



the
MAIL BUOY

Vol.3

June 28, 1996

WHAT'S UP with the APO?? Good question! I personally apologize for this issues' delay. At the 5/3/96 APO meeting, I promised I'd have it out by June 1. Oh well, a short observing contract and too many home improvement projects to count have been just a little distracting. Anyway, this was more or less published by the seat of my pants so I would appreciate any feedback you're willing to give-both positive and negative. The APO also continues to be interested in your ideas- if you have an idea for an article, would like to respond to a previous article or just some issues you think the APO should address, drop a letter or call Teresa Turk, Steve Copps, Tracy Mayhew or Kim Dietrich the next time you're in Seattle. Thanks again to all who contributed to this issue.

Those people who are in town prior to "B" season should give a shout as well so that we can organize another meeting prior to everyone scattering again. (KD)

THIRD PARTY ALTERNATIVE to the RESEARCH PLAN DELAYED

by Kim Dietrich

At the April, 1996 meeting, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) delayed taking final action on a modified pay-as-you-go Observer Program which was described in the draft Statement of Work (SOW). The proposed program would have consisted of a third party entity (the Prime Contractor) directly contracted by NMFS. The Prime Contractor's major responsibilities would be to hire one or more observer contractors (subcontractors) and to collect money from vessels for each vessels' individual observer needs. The system would be similar to the current system except observers would be paid by a contractor who is NOT in a direct monetary relationship with the fishing industry.

The delay was requested by NMFS due to concerns regarding observer employment status under the contractual system proposed in the draft SOW. NMFS is currently awaiting a Department of Labor (DOL) ruling that will decide whether observers qualify for a government-like compensation package under the Service Contract Act. The Service Contract Act applies only to contracted and possibly subcontracted employees when a government contract exists. Currently, there is no official contract between NMFS and the six contractors. If observers qualify, the cost of the modified pay-as-you-go alternative to industry will increase drastically. One of the major increases in cost would be due to observer wages. The APO continues its struggle to achieve compensation similar to what a federal employee would receive if the federal employee were to be deployed as an observer. Salaries would range from \$120-\$220/day and insurance benefits would also increase. The other major cost increase would be for Prime Contractor overhead which some estimate will be 25% higher than current rates. The estimate of 25% includes both staff overhead and the cost of all sampling gear which NMFS would no longer supply under the proposed system. The Council voted to delay action until these additional cost variables could be more accurately defined.

Once the DOL makes a statement, the Observer Advisory Committee (OAC, formerly the Observer Oversight Committee) will meet again and hopefully come up with more concrete recommendations for the Council. The Council will take up the Observer Program and the modified pay-as-you-go alternative at its September meeting in Sitka, AK. The APO will keep you updated regarding the DOL ruling and the OAC meeting date. Remember, all of the meetings

are open to the public and comments are accepted. [See page 7 for the address.]

Due to the delay, the remainder of 1996 and most likely all of 1997, observer compensation methods will remain the same. The Council also took final action on an amendment to the Research Plan to return all fees collected in 1995.

NMFS BEGINS NEW EVALUATION SYSTEM - WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

by Kim Dietrich

Within the draft Statement of Work (SOW), which is currently on hold (see above article), there is a section which addresses observer performance rating. The rating system is designed to take into account observer experience and performance and link performance to wage: the desired result is to develop a core of observers who consistently perform at an exemplary level. The system was designed by Observer Program staff on short notice and needed to be implemented immediately so that the draft SOW could be published and ideally could be implemented by January of 1997.

Many observers who have returned from the field in 1996 have been given a rating per vessel type based on job performance and you all probably have an idea how the evaluation system works. For those of you who haven't been out in 1996, I'll try to summarize but if you want further information you should talk to Heather Weikart, Shannon Fitzgerald or Bill Karp at the Observer Program directly. If the SOW is embraced by the Council, the rating you receive will affect your future pay grade and how quickly you advance in the pay grade system. In the draft SOW, four pay grades are suggested (but not specifically defined unfortunately). An observer will receive pay grade 1 upon completion of the 3-week training session. Following debriefing after the first cruise, each observer's status will be reviewed. Successful evaluation will result in a change to pay grade 2 for the next cruise. If a recommendation for advancement to grade 2 cannot be supported, the individual will be decertified and will not be permitted to serve as a groundfish observer in the future.

