



Chapter 10

Catch Shares-Observer Life

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I. Introduction

This chapter provides information about the day-to-day routine of West Coast Groundfish Catch Shares Observers and describes expectations for observer performance. The chapter includes:

- Guidelines for communicating with vessels.
- Checklists of tasks that must be completed before and after each trip.
- Descriptions, recommendations and care of personal, sampling and safety gear.
- Explanation of the data debriefing process and observer evaluations.
- Requirements for maintaining a position as a WCGOP observer.

II. First Days

Start Dates and Contacts

After successfully completing training, observers will receive a Catch Shares Certification Certificate and travel to their assigned ports (determined by their respective contractor).

It is the observer's responsibility to provide their contractor and the WCGOP program, with updated contact information and to keep an up-to-date mailing address (PO Boxes not acceptable), email address and phone number(s) in the WCGOP database.

Tip: Contact information for program staff and observers can be found in the WCGOP database and Observer Manual Appendix.

Getting to Know the Port

When observer's arrive in a new port, they should take some time to orient themselves to the area. They can try and get a hold of other WCGOP observers in the area for helpful advise about the port and area. The port orientation tour should include vessels, docks, local processing plants, local US Coast Guard, and an introduction to other port observers and to local state biologists (port samplers and port biologists). It should also include an overview of local responsibilities,



including any expectations for providing information or aid to the local state biologists.

Other WCGOP observers in the assigned port group are excellent sources of information for locating housing, places to eat, local entertainment, and other personal needs. Many have been in the area for multiple years and are very knowledgeable about the port.



III. Communication and Contacting Vessels

Contacting Vessels

Observers will be assigned vessels by their respective contractor. Observers are supplied with vessel names, vessel owner/operator names and phone numbers. Vessel contacts are also available in the database. **ALL vessel communications must be logged in the database.**

Tip: To find a vessel's contact information, look up the vessel name in the database, then check the communication log for the vessel. The names of the person contacted can be found in the communication log. Under the vessel contacts tab, search for the contact by last name.

If observer's need to contract a vessel for some reason here are some guidelines for contacting vessel owner/operator by phone:

1. When calling a vessel owner or captain, do so in a friendly and professional manner.
2. State your name and association with the WCGOP.
3. Make it a habit to begin with a professional introduction to whoever answers the phone.

Example: Hi, my name is Joe Smith. I am the West Coast Groundfish Catch Shares Observer in Port Group XX. Could I please speak with *Vessel Owner/Captain's Name*?

4. If the vessel owner/operator is not available, leave a message with your name and number and request that they return your call.
5. Once contact has been made with the vessel owner/operator, establish the reason for the call and log this vessel communication in the database.

Vessel Communication Log

The database communications log is used by observers and WCGOP staff to track communications with vessels and to ensure calls are made and not duplicated.

Observers **must** log all communications with vessels in the database in a timely manner. This should include arrangements for safety inspections, notification of departure times, cancellations, and any other communications with vessels or pertaining to coverage of vessels. Any communications that might be construed as harassment must be documented. It is also a good idea to document in the Observer Logbook communications with the observer's respective contractor and other observers as well as WCGOP staff.

Communications must be recorded daily. The communications section of the Observer Logbook is used to record communications that take place when away from port (at sea, on travel, etc.). These communications must be logged in the database at the earliest possible time.

Vessel Safety Checks

A Vessel Safety Checklist should be completed as early as possible BEFORE before the first trip (See Observer Logbook for Vessel Safety Checklist). This gives vessels time to correct any deficiencies that may exist. **If possible, do not wait to do the safety orientation until the day before, or the day of, the planned departure for the first fishing trip!** It can be very problematic to discover a vessel lacks necessary safety features, such as adequate life raft capacity to accommodate the observer and crew, at the time the vessel is planning to depart.

The Vessel Safety Checklist must be completed and mailed or faxed to the coordinator prior to embarking on the first trip. If this is not possible (example: observer was sent on travel and arrived after business hours, with no place to mail or fax), call the coordinator's office and leave a verbal confirmation that the vessel has passed inspection. A copy of the Safety Checklist must be mailed or faxed as soon as possible after disembarkation. Observer's North of Port Orford, Or. should send their check list to WCGOP coordinator Brian Perry at the Newport OR.



office. Those observer's in Port Orford, OR. and south should send their check lists to WCGOP coordinator John LaFargue in the Eureka office.

Do safety orientations with another observer, if possible. Two observers working together are likely to do a more thorough inspection than one. Also, it will not be necessary to take additional time from the captain or crew to complete a second inspection should both observers be assigned to the boat during the same selection period.

Pre-First Trip Departure Meeting Form

A Checklist for Trawl IFQ Vessel/Observer Program Pre-First Trip Departure Meeting form was created to ensure vessels and crew understands regulatory responsibilities under catch shares. (see Figure 10-1). This form needs to be completed before a catch shares / IFQ vessel's FIRST trip in the fishery. WCGOP requires one of these forms completed for every catch shares vessel in the fishery. It is the observers responsibility to ensure this form is completed for the vessel's very first catch share/IFQ trip.

