

# the Mail Buoy

A publication of the Association for Professional Observers  
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## In the Hot Seat by Teresa Turk

[your observer representative on the Advisory Panel (AP)]

The North Pacific Fisheries Management Council's June 1997 meeting was held in Kodiak. While the weather outside was remarkably sunny and warm with calm winds, the discussions inside walls of the Elks Club were just the opposite. History has a way of repeating itself--the inshore-offshore debate of how to parcel out the pollock jewels of the Bering Sea dominated the agenda. Observer issues were postponed until the last day of AP meetings.

The highly contentious issue of inshore-offshore appeared as a no-win for observers regardless of which side our vote was cast. In serving as your representative on the Advisory Panel, I hope to play the political game "straight up"--to not trade votes but to vote in your interests and maintain the hallmark of our calling--**integrity**. Although I was lobbied hard on both sides of the issue, I chose to abstain from voting on this item. I would rather have other AP members abstaining on an observer-related issue than voting against an observer-related issue because I did not vote on their side.

Bill Karp and Sue Salvesson presented new information regarding the observer program to the AP. NMFS has been working on estimating what percentage of a vessel's gross earning goes toward paying for observers. This information was compared by sectors of the industry (e.g. 30% Shore-side delivery vs. 100% Longliners). Most vessels currently pay less than 2% of their gross. However, the 30% P.cod longline fleet appeared to be carrying the largest burden as compared to their gross revenues.

Chris Blackburn, chair of the Observer Advisory Committee, presented the OAC's recommendations to the Council. The OAC met on June 5-6, 1997, and concluded that a Joint Partnership Agreement (JPA) between NMFS and Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) was a better route to follow than reawakening the failed Research Plan (RP). PSMFC would act as an interface (third party) between vessels and plants carrying observers and the private contracting companies

who provide observers. Under this arrangement, vessels/plants would contact the PSMFC for their groundfish observers and observer deployments would be assigned by the PSMFC, thereby establishing the arms length relationship which was one of the underlying goals in restructuring the program. There are several limitations to the JPA--no flexibility on moving observers based on biological reasons and potential high cost to small boat fleet--which were brought up in the OAC, AP, and Council. After much discussion on the merits of the RP vs. JPA, the OAC decided to support moving forward with the JPA for the following reasons (not in order of importance):

1. The JPA can be implemented relatively quickly--by Jan. 1999;
2. The JPA does not entail making amendments to the Magnuson-Stevens Act or other legislative changes;
3. Observer issues appear to be seriously considered--PSMFC can standardize wages and set other minimum standards in addition to our unionization efforts;
4. Other funding sources for the small boat fleet are being fleshed out (an industry funded foundation was mentioned as an option to supplement the small boats);
5. There is probably enough support on the Council to implement this plan; and
6. Creates an arms length relationship between contractors and industry.

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During the AP meeting Al Burch and Dave Fraser raised many of the concerns of the small boat fleet as previously noted. With numerous AP members missing during the vote, the AP passed a motion to move forward with the RP and to not support the JPA. I voted in support of both programs-either solution is better than the status quo we have been working under for the past 7 and 1/2 years.

The next day at the Council meeting, the Council voted overwhelmingly for the JPA. NMFS and the PSMFC are working on the details of the program and will take public comment. See letter from Bill Karp below.

**A few other high points of the June Council meeting:**

- **The AP and the Council unanimously voted down NMFS 12 month prohibition from observing after working for a fishing company. The 1995 observer conflict of interests standards will go back in effect at the start of 1998! There will, however, be clarification that observers may not solicit or accept employment onboard the vessel harvesting and/or processing or accept employment at a shoreside processor receiving fish from a North Pacific fishery while under contract with an observer contractor.** (Other proposed changes for the 1998 regulations will be to require all prior observers to complete a 4-day briefing prior to their first deployment in any calendar year. One day briefings will be required prior to subsequent deployments within a calendar year. Observers will also be required to have taken at least one course that used dichotomous keys extensively. Changes to the regs. will be published in the Federal Register and will be available for public comment in the fall.)
- **Greenpeace, Alaska Marine Conservation Council, Center for Marine Conservation and many fisherman testified in support of our Unionization efforts and the continued need for good quality data.**

**THE AFSC CALLS FOR INPUT ON  
FUTURE OBSERVER PROGRAM** (letter  
reprinted w/ permission)

July 15, 1997

Dear Observer:

At their June, 1997 meeting in Kodiak, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) took action on two Observer Program issues.

