



the
Mail Buoy

A publication of the Association for Professional Observers
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E-mail: APO_obs@hotmail.com Website: <http://www.apo-observers.org>



www.ObserverNet.org

Check out the brand new website! ObserverNet is meant to be a resource of useful information about the observer profession and the observer lifestyle in general. Information, news, pictures, links, tips, and more, **for observers by observers.**

Topics include:

- NMFS and Observer Related News
- Vessel Profiles
- Contractor Profiles
- Union and Contract Information
- Calendar
- Observer Profiles
- NMFS Personnel
- Rant
- Job Links
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Insurance Information
- Classifieds and Gear Exchange
- Travel and Gear Links
- Bulletin Board
- Mixed Media
- Creative Writing
- Maps and Activities
- Picture Gallery

Contribution of information from all observers is needed. Please forward this information to other observers and encourage and promote activism throughout our profession! Email Info@ObserverNet.org or ObserverNet_org@hotmail.com

NORTH PACIFIC COUNCIL NEWS

Mayhew appointed to Advisory Panel (AP)

The Council voted in June to appoint Tracey Mayhew as the observer representative on the Council's Advisory Panel. Her first meeting will be in September. Feel free to contact her at: mayhewinwa@yahoo.com. [Congratulations Tracey!]

Observer Advisory Committee – 8/14/01 Update

The OAC met last March and discussed the viability of the no-cost contract approach that was being explored by the Observer Program to meet several goals related to data quality and administrative control, such as: addressing the conflict of interest between the industry and the contractors; implementing NMFS management controls over observer providers; and providing increased support for observers. Because the no-cost contract approach would trigger the Services Contract Act and necessarily increase costs to industry, the OAC and NMFS opted to shift the focus to a regulatory approach for achieving the near-term goals that the no-cost contract sought to address.

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NMFS is currently working on a white paper to analyze a suite of regulatory changes to the administration of the observer program that would meet the above goals. The white paper is an interim step prior to a draft analysis. The plan is to send the white paper to the OAC in late September, along with the agency goals and objectives for the observer program. Any comments on the white paper by the OAC would be requested by late October, for consideration/incorporation in the draft analysis for initial review.

The Council's initial review is currently scheduled for Feb. 2002, with final review in April. The plan is to have the OAC meet in January and receive a formal presentation on the draft analysis (another chance to comment). Any comments from the OAC at the January meeting would be incorporated as possible, and anything substantive that could not be included in the draft prior to presenting it to the Council would be addressed or incorporated before final action in April. The effective date for the implementation of the regulatory changes would be 2003, barring any unforeseen obstacles. The schedule is then as follows:

Late Sept. 2001: Send out white paper and goals and objectives to OAC

Late Oct. 2001: Receive comments on white paper from OAC
January 2002: Draft analysis presented to OAC
Feb. 2002: Council's initial review of analysis
March 2002: (tentative) OAC meeting, if necessary
April 2002: Council's final action on analysis

NMFS-ALASKA UPDATE

Alaska Fisheries Science Center Pursues Study of Northeast Pacific Rockfish Species

With slightly over 100 species worldwide and 33 species off Alaska, identifying the many rockfish species in the Northeast Pacific Ocean is an ongoing challenge for fishery biologists, fishermen and other observers. Although many rockfish species were described in the late 1800s, new species are still being found today. This is partly because the characteristics that distinguish the species are often subtle and confusing. For convenience, several similar appearing species frequently are lumped in fisheries catch statistics. For rebuilding efforts to be successful, the life history characteristics of each species must be well understood. This requires that all life history stages — larval, juvenile, and adult — of the species can be accurately identified. While accurate identification of adults of some rockfish species is difficult, accurate identification of larvae is rarely possible at all. Nevertheless, each species has unique biological characteristics and should be managed separately from all other species. In response to the need for more accurate identification of rockfish species, scientists at NOAA Fisheries' Alaska Fisheries Science Center have undertaken a variety of collaborative approaches to their study.

