



the
Mail Buoy

A publication of the Association for Professional Observers
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OBSERVER NEWS

APO Activities

The 2002 Observer Survey - Some Preliminary Results

We are incredibly grateful for all of you who took the time to complete the survey. Out of the 150 distributed we have 70 returned at the half way point - a great start indeed. I would especially like to thank Jesse Agee and the OTC for their help distributing the survey to the folks in Anchorage. This survey is intended to assess observer interests and how best to inform observers of changes that may affect their jobs. If you have time this summer to fill one out *please do* – you can do it online at <http://www.apo-observers.org> (select Observer Survey at bottom of main page) Final results will come out in October and will be used to inform APO policy recommendations regarding regulation changes that affect our jobs directly.

Who filled out this survey?

Gender

Male	55%
Female	45%

Experience level/Days at sea

1-90	16.4%
91-180	18 %
181-270	14.8%
271-360	16.4%
361-450	4.9%
451+	29.5%

Contractor

Alaska Observers Inc. (AOI)	53.3%
Saltwater Inc. (SWI)	36.7%
NWO Inc.	8.3%
Other (non-Alaskan)	1.7%

Unfortunately, not all of the contractors in Alaska are represented in these survey results. If you don't see your contractor here, REPRESENT! Do a survey!

Continued on page 2...

WANTED: APO OFFICER NOMINATIONS

The Association for Professional Observers is soliciting recommendations for Officer candidates until August 30, 2002. The current APO Board of Director's(BOD) will compile the nominations and provide ballots to the voting members by September 20, 2002. Votes will be accepted via regular and electronic mail; more details will be provided with the actual ballots. The ballots must be received by January 10th and will be counted at the Annual Board meeting in January. Only Observer members have voting privileges (i.e. you must be a current member to vote).

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What do you want to see changed?

NMFS related services:

The top three changes were, in order of desirability:

1. Content and format of four-days briefings,
2. Support in the field with vessel safety issues, and
3. Supplies available in the field.

Contractor services:

The top three changes were, in order of desirability:

1. Compensation for waiting periods - this ranked 10% higher than all other issues,
2. Health benefit options for off-contract coverage, and
3. Improvement of company housing.

Comments regarding company housing addressed the number of people forced to share single apartments and the behavior of other observers.

As for changes desired from the industry itself, scale hanging/location options and type ranked the highest, followed by overall sample station space and lastly, discard options.

Standards of Behavior

Developing policy relating to standards of behavior is no easy task - the policies have to address problems encountered with a very small percentage of observers without offending the majority for whom regulation of behavior is not necessary. Specific questions addressing the details of standards of behavior displayed no significantly strong results. When asked about a minimum drug policy observer opinions varied greatly - from the opinion that drug testing was an infringement of basic civil liberties to advocating drug testing before, during or after a cruise. The question addressing an alcohol policy had similar results that may just reflect the difficult nature of addressing the issue.

The only standard of behavior policy question with a clear answer was the definition of job site - 83.3% of respondents believe that they are on the job when they are on the vessel or plant they have been assigned. A curious result for the standard of behavior questions is that while 59% felt they understand how the standards of behavior *apply* to their experience of cruise situations 52% feel a little or not at all confident of how standards of behavior are *enforced*.

Another interesting link between questions occurred with the sexual behavior standards questions - while only 66.7 % felt that the new regulatory language is *clear*, 82.8% felt the regulation is *appropriate*. 78.9% of those who felt the policy is unclear identified the second part of the regulatory language, " with any vessel or processing plant personnel

who may be substantially affected by the performance or non-performance of the observers official duties," as ambiguous. And 55.9% of respondents felt that " any other activities that would reflect negatively on their image as professional scientists, on other observers, or on the observer program as a whole" cannot be generally understood or defined or has potential to be subjectively enforced.

Changes to certification requirements

83.6% are comfortable with criminal background checks that look for felonies, yet 67.2% do not feel a clean criminal record is an appropriate prerequisite for the job of observing. Comments regarding this change to requirements specified the need to define what constitutes a clean criminal record - an issue the observer program has thus far decided to assess on a case-by-case basis.

Safety

Vessel safety is a complex issue for the fishing industry. In the 1980s a dedicated group of people who had lost family members in the Bering Sea started a fight for vessel safety that continues today. In the six years legislation bounced around Washington DC, 843 U.S. commercial fishermen died at sea. In 1988 the Commercial Fishing Industry Vessel Safety Act was passed. This act, the most lenient of the bills proposed, requires all vessels to carry life rafts, survival suits and emergency radio beacons in addition to providing mandatory safety training. While these changes have reduced the number of deaths, the number of vessels lost has remained relatively unchanged. The compromises made to get the vessel safety act passed combined with lack of enforcement continue to be significant.