(a) Extension of the interim program through 1998. The Council voted unanimously to extend the interim program through 1998, with minor revisions and clarifications to the existing requirements. They also voted for an adjustment to the existing observer conflict-of-interest standard that prohibits a person from serving as an observer if that person was employed in a North Pacific fishery during the previous 12-months. They recommended a less restrictive standard that would prohibit an individual from observing on a vessel or at a plant owned by a company that has employed that individual during the previous 12-months.

(b) Development of a new observer procurement infrastructure The Council voted unanimously to support the development of a joint project agreement (JPA) between the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) to address observer compensation and minimize conflict of interest concerns that stem from the current ability of the industry to negotiate directly with observer companies for services. Under the JPA, PSMFC would provide observer procurement services for the groundfish fisheries using contract arrangements with private observer companies. The Council further voted unanimously to request NMFS to develop an analysis of options to address cost equalization concerns for observer services, although the expectation is that this analysis will not be initiated until after the JPA arrangement is implemented. The Council will review progress towards the JPA at its September, 1997 meeting (in Seattle).

The first action was required because the current observer regulations expire in December, 1997. The 1998 requirements will be almost identical to those which are now in place.

The second action addresses fundamental issues which have been of concern to observers and NMFS for several years. I am pleased that we now have the support of the Council to make substantial changes to the program and I am confident that NMFS and PSMFC will be able to work together to design a system which brings significant improvements to observers and the Observer Program. We intend to work closely with observers, fishing industry, and contractor representatives during the next few months as we prepare a draft JPA.

Although many of the details have yet to be addressed, the concept is simple. Companies required to obtain observer coverage for their vessels and plants will request observers from PSMFC. PSMFC will direct observer companies to place observers in response to these requests. Observer contractors will invoice PSMFC for the observers they deploy, and PSMFC will bill fishing companies for observer services. Fishing companies will no longer be able to negotiate directly with observer companies. In drafting the JPA, we will ensure that fair and equitable salaries are provided for observers, and that the possibility for nonpayment of observers (which occurred when Arctic Observers, Inc. ceased business operations in 1993) is eliminated. We will also include provisions for encouraging retention of experienced and skilled observers in the workforce, and improved procedures for problem solving and conflict resolution. Even though we have yet to decide exactly how some of these requirements will be met, we are committed to working with PSMFC, the fishing industry, observer contractors, observers, and other interested parties in designing the new program.

We will provide the Council with a progress report and cost projections at its September, 1997 meeting and it is our intent to request that the Council take final action in approving the new program at its December, 1997 meeting. Under this scenario, we would implement changes during 1998 and the new program would be effective on January 1, 1999.

We rely on observers to collect information which is critical to the management of groundfish stocks in the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea. We now have an opportunity to make changes which will

bring major improvements to the North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program. The partnership we develop with PSMFC will address data integrity concerns by improving the status and working conditions of observers, and maintaining the independence of the program.

Please contact me (phone (206) 526-4194, fax (206) 526-4066, email *Bill.Karp@noaa.gov*) if you have questions or suggestions regarding this process or any other aspect of the program.

Yours sincerely,

William A. Karp, Ph.D.

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*(Editors Note: Bill can also be reached at the following address: Alaska Fisheries Science Center, Resource Ecology and Fisheries Management Division, BIN C15700, Bldg. 4, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115-0070.*

*I also suggest all correspondence be made in writing and cc: Jim Balsiger at the AFSC and Al Didier at PSMFC, 45 S.E. 82nd Dr, Suite 100, Gladstone, OR 97027)*



**The Unionization Process and Where It Stands Now** by Teresa Turk, Mark Coles and Kim Dietrich

As many of you already know<sup>1</sup>, the APO and Alaska Fishermen's Union (AFU) have been mailing out blue union cards asking observers to sign this card and return it in the mail. On May 21, the AFU/APO determined we had 30% or more employees from each contractor return cards. We submitted the cards to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and filed a petition for election to organize with the AFU. There is a separate election for each contractor.