An overview of the study is now available electronically through the science center's web site, at:
http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/Quarterly/jfm2001/feature_jfm01.htm.
To view a quarterly report on the Science Center's research activities January through March 2001, go to:
http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/Quarterly/jfm2001/contents_jfm01.htm

The Executive Summary including recommendations of "Solutions to Seabird bycatch in Alaska's demersal longline fisheries" was posted September 6 on the Washington Sea Grant Web page:

<http://www.wsg.washington.edu/pubs/seabirds/execsummary.pdf>. The full document will be available online within 2 weeks.



National Observer Program UPDATE

Information for Observers about the Federal Employee's Compensation Act (From NOP's website: <http://www.st.nmfs.gov/st1/nop/FECA.html>)

If you have been injured while performing your duties as an observer, you may be eligible for compensation under the Federal Employee's Compensation Act (FECA). FECA is a federal law which provides benefits for work-related injuries or occupational diseases. These benefits include payment of medical expenses and compensation for wage loss. FECA also provides for payment of benefits to dependents.

Although FECA is primarily intended for federal employees, a 1996 amendment to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act extended the provisions of FECA to observers, as follows (section 403(c)):

"An observer on a vessel and under contract to carry out responsibilities under this Act or the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 USC 1361 et seq.) shall be deemed to be a Federal employee for purposes of compensation under the Federal Employee Compensation Act (5 USC 8101 et seq.)."

If you are an observer working for NMFS or under contract as described above, you are covered under FECA regardless of how long you have worked as an observer or

your work schedule, including if you work on a seasonal, part-time, intermittent, or contracted basis.

If you are injured, you must immediately notify your employer of the injury and obtain first aid or medical treatment as necessary. To obtain FECA benefits, you should also submit the appropriate FECA claim form within 30 days of the injury. The most common FECA claim forms are the following:

- CA-1 "Federal Employee's Notice of Traumatic Injury and Claim for Continuation of Pay/Compensation" - Traumatic injuries are defined as a wound or other condition of the body caused by external force, including stress or strain. They must be caused by a specific event or incident or series of events or incidents within a single day or work shift.
- CA-2 "Notice of Occupational Disease and Claim for Compensation" - Occupational diseases are defined as a condition produced in the work environment over a period longer than one workday or shift. It may result from systemic infections, repeated stress or strain, exposure to toxins, poisons, or fumes, or other conditions of the work environment.

The burden of proof for all claims is the responsibility of the claimant. Claimants must prove that they were performing their official duties as an observer when the injury occurred. In addition, claims must be supported by medical documentation that includes the following information:

- history of injury
- diagnosis
- statement that supports that the reported injury caused the condition
- course of treatment
- test results
- prognosis.

Compensation will be decided on a case by case basis after a thorough review of the claim form(s) and all supporting documentation.

More information about FECA, as well as copies of all FECA claims forms, may be obtained from the Department of Labor's Office of Worker's Compensation Programs website at:

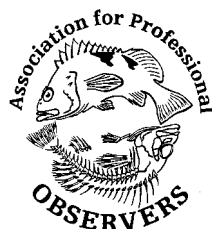
<http://www.dol.gov/dol/esa/public/regs/compliance/owcp/fecacont.htm>

If you are employed by the National Marine Fisheries Service as an observer, submit claims to:

*The Department of Commerce
Worker's Compensation Operations Center
14th and Constitution Avenue, NW, Room H-5102
Washington, DC 20230
(202) 482-0372
(800) 693-COMP (2667)*

If you are an observer under contract to carry out the responsibilities of either the Magnuson-Stevens Act or the Marine Mammal Protection Act, submit claims to:

*The Department of Labor
Office of Worker's Compensation Programs
800 North Capitol Street, Room 800
Washington, DC, 20211
(202) 513-6800*



APO ACTIVITY UPDATE

APO Comments on PSEIS...