At the April North Pacific Fisheries Management Council meeting the APO requested that the safety training for observers be increased to reflect the standard for comparable fisheries biologist positions. The request was adopted and will be subject to public comment. Here's what observers had to say about safety training.

<u>How confident are you that a boat with a Coast Guard Safety Sticker is actually safe?</u>	
Very Confident	3.3%
Fairly Confident	49.2%
A Little Confident	34.4%
Not At All Confident	13.1%
<u>How many of the vessels you've been assigned to have conducted safety orientations?</u>	
All vessels	23%
Most of the vessels	32.8%
Some of the vessels	42.6%
None of the vessels	1.6%
<u>How many of the vessels you've been</u>	

<u>assigned to conducted safety drills?</u>	
All vessels	8.3%
Most of the vessels	25%
Some of the vessels	50%
None of the vessels	16.7%
<u>How comfortable would you be refusing a vessel with a valid Coast Guard Safety Sticker that felt unsafe to you?</u>	
Very comfortable	16.7%
Fairly comfortable	21.7%
A little comfortable	33.3%
Not at all comfortable	28.3%
<u>Do you feel confident that if there was an emergency on a vessel you were working on that you would know what to do?</u>	
Very confident	15%
Fairly confident	65%
A little confident	18.3%
Not at all confident	1.7%
<u>How confident did you feel after the vessel safety orientation that you would know what to do in an emergency situation on that vessel?</u>	
Very confident	18%
Fairly confident	59%
A little confident	23%
Not at all confident	0%
<u>How often do you think safety training should be conducted?</u>	
Annually	78.7%
Biennial	11.5%
Three week training only	8.2%
Other	1.6%

<u>What kinds of safety training should be conducted?</u>	
Survival suit practice	86.9%
Emergency equipment use (fire extinguishers, EPIRBS, life rafts, flares etc..)	86.9%
Emergency communications	80.3%
Specific vessel type hazards (i.e. trawl cables, factory dangers, combis etc..)	72.1%
Operating conditions (essential equipment- i.e. sump pumps; safe practices - i.e. keeping hatches closed and why; emergency drill procedures)	67.2%
Vessel safety requirements for different vessel sizes/Coast Guard requirements for vessels	62.3%
Coast Guard personnel available for questions	60.7%
Injury prevention	47.5%
Safety videos	45.9%
Other	9.8%

The history of the Coast Guard Safety sticker is a complex one that observers would be well-served to know. A great source of information and history is Patrick Dillon's book, "Lost at Sea" which chronicles the legislative battle for safety regulations and its beginnings in the Bering Sea. Current work on commercial fishing vessel safety can be found through NIOSH, the National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety. Some of the information is pretty spooky - make sure you're sitting down!

Do you know what is required of vessels to obtain a Coast Guard Safety sticker?

Yes **57.4%**
No 42.6%

Do you look for any other safety related characteristics other than the Coast Guard Safety Sticker when you board a vessel?

Yes **91.7%**
No 8.3%

Have you ever been on a vessel that had a Coast Guard Safety Sticker but felt unsafe to you?

Yes 49.2%
No **50.8%**

Did you report these conditions to NMFS?

Yes **58.1%**
No 41.9%

How did you report these conditions?

Vessel survey	62.5%
Exit survey	6.2%
In-season advisor	18.8%
Logbook	87.5%
Verbally	52.2%
Other	6.2%

Did you report these conditions to your contractor?

Yes	29%
No	71%

How did you report these conditions?

Verbally	100%
In writing	0%
Email	12.5%

Please check all that would apply in making a vessel feel unsafe:

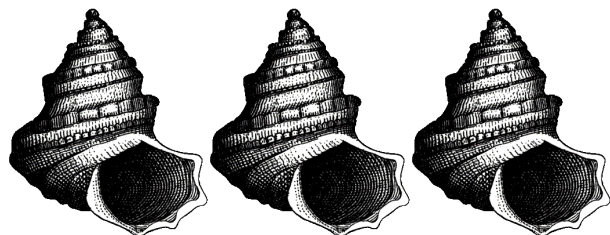
Not Enough Emergency Exits	12.5%
Inexperienced Crew	46.9%
Unlicensed Captain/Engineer	3.1%
Crew Sleeping/No One On Watch	53.1%
Vessel Appeared Poorly Maintained	78.1%
Hatch Door wouldn't seal or close properly	21.9%
Hatch doors left open all the time	21.9%
Sumps broke regularly	15.6%
Lost power regularly	18.8%
Discard chute not adequate for bycatch off the boat quickly	21.9%
Discard chute propped open regularly	18.8%
Alarms not working	12.5%
Engineer's can't hear alarms everywhere on the vessel	3.1%
Ammonia or other chemical leaks regularly	15.6%
Decks cluttered with gear	37.5%
Food quality questionable/unsanitary conditions	40.6%
Communicable disease risk	15.6%
Lost/used safety equipment at sea with no replacement on board	3.1%
Other	28.1%

The observer program is in the process of increasing the safety training we receive. The APO is soliciting observer experiences and opinions about the kinds of safety related concerns you'd like to see addressed in trainings. If you have a good "war story" that made you more conscience of a safety problem not currently mentioned in trainings, let us know.

