

West Coast Groundfish Trawl Catch Share Program

2012



NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE

For more details on the
Catch Share Program,
call 206-526-6140
or go to our website:

[www.nwr.noaa.gov/
Groundfish-Halibut/
Groundfish-Fishery-
Management/Trawl-
Program/index.cfm](http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Groundfish-Halibut/Groundfish-Fishery-Management/Trawl-Program/index.cfm)

For the full groundfish
regulations, see the Code
of Federal Regulations
(CFR) at 50 CFR part 660,
subparts C-G.



Shorebased IFQ Program Observers & Catch Monitors

Overview

In January 2011, the West Coast Groundfish Trawl Fishery transitioned to a new, innovative management approach known as a Catch Share Program. The Catch Share Program consists of a Shorebased Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Program for the shorebased trawl fleet and cooperative programs for the at-sea mothership and catcher/processor trawl fleets.

The following provides an overview of the observer and catch monitoring programs. It outlines observer and catch monitor requirements for those participating in the Catch Share Program.

What are observers and catch monitors?

Observers are highly trained biologists that work independently aboard vessels to quantify total catch. They estimate bycatch, collect biological samples, and monitor for fishery interactions with marine mammals, sea turtles, and seabirds.

In contrast to observers, catch monitors are land-based. They are located at first receiver facilities and confirm that total landings are accurately sorted, weighed, and recorded on fish tickets (landing receipts). Catch monitors perform more of a compliance role than that of a biologist.

Observers focus on scientific data collection at sea, while catch monitors ensure compliance with IFQ landed fish sorting requirements, and together they give the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) a very accurate and complete picture of the fishing mortality in the Catch Share Program.

For observer requirements in the Shorebased IFQ Program, please see § 660.140(h).

For catch monitor requirements in the Shorebased IFQ Program, please see §§ 660.17, 660.18, and 660.140(f), (i), and (j).

For questions on the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program call 206-302-1777.

For questions on the Catch Monitor Program call 503-595-3282.

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Is observer coverage & catch monitoring mandatory to participate in the program?

Yes. Vessels participating in the Shorebased IFQ Program are *required* to have observer coverage *at all times* the vessel is at sea. Observer coverage is required until offloading begins unless exempted (as explained under the next section on coverage required at offload). In addition, for the Shorebased

100% observer coverage at sea and 100% monitoring of landings is mandatory under trawl rationalization.

IFQ Program, catch monitors must also be present at all times when the offloading of catch takes place and for the entire duration of the process, unless a waiver has been granted by NMFS.

What observer and catch monitor coverage is required at offload?

For 2011, NMFS required the observer to remain onboard the vessel until all IFQ species were offloaded. In response to industry feedback, NMFS revised the offload regulations. The regulations now allow the observer to depart the vessel upon return to port and for the catch monitor to conduct the hold inspection at the end of the offload. This is allowed if certain requirements are met. To allow this and in order to ensure catch accountability, the observer will document certain information on a form entitled “IFQ Priority Species Tracking Form.” This form will be provided to the catch monitor.

For vessels that want to take advantage of this provision—allowing the observer to depart the vessel once in port—the observer will document the weight and number of bocaccio, yelloweye rockfish, canary rockfish, and cowcod. If there is a discrepancy between the vessel operator and the observer regarding the weight and/or number of those species, the discrepancy will be noted on the form. A copy of the form must be retained by the observer and the vessel operator, and made available

to the catch monitor. If the vessel moves between delivery points (within a port or between ports), the vessel must maintain observer coverage onboard the vessel during transit.

For vessels participating in the maximized retention shorebased whiting fishery or for vessels where the observer does not document these species on a form, the vessel must maintain observer or catch monitor coverage while in port until all IFQ species from that trip have been offloaded.

If upon offload the number of species verified by the catch monitor is less than that recorded by the observer on the IFQ Priority Species Tracking Form, the catch monitor will use the number and weight of the species recorded on the IFQ Priority Species Tracking Form in the catch monitor’s offload report. This will be submitted to the vessel account.

The list of IFQ species required to be documented on the form can be changed inseason through publication of a *Federal Register* notice. Publications of inseason actions generally follow a Council meeting.

Where do I obtain observer & catch monitoring services?