Regardless of which alternative is chosen as the NMFS preferred alternative, quality observer data are critical. The current North Pacific Groundfish Observer

Program (NPGOP) has several serious flaws that are recognized by the agency but little action has been taken to change a potentially biased and extremely inequitable system. In fact, there was no discussion in the Draft PSEIS regarding of the adequacy (or lack thereof) of current coverage rates or whether coverage levels need to be modified in a statistically reliable way under any of the alternatives. We feel it is important to evaluate the following as a subsection of NMFS' preferred alternative in the Final PSEIS:

1. Incorporation of uncertainty in natural resource management has become a catch phrase in the past decade. However, significant uncertainty is inherent in fisheries management and data collection and observer-collected data is no exception. As part of any sustainable management program, this uncertainty must be accounted for and minimized where possible. Observer data is a prime example of where some improvements could be made fairly easily. The Final PSEIS should:
 - Quantify uncertainty in observer estimates including confidence limits on total take of all FMP species;
 - Set goals for how precise the estimates should be in the future and use these goals to implement a rational observer placement and sampling plan; Use the most conservative method to calculate total removal (i.e. lower end of the confidence interval).
2. The current observer procurement system is wrought with conflict of interest and lack of accountability to NMFS by the service providers (i.e. the six observer contractors). The procurement system also places a larger economic burden on

small vessels or vessels in marginal fisheries. NMFS has the authority to implement a fee system to fund data collection essential to management. Fees should be based on total catch (not on total fish retained). In the Final PSEIS, NMFS should evaluate to what extent the current system has biased management data and address options for change. This should include the lack of evaluations of the service providers and the industry's ability to manipulate the data.

3. Data quality has suffered due to high turnover rates of observers, lack of support by NMFS, and NMFS' inability to place staff and/or observers on vessels based on a sound statistical design. Some of the most damaging fisheries have an *effective* sample rate of <20%. In the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands area between 1993-1997, effective sample rate for what is considered a relatively "undamaging" fishery, the groundfish longline fishery, averaged 27% while the Gulf of Alaska effective coverage averaged 10%. The final PSEIS should address avenues to improve data quality including but not limited to:

- **Increasing effective sampling rate** in fisheries of concern or where there are specific data needs. Observer coverage should be based on sound sampling design which at a minimum includes deciding when vessels take observers and which fisheries are observed to reflect where the most data collection is needed.
- **Increasing the amount of detail observers collect.** Many of us feel that our skills as biologists are underutilized when the primary focus is on a few commercially important target species while management virtually ignores species that have the potential to be keystone species in the ecosystem. The analysis of Alternative 4 to increase protection to non-target species mentions repeatedly that we need to identify skates and other non-allocated species in the catch (or a random sub-sample of the catch) if we want to know whether we are harming these species. Observers should be provided with appropriate tools (i.e. dichotomous keys to the major species of fishes such as skates and sculpins, keys to the major phyla of invertebrates and also a photo verification guide like the one used by NMFS survey personnel, annual training and/or retraining of some of the more difficult species to identify such as skates and grenadiers).
- Achieve a more balanced sampling regime and work load of observers to include the monitoring of protected species interactions with fisheries and the effectiveness of the techniques developed to reduce these interactions. It is also important to collect baseline data per vessel on the parameters known to effect these interactions. For example, effectiveness of seabird mitigation measures to decrease incidental mortality is dependent on certain fixed vessel parameters, such as, vessel length, vessel width, height of setting chute off the water, and configuration of gear, yet this information is not currently collected in the NPGOP.
- Use available data to its fullest potential. There is currently no observer coverage in the halibut fishery. However, observers do go out on IFQ trips with mixed targeting of halibut and sablefish. To our knowledge data

on bycatch in this fishery is not utilized in estimating total removals of groundfish such as rockfish.

4. For management purposes, observer data is used in two very different ways—to monitor Total Allowable Catch for large geographic areas and to monitor individual vessel removals of target and bycatch species during prosecution of MS-CDQ. Current sampling protocols are probably statistically adequate for the former but severely inadequate for the latter. However, more and more emphasis is being placed on the latter without changing sampling methods in a systematic way. The Final PSEIS should address the impact of the NPGOP's lack of clearly stated goals and objectives on the current management system and rectify the duality in the current data collection regime.