At the conclusion of debriefing, observers will be assigned a performance rating for each deployment (vessel) type encountered during the cruise they have just completed. The possible ratings are Unsatisfactory (=0), Meets Expectations (=1), Exceeds Expectations (=2), and Exemplary (=3). A score for each cruise will be calculated by multiplying the performance rating (#) by the number of days spent collecting data. If two or more deployment types are involved in an individual cruise, separate scores will be calculated for each deployment (vessel) type. If an observer is rated unsatisfactory for any cruise, probation or decertification will be initiated at program discretion.

Current standing for each observer will be calculated by summing the scores for all cruises for each deployment (vessel) type.

Promotion to pay grade 3 will occur when a cumulative score of 300 is reached and promotion to grade 4 will occur when a score of 600 is reached. Promotion to grade 4 will not occur, however, unless an exemplary performance rating was given following at least two out of three of the observer's most recent cruises. Demotion to grade 3 will occur if an observer is rated less than exemplary on two consecutive deployments of at least 2 weeks in duration. The following is a revised example from the draft SOW:

<p>An observer has the following history of deployment & evaluations:</p> <p>Cruise #1 @ pay grade 1: 90 total days - 50 longline (LL) and 40 shoreside delivery (SSD) Performance rating: LL =1 and SSD =1 Score for deployment is 50 for LL and 40 for SSD Cumulative score = 90</p> <p>Cruise #2 @ pay grade 2: 80 total days -all SSD Performance rating: SSD =2</p>
--

<p>Score for deployment is (2 x 80) for SSD Cumulative score = 250</p> <p>Cruise #3 @ pay grade 2: 130 total days - 70 LL and 60 SSD Performance rating: LL =1 and SSD =2 Score for deployment is 70 for LL and 120 for SSD Cumulative score =440</p> <p>Cruise #4 @ pay grade 3: 85 total days - 25 LL and 60 SSD Performance rating: LL =2 and SSD =3 Score for deployment is 50 for LL and 180 for SSD Cumulative score = 670</p> <p>Cruise #5 @ pay grade 4: etc...</p>
--

Currently, the draft SOW is written so that scores, and hence pay grades, are by vessel type. The result, if taken literally, would be that your contractor could move you to a vessel type which you are a pay grade 1 and you'd take a pay cut in the middle of a contract. Both the APO and numerous observers have made comments to the Observer Program: it is likely the pay grade will be based on the cumulative score alone. It is important the Observer Program gets your feedback on this issue. If the pay grade system remains as it is written, will you be willing to take any assignment? I wouldn't. Observers will become gear specific and contractors will have less flexibility to place observers on all vessel types. The end result to industry will be an increase in cost.

The APO has asked the Observer Program for a set of clear, objective criteria so that the observers know exactly how evaluations are being employed. Currently, evaluations are entirely subjective and it is difficult to dispute an evaluation if the criteria have never been explained. In order to include prior observers in the proposed pay grade system, NMFS is proposing to retroactively grade all cruises completed in 1995 based on debriefing evaluations. The practice of basing wages on re-evaluation of past performance, if done by a private company, would violate the 1978 federal Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures. All observers should contact the Observer Program with questions regarding any ratings being applied to 1995 contracts. Ask for details regarding how the ratings were determined and for specifics regarding what could be improved in the future. The APO supports the implementation of performance evaluations for all future cruises but NOT retroactively. Evaluation criteria must be clearly defined in advance. We look forward to seeing NMFS resolve the question of how an observer can be objectively evaluated by someone who was not physically present during the observers deployment. The observers work environment is dynamic and should obviously not be judged on output alone. It is worrisome that evaluations made shoreside will directly effect an observers wage. Observers should at the very least know that evaluations are being made objectively and relative to a strict, well-known set of criteria.

Hopefully by the time the next Mail Buoy is published, we'll have a copy of the criteria which we'll be able to publish and you'll all be able to comment on them. Observer Program staff have expressed interest in outside ideas on both the evaluation process and on any other changes which could potentially improve the program. NMFS would prefer constructive suggestions. Going in and saying the evaluation process is "unfair," doesn't solve the problem. Be specific and submit your ideas or proposals in writing. If you would like help or just another opinion, contact Teresa, Steve or myself, or get together with another observer. Remember, change can occur only if you participate in the process. Any action you take as an individual can help all of us.



