

## **Expectations for Observers and Captains when an Observer is Aboard a Fishing Vessel**

National Marine Fisheries Service, West Coast Region Observer Program

### **THE OBSERVER'S ROLE - WHAT TO EXPECT**

#### **Observers are expected to:**

- collect objective data on fishing activity, the take of target and non-target species and selected specimen samples;
- perform their duties in such a manner as to minimize interference with fishing operations;
- keep open communication with vessel personnel by informing them about observer duties and collected data;
- use work cameras for photographing specimens;
- obtain permission from the vessel captain before using any boat equipment;
- collect data on the use of pingers;
- collect whole specimens as instructed by NMFS and clean up thoroughly afterward;
- bring issued rain gear, boots, life vests (PFD), survival suit, and Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB);
- ask the captain about emergency procedures and familiarize themselves with the locations of life rafts, EPIRB, fire extinguishers, and first aid kits;
- remain on their assigned vessel until it returns to port to unload; and
- share housekeeping routines such as dish washing and head clean-up with the crew.

#### **Observers are not expected to:**

- dictate procedures or direct fishing operations;
- be involved with crew responsibilities such as standing watch or helping with fishing;
- keep personal diaries in any form, bring aboard recording devices, personal computers, or personal cameras of any type;
- compromise data or record personal comments;
- conduct personal research of any kind, or keep specimens or edible fish of any kind; or
- talk about any boat's business while aboard another boat or to any fishermen dockside.



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### **THE CAPTAIN'S ROLE - WHAT TO EXPECT**

#### **Captains are expected to:**

- cooperate with the observer in the performance of the observer's duties;
- provide observers living quarters comparable to a full crew member;
- provide the same meals, snacks, and amenities provided to crew members;
- allow the observer access to areas of the vessel necessary to conduct observer duties;
- allow the observer access to communication and navigation equipment, as necessary to perform observer duties;
- notify the observer when commercial fishing operations are to begin and end;
- provide true vessel locations by latitude and longitude upon request by the observer;
- bring aboard marine mammals, sea turtles and sea birds that were killed during fishing operations for biological processing that are readily accessible to crew members, if requested by the observer;
- provide refrigerated storage space for observer collected specimens;
- record comments on the back of the observer's original forms, if there is a disagreement with the observer's collected data or need to provide additional information; and
- comply with other guidelines, regulations or conditions that NMFS may provide in writing to ensure the effective use of observers;

#### **Captains are not expected to:**

- assault, harass or sexually harass, intimidate or attempt to influence observers, interfere with or impede observer duties;
- ask observers to stand watch or help with fishing operations; or
- fish without an observer on board the vessel after the owner or agent of the owner has been directed by NMFS or the designated contractor to carry an observer.