Although the issue of bycatch is slightly outside the scope of the APO's mission, we find the evaluation of bycatch reduction programs to be inadequate. The success of the IR/IU program, for instance, was not convincing to many of us who spend time on these vessels. Retained catch as reported by observers is a guess at best especially in trawl fisheries. We suggest that the analysis for IR/IU include a comparison of length-frequency distribution data from pre- and post-implementation of IR/IU by fleet (i.e. Pollock & cod target; catcher/processor and catcher vessel). If the differences are not significantly different, then a possible conclusion is that IR/IU is ineffective in **reducing** bycatch and therefore is not working. The main goal was to decrease the catch of unwanted fish not increase the amount of fish retained as fishmeal. As a second method to test the effectiveness of IR/IU as a bycatch reduction measure, the volume (tonnage) of fishmeal produced from pollock/cod trawl fisheries could be compared (after standardizing by some unit of effort) before and after implementation of IR/IU. If fishmeal production increased, then we would again conclude that IR/IU is ineffective.

We support effective bycatch reduction measures and the only way to monitor a measure's effectiveness is through a rational observer research plan. A rational observer research plan based on science is a critical component to the sustainability of Alaska's fisheries and we hope one will be included in the preferred alternative in the Final PSEIS.

8/8/2001 Meeting Update: APO held a meeting in Seattle. Eight observers attended representing 4 observer programs. Topics included discussion of a new website for observers (www.observernet.org) as well as how to more fully engage observers to participate in activities related to their job. Also discussed were some of the more intangible issues of observing such as: sleep deprivation and the Random Sample Table(RST); drug/alcohol use/abuse on vessels; isolation, etc. Although we didn't come to any tangible conclusions (and these do not necessarily represent the opinions of all observers), there were some general trends in the comments. Regarding sleep and the RST it was felt that for the most part NMFS was fair about missed hauls if an observer didn't make a habit of skipping hauls to sleep and that many observers felt they could take better advantage of the random break table which does allow an observer to take a 6 hour break every day. All observers present

had some experience to share about excessive drug or alcohol use on a variety of vessels/vessel types. None of us reported incidents to NMFS or the Coast Guard but couldn't really come up with tangible reasons why and all of us had different reasons for not reporting. It was accepted that we all had differing comfort levels and in retrospect we realize that we maybe should have said something at the time. [Personally, I think that this behavior is common when an individual is exposed to a traumatic or very uncomfortable situation. You want it to stop so when it's over you don't want to think about it again. Like victims of violent crimes.] Exposure to second hand smoke and infectious diseases such as hepatitis & TB were also discussed. Observers present didn't feel that much could be done about the smoking issue at this time but did see it as a health risk of this job. It was also suggested that TB exposure testing be part of the annual physical process.

The observers who were present also had several great ideas about APO operations; some of them hadn't even heard of the APO. One of the ideas was to have a weekly observer/fisheries news email sent out. This was initiated the following day and is archived on the APO website as well. Anyone who is interested in this electronic mail list, please let the us know at:

APO_obs@hotmail.com. Another suggestion was to have an introductory letter regarding who the APO is and ask the contractors to include this letter with the contract for first time observers. Thanks to all of you who participated.

[APO acquires funds to hire staff person. Full announcement is in the Jobs section on page 7.](#)

Volunteers needed....as always, nothing happens at the APO without the hard work of volunteers. Even if you're only in town for a day or two, any amount of time you have could be utilized (i.e., the introductory letter mentioned above still needs to be written).

The APO is slowly making changes to new our new website: www.apo-observers.org Check it out for the archive of Observer News, Jobs, Mail Buoy's and various letters the APO has written in the past. You will notice that there is some overlap with the new observer site. We think this is good & would like cooperatively with other observers so we can compliment the information found on one another's sites rather than compete.

As part of the reauthorization of the Magnuson Act, HR 2570 has been introduced to Congress. For a full copy of the changes suggested by HR 2570, see:

<http://www.conservefish.org/finalfra.pdf>

NOP Insurance Workshop by K. Dietrich

The APO was invited to participate in the National Observer Program's (NOP) Insurance, Liability and Labor Workshop held Jun 12-14, 2001 in Silver Spring, MD. There were 8 panels; each panelist gave a 5-10 minute talk and then the floor was

opened for questions. The workshop started with a panel to define and discuss various types of insurance and common labor terms. Other panels included discussion of the current court decisions on observer status as 'seamen', differentiating between land- and sea-based observers, Federal Employees Compensation Act, the applicability of the Service Contract Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act and understanding what compensation means to injured observers and their quality of life.