OREGON'S ENHANCED DATA COLLECTION PROJECT UPDATE

by Keith Matteson

The Enhanced Data Collection Project is up and running out of Oregon and Washington ports. In the last Mail Buoy, published in December, Steve Copps and I had recently completed a shakedown cruise and were pleased with the

results. Since then, regular sampling by observers has taken place aboard four more volunteer trawl vessels. Steve is still with us, sampling out of Westport, WA. In January he was joined by Timothy Edgars in Charleston, OR. John Everson and Mike Bilan also served the project for the first quarter of 1996 aboard boats in Astoria and Charleston.

Observers are being assigned to the boats for four month periods. These boats have volunteered to participate in the program. The Oregon Trawl Commission is the largest funding source for this project. Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) is coordinating the project in addition to funding, and NMFS and the West Coast Processors Association are also providing funds. Mark Saelens is the ODFW Coordinator for the project, with myself as Ass't Coordinator and Jodene Summers as the project's Data Technician.

Every trip which targets groundfish is sampled to determine both the amount and the makeup of the discard for each tow. We've run into a great variety of situations which have challenged the observers, but with a little ingenuity and lots of notes most problems have been resolved.

If sufficient information can be collected, the intention is to use the information together with fish ticket data to determine total removals by fishery, which will then be used for more accurate stock assessment modeling.

The project has donated over 100 incidentally encountered salmon to area hunger relief agencies thus far, opening up the way for much larger amounts of discard to be utilized in the future. You may have heard of Northwest Food Strategies(NFS) and the work they are doing to distribute discard and overages in Alaskan fisheries. Now NFS is helping us by organizing the various hunger relief agencies and transport systems to process and distribute discard brought in by our project.

I'd like to take a moment to thank several people from the observer world who have given me valuable help and advice over the past half-year. Most of all, Steve Copps and Timothy Edgars have provided outstanding help in far too many ways to describe here, and I owe them both big-time. Mandy Merklein and Shannon Fitzgerald have given me lots of encouragement and I'd like to thank everyone who posted my initial hand-scrawled fliers looking for observers last October.

We're still looking for observers to be involved in this program. Ideally, these observers would already be located on the Oregon coast, but if any of you with groundfish certification would like to get involved with a new program, give me a call at (541) 867-4741. This is a pilot project, so we'd like people with experience and a professional attitude. The project is still evolving rapidly, and new situations and challenges arise continually.



WOMEN IN THE FIELD - EDITORIAL by Barbara Gimlin

Initially, the best part of observing can be the freedom and attitude of "I'm on the boat in the Bering Sea and my boss is in Seattle." By the end of your contract the best part may be getting off the boat and onto the nearest airplane. In between, experiences vary as widely as the backgrounds of each observer.

During my fifth contract observing I found myself wondering once again what makes a female (like myself) decide to head off to sea, aboard fishing vessels with predominately male crews, in tumultuous seas in order to count fish. I yearned to know more about my female counterparts in hope of better understanding myself. Being assigned as the Westward plant observer in Dutch Harbor in January and February of 1995, gave me a perfect opportunity to meet and talk at length with other female observers.

Interviewing female observers was easy. Everyone was enthusiastic about sharing their experiences. The ten women I spoke with had a wide range of experiences as observers. One half had been observing for 2 ½ years or more and had completed at least four contracts. They came from such far away states as Nebraska, New York, Texas, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and New Jersey. Their backgrounds were just as varied as their states.

One thing they all shared in common, however, was the love of adventure and the outdoors. Since observing takes us where fishermen go, stories spilled out about remote ports like Dutch Harbor, Akutan, Sandpoint, the Pribilof Islands,

Kodiak, Seward, the western Aleutians, and as far north as the North Pacific ice flows. Not only is observing giving women practical field experience in biology, but they're seeing parts of Alaska most tourists don't even know exist.

For a few, observing was their first career-related job right out of college. Others had a wide range of work experience, with a surprising list of unique jobs that included fire fighting, small mammal research, collecting fish stomachs, raising cockroaches, wildlife refuge management, teaching high school, teaching environmental education at a prison, serving the National Guard Reserves in Desert Storm, and various fish technician position. Three of the 10 had served with the U.S. Peace Corps.

