

**NOAA Fisheries
Northwest Fisheries Science Center
West Coast Groundfish Observer Program
Training Requirements**

New Trainees

All new observer trainees must attend a 15-day training provided by the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program, fully participate during classroom exercises, and achieve minimum performance standards as set by the WCGOP. The purpose of the training is for trainees to gain an understanding of how to collect fishery data which can be used to manage the groundfish stocks on the West Coast. In addition, trainees learn how to work efficiently under the strenuous conditions of commercial fishing vessels. In general, the training consists of an intensive overview of commercial fishing gear and strategies, sampling protocols, safety at sea, and identification of fish, invertebrates, birds, and mammals of the West Coast. Trainees must pass a series of tests with a minimum score of 80 percent. Additionally, several homework assignments will be given which must be completed accurately and on time. Through the exams and homework trainees will demonstrate their understanding of, and ability to apply the following concepts:

- Observer priorities and duties,
- Methods of independent catch estimation,
- Proper recording of catch data,
- Methods of sampling and recording species composition data,
- Fish identification and use of dichotomous keys,
- Gender determination and measurements of fish and crab,
- Procedures for collection of age structures,
- Safety and survival skills.

In order to successfully complete WCGOP observer training, there are classroom and safety requirements that must be met.

Classroom Training Requirements include:

- Arrive for training on time and participate in all in-class lectures and assignments.
- Pass a fish anatomy exam on day 2 with a minimum score of 80%.
- Successfully complete all the homework and make any corrections requested by the trainers.
- Pass a final written exam with a minimum score of 80%.
- Pass a fish identification exam. Each fish identification exam is made up of: 7 rockfish species, 3 flatfish species, 9 miscellaneous species, 3 invertebrate species, 1 sea turtle species, and 2 biological sampling questions. The following is the minimum criteria that must be met:
 - a minimum overall score of 80%, and:
 - 4 rockfish species identified correctly
 - 1 flatfish species identified correctly
 - 5 miscellaneous fish species identified correctly
 - 1 invertebrate species identified correctly

The Safety Training Requirements include at minimum:

- Arrive for training on time and participate in all in-class lectures and assignments.
- Demonstrate the proper way to test an EPIRB.
- Properly hook up a hydrostatic release.
- Properly don an immersion suit dry within 60 seconds.
- Demonstrate proper jumping techniques into the water while wearing an immersion suit.
- Participate in drills; Fire, Flooding, Man Overboard, and Abandon Ship.
- Participate in water exercises
- Demonstrate proper flare firing.
- Additional activities and exercises.

Additionally, new trainees must be able to demonstrate to the instructor that they have the attitude and ability required to perform a difficult job independently, and to act professionally in stressful situations.

Returning Observers/ Briefings

Observers who have completed a prior contract and whose certification is still valid will be required to fulfill, at a minimum, the following:

- Attend a WCGOP briefing in its entirety.
- Successfully complete all the homework and make any corrections requested by the trainers.
- Pass a fish identification exam with the same requirements as detailed above.
- Successfully complete all safety training requirements as detailed above.

If, for any reason, these requirements are not met, the trainee may be re-tested for some areas of the training. One make-up exam may be given for the fish identification exam, provided that the first test resulted in a score of no lower than 64%. The same criteria for passing a fish identification exam as detailed in the New Trainee section must be achieved. Additional homework may be assigned if a trainer does not feel homework was completed adequately. There will be no make-up for other exams. Make-up fish identification exams will be held starting at **noon** on the next BUSINESS day that staff are available.

X Printed Name: _____

X Signature: _____

X Date: _____