What you see above is just the beginning of the results from the survey. A more complete and final compilation will be available in October. If you have not filled one out yet please check it out online. It takes about 45 minutes to complete. **The time you spend is more valuable than you can imagine.**

2003 will bring significant changes to the observer program and it's important to make your voice heard in the process!

Cheers-Suzanne



North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Observer Program (from Council's April newsletter)

The Council approved extending the regulations which implement the North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program through December 31, 2007. The Council also approved modifications to a suite of existing regulations and approved new regulations which would increase NMFS' management controls over observer providers (contractors) and observers. Generally, these include:

- changes to the observer certification and decertification process to make it compliant with the Administrative Procedures Act (APA);
- modifications to the observer certification criteria and standards of behavior;
- replacing the observer provider certification and decertification process with a permitting process
- compliant with the APA; and
- changes to regulations governing the duties and responsibilities of observer providers.

The Council recommended that currently certified observers and observer providers would have grandfather rights under the new regulations regarding the certification and permitting processes, respectively, and would not have to reapply.

The Council also approved a regulation which will allow NMFS the authority to place NMFS staff and other qualified persons aboard any vessel and any processing plant that targets groundfish or halibut and is currently required to have observer coverage. NMFS would not have the authority to order a vessel to port or modify their fishing schedule under this regulation. This authority is intended to increase NMFS' ability to work with industry, observers, and observer providers to resolve sampling issues, prepare for future data needs, develop special scientific projects, and help NMFS to maintain a working knowledge of observer duties, the realities of working at sea, and stakeholder concerns.

The Council also tasked the Observer Advisory Committee (OAC) to discuss long-term changes to the Observer Program at their upcoming meeting on July 18-19. The Council would like the committee to report on whether the Council and NMFS should begin a formal scoping process to initiate an analysis to restructure the Observer Program. The Council would like the committee to include discussion of a problem statement, goals and objectives, cost equity issues across fishing sectors, and consideration of the Research Plan and

other past Council efforts to restructure the program.

The Council motion in entirety and the public review draft of the analysis is on the Council website. Council contact is Nicole Kimball.



PSEIS ALTERNATIVES UPDATE

What happened at the June 2002 Council meeting? During its June 4-12, 2002 meeting, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council received a report from NMFS staff on the refinements made to the April 2002 suite of programmatic alternatives and the results of several meetings held with public stakeholder groups. The Council also reviewed written comments from the public and received oral testimony from a number of representatives of fishing industry and environmental organizations.

Following a review of all this information, the Council modified, through a series of motions, the wording of alternative policy language as well as details of the alternatives' associated FMP frameworks. The Council completed its June action by adopting the suite of alternatives for analysis.

For full update visit:

<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/seis/2nddraftalts.pdf>

Also on the agenda was VMS & Bering Sea crab rationalization. For more information contact the observer representative on the Advisory Panel, Tracey Mayhew at (907) 562-5122 or mayhewinak@yahoo.com.

National Observer Program UPDATE

Call for Presenters for the [International Fisheries Observer Conference](#): November 18-21, 2002 at the Astor Crowne Plaza in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

On behalf of the steering committee, I would like to invite you to the Third Biennial International Fisheries Observer Conference. The objective of the International Fisheries Observer Conference is to bring together a broad representation from the U.S. and international fisheries and observer communities to address some of the key issues common to fisheries observer programs. The conference is being sponsored by NOAA Fisheries, in cooperation with the Canada Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

The deadline for submitting abstracts for the International Fisheries Observer Conference is **July 31, 2002**. Abstracts must be submitted if you are interested in giving a short presentation on one of the following panel topics:

- Should There Be International Standards for Observer Programs?

- Is the Risk of Deploying Observers Worth the Data Collected?
- What is the Observer's Role in Violation Situations?
- Should Observer Data be Used to Open and Close Fisheries?
- How is Sampling Design Impacted When Observers Select Deployments?
- How Should Contractor Performance be Measured?
- What is the Best Mix of Observer Presence and Compatible Technologies?
- How Are Optimal Observer Coverage Requirements Determined?
- Can There Be Other (Non-Traditional) Roles for Observers at Sea?
- Lessons Learned: What Guidance Can Be Provided to New Observer Programs?

Presentations should be designed to stimulate further discussion on each topic, with a focus on lessons learned, advances made, new issues, and future directions. Full instructions for submitting abstracts can be found on the conference website at: <http://www.st.nmfs.gov/observerconference2002>.