<sup>1</sup> If you would like more information regarding the APO/union history, refer to the 4/14/97 issue of the *Mail Buoy* or contact the APO.

Three contractors-Alaskan Observers, Inc., NWO, Inc., and Frank Orth and Associates decided to recognize our efforts and allow an immediate election. This is also called "stipulation". The NLRB determined the dates of the election, type of election (mail ballot vs. polling booth) and who qualifies to vote. The NLRB decided those groundfish observers (not shellfish) who have worked 30 days total from May 31, 1996 to May 31, 1997 are eligible to vote from June 27-August 8, 1997. If you feel you qualify and have not received a ballot with your respective employer (s) name on it, call the NLRB in Seattle at (206) 220-6300 and/or call the APO at (206)547-4228 and we will forward the information.

Unlike the three contractors referred to above the remaining two contractors-Saltwater, Inc. and Data Contractors, Inc. did not agree to an immediate election. Although through negotiation with the NLRB, Data agreed June 18th to a mail ballot election starting July 7-August 21, 1997 for *both* shellfish and groundfish observers. The employment criteria for voting are the same as the above.

Saltwater Inc. challenged the petition at hearings in Seattle and Anchorage. Saltwater contended that shellfish observers should be included. The AFU/APO agreed. Saltwater also wanted a peak season election where only current employees were eligible to vote. In their arguments at the hearing they suggested that observers do not depend on this job for future employment. We testified that if this was the case, there would be 100% turnover and no experienced observers. The APO fought hard on this point. We believe that new people who have yet to experience the pros and cons of the job firsthand and who do not fully understand the history of the industry-contractor relationship should not unduly influence the results of the election. We also feared Saltwater would not rehire prior observers and load the vote with new people in order to defeat the union. Fortunately, the NLRB ruled in our favor on June 26th. Saltwater will have a mail ballot election in August (most likely starting 8/1) for both shellfish and groundfish observers.

The NLRB in Anchorage will be processing the ballots for Data and Saltwater. If you feel you qualify and have not received a ballot within a week of the your contractors voting start date, please contact Norm Hayashi, NLRB Anchorage, at (907) 271-5015.

**PROPOSED OBSERVERS SALARIES & COMPENSATION PACKAGE**

[ *Partially*<sup>2</sup> reprinted from APO submission to Council, September, 1995. ]

<sup>2</sup> For full document submitted in 1995, contact the APO.

The APO is submitting the following list of compensation and salary requests to all interested companies, state and federal agencies, as well as individuals. If observers are compensated appropriately, data quality and integrity will remain at a high standard. We feel this package represents a fair and minimal criterion for retaining experienced observers while contributing to a more professional attitude and standard among the fishing industry as a whole.

**I. The System**

- Observers will be placed on boats by a scientific need for data.
- An “arms length” distancing mechanism between contractors and vessel owners must be created.
- NMFS will develop and implement an annual review and evaluation of contractors. This report will be made available to all observers. NMFS will give significant weight from these “report cards” in determining future contracts regarding observers.
- An annual review of the program will be held by the OAC.
- Observers must be included in the long term structure and evaluation of program, contractor and the system as a whole in whatever plan is implemented.
- Contractors will be required to maintain an 80% return rate of prior observers. At least 50% of these priors (40% of the work force) must have successfully completed 3 contracts or ore. Any special projects or special contracts must be offered to priors with 3 or more contracts completed. NMFS must approve of these personnel placements and will be given the option of deciding upon personnel.
- Insurance types and levels of coverage must be included in the observer’s contract.
- Contractor must pay observer within 30 calendar days of work performed including bonuses.
- Contractors must hold harmless any observer(s) participation in any political or lobbying effort and must place these observers in a consistent and fair fashion in relation to other observers.
- There will be no minority or gender considerations when placing observers on vessels. NMFS and industry must assure or develop a system where fishing companies

do not pressure observes or contractors because they do not want a minority or a female on board their vessel.