Return observers generally had many good stories for every harrowing or unpleasant one. While females face different situations than men, a number said they felt their job was often easier to carry out. Crews tend to put more effort into helping a woman with her samples and are generally more courteous.

Sexual harassment of female observers is a popular subject of speculation. After all, if you're breathing and female in Dutch Harbor, someone at some point will come on to you. Most female observers, however, learn how to handle such advances quickly. But what do you do when a crew member becomes drunk in port and slurs inappropriate comments at you? Or if the guys on board have a preconceived attitude towards you that seems impossible to shake? It's surprising how adolescent men can be at times when it comes to dealing with women, especially when you're at sea and there aren't many women around.

The attitude and personality of a female observer can make it clear, if not in words but in body language, that sexually-oriented conduct is not an option. When inappropriate behavior occurs, it needs to be called on when it happens. Even with this, however, there are some men with whom this will always be a problem. It's a very subjective area and women need to recognize the situations and gracefully get themselves out whenever possible.

Harassment, whether sexual or job-related, is a small part of the total picture. As time goes by, one observer told me the worst feelings she has relates to being so close to tragic accidents that occur. She now worries more about boats going down and people getting hurt. Nine times out of 10 she has heard of the boat and knows the people involved. "Short-timers" don't realize this as much. They come up once or twice and leave, and never acquire that feeling of being an integral part of the industry and data collection process.

I came out of my "interviews" with female observers with a reaffirmation that whether its adventures at sea, the comraderie on board, or seeing humpback whales breaching from the deck, observing will always draw a special kind of women --and men. Sometimes we all need to take a few steps back and remember why we became observers and how well our original aspirations were met by our experiences.

Whether the next chapter of your life is being a tour guide on the Amazon or obtaining a Ph.D. in quantum physics, observing is a memorable stepping stone along the way. If the first two entries of your first logbook said "Violently sick, don't ask," I bet you're now laughing about it. And later in life when you're reclining in your rocking chair (or sailboat), the memories will come flooding back and you'll realize how glad you are that you didn't spend those months -- or years -- behind a desk.



CAREER ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES by Steve Copps

For those of you disillusioned with the Alaska Program, or looking to boldly sail new waters, there are possibilities. This list is not complete so if you come across new leads, please let us know so that we can pass on the information in the next Mail Buoy.

Antarctic Support Associates
61 Inverness Dr. East #300
Dept. MAR-607
Englewood, CO 80112

Committee for the Conservation
of Antarctic Living Marine Resources
25 Old Wharf
Hobart, Tasmania 7000
Australia

Groundfish Enhanced Data Collection
Project
Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
ATTN: Keith Matteson
2040 SE Marine Science Dr.
Newport, OR 97365
ph. (503) 867-4741
Note: this office also runs a shore-
side hake observer program.

Pacific States Marine Commission
45) S.E. 82nd Dr., Suite 100
Gladstone, OR 97027
ph: (503) 650-5400

Observer Program
Attn: Sylvia Harron or Michael Gjernes
2nd fl. 525 Head St.
Victoria, British Columbia
V9A-5S1
CANADA
ph: (604) 383-4535
fax: (604) 383-0103

Hal Weeks
Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
2040 SE Marine Science Dr.
Newport, OR 97365
ph. (541) 867-4741
Note: part-time position available for
whiting shoreside observer program

Liz Scott
Southeast Fisheries Science Center
Galveston Laboratory, NMFS
4700 Avenue U, F/SEC7
Galveston, TX 77551
ph. (409) 766-3571
Note: observers placed on shrimp otter trawl
vessels and employed by contractors and as
federal employees.

Howard McElderry
Archipelago Marine Research Ltd.
2nd fl., 525 Head St.
Victoria, BC
CANADA V9A-5S1
(604) 383-4535

International Pacific Halibut Commission
P.O. Box 95009
Seattle, WA 98145-2009
ph. (206) 634-1838
Note: the pay is \$150-185/day with good
opportunity for advancement.

Manomet Observatory, Inc.
Fisheries Observer Program
Attn: Jay Wennemer or Steve Drew
Box 1770
Manomet, MA 02345
ph: (508) 224-6521
fax: (508) 224-9220

Washington Sea Grant
University of Washington
3716 Brooklyn Ave. NE
Seattle, WA 98105
ph: (206) 543-6600
Note: Ed Melvin has run a small observer program in Puget
Sound monitoring the interaction of seabirds with drift gillnets
targeting salmon. Funding duration uncertain.