Vessels and first receivers are required to get observer and catch monitor services from any one of a number of providers. These include the following, but observer and catch monitor providers may change in the future:

Alaskan Observer, Inc. Contact: David Edick (206) 283-7310 Email: aoistaff@alaskanobservers.com	Saltwater, Inc. Contact: Tim Carroll or Kathy Robinson (907) 276-3241 Email: tim@saltwaterinc.com or kathy@saltwaterinc.com
MRAG Americas, Inc. Contact: Brian Belay (907) 677-8772 Email: bryan.belay@mragamanicas.com	TechSea International, Inc. Contact: Troy Quinlan (206) 285-1408 Email: Info@Techsea.com
NWO, Inc. Contact: Jas Mangat (425) 673-6445 Email: alaska@nwoinc.com	

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Do I have to pay for observers and catch monitors?

Yes. However, the government partially defrayed the cost of procuring observer and catch monitor services for the first year of the program (2011 season) and this will continue through at least the 2012 season. The industry is responsible for those costs not incurred by the government.

What are the observer's responsibilities?

Observers must be certified by NMFS and must meet responsibilities specified in the regulations at § 660.140(h)(6) for the Shorebased IFQ Program.

Generally, the observers *must*:

1. Successfully perform their assigned duties as described in the Observer Manual or other written instructions from the Observer Program Office. These include calling into the NMFS deployment hotline upon departing and arriving into port each trip to leave the following information: observer name, phone number, vessel name departing, date and time of departure, and date and time of expected return;
2. Accurately record their sampling data, write complete reports, and report accurately any observations of suspected violations of regulations relevant to the conservation of marine resources or their environment;
3. Not disclose collected data and observations made on board the vessel or in the processing facility to any person except the owner or operator of the observed vessel, an authorized officer, or NMFS;
4. Successfully complete NMFS-approved annual briefings as prescribed by the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program for all catcher vessels (IFQ, Mothership, and Catcher/Processors); or for the observers on Mothership or Catcher/Processor vessels, successfully complete NMFS-approved annual briefings as prescribed by the At-Sea Hake Observer Program;

5. Successful completion of briefing by an observer applicant consists of meeting all attendance and conduct standards issued in writing at the start of training; meeting all performance standards issued in writing at the start of training for assignments, tests, and other evaluation tools; and completing all other briefing requirements established by the observer program;
6. For all catcher vessels (IFQ, Mothership, and Catcher/Processors), hold current basic cardiopulmonary resuscitation/first aid certification per American Red Cross Standards;
7. Successfully meet all expectations in all debriefings including reporting for assigned debriefings;
8. Submit all data and information required by the observer program within the program's stated guidelines; and
9. For all catcher vessels (IFQ, Mothership, and Catcher/Processors), meet the minimum annual deployment period of 3 months at least once every 12 months.

What does observer training consist of?

To maintain the flexibility and efficiency of observer deployment, observer training will capitalize on the existing program structure to train and certify qualified observers in the least number of trainings and briefings as possible.

Observers are qualified, trained, and certified separately for the shorebased fleet and at-sea whiting processing fleet.

The Shorebased IFQ and Mothership/Catcher Vessel observer training is 13 days. Instruction includes sampling methodology, data recording, species identification, at sea safety, etc. Four-day briefings also are available for observer candidates who observed in the Shorebased IFQ Program in 2011. NMFS will ensure enough qualified observers are available for the fleet.

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What are the catch monitor's responsibilities?

Catch monitors must be certified by NMFS and must meet responsibilities specified in the regulations at § 660.17.

Generally, the catch monitors *must*:

1. Perform authorized duties as described in training and instructional manuals or other written and oral instructions provided by NMFS;
2. Accurately record and submit the required data, which includes fish species composition, identification, sorting, and weighing information;
3. Write complete reports and report accurately any observations of suspected violations of regulations;
4. Keep confidential and not disclose data and observations collected at the first receiver to any person except NMFS staff, authorized officers, or others as specifically authorized by NMFS;
5. Successfully complete NMFS approved annual briefings as prescribed by the catch monitor program; and
6. Report for his or her scheduled debriefing and complete all debriefing responsibilities.

What if observers or catch monitors fail to fulfill their duties?

If an observer's performance does not meet the observer program minimum standards outlined in the observer program manuals and other materials, the observer risks being decertified and may become ineligible to observe in any West Coast groundfish fishery.

If a catch monitor fails to meet performance standards while conducting his or her responsibilities and/or fails to abide by standards of conduct, they risk loss of their certification and may become ineligible to continue as a program catch monitor.