John Varner and Eric Sandberg, two seriously (and permanently) injured observers, and I (representing the APO) sat on the last panel and attempted to address what compensation means to injured observers. The observers were asked to share how their respective insurance compensation failed or was failing them and I was asked to address potential mechanisms that the APO could utilize to assist observers. Before attending the workshop, I emailed all of the observers in the APO's database to get an idea of how observers (mostly in the Alaska Groundfish Program) were treated.

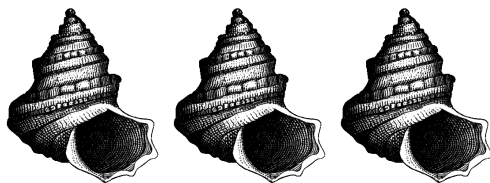
Most of the observers who responded to my query had satisfactory experiences with their employers and the insurance company if they had injuries. However, there were several who were not treated appropriately by their employer and/or by the insurance company. Most observers were very unclear on their rights and proper procedure for reporting injuries. Some even reported that they felt reporting an injury would result in negative repercussions from their employer. After getting feedback from observers and listening to John and Eric's experiences regarding lack of support by insurance companies, employers and the agency, I don't think there was a hair on my body that wasn't standing on end. The job is difficult enough without having to worry about inadequate coverage if we are injured.

Even without knowing which type of insurance coverage is best and having a definitive answer on observer status as "seamen", there are several things that can be done:

- Observers need to take the responsibility to know and understand their rights. Observers must report all injuries (no matter how insignificant you think it is when it occurs) and to ask for treatment when needed. Observers should also document all conversations with vessel personnel, their employer, the insurance company as well as with NMFS staff.
- NMFS could be more proactive by keeping better records of whether or not observers are adequately covered by their employers and providing follow-up (i.e., a phone call or letter) with observers who were injured. There are at least 3 observers who have communicated with me who were seriously injured in the Alaska program and who were not taken care of. I'm certain this is an underestimate and even this number is unacceptable. The Alaska program currently asks observers about injuries that prevented them from working. It is possible to be injured and continue to work and it's also possible to cause long-term damage if we continue to work without adequate treatment. Part of the contractor evaluation process (which is currently not performed on AK contractors) should include whether or not observers were provided with adequate coverage while injured.

- NMFS needs to decide whether they will (or legally can) take any 'real' responsibility for the livelihood of the observers who collect their data or if they will continue with the 'don't ask, don't tell' policy currently in place.
- NMFS should have a protocol for situations when the observer is unable to report their own injury. If an observer isn't heard from in a week or two, what is NMFS' course of action?
- Contractors (or maybe the APO) should supply the observers with a clear explanation (in writing) of procedure to follow if injured as well a detailed explanation of our rights. Observers should be armed with the pros and cons of worker's compensation versus maritime claims and under what scenarios each of these claims can be made. Are we always entitled to a choice or does it matter where the injury occurred (i.e., offshore or near shore). Observers need to know if they have a right to a second opinion especially in situations where an MD does not provide treatment.
- The APO should be a better advocate for observers. At the moment, the APO is not equipped with staff (or legal advice) who are knowledgeable in the intricacies of insurance or which coverage option is best. Even after this workshop, I don't feel like I can make a decision for someone else on which coverage option would be best for him or her.

There is still a lot to learn and more research to be done. If anyone would like copies of the material handed out at the workshop, let me know and I'll send copies to you. Also, there will be a summary document available from NMFS in the fall. Contact Vicki Cornish if you'd like a copy. Her contact info is in the NOP section.