Norm Mendes
Southwest Region, NMFS
501 West Ocean Blvd. F/SWO32
Longbeach, CA 90802
(310) 980-4028
Note: SW Region has been responsible for several observer
programs including the tuna purse seine, set & drift gillnet for
halibut, sharks, swordfish and the longline fishery targeting bill-
fishes and tuna. Observers are federal employees. Uncertain of
current hiring needs.

Eugene Nita
Southwest Region, NMFS
2570 Dole St. Rm 106, F/SW0
Honolulu, HI 96822
(808) 955-8831

Dennis Lee
Southeast Fisheries Science Center, NMFS
75 Virginia Beach Dr., F/SEC4
Miami, FL 33149
(305) 361-4247
Note: Program includes pelagic longline fishery for tuna &
swordfish. Observers are both contracted & federal employees.

NMFS plans to re-open the Dutch Harbor field position. For more information regarding a possible announcement date and about the application process, contact Heather Weikart at the Observer Program at 526-4213.

OBSERVER PROFESSIONALISM -Editorial by William Monheimer

Currently posted on my bunkhouse bulletin board are a bunch of newspaper articles dealing with the misfortunes of William Bokenyi, a former observer. Seems William falsified bycatch data with the intention of extending the fishing

season and with it, his term of employment. He probably didn't realize that he was committing a felony, but he knows it now. From what I've read he's copped a plea and is going to serve 12-18 months in a federal prison. One good thing - he didn't take a bribe- that would probably call for a 10-year sentence.

I'm sure that most of you know that the 'P' in APO stands for Professional. APO's goals include increased compensation, quality insurance and the respect accorded professionals, etc... The flip side of this is that we have to behave like professionals. We can't be out carousing when our boat is ready to leave the dock. We can't get too friendly or have an intimate relationship with crew members. We can't be concerned with trying to score a QC or deckhand job.

None of this should be new to anybody. ~~If you put yourself in a compromising position, you're not doing your job, you're making the next observers job that much tougher and you're making all of us look bad.~~ Who knows, you might even be committing a felony.

As for shoreside behavior I want to say that a little bit of discretion goes a long way in this life. I'm not saying you can't party it up and have a good time but you can't be acting like drunken sailors either.

I imagine any of you who know me are having a chuckle at this point. I've certainly become more aware of what might be perceived as an indiscretion. It's time for me to clean up my act too. If we want any respect, we're going to have to earn it.

MIND EXPANSION (KD)

Do ever find yourself thinking that you know absolutely nothing about how the data you collect is utilized? Do you find yourself responding, "I don't know" to fish-related questions asked by fishermen? Would you like to learn more about the North Pacific and Bering Sea ecosystems and how they are managed? Here's what you can do:

- 1) Write or call the North Pacific Fishery Management Council office and request to be put on the mailing list for the Council Newsletter. The newsletter is published 1-2 weeks after each Council meeting; it's a good summary of the major issues and the status of any regulatory actions. The address is 605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306, Anchorage, AK 99501 and the phone number is (907) 271-2809;
- 2) Familiarize yourself with the Council process and its membership. Attend (maybe even testify) a Council meeting to educate yourself. I realize some of the topics aren't related to observing but a little knowledge of the bigger picture couldn't be harmful either;
- 3) At the September Council meeting, the Plan Teams for the GOA and the BS/AI will present the initial draft Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) for 1997. The Council and scientists will accept written comments from the public. Both survey data and observer data from 1996 are used to produce the stock assessments. September's draft frequently has a lot of data holes; the November draft includes more data and has taken public comments into consideration. The documents (each area is 300-400 pages) are available for free upon request from the Council office. The Plan Teams also meet in between drafts to discuss model variables, acceptable biological catch (ABC) estimates and total allowable catch (TAC) recommendations with the other scientists. The Plan Team meetings are also open to the public. I'm uncertain whether comments are accepted at this time but I'd be willing to bet that most of the scientists wouldn't mind discussing their models and conclusions with an observer who showed interest in the system;
- 4) The State of Alaska Board of Fish is responsible for all shellfish management in Alaska. The address is P.O. Box 25526, Juneau, AK 99802 and the phone number is 907-465-6098. The Board of Fish is rumored to be conducting a meeting in October to address the future of the shellfish observer program. They meet in Anchorage and the public is welcome;
- 5) The Pacific Fishery Management Council is responsible for management of all groundfish off of the Washington and

Oregon coasts:

- 6) I have been collecting material for a North Pacific Fisheries bibliography for several years. If anyone is interested, I'd send you a copy if you contributed to the copy and mailing costs (<\$2). It's currently about 20 pages in length. You can contact me via the APO mail box:
- 7) Seattle Community College offers a one quarter class on marine fisheries that has an excellent reputation among observers.