**II. Compensation**

- Standardized insurance for all observers regardless of contractor, vessel type or project.
- Contractor, NMFS or ADF&G supplies observers with all sampling gear and raingear.
- Contractor continues to pay for all travel related costs including: excess baggage, transportation to and from airport, hotel or any other costs associated with travel regardless of weather delays, airline strikes or another situation beyond the control of the observer.
- Observer accommodations during the entire contract including training, briefing and debriefing will be in safe neighborhoods, clean and of comfortable temperature. Each observer will have their own bed with clean linen- no sleeping on the couch or floor. In sum, the accommodations must be consistent with that of a professional biologist operating within the U.S.

**III. Salaries**

- Since observers are prohibited from and unable to take other employment, observers should be compensated at the rate of at least 70% of salary for days briefing, debriefing, training, and down time before deployment. However, this does not include days between boats while stationed in the field. A minimum per diem rate of \$35/day and housing while in Seattle or any other briefing/debriefing location.
- Observers will be paid at the following rates from the day of departing their briefing/training location until they arrive back at the debriefing location:
 

1st contract	\$120/day
2nd/3rd contract	\$170/day
4th + contract	\$220/day

Observers remind industry that these salary levels are still quite low. In our presentation to the NPFMC, 12 hours/day was used as the standard when, in fact, observers frequently work longer days and are responsible for being on call 24 hours/day. See chart below for wage comparison of agency staff.

**AGENCY PAY SCALES FOR BIOLOGISTS\*\***

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>Rate of Pay</b>	<b>Level/range</b>	<b>Ave day(12 hrs)</b>	<b>Month (30)</b>	<b>Other Compensation</b>
NMFS	\$9.47/hr	Grade 5, step1	\$142.68	\$4,280.44	Shore leave, sick days, raingear provided
NMFS	\$10.74/hr	Grade 5, step 5	\$161.81	\$4,854.48	Shore leave, sick days, raingear provided
NMFS	\$11.75/hr	Grade 7, step 1	\$177.03	\$5,311.00	Shore leave, sick days, raingear provided
IPHC			\$150-185	\$4500-5550	plus 5% vacation pay
WDF&W	\$9.71/hr	Sc. Tech 1*	\$147	\$4,411.92	Raingear provided, sick days, holiday pay
ADF&G	1 2/3 x base pay for sea time	Technician*	Approx \$150	Approx \$4500	Shore leave, sick days, raingear provided

<b>INDUSTRY</b>	Varies	Quality Control* \$120-275 plus crew share	\$3600-\$8250	Training usually paid, some gear provided
Obs. Contractors	12-24 hrs/day	1st contract	\$70-80 \$2100-2400	For all observer categories the following apply: Raingear is NOT provided. Training, briefing, debriefing usually not paid for. Accomodations vary.
Obs. Contractors	12-24 hrs/day	2-3 contracts	\$80-100 \$2550-3000	
Obs. Contractors	12-24 hrs/day	3 + contracts	\$90-105 \$2700-3150	

\* Educational requirements less than observer.

\*\*Compiled by D. Cunningham. Not updated since September of 1995

### Insurance Technical Committee Report to the Council

The ITC met on June 4, 1997 to discuss insurance issues as they relate to the observer program in the North Pacific. The two primary issues were: 1) the recent language changes to the Magnuson-Stevens Act (M-S Act) designating observers to be federal employees for purposes of insurance coverage under the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA); and 2) current insurance coverage requirements for contractors providing observers.