Abstracts may also be submitted for the conference poster session on general topics not addressed by the above panel topics. The deadline for submission of general topics abstracts is August 31, 2002. For more information on submitting abstracts for the poster session, refer to the conference website at: <http://www.st.nmfs.gov/observerconference2002>.

The deadline for early registration for the conference is **August 31, 2002**. The early registration fee is US\$350 and includes attendance at all conference sessions, the evening social agenda events, and a copy of the final publication of the conference proceedings. After August 31, the registration fee increases to US \$400. Registration may be made through the conference website at: <http://www.st.nmfs.gov/observerconference2002>. *Early registration for the conference will help the conference organizers to plan appropriately for this event. To encourage early registration, the names of the first 50 registrants will be entered into a drawing for unique conference items.*

Comments and questions about the conference are welcome -- please contact us at:

Victoria Cornish, Conference Chair
 NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology
 1315 East-West Highway
 Silver Spring, MD 20910
 Phone: 301/713-2328, x160
 Fax: 301/713-4137
 Email: Vicki.Cornish@noaa.gov

Die" fame) and Karen Lybrand have teamed up on a new "Fisheries Observer" logo, designed especially for NMFS observers. A limited number of t-shirts are being distributed by NMFS to long-term observers in appreciation of all the hard work and dedication that observers demonstrate in performing their job. Additional t-shirts with the "Fisheries Observer" logo are also available for sale at the web site <http://www.promoplace.com/6266/stores/NOAA>.



APO ACTIVITY UPDATE *(continued)*

The officers of APO include President, Vice-President(s), Secretary and Treasurer. Any two (2) or more offices may be held by the same person except the offices of President and Secretary. Starting in 2003, the Observer Members will elect the officers of APO annually, and each shall serve at the pleasure of the Observer Members. Each officer shall hold office until his successor shall have been duly elected. The "official" duties of the officers are within our bylaws (<http://www.apo-observers.org/bylaws.pdf>) and should be read and understood before agreeing to run for office. Below is the non-legalese version of the duties and expectations for each officer.

President. The President is the principal executive officer of APO and shall in general supervise and control all of the business and affairs of APO. The President shall attempt to preside at all meetings of the members. Currently, the meetings are held in Seattle, WA and are scheduled during the major NMFS briefing and debriefing seasons. It is the goal of the APO to increase the meeting frequency (including meetings during all three week trainings) and observer member participation. If the person elected is not local to the Seattle area or is deployed, the President should coordinate with the BOD, other officers or members to ensure these meetings continue at regular intervals. The President is responsible to attend and participate in all meetings of the Board of Directors (we've only had 3 so far this year lasting ~4 hours). These meetings may be held in person or via telephone conference. The President has authority to sign any official APO communications; and in general shall perform all duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors from time to time. The President shall oversee any contract work performed by members.



**Fisheries Observer Logo
 T-Shirts Available**

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The time commitment could range from 0 to 10 hours per week depending on time of year.

Vice-President(s). In the absence of the President, the Vice-President (or in the event there is more than one vice-president, the vice-presidents in the order designated at the time of their election) shall perform the duties of the President, and when so acting, shall have all the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the President. The Vice-President shall attempt to attend the observer member meetings and participate in all BOD meetings (either in person or by phone). The Vice-President shall perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him by the Board of Directors. The time commitment could range from 0 to 8 hours per week depending on time of year.

Secretary. The Secretary shall: (a) keep the minutes of the Board of Directors' meetings in one or more books provided for that purpose; (b) see that all notices are fully given in accordance with the provisions of the bylaws or as required by law; (c) be custodian of the corporate records; (d) maintain the member database (in MS Access); and (e) in general perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him by the Board of Directors. The time commitment could range from 0 to 5 hours per week depending on time of year.

Treasurer. The Treasurer shall: (a) have charge and custody of and be responsible for all funds and securities of APO; (b) receive and give receipts for monies due and payable to APO from any source whatsoever; (c) deposit all such monies in the name of APO; (d) maintain accounting information; and (e) in general perform all of the duties incident to the office of Treasurer and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him by the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall also be responsible for checking the APO mailbox in Seattle. The time commitment could range from 0 to 2 hours per week.

All officers shall share responsibility for responding to APO communications (written, email, phone) with members, agency staff and the public.

Send your recommendations for officers by August 30, 2002 to: APO, PO Box 30167, Seattle, WA 98103 or via email: APO@apo-observers.org or apo_obs@hotmail.com. Please have the observers you nominate provide us with a brief summary of their experience and availability **and if you have further questions, don't hesitate to contact us either.**



APO Represented at NPFMC Meeting

Thank you Mike Todd for reading the APO's testimony on the proposed changes to Observer Program regulations at the April Council meeting.



