coordinator TMMSN, at tmmsn@tamug.tamu.edu for more information. Or contact Texas Marine Mammal Stranding Network, Texas A&M University, 5001 Avenue U, Suite 105, Galveston, TX 77551, (409) 740-4721 voice, (409) 740-4905 fax

Antarctic Support Associates hire all support personnel for the US Antarctic Program. They are supported through a NSF grant. Contact address: 61 Inverness Drive East, Suite 300, Englewood, CO 80112. Ph. 303-790-8606. Or check out their website: <http://www.asa.org>

MISC. NOTES & TIDBITS

SPERM WHALE PROJECT CONTINUES

Hello all! Thanks to all who participated in the pilot project to study sperm whale interactions with the longline fishery.

This year we are continuing the project with another 12 or so and would like to hear from anyone interested in participating. We're still on the search for sperm whale fluke photos (not limited to project participants). We're wondering if the same individuals come back to the same grounds year after year. This can only be determined using fluke photos which show individual characteristics. Other marks can also be used, such as a nick out of the dorsal fin or scars on the face. We're hoping to put together a catalog of individual sperm whales to include in observer gear. So far, I have photos (mediocre quality but identifiable) of 15 individuals and am armed again this longline season, with hopes of getting more. Last year I photographed one that I had previously photographed in 1995, and the sightings were within 30 n. miles of each other.

If anyone is interested in participating in this project or you just want to chat about it, you can e-mail or write me at the address below (I'll be checking my mail and phone messages in port) or contact Scott Hill (below). We'd be happy to give more details. Here's to a good season!!

Liz Mitchell
P.O. Box 933
Eugene, Oregon 97440
541/338-7939
e-mail: emitch@efn.org

Scott Hill
National Marine Mammal Laboratory, Seattle
206/ 526-4048

Check out the following report which uses observer data:

Fritz, L., A. Greig, and R. Reuter. 1998. Catch per unit effort, length and depth distribution of major groundfish and bycatch species in the Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska regions based on groundfish fishery observer data. NOAA Tech. Memo., NMFS-AFSC-88.

Regarding release of names... The APO occasionally receives requests from agencies or non-Alaska contractors for names, addresses, phone numbers of observers who would be willing to perform similar work but in a different area. So far I've been fairly selective to whom I give information. I've given names to the IPHC. If you would like me to pass on your name if requested, please let me know. Otherwise, I won't pass on this information.

NEW MEMBERSHIP: if you want to become a member of the APO, please write, email or call Kim Dietrich. An annual donation of \$10 is required. Donations are used to publish and distribute the *Mail Buoy* and to pay for costs of testifying at Council meetings out of state. Also, if you aren't an observer but would like to receive your own copy of the *Mail Buoy*, there is an annual charge of \$15.

APO T-SHIRTS are available. Size options: L or XL. Color option: Black. The price is \$15 (sales tax included).

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO DO WHILE IN SEATTLE?

Attend the UW School of Fisheries Quantitative Seminar every Friday, 12:30-1:20pm, Rm. 288, Fisheries Center. Visit <http://weber.u.washington.edu/~calvarez/qua~nti.html> for more information. [May 1st seminar will be by Mark Maunder, UW School of Fisheries, "Integrated Analysis of Tagging and Population Dynamics in Fisheries Stock Assessment."]

Attend UW School of Fisheries Department Seminars (Fish 520) every Thursday, 3:30-4:20pm, Rm. 201, Fisheries Center. Schedule is as follows: 30 April "The Role of No-take Marine Reserves in Fisheries Management." Dr. Donald Gunderson, School of Fisheries; 7 May "Managing Seabird By-catch in Coastal Gillnet Fisheries." Dr. Edward Melvin, Washington Sea Grant; 14 May "Biological Life Support Systems for Fish Astronauts." Dr. Frieda Taub, School of Fisheries; 21 May "Salmonids, Tubificids and Myxozoans: Dissecting Whirling Disease with Molecular Markers." Dr. Charlotte Rasmussen, School of Fisheries and National Marine Fisheries Service, Sand Point.

The School of Marine Affairs will hold a symposium on overfishing and oil spills from May 7-8. The public is welcome at this symposium, entitled "Key Issues in Marine Affairs: A Public Symposium Marking the 25th Anniversary of the UW's School of Marine Affairs." Presentations will ask the questions, 'Are we depleting the world's oceans so fast that we need to put some places off limits to human activities? What about oil spill prevention and response when federal, state and tribal standards conflict?' The day-long sessions will be held at Building Nine, NOAA-Sand Point. For more information about this free event, call (206) 543-7004.

There are two fisheries related organizations which are always looking for volunteers.

The **Women's Fisheries Network** (WFN) Northwest Chapter sponsors monthly dinner meetings on various fisheries related topics. The next meeting will be Tues., May 19, 5:30pm. Meeting topic is "World Oceans and Ecosystem Management." Attendance is not limited to women. Meetings are usually the 3rd Tues. of each month. Contact the WFN office @ 789-1987 for more information regarding future program topics.

The **Youth Maritime Training Association** (YMTA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving the youth of WA state. They seek to open new pathways to maritime employment and build awareness of the maritime industry's contribution to Pacific Northwest communities. For more information, contact Norm Manly @ 206-281-3821.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS/email

Teresa Turk 206-860-5828/
 turk@fish.washington.edu
Kim Dietrich 206-547-4228/*kdiet@aa.net*

Mark Coles, AFU 206-441-3425

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NMFS staff (email format *first.last@noaa.gov*):

Bill Karp 206-526-4194
Shannon Fitzgerald 206-526-4553
Martin Loefflad 206-526-4194

OTC 907-257-2770/
NPFMC (Council) 907-271-2809
Al Didier, PSMFC 503-650-5400/
Al_Didier@psmfc.org

Dave Hanson, PSMFC 503-650-5400
dave_hanson@psmfc.org

NMFS BRIEFING/TRAINING SCHEDULE

(subject to change)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Location</i>
5/5	1-day	Anchorage	6/1-19	3-week	Anchorage
5/5	4-day	Seattle (hake only)	6/2	1-day	Anchorage
5/12	1-day	Anchorage	6/9	1-day	Anchorage
5/18	1-day	Seattle	6/15	1-day	Seattle
5/19	4-day	Seattle	6/16	4-day	Seattle
5/26	4-day	Anchorage	6/23	1-day	Anchorage
5/26	1-day	Anchorage	6/23	4-day	Anchorage
			6/30	1-day	Anchorage

MEETINGS & OPENINGS

May 13 Vessel Bycatch Accountability (VBA) Committee meeting, 8AM, Fishermen’s Terminal, Nordby Conference Center, Suite A, 1711 West Nickerson, Seattle, WA.

June Pacific Council Meeting

Jun 8 North Pacific Council meeting in Dutch Harbor

Oct 5 North Pacific Council meeting in Seattle

Cool Websites:

<http://home.istar.ca/~gadus/sci.html>
www.psmfc.org
www.fakr.noaa.gov

INTERESTED IN PUBLISHING THE MAIL BUOY IN August? Volunteers needed--talk to Kim or Teresa. We’re also looking for extra help with some insurance research and grant writing.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE (I hope!) updates on ATLAS, Enforcement Report, Groundfish Multi-species CDQ Regulations re: Observers, Donut Hole fisheries, How do observer reports benefit observers? and Pacific Marine Conservation Council.

The APO continues to be interested in your ideas - if you have an idea for an article or story, would like to respond to a previous article, or think the APO has overlooked some issues, drop us a letter or call any time. Contributions from all sectors are welcome. Thanks again for all of you who contributed to this issue. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. (KD)