The ITC discussed feedback from the Dept of Labor (DOL) received thus far regarding the FECA designation for observers in the M-S Act language. The language in the Act deems observers to be federal employees for purposes of insurance coverage by FECA. The language in the Act specifically refers to observers on fishing vessels and does not refer to plant observers or to activities of vessel observers when assigned to vessels, but not actually on the vessel. The advice from DOL is that FECA is a workman's compensation coverage and does not relieve the contracting company from the existing liability coverages or their existing Alaska Workman's Comp policies. In essence, while FECA may provide an alternative workman's comp remedy for some observers, it does not resolve the overriding issue of observer status, nor does it relieve the contracting companies or vessel owners from potential liability.

In determining the hierarchy of remedy in an injury case, DOL advises that it cannot answer this question until a claim is filed, and that the determination of remedy may vary from case to case. They further advise that existing coverages should be maintained by the contracting companies. This is contrary to the ITC's original focus - to develop a single, comprehensive source of insurance which protects the observers, the contractors, and the vessel owners. The FECA designation further confuses the observer insurance issue, does not relieve the contracting companies of any existing comp or liability coverages, is redundant to

existing comp coverages for observers, and could actually result in increased costs of the existing insurance coverage packages (due to the uncertainties created).

**For these reasons, the ITC recommends that the Council recommend to Congress that the FECA designation in the Act, as it relates to North Pacific FMP groundfish and FMP crab observer programs, be removed (from the Act).**

The ITC originally (in 1994) recommended that Contractual General Liability coverage be required to be carried by observer contractors. The ITC recommends that this be changed to an option, not a requirement.

The ITC will probably meet again in September, 1997.

### Rating System a Farce - Editorial by Gillian Stoker

At the end of my last contract in 1996 (November) I returned from the field and had my first experience with the NMFS Observer Program's new rating system. During my deployment I worked on two vessels, one fishing shoreside pollock and delivering to the Alyeska plant in Dutch Harbor and the other a factory boat fishing pot cod. At the end of my debriefing I was given two different ratings. For the pot vessel I was in the "meets expectations" category (grade 1) and for the shoreside vessel "exceptional" (grade 2).

This made no sense to me as I knew my data were clean and complete for both vessels but that while simply doing the then expected whole haul sample at the plant for the shoreside vessel I had greatly exceeded the minimum sampling requirements for the pot vessel. (I had no corrections to make and heard no complaints from my debriefer.) I thought that perhaps the ratings had

been reversed by mistake and went back to my debriefer to question the rationale behind them. I was told that I was misunderstanding the rating system and that quantity of work was not to influence ratings as this could encourage drylabbing of data. Exceptional ratings were only to be given when an observer had to overcome some particular difficulty in sampling and not as a recognition of extra effort in straightforward sampling situations.

Now, I could have accepted this if I had received a Grade 1 rating on both vessels. However, as I can think of few sampling procedures more straightforward than whole haul pollock deliveries at a plant with a full time plant observer, I still failed to understand the logic behind my different ratings and continued to question my debriefers reasoning. After arguing for some time about the rating system my debriefer told me that my grade for the pot vessel would be raised to Grade 2. No logical reason was given for the change. It was simply a way to try and placate me, shut me up and get me to leave.

At that point the rating system became completely meaningless. If grades are raised simply to placate there is no point to grading in the first place. Also, I have spoken to several other debriefers since that time about their interpretation of the rating system and each person I've talked with seems to use a somewhat different standard. If NMFS plans to continue to rate observers, they need to come up with a more concrete set of criteria and make sure that all the people conducting debriefings are interpreting those criteria in the same fashion.

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### **Letter of APO Support -- Bill Monheimer**

I sent my ballot off a week ago and I must admit to being excited. I know that victory for the union is by no means assured, but I feel good about this election. Hopefully you do too.

Three women have been responsible for making this organization and hence, the election, possible. Mandy Merklin, Teresa Turk, and Kim Dietrich. Mandy and Teresa got started observing in the Joint Venture days and though retired from observing they have worked for years trying to improve the working conditions of observers as well as the observer program itself. M and T were responsible for getting the 'Mailbuoy' started, and as legend has it, held the first APO meeting around Mandy's kitchen table. In the 16 months since leaving AOI, Kim, the third guilty party, has put in

countless hours getting the 'Mailbuoy' out, making hundreds of phone calls, holding APO meetings in her home," and working with the Alaska Fishermen's Union.