GOOD FISHERMEN COUNT ON HONEST OBSERVERS by Mark S. Decker

Permission to reprint editorial originally published in the Anchorage Daily News, 5/23/96 given by M. S. Decker

As the captain of a factory trawler in Alaska, I am greatly concerned about the recent article in the Daily News about William Bokenyi, an observer for the National Marine Fisheries Service, being arrested on one felony count of false reporting while he worked aboard the *Bering Enterprise*.

I grew up in Maine and saw a fishery completely decimated by overfishing because there was no program like the one we have with NMFS on the West Coast. While the NMFS observer program is not a perfect system, it is very much needed.

Fishermen depend on professional observers to collect accurate data for fisheries management, and we realize the need to work with observers, to respect their efforts and not to interfere with data collection.

It is very disturbing to hear of Mr. Bokenyi's admission that he falsified data in order to allow the *Bering Enterprise* to fish an extra 13 days in 1994. I can only hope that this is an isolated incident.

I have been taking observers on my vessels since the beginning of the observer program, which began in the 1980s during joint venture fisheries, where we worked directly with foreign vessels. In my career I've only come across one truly bad observer and have had many great observers who worked diligently to uphold the standards set by NMFS for fisheries management.

The best observers have always been repeaters, or what I would call professional observers. They take their work on board seriously and consider it a career job. Those that don't have that attitude often just put in their time and seem to do the minimum amount required.

It is unfortunate that professional observers are not given more support and encouragement from both NMFS and the middleman contractors who hire them.

My vessel pays over \$8000 a month to have an observer on board, not to mention the expense of daily room and board. I have been told by my many observers that they receive far less than this pay, with average salaries ranging between \$2000-\$2400 a month.

In recent years, the contractors who hire the observers to collect data for NMFS have cut back on the amount they pay return observers and seem to be targeting young college grads who can be hired for far less. These young, inexperienced kids often have no idea what the job entails and don't stay around long enough to find out.

Even though contractors make a hefty sum each month off of the observers they hire, they do not provide any of the standard benefits that you would earn in a normal state or federal job. That means no medical or dental coverage if it's not work-related, much less anything such as retirement.

Observers work for wages that are decreasing rather than increasing, yet their workload and the amount of paperwork they're required to fill out while on board seems to increase. They fill out form after form for NMFS for each sample they conduct on the fish we catch.

It seems to me that if the workload was condensed, the observer would have more time to actually conduct samples and would have to spend less time at the ship's communications.

Trawler bashing is very popular in the media. A Daily News article, May 11, stated that most of the fish brought up by factory trawlers are the wrong species (bycatch) and are tossed overboard. This is not true. Watchdog groups need to examine the data collected by observers and determine percentages on a scientific basis. I estimate the average amount of fish not kept to be anywhere from 10 to 40% which is far less than "most."

What is never said is that most of this bycatch or "waste" is undesirable fish that are not marketable, such as skates, sculpins and arrowtooth flounder. These fish are usually released alive. To my knowledge, there have been no studies performed to document their survival rates. It is wrong to classify them as "dead or dying". Factory trawlers have conveyor belts in the sorting area that send all fish not used out a discard chute. To keep our fish products at

an optimum. sorting must be done as quickly as possible. The majority of fish are alive when they are released.

Alaska fishermen produce the best quality fish products in the world. We feed millions of people and provide thousands of jobs. The fishing industry pumps literally millions of dollars into the ports of Dutch Harbor, Kodiak, Akutan and the Pribilof Islands. Airlines, coastal trampers (vessels which transport fish to buyers) and transport companies all depend on us.

Fishermen depend on observers to collect good data. With proper fisheries management, fishing can continue for many generations to come. We need professional observers to ensure this is accomplished. Until NMFS and its contractors recognize this, we will all suffer.