ALASKA FISHERMAN'S UNION NEWS

For any contract related problems or questions, please contact Duke Bryan at:

Alaska Fishermen's Division-UIW
721 Sesame St., #1C
Anchorage, AK 99503
Ph: 907-561-4988
Toll free: 1-877-471-3425
Email: dukeworks2@aol.com

The latest versions of the 3 union contracts can be found at the following URL:

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

West Coast UPDATE

WEST COAST OBSERVER PROGRAM

As you all may have already heard, the National Marine Fisheries Service started a new observer program for the West Coast in late August. Alaskan Observers, Inc. was awarded the contract to supply observers for the program.

Many West Coast groundfish stocks are in trouble. The catch has been dwindling in the past years and catch limits have been cut. Currently, there is no accurate measure of discard in the fishery and acquiring these estimates will provide a more complete picture to fishery managers. The Pacific Fisheries Management Council decided observers are the best method to determine an accurate measurement of discard.

The program currently consists of 20 deployed observers and 3 port coordinators located in port groups from Bellingham, WA to Santa Barbara, CA. The observers will cover chosen fishing vessels in their port group for a cumulative trip limit period (usually 2 months). These are small catcher vessels that make short trips (average length of trip is 3-4 days) and deliver to a shoreside plant. It is expected that each observer will keep a home within their port group and be there year round. This promises to offer more of a 'regular' life while still observing. Fish for 3 days, come home for 4, fish for 2, come back for 1, etc. The ability to keep a house or apartment is tempting to a lot of us!

This is a new program and still in its infancy. This offers a unique opportunity to be instrumental in the development of a program that is expected to expand in the future and become a key management tool for troubled West Coast groundfish stocks. Observers have the opportunity to have their input matter! By supplying ample creative criticism and solutions in the beginning of the program, they could remain an integral part of how the program responds to observer needs in years ahead. The observer situation on these vessels will be new to managers and observers alike and feedback will be used to improve the design of data collection techniques in the future! Observer coordinators will be looking to observers for input in data collection methods and solutions for problems encountered.

Various groups and organizations have a great interest in this program. Groups include not only the NMFS, but also Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Department of Fish and Game, Pacific Marine Conservation Council, the Center for Marine Conservation as well as various fishing industry groups.

For questions about employment: Alaskan Observers, Inc., David Edick, 206-283-7310

For questions about the program: **West Coast Observer Hotline** at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center, NMFS, 866-780-8064. More information on this new program can be found at: <http://www.nwfsc.noaa.gov/fram/Observer>.

John LaFargue, Janelle Majewski and Jon Cusick are the port coordinators for California, Washington and Oregon, respectively.



JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The APO maintains an informal electronic mail list for jobs. If you want to be added to the list or know of any jobs observers may have an interested in, contact APO_obs@hotmail.com.

Executive Director for APO

Part-time (20-25 hrs/week)

Primary Responsibilities:

- Primary point-of-contact for the APO with observers, agency staff, contractors, Council & AP representatives, union, the Alaska Oceans Network (AON), and the public. On average, the APO receives about 30 messages/week that need responses. Interfacing with the AON could easily take 3 hours/week.
- Coordinate volunteers to work on various tasks
- Publish the *Mail Buoy* quarterly.
- Maintain Observer News and Jobs electronic mail lists
- Maintain observer/member database
- Coordinate and organize meetings with observers in Seattle and Anchorage
- Maintain detailed notes on all communications

Requirements:

Skills & Knowledge: Demonstrate knowledge of both NMFS and ADF&G observer programs in Alaska; Strong administrative/organizational skills; ability to communicate both orally and in writing; Ability to work with diverse groups of people and communicate in a manner that engenders collaboration and productive discussion.

Education: Bachelor's in biological science

Experience: Minimum of 2 years experience as groundfish & 1 year as shellfish observer. (Negotiable)

Other: Dedicated to the APO's goals & objectives (see <http://www.apo-observers.org> for the full list)

Desired qualities:

- Knowledge of OP & AK Region hierarchy (who to contact when & why)
- Knowledge of laws and regulations pertaining to observers
- Respect for opinions of others and ability to tactfully disagree (diplomacy skills)
- Willingness to take initiative on new projects/ideas

- Awareness of other OP's nationwide

Terms of employment: Initially, part-time contract work. Length of contract is negotiable. Eventually, we would like to change to direct employment. Contract award amount will be based on experience and length of time commitment.