Regardless of how the election goes we owe these three a big hardy THANK YOU and WELL DONE!

Not to be forgotten are the rest of us. Kudos to all of you who testified at Council meetings, submitted pieces to the 'Mailbuoy' and attended APO meetings to put in your 2 cents. **Membership input is what will make APO work.**

In the meantime, the 'Mailbuoy' needs your support. Until APO becomes the recognized bargaining unit for all observers, APO needs the sense of identity the 'Mailbuoy' provides. Without the 'Mailbuoy' APO could easily have withered and died in the last 2 years.

Each issue of the 'Mailbuoy' costs about \$400. The burden of financing the 'Mailbuoy' has been falling on a handful of people and that just isn't fair. Suggested dues are \$10/year. To those of you who paid your dues in '95 and '96 thanks alot. This is '97 and APO is runnin on fumes. Make your check payable to APO and mail it off today. Good news for those of you who feel really moved and contribute \$25 - your checks won't be rejected.

Besides your \$, the 'Mailbuoy' needs your thoughts and ideas. If you ever feel the urge to put pen to paper, submit it. We'll even take crayon. For those of you who are wired, e-mail will save someone a lot of time typing and editing. Subject matter doesn't have to be APO or observer related. Poetry, short fiction, essays, whatever are all acceptable. But be reasonable. The 'Mailbuoy' can't publish libelous material (that's what fiction is for), and your fantasies regarding sea lions may or may not be appropriate.

Consider the 'Mailbuoy' your vanity press.

### **Preventable?** by Sue Jorgensen

[Reprinted from the *Life Ring*<sup>3</sup> with permission of the Fishing Vessel Safety division of the U.S. Coast Guard]

People fall overboard all the time but the only ones we hear about are the tragic incidents--when someone dies. In 1996, four people died as a result of falling off commercial fishing vessels. One fell off a crabber in the Bering Sea, another man in Bristol Bay was relieving himself on the bow of the boat when he fell overboard, one fell off a longliner near the Shumagin Islands and another was tangled up in crab gear and went over the side in the Bering Sea.

Man overboard fatalities are nothing new and are not just a commercial fishing problem. In 1993 falls

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<sup>3</sup> Interested in receiving your own free copy of the *Life Ring*? Call 1-800-478-7369 (in Alaska) or 907-463-2286.

overboard were second only to collisions in all boating-related casualties in the U.S. Many of these overboard fatalities are preventable. Incorporate the following into your shipboard procedures and let's see if we can't eliminate these needless fatalities:

- **Wear** a PFD anytime when out on deck. When you are going over the side it's too late to put one on! Too bulky and awkward you say? There are many choices available today that are not only comfortable but effective. Shop around. Make sure your crew wears them also.
- **Coat** the decks with non-skid and keep them clean and cleared of clutter.
- **Establish** deck safety procedures. No one on deck alone without checking out and in. No one to relieve himself directly overboard (buckets are safer if there is no toilet). Create a buddy system.
- **Purchase** man overboard alarms. These alarms are set off when the wearer is immersed in water and they can activate an alarm in the wheelhouse, shut down an engine or deactivate an autopilot.
- **Conduct** man overboard drills. Drills are essential so that each crewmember knows what is expected in the event someone falls overboard. In 15 foot seas and 40 knot winds it may be very difficult to bring someone back on board. But with practice, gained only through drills, the chances for a successful recovery will improve.