[Note: The opinions expressed in this editorial are not necessarily representative of the APO. No figures were verified before publication.]

Current observer salaries range from \$2200-\$3200/month and vessels are charged approximately \$5000-5600/month + airfare. The above contractor cost does not reflect room and board expenses or any additional insurance cost the vessel decides to carry.]

MISC. NOTES & OTHER BUSINESS

FRASER ASKS FOR APO SUPPORT

Dave Fraser, owner/operator of the f/v Muir Milach, approached the APO seeking our support for his bid in taking over a Council seat (currently occupied by Wally Pereyra.) Mr. Fraser is currently on the Advisory Panel and has frequently voted to support the Research Plan in the past. The appointment has not been announced as of publication.

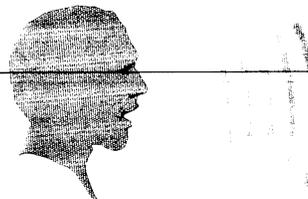
Our members thoughts on the APO's involvement would be appreciated.

MAGNUSON ACT...

Reauthorization of the Magnuson Act continues to be on hold. It is uncertain which changes will be made and how they will affect observers. We'll keep you updated. Thanks to all of the observers who commented individually and to those who signed the letter last spring.

INSURANCE UPDATE...

In the vote for insurance type USL & H is ahead by a narrow margin. We're still interested in your input so if you have an opinion, write or call.



APO CHANGES ADDRESS!

Please make a note of the new address: P.O. Box 30167, Seattle, WA 98103.

Also, if your mailing address has changed, please drop us a postcard or letter stating the change. If you didn't receive this issue of the Mail Buoy at the address you think you should have, it may be because I don't have your complete address. I apologize in advance for any inconvenience. You may be able to communicate with the APO via the web soon; include an E-mail address if you have one.

NEW MEMBERSHIP: if you want to become a member of the APO, please write to the above address or contact Kim Dietrich at (206) 547-4228. A donation of \$10 would be appreciated.



APO T-SHIRTS WILL BE AVAILABLE AGAIN...

...for those of you who missed the first opportunity. I would like to place the order by July 15, 1996 and have them sent to you by mid-August. Color options are black, purple and aqua; size options are large and extra large. It is currently undecided whether we want to print the big logo or the pocket sized logo on the front and the statement "Sampling at its finest." on the back so if you have an opinion about the logo you should include this preference as well. Send a donation of \$15 and state color/size preferences to APO, P.O. Box 30167, Seattle, WA 98103.

APO IS LOOKING FOR PROJECT VOLUNTEERS

The scope of the APO and the time it takes to seriously research issues are becoming larger than I'm sure anyone anticipated. If any of you are interested in volunteering when in Seattle or even while at home, the following projects could use some enthusiastic minds:

- 1) Insurance follow-up; 2) Unionization; 3) Publicity campaign; 4) Fishery updates for crab and groundfish in Alaska and the WOC; 5) Council regulatory action updates; 6) Magnuson Act updates; and any thing else you'd like to work on.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:

Teresa Turk	(206) 860-5828	Bill Karp	(206) 526-4194
Steve Copps	(206) 706-1793	Shannon Fitzgerald	(206) 526-4553
Tracy Mayhew	(360) 379-8410	Martin Leofflad	(206) 526-4194
Kim Dietrich	(206) 547-4228	Heather Weikart	(206) 526-4213

UPCOMING BRIEFING AND TRAINING SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Location</u>
			July 24	2-day	Seattle
			July 29	2-day	Anchorage
July 1	2-day	Anchorage	July 29	4-day	Seattle
July 8	4-day	Anchorage	Aug.5	3-week	Anchorage
July 10	2-day	Seattle	Aug.5	3-week	Seattle (2 concurrent classes)
July 15	2-day	Anchorage	Aug.7	2-day	Seattle
July 22	2-day	Anchorage	Aug.20	4-day	Seattle
July 22	3-week	Anchorage	Aug.26	2-day	Anchorage
			Aug.28	2-day	Seattle

FISHING OPENERS AND COUNCIL MEETINGS

July 1	Deep and shallow water flatfish in GOA and rock sole/o/flats in Bering reopen
Aug.15	Yellowfin sole in Bering reopens
Sept 1	Pollock "B" season opens; P.cod longline opens;
Sept 16	NPFMC meets in Sitka, AK