Expectations:

- Attend all Council meetings (or at the very least attend the ones where observer issues are being discussed), all Observer Advisory Committee meetings and Observer Program workshops.
- Hours are flexible but expect at least some hours to be consistent every week. For example, the week before & after a Council meeting, hours could be reduced to make up for the "extra" time put in during the meeting.

Location: Seattle, WA (negotiable)

How to Apply: Send resume, names/phone numbers of 3 references and a brief (1-2 pages) description of how you meet all of the skills and knowledge requirements to: APO, P.O. Box 30167, Seattle, WA 98103 or via email to: APO_obs@hotmail.com. Questions are welcome.

The Army Corps has an opening for a fish biologist in the Seattle Area: **BIOLOGIST**, GS - 0401- 09/09

PROMOTION POTENTIAL: GS- 11

Closing date September 14

The incumbent collects field data on fish habitats and other aquatic resources for baseline biological and ecological information to perform impact assessment and to determine study needs. Some specific duties include: assembling biological data from records to determine past resource activities; preparing environmental documents and project reports; conducting biological surveys and inventories for a variety of projects affecting water resources; monitoring fish and wildlife habitat conditions as needed to determine project related impacts; classifying habitats and determines conditions for fish, wildlife and other biological resources; conducting water resources planning studies; conducting interagency coordination with federal and state resource agencies regarding issues related to both planning studies and operating projects; and providing technical input to project operation, design and construction of features to minimize or avoid impacts to fish, wildlife and other biological resources. See the website for details

<http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/wfjic/jobs/VF0873.htm>

CONTRACT FISHERIES BIOLOGIST

LOCATION: Wyoming Game and Fish Dept., Laramie, Wyoming, Fish Division HOURLY RATE: \$10.98

Tentative Start Date will be October 1, 2001 thru June 30, 2002 – contract may be extended.

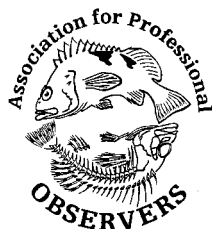
MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: Completion of college coursework at the baccalaureate level in fishery management, zoology, biology, ichthyology, wildlife management or other closely related field. Other related training and experience will be evaluated for placement in this position.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF WORK: Conduct a conservation assessment and literature review regarding the status of native, nongame fish in the North Platte River drainage in Wyoming. The initial goal of this project is to conduct a review of the available information regarding the status and life-history requirements of several species of native, nongame fish in the North Platte River drainage. The intended product is a conservation assessment of each species, including life history requirements, current status and extinction risk. Once the conservation assessments are completed the emphasis will shift to translating the conservation assessments into informational products (verbal presentations, printed material, etc.) that can be used while contacting landowners. The goal is to provide resource management alternatives that will improve or maintain the status of fishes of concern. If the first 2 phases are completed, this person will also work in a few watersheds to summarize surface water rights on those streams, or stream segments, known to contain fishes of concern, and summarize stream hydrologic characteristics. The intent is to identify: 1) property owners with the greatest potential to affect the short and long-term status of the fishes of concern, and 2) streams, or stream segments, that have known hydrologic characteristics which are favorable in terms of life history requirements of the fishes of concern. This information will be used to identify areas to focus conservation and landowner relation efforts.

Applications: An official State application must be submitted to the Wyoming Game and Fish Dept, 528 S. Adams Street, Laramie, WY 82070 Attn: Dirk Miller, (307) 745-4046, [FAX (307) 745-8720] along with transcripts of any relevant course work, no later than 5:00 p.m. September 14, 2001.