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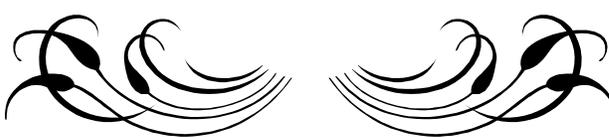
**\*\*Job Opportunities\*\***

**Resources Northwest, Inc.**, Closes 8-15. Salary for crew leader is \$11-15/hr; crew member is \$9-12/hr; plus work related transportation and per diem. Company is a natural resources consulting firm specializing in wildlife, fisheries and forestry analysis and management planning. Will conduct fish/stream surveys in western Oregon from Aug-Oct. Will conduct surveys according to Forest Service protocol for stream inventory and fish species identification. Field surveys will be conducted on small to mid-sized streams and rivers. Some overnight camping, electrofishing and snorkeling may be required. Must be capable of recording data accurately, clearly and with meticulous detail; capable of working as team member to reach project goals. For crew leader, must have one season conducting Forest Service stream

inventories or have attended Forest Service stream inventory training. For crew member must have one season of biological survey work. Send or fax resumes to Resources Northwest, Inc., P.O. Box 675, Kirkland, WA 98083. FAX: 206-828-3543.

**Fisheries Biologist, Beak Consultants**, Salary negotiable depending upon experience. Company is an international, environmental consulting firm. Permanent, full-time position. Will conduct fisheries investigations for commercial and government clients, conduct field research, data analysis and write reports. Requires M.S. in fisheries management or science. Field experience with multiple fisheries sampling techniques and strong data analysis and technical writing skills required. Experience in fisheries research or management and supervision of multiple fisheries projects desirable. Knowledge of Pacific salmonid populations, modeling, species interaction, conservation biology, applied statistics and experimental design also desirable. Contact Tim Fisher, Beak Consultants, Inc. 317 S.W. Alder, Suite 900, Portland, OR 97204.

**Fish & Wildlife Officer I, WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife**. Closing date is open until further notice but 1st round of applications will be considered on applications received by Aug. 1. Salary: \$2465-3146/mo. Enforce all fish, wildlife, food fish and shellfish laws, department rules/regulations, all laws of the state and specific federal and tribal laws. Resolve dangerous and problem wildlife situations. Assist in emergencies such as floods, fires, and rescues. Assist all other law enforcement agencies. Respond to criminal activities in progress. Requires Bachelor's degree in natural resource science, criminal justice or closely related field. For application & information, contact Dept of Personnel in Olympia @ 360-753-5368. Recruitment #17069OCSG.



**MISC. NOTES & TIDBITS**

**Captain Vince O'Shea from the Coast Guard** is soliciting information from observers regarding Coast Guard boardings of fishing vessels. He would like to know how the boardings are being handled from the observers perspective (i.e. are you being questioned privately and have you been placed in any compromising situations?). His contact number is (907) 463-2226. His mailing address is 17th Coast Guard District, P.O. Box 22517, Juneau, AK 99802-5517.

**Letter of support from a concerned fisherman (Anonymous)**

As an Alaska commercial fisherman I would like to salute the hard working men and women who make up the APO. For without your efforts and diligence we would not have any data collected or any of the databases we have to draw from.

You have my respect and support as you continue to provide data to conserve, manage, and sustain our domestic fisheries. I feel it is time now more than ever for the industry to work with science in order to find ways to more effectively harvest the ocean, as well as preserve and manage stocks so that our children and future generations can enjoy the same bounty and harvest that we enjoy! We need you to make that happen!

Keep up the good work!

**Call for Observers Interested in Sperm Whale Special Project.** A special project is being developed for observers within the National Marine Mammal Lab at NMFS to examine the association of sperm whales with the longline vessels in the GOA. Basically, we are just asking for more detailed behavioral observations and photos. Observers have varied interests and strengths and we are taking names and contact numbers/addresses of observers who have worked on longline vessels in the GOA and are interested in this association. The project is in its early stages and has not yet been approved but if anyone is interested, please contact Scott Hill at NMML (206) 526-6554 or Liz Mitchell at c/o NWO, P.O. Box 217, Sisters, OR 97759.

**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 recommended but not 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*, an annual donation of \$15 is recommended.

**APO T-SHIRTS** are still available. Contact Kim. There are only a few large black ones left. If there's interest, I'm willing to place another order. The price is \$15.

**LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO DO WHILE IN SEATTLE?** 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 is Sept. 16, 5:30-8:30 p.m., at Ray's Boathouse, 6049 Seaview Ave, NW. Attendance is not limited to women. Meetings are the 3rd Tues of each month. Contact the WFN office @ 789-1987 for more information regarding the next program topic.

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

Mark Coles, AFU 206-441-3425

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

Bill Karp 206-526-4194  
Shannon Fitzgerald 206-526-4553  
Martin Loefflad 206-526-4194  
Heather Weikart 206-526-4213

OTC 907-257-2770/  
Council 907-271-2809

**NMFS BRIEFING/TRAINING SCHEDULE**

(subject to change)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Location</u>
7/21	3 week	Anchorage
7/23	2 day	Seattle
7/20	2 day	Anchorage
8/4	3 week	Anchorage
8/4	3 week	Seattle
8/6	2 day	Seattle
8/12	2 day	Anchorage
8/18	3 week	Anchorage
8/19	4 day	Seattle
8/26	2 day	Anchorage

9/2 2 day Seattle  
 9/9 2 day Anchorage  
 9/17 2 day Anchorage  
 9/23 4 day Anchorage  
 9/30 2 day Anchorage

9/9 Vessel Bycatch Accountability Committee  
 (tentative date), Seattle  
 9/15 BSAI Pacific cod longline season opens  
 9/15 St. Matthew blue and Pribilof red king crab  
 season open  
 9/21-22 Joint Council/AK Board of Fisheries,  
 Anchorage  
 9/22-26 Council meeting in Seattle  
 12/8-12 Council meeting in Anchorage

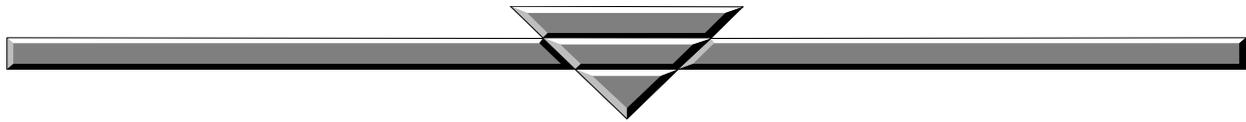
**Additional Observer Training Center activities:**

8/11-22 Crab observer training class

**MEETINGS & OPENINGS**

8/1 Experimental test fishery-gear performance  
 research  
 8/15 Yellowfin Sole opens  
 9/1 Pollock "B" season opens  
 9/1 Brown king crab season re-opens  
 9/2-5 Groundfish Plan Teams meet to discuss 1997  
 Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluations  
 (SAFE), Seattle  
 9/9 OAC meets in Seattle (date tentative)

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. Thanks again for all of you who contributed articles and especially to those who testified at the Kodiak Council meeting. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. (KD)



**Unionization Questionnaire:** I know many observers have concerns about how flexible the system will be if a union is involved, therefore, we would like observer input to the following questions. Please respond using any format you wish.

- 1) What is your ideal contract length? How much do you expect to work in a year? How much are you willing to work in a year? Should there be a min/max?
- 2) We feel all employed days should be paid for including briefing, training, debriefing and all days in the field (i.e. between assignments). Do you agree?
- 3) What are your expectations concerning initial pay rates? Would an incremental pay increase over 3 years (or more) be acceptable to reach the target salary?
- 4) Should future increases reflect inflation or some other standard? {How often are federal GS ratings updated?}
- 5) Do you currently have health insurance? Does your contractor contribute? If yes, what do they pay? What would you be willing to pay annually for health insurance?
- 6) How important is contractor provided housing during training/briefing/debriefing and/or in the field?
- 7) Does your contractor provide mail delivery in the field and is this important?
- 8) What other concerns do you think the Union can address?
- 9) What concerns can the APO address? I.E. NMFS/Council related issues
- 10) Is it important to you to have the option of working for industry for part of the year?
- 11) Do you think the coursework requirements are too restrictive, adequate, or not restrictive enough?

12) In general, do you think observers are performing their duties? How prevalent do you think dry-labbing is? What is your definition of dry-labbing?

13) What is your favorite part of the job? Least favorite?

14) Why do you observe?