ALASKA FISHERMAN'S UNION INFO

For any union or contract related problems or questions, please contact Duke Bryan or Harold Holten at:
Alaska Fisheries Division-UIW
721 Sesame St., #1C
Anchorage, AK 99503
Ph: 907-561-4988
Toll free: 1-877-471-3425
Duke Bryan in Tacoma: 253-272-5551 or 253-272-7774
Email: dukeworks2@aol.com or haroldholten@ak.net

The latest versions of AOI, NWO and SWI union contracts can be found at the following URL:

http://www.apo-observers.org/union_page.html



OP-ED

Thoughts & Responses: APO involvement with the Alaska Oceans Network Summary of email from Tami Applebee (June 12, 2002) and responses from Kim Dietrich, APO and Karen Dearlove, AON. Printed with permission.

Dear APO:

Imagine my surprise at the June meeting for the NPFMC to

learn the Alaska Oceans Network was representing the APO in their testimony. I was infuriated and embarrassed by the inappropriateness of this affiliation for the following reasons:

1) In testimony with regards to the Programmatic Groundfish SEIS, the AON representative encouraged inclusion for analysis a suite of policies which included 30% observer coverage on vessels smaller than 60 feet. Given potential safety issues and concerns for a minimum standard for living quarters this is certainly not in my best interest.

AON Response to 1): AON requested a clarification and separation of the alternatives and did not "encouraged inclusion ..." as stated above; 30% observer coverage is only one item of one element of the 4.1 subalternative that NMFS presented for analysis. AON comments on the PSEIS alternatives were as reflected in the May 22nd letter to the Council and specifically on the remark:

"We support efforts to move forward in this process with adequate and responsible alternatives for analysis, and in particular we find it essential to provide for separate analyses of each of the proposed 'book ends' within the current SEIS framework establishing seven (7) separate alternatives for analysis." (view full letter at: http://www.apo-observers.org/letters/aon_5-22-02.pdf)

APO Response to 1): The APO is not promoting across the board observer coverage on vessels <60 feet. However, we have commented that to collect the highest quality data, observer coverage and data collection should be based on data needs and sound statistical sampling design (<http://www.apo-observers.org/letters/7-25-2001.pdf>). For example, the sablefish data collection is extremely biased both spatially and temporally (over half of the catch is caught by vessels <60'). The AON member groups may have used our recommendations to propose their own alternatives but the APO has in no way endorsed any of the other member groups' proposals. In fact, I don't even know what the various proposals were. IF NMFS decided some small amount of observer coverage from small vessels was necessary, the new rules would need to go through several rounds of Council and public review. I am fairly confident that there would be a mechanism for refusal of unsafe vessels and if not, the APO would provide a strong voice for establishing this mechanism. Observer coverage on

small vessels is the norm in most regions (and even for some AK fisheries – i.e., salmon gillnet). Vessel size alone does not make a vessel unsafe or unobservable. The APO is promoting quality data collection under safe working conditions. I believe that it is possible to collect this data on small boats AND it is possible to deploy observers in such a way so that lives are not endangered and observers are not needlessly put at risk. The APO continues to work on safety issues. We recently submitted a FOIA request to the AK Groundfish Observer Program for a more detailed summary of safety related complaints made by observers. If the agency fulfills this request, it will be made available to all observers. The APO also intends to apply for funding so we can begin to address some of the gray areas of the safety issue. Your input and the input of all observers would be extremely valuable for this type of work.

2) In the same testimony, AON criticized the current list of alternatives as potentially not meeting NEPA standards with a veiled threat for potential litigation. Is the APO funding or participating in any current or future litigation against NMFS on non-observer related issues? Does this seem appropriate?

AON response to 2): Other AON member groups testified on behalf of their own individual groups – NOT for AON or any other group. Whit Sheard testified for the Ocean Conservancy and brought up the legal points of meeting the order from the court regarding the PSEIS and the NEPA process so that future legal action wouldn't be necessary and pressed for the separation of the "bookends approach"; Geoff Shester from Oceana testified regarding precautionary approaches and that 4.1 should not be combined with the "No fishing" alternative (sub-alternative 4.2); and AON testified on only two points: the PSEIS alternatives and public process. Nothing in AON's remarks was threatening or a veiled threat; Karen was especially careful to be appreciative, respectful and constructive. Karen was acknowledged by three council members for "constructive, thoughtful remarks".

Council meetings are taped and copies can be requested from the Council. The PSEIS testimony started at approximately 10:30 a.m. on 6/11/02.

APO Response to 2): The APO is not funding or participating in any litigation against NMFS on non-observer related (or observer-related) issues. No, this would not be appropriate.

3) Membership in the AON includes certain fishing associations. Thus the insinuation was that observers have aligned with the longline fleet. This is beginning to border on misconduct for active observers to lend their collective support to one sector of the industry over another. I certainly hope the APO has not received any monies from AON; which would be the equivalent of taking money from the longline fleet.