MISC. NOTES & TIDBITS

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

NRC climate report is online: The US National Research Council report "Climate Change Science: An Analysis of Some Key Questions" is available online:

<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/10139.html?srchtop>

The report "Climate Change and Canada's National Park System" is available online at <http://www.msc-smc.ec.gc.ca/airg/pubs/parks.htm>

WORLD SWORDFISH FISHERIES STUDY AVAILABLE

The World Swordfish Fisheries research study is now available from the NOAA Fisheries Division of International Science and Technology. Topics covered in the study include fishing areas, catch, fishing companies, vessel construction and imports, management, bycatch, research, international relations, joint ventures, trade trends and enforcement. The study includes an executive summary and five regional volumes containing overviews and country/continent reports that include statistical tables, photographs, maps and graphics. The report can be viewed online at: <http://www.st.nmfs.gov/st3/swordfish.html>

To order a copy, contact:

Ms. Mia Robinson

NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology (F/ST3)

1315 East-West Hwy.

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NOAA Fisheries Approves Program to Make West Coast Sablefish Harvest Safer

NOAA Fisheries has approved a proposal by the Pacific Fishery Management Council to let fishermen combine or "stack" as many as three permits assigned to any one vessel for harvesting sablefish, a staple of the West Coast groundfish fishery. In addition to the permit-stacking program, NOAA Fisheries also approved lengthening the fishing season for sablefish. Instead of a typical nine-day, first-come-first-served, grueling season with a high safety risk to fishermen, the new season runs from Aug. 15 through Oct. 31 this year. Last year, landings of sablefish, also known as black cod, topped 14 million pounds worth just over \$21 million in Washington, Oregon and California. In 1999, Newport and Astoria, Ore., and Northern Puget Sound were the principal sablefish ports.

To view the complete announcement, go to:

<http://www.publicaffairs.noaa.gov/releases2001/aug01/noaa01r128.html>.



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/test/st1/nop/index.html>

Links to other observer program websites:
<http://www.pond.net/~pcffa/obs.htm>
<http://www.habitatmedia.org/>

THINGS TO DO (if you're a Fishhead):

- 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
- Nov. 15-17, 2001. Fish Expo. <http://www.fishexpo.com/>
Panel Discussion "Observers on your boat." NOAA Fisheries staff will review the new observer program for West Coast groundfish, developments in North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program, as well as the expansion of the Marine Mammal Program into Kodiak, Alaska.

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UPCOMING MEETINGS

Sep 5-10 North Pacific Fishery Management Council, Steller Sea Lion mtg., Sitka, AK

Sep 10-14 Pacific Fishery Management Council, Portland, OR

Sep 11-14 AK Groundfish Plan Team mtg, Seattle, WA

Oct 1-5 North Pacific Fishery Management Council, Seattle, WA
<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/>

Oct 23-26 Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, Honolulu, HI

Dec 3-7 North Pacific Fishery Management Council, Anchorage, AK

16TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEANUP (ICC). Date: September 15th-October, 2001

Nearly one million people will descend on beaches all over the world to help tackle the problem of marine debris during the 16th Annual International Coastal Cleanup (ICC). Last year, cleanup volunteers scoured 20,700 miles of beaches, oceans, and waterways collecting over 13.5 million pounds of trash - the world's largest marine trash haul. To find out how you can volunteer to clean up your own beach, contact your state or country coordinators to join the 2001 International Coastal Cleanup. For more information, see:

<http://www.cmc-ocean.org/index.php3>

3rd OCEANOLOGY INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC RIM

Conference Dates: December 4-6, 2001, Singapore
Meeting aims to gather scientists, government, NGOs and industry to share information and shape the future course of marine research and development for the region. Now accepting abstracts of 200 words via online submission. Conference topics include Oceanography & Environment, Information Systems, Coastal Marine Resources Management, Coastal Oceanography and Marine Information Systems. For more details:

Angela Pederozolli

Phone: 44.20.8949.9839

Email: angela.pederzolli@spearhead.co.uk

Web: <http://www.oipacificrim.com/conference/topics.htm>

Briefing/Training Schedule

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

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

Volunteers needed--talk to Kim. We're always looking for extra help with letter writing/editing, insurance research, grant writing, database The **SUBMISSION DEADLINE** for the next issue is **December 15, 2001**.

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 Vicki Cornish, Liz Mitchell, and Dave Wagenheim 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)