AON response to 3): AMCC and ALFA are the only 'fishing' members of AON none of which have control over AON funds, which are from private foundations. Insinuations or perceptions of APO or AON are such as they are, and this issue is served only by an APO internal discussion about membership in AON. AON has taken no positions on gear-types, and I made no insinuations at this Council meeting in that regard or any other.]

APO response to 3): Membership in the AON includes fishing associations, conservation organizations, several native groups and the APO (in very limited capacity). The APO is currently an affiliate member (this means that we have **NO VOTE** in any action they take and they cannot use our name unless we explicitly agree to sign on to a letter/testimony/etc). We are no longer on their Steering Committee, which has voting power and is control of all AON policy statements.

When the AON was first being developed, we felt that the group had a productive vision and that the APO could fit into their framework in a constructive and positive way.... By design, the Network is supposed to 1) facilitate opportunities for diverse perspectives to effectively participate as advocates for sustaining the long-term health and biodiversity of Alaska's oceans, 2) expand marine conservation capacity in Alaska and support opportunities for community voices to advocate for healthy oceans and sustainable fisheries, and 3) increase public awareness of biological, cultural and economic importance of a healthy marine ecosystems in Alaska. The groups were supposed to share information and ideas. **The groups agreed to maintain their autonomy unless there was consensus to act as one.** There were plans to include more fishing organizations but this has not occurred yet. The APO was one of the initial member

groups on the AON's Steering Committee. The initial introduction of the AON (summer, 2001) was extremely adversarial. The APO pulled out of our "official" affiliation at that time. While the APO agrees with the fundamental goals of the AON (i.e. long term sustainability of fisheries and healthy oceans), the process of affecting those goals went beyond our comfort level. We recognized that some of the arguments of industry and the agency regarding APO's involvement with the AON are valid. The most serious of which is the perception that observers will be biased and hence collect biased data if we're on AON's Steering Committee. This perception, whether real or perceived, doesn't serve anyone involved--not industry, not the NMFS and not the environmental community. The whole premise of having observers for any extractive industry is to have an objective, neutral party collecting objective, neutral data.

Your point is well taken about the "appearance" of conflict of interest by taking their money. A few members of the industry made this exact same point. The money was in the form of a grant and was (and is still being) used to assist us to get ourselves officially recognized by the IRS as a non-profit group and to increase distribution of the Mail Buoy. In my opinion, there were no "inappropriate or questionable strings" attached to receiving this grant. This funding has allowed us to survive. I disagree that we crossed the line and compromised our (and observers') collective integrity. The APO is also applying for federal grants. Is this acceptable? When the AON was first being developed, the other groups felt that the observers had something unique to contribute and I took that at face value. I continue to believe we have a significant contribution to make to the management process.

In a lot of ways, the APO has the opportunity to ensure that groups do not exaggerate or distort the facts. I'm sure there is some irony in the fact that many of my conversations with AON members have been in defense of the fishing industry. I have made every attempt to keep the APO away from controversial and inappropriate issues. I have tried to limit contact between the APO & AON by acting as an interface. I get input from APO's board and other observers before making any significant comments. I have provided informative comments on a few of their documents but have in no way endorsed them on behalf of the APO. I have supplied some of the groups with information on the types of data that observers collect so that there is an increased understanding by these groups of what is collected,

how it is being used and how it could be used. At the request of some of the member groups, I spoke to the Marine Stewardship Council's pollock review team but limited my comments to observer sampling issues. At no time did I state support or lack of support for certifying the pollock fishery. A detailed summary of my comments to the team is available upon request.

The AON is not an arm of the longline industry. The fishing groups are currently a small component of the AON's composition. I have voiced my opinion to the AON coordinator that the AON would benefit from inclusion of more fishing groups.

The APO does not support one gear group or fishery over another; indeed, this would border on misconduct. The APO responds to questions from industry as well as the NGO's. Some members of industry see us as an asset and wealth of information as well. Observers can be the facilitators for positive change but that means we need to talk to all sides.

4) Overall, AON supports a severely restricted fishing option for the future SEIS. Do you feel this is the general consensus among observers? Are observers aware they are making this statement when they join APO? I was not.

AON Response to 4): AON does not support a severely restricted fishing option for the future SEIS; AON does not support any alternative or sub-alternative in this PSEIS process at this time. In fact, due to our diversity, I doubt that AON will specifically support a specific sub alternative ever! I stated that a highly precautionary alternative should be separate from a no-fishing alternative for analysis in the PSEIS for the benefit of the appearance of the intent of the Council, the intent of the environmental organizations that signed off on it, and for the public's benefit to understanding the suite of alternatives presented.]

APO Response to 4): No, I do not feel that observers would agree with the AON's point of view. The APO did not sign on to the AON's official comments.

My membership in the APO expires in November of this year. Please consider it terminated immediately. I hope you will help me in ensuring that observers are aware the APO is a highly political organization that has gone on the PUBLIC RECORD on the above issues.

APO Response: The APO has not gone on the public record supporting any of the PSEIS alternatives. All testimony and letters regarding the PSEIS have been limited to data quality and collection issues and can be viewed on our website: <http://www.apo-observers.org/letters.html>. Click on Alaska Groundfish Observer Program and see Item #5.

The APO appreciates input from observers and we hope that some light has been shed on our involvement with the AON. We hope that observers will continue to comment on observer related and fisheries issues. Observers can also discuss the PSEIS process with Tracey Mayhew (mayhewinwa@yahoo.com), the Observer representative on the Advisory Panel to the Council.

For more information on:

Alaska Oceans Network: <http://www.alaskaoceans.org/about.cfm>
NEPA process:

<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/ea/default.htm>

Draft PSEIS: The alternatives for the DPSEIS which were approved in June by the Council for analysis have been posted on the NMFS website

(<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/seis/default.htm>).

In red are the highlighted changes made by the Council at the June meeting.



JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The APO attempts to update Job links on the website weekly. Visit <http://www.apo-observers.org/> and click on current jobs & internships in the left side navigation bar. If you'd like to be on the email list for weekly reminders/updates, send Kim an email at apo@apo-observers.org.

MISC. NOTES & TIDBITS

NEW MEMBERSHIP: if you want to become a member of the APO, please write, e-mail or call Irene Dorang. An annual donation of \$15 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 are not an observer but would like to receive your own copy of the *Mail Buoy*, there is an annual charge of \$10. The *Mail*

Buoy is also available electronically either directly from the APO or via our website.



APO T-SHIRTS are available. Size options: L or XL. Color options: Black, Teal, but others can be ordered. The price is

\$15 (sales tax included).

WEBSITES OF INTEREST:

North Pacific FMC: <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/>

Pacific FMC: <http://www.pcouncil.org/>

National Observer Program (NOP) Website:

<http://www.st.nmfs.gov/nop/index.html>

North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program:

<http://www.refm.noaa.gov/observers>

ObserverNet:

<http://www.observernet.org/>

BOOKS

Books Recommended By Observers...

Harris, Michael. 1998. **Lament for an Ocean.**
McClelland & Stewart, Inc.: Toronto.



Books Written By Observers...

And We Were Sailors by [David Benson](#)

Unlike many who write about Newfoundland and the sea, poet David Benson is a seaman as well as a long time political activist. He and his family live an age-old tradition, yet must deal with a political system that discourages thought in the present and encourages an "unremembering" of the past.

Avoiding romanticism, he speaks with an authenticity born of experience and his voice is one that will not abide the common cant, the generally accepted, or the 'easy way out'. From whimsical speculation about "going ashore on the Moon" to the conspiratorial drama of the "Manus", David's poems give us unique insights into the beauty and tragedy of life at sea, the

joy of returning home, the unceasing struggles, the failures and the personal triumphs that have made the men "able and strong" and the women "mighty".

Just as his poems of the sea wash the shoreline of our experiences, David's poems of the past reveal their intimate and often overlooked connection to the present. To order, see:

<http://www.nfbooks.com/default.htm>.

And We Were Sailors

And pirates and smugglers and outlaws
and rebels and mummers and wreckers
and salvers and shepherds and witches
and healers and hunters of birds and bears,
caribou and seals and fish and great whales
and there is magic in us.

The magic of fog and wind and sea and ice,
boggy ponds and peat lined gullies,
barrens and marshes and gnarled woods,
shapes and colours changing in the dusk
and dawn - blue hills and purple bracken
and shadows - of stunted, wind blasted trees;
crunnick and starrigan and tuckamore.
Shadows of people:
our men, able and strong
but our women, mighty.

We know the sky, the tides and the moon's power.
Our houses feel the fingers of the wind
and stairs creak with the tread of dripping fetches -
our people lost at sea.

From off black headlands, their schooners
stand on now, against the gales,
are manned by crews whose bones are food for fish.
Ghosts walk here
and here gallop the dogs of lore.
We listen in the darkness.
The rote from the barrisway - the sea's rote,
constant . . . like background music,
a tune familiar, that will not die.

Listen . . .

Listen . . .

Mark what ye have heard.



Articles & other books of interest:

Brodeur, R.D, H. Sugisaki, G.L. Hunt, Jr. 2002. Increases in jellyfish biomass in the Bering Sea: Implication for the ecosystem. Mar. Ecol. Prog. Ser. 233: 89-103

Lines in the Water: Nature and Culture at Lake Titicaca by Ben Orlove

This study of remote indigenous villages on the shore of Lake Titicaca, high in the Peruvian Andes, brings alive the fishermen, reed cutters, boat builders, and families of this isolated region, and describes the role that Lake Titicaca has played in their culture. In this book, part memoir and part ethnography, Ben Orlove demonstrates that people here have found ways to maintain their cultural autonomy and to protect their fragile mountain environment. They use improved boats and gear and sell fish to new markets but have fiercely opposed efforts to strip them of their indigenous traditions. They have retained their customary practice of limiting the amount of fishing and have continued to pass cultural knowledge from one generation to the next--practices that have prevented the ecological crises that have followed commercialization of small-scale fisheries around the world.

Full information about the book, including a pdf of the preface, a pdf of Chapter 2 ("Mountains"), and the table of contents, is available online: <http://go.ucpress.edu/orlove>

THINGS TO DO (in the FALL):

UW School of Fisheries & Aquatic Sciences (SAFS) Quantitative Seminar every Friday, 12:30-1:20pm, Rm. 203, Fishery Sciences Building, 1122 Boat St. See: <http://www.students.washington.edu/cminte/seminar.html> for more information.

UW SAFS Department Seminars, every Thursday, 4:00-5:00 pm, Rm. 102, Fisheries Science Bldg. <http://www.fish.washington.edu/seminars/>

Fisheries-Oceanography Coordinated Investigations (FOCI) Lunchtime Seminar Series. Thursdays, Noon, Bldg 4, Rm. 2039. For topics see www.pmel.noaa.gov/foci/seminar.html

Conferences & Workshops

2ND INTERNATIONAL FISHERS FORUM

November 19-22, 2002, Honolulu, Hawaii
Hosted by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. See the Council's website at <http://www.wpcouncil.org/fishforum.htm> for additional details.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS/E-MAIL

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

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Martin Loefflad	206-526-4194

OTC 907-257-2770

NPFMC (Council) 907-271-2809



UPCOMING MEETINGS

North Pacific Fishery Management Council: Seattle WA, September 30, 2002 <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/>

North Pacific Plan Team Meetings: Seattle, WA, September 9-13 and November 12-15.

Pacific Fishery Management Council: Portland, OR, September 9-13, 2002 <http://www.pcouncil.org/>

BRIEFING & TRAINING SCHEDULE

8/5-8	Level 2	Anchorage
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8/9	1-day	Anchorage
8/26-29	Level 2	Anchorage
8/15	1-day	Seattle
8/19-22	4-day	Anchorage
8/23	1-day	Anchorage
8/29	1-day	Seattle

Visit
<http://www.refm.noaa.gov/observers/NPGOPInformation.html>
 for more up to date information on groundfish training & briefing.

INTERESTED IN WRITING/PUBLISHING THE MAIL BUOY or doing other APO tasks?

Volunteers needed--talk to Kim or Irene. We're always looking for extra help with letter writing/editing, insurance research, grant writing, database editing. The **SUBMISSION DEADLINE** for the next issue is **September 20, 2002**.



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 to Tracey Mayhew, Suzanne Romain, Jessica Trupin, Vicki Cornish, and Reuben Bezley** for your articles/comments, your prompt answers to questions, requests for information in electric format, and/or your editing contribution. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. (KD, ID)

WHAT IS THE ASSOCIATION FOR PROFESSIONAL OBSERVERS?

APO is a non-profit corporation dedicated to the exchange of information for observers and to the conservation of marine resources. Specifically, APO's Objectives are: (A) **To facilitate the exchange of information for observers regarding fisheries in the United States territorial waters by:** *creating a professional association and network for exchanging information and expertise and fostering contacts within the various observer programs, management personnel and the fishing industry throughout the nation; *disseminating information concerning observer, marine conservation, biological and interagency issues via a quarterly newsletter, the Mail Buoy, maintaining a website and listserv for up-to-date information between newsletters, and developing brochures explaining procedures to obtain better access to publicly owned information; *encouraging and promoting observers to attain positions of leadership within the fisheries; *identifying the needs of observers within the current management system in United States fisheries by formulating a Bill of Rights assuring observers the right to adequate insurance, wages and safe working conditions; providing input to the developing National Observer Program to standardize protocol on a national basis, developing a national vessel safety protocol for vessels carrying observers to promote and maintain a safe working environment for all observers; working with agency officials to monitor cases where safety violations occur; and *encouraging national and international growth of APO by promoting chapters to qualified groups, including observers from private, state and federally supported observer programs, who will promote the purposes of APO. (B) **To encourage the conservation and sustainability of marine and other aquatic resources by:** *initiating a partnership with the administrative agencies and scientific communities to enhance biological sampling protocol and overall data quality; *helping secure funding for observers, who are the base-line data collectors, to participate in observer program workshops for the purpose of improving the monitoring systems of the nation's fisheries; *educating members and non-members concerning the uses of observer data; *disseminating abstracts and references of emerging research and publications to the public relevant to observer programs or that which is based on observer data; *identifying problems in sampling protocol and recommending alternatives and future priorities to management agencies to improve data quality;

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