Checklist for Trawl IFQ Vessel/Observer Program Pre-First Trip Departure Meeting

This form must be completed by a West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP) staff member during discussions with vessel crew and observer about the IFQ fishery. Upon completion, return to Rebecca Hoch.

Date (MM/DD/YYYY) WCGOP Staff:

Vessel Name: USCG/State Registration #:

Start the meeting by:

1. Introducing yourself and your role in the program.
2. Describe the goal of the meeting: To ensure everyone on board understands the observers and vessels regulatory responsibilities under catch shares. We understand that the first few trips will likely be difficult for everyone so we hope this meeting will ensure understandings from all parties.
3. Topics will include sorting requirements, observer priorities, illness/injury.

Document each person in attendance and their role.

First and Last Name	Role (observer, crew, skipper, permit owner, etc.)	First and Last Name	Role (observer, crew, skipper, permit owner, etc.)

Meeting Checklist:

- Complete Vessel Safety Check.
- Observer always has the right to refuse a trip. If that should happen, contact your observer provider.
- Hand the industry representatives the outreach package.

Start with the General Information sheet for the Trawl IFQ fishery. Skip the "Steps to get an Observer" section and focus on the sampling and requirement portions.

- Observers first priority is to sample all retained and discarded overfished ROCKFISH species.

Document conversation:
(Do you plan to discard overfished rockfish species? How do you plan to sort OF RF species? What will be the best method to ensure observers get access to these species?)

Figure 10-1: Trawl IFQ Vessel/Observer Program Pre-First Trip Departure Meeting, page 1. All catch shares vessel require one of these forms to be completed.

- Observers MUST sample all discarded IFQ species. Refer to "IFQ Species" Handout to ensure crew knows all IFQ species and species groups. Under the regulations, required to sort to IFQ species/groupings.

Document conversation:
(Do you plan to discard any IFQ species? Do you think you'll be discarding small flatfish - how will this be handled?)

- Observers will be counting every Pacific halibut caught and either measuring all or a subsample for condition. The condition assessments will directly relate to the amount of halibut IBQ that will be subtracted from your quota. Explain the halibut sampling sheet.

Document conversation:
(What's your normal routine for handling halibut? We understand you'll be trying to get these over quickly so how are we going to work this? Communicate with observer on hauls so everyone knows what the observer will be asking for.)

- One last thing observers will do, besides biological sampling, is to estimate the weight of the non-IFQ species discard on every haul. In addition, they'll be taking species comp samples these species on at least 1/3 of all hauls.

Document conversation:
(Discuss how to handle this - observer inform crew prior to sort they'll be sampling non-IFQ discard.)

Figure 10-2: Trawl IFQ Vessel/Observer Program Pre-First Trip Departure Meeting, page 2. All catch shares vessel require one of these forms to be completed.

Using the backside of the general trawl outreach sheet, review the vessels responsibilities. Highlight the following:

- Stow all catch from one haul prior to dumping a second haul on deck.
- Time for sampling
- 15 minute prior notification of observer.
- Only can fish in one area at a time. (If they ask why, it's because landings can't be associated to individual hauls; therefore wouldn't know which area pot to take from.)
- If the observer becomes ill or injured, you must be at the dock within 36 hours of since they had completed their duties.

Figure 10-3: Trawl IFQ Vessel/Observer Program Pre-First Trip Departure Meeting, page 3. All catch shares vessel require one of these forms to be completed.

IV. Before and After a Trip

Observer Checklist: Before Every Trip

1. Contact vessel owner/captain and arrange to meet at the vessel.
2. Complete Vessel Safety Checklist and Checklist for Trawl IFQ Vessel/Observer Program Pre-First Trip Departure Meeting. (See Observer Logbook for Vessel Safety Checklist and Figure 10-1 - 10-3)
3. **Mail, fax, e-mail or text message** a copy of the Vessel Safety Checklist to the coordinator **prior** to departing on the first trip. If you are unable to send a copy of the Vessel Safety Checklist to your coordinator, call in to confirm the vessel has passed inspection and to discuss any safety concerns or issues. Submit a copy of the Vessel Safety Checklist to your coordinator at the earliest opportunity upon disembarkation.
4. Review sampling procedures for the fishery to be observed. Call your debriefer if you have any questions.
5. Ensure personal and sampling gear is in order and scales have been lubed and tested. Make sure to bring extra pencils and **plenty of forms**.
6. Observers should be on the vessel with gear stowed and ready to depart **at least 30 minutes prior to vessel departure time**. Depending on port location, this may mean arriving at the docks an hour or more before the trip's scheduled departure time. Often there will be an unforeseen delay but it is vital that the observer does not cause it!

Checklist: After Every Trip

1. Clean, organize and pack gear before landing. Ensure that no observer gear, such as a survival suit or EPIRB, remains on the vessel.
2. Make sure all necessary data from the Vessel Logbook has been gathered (if applicable).
3. Ask the vessel when they anticipate making their next fishing trip.
4. Obtain the fish ticket number (landing receipt number and first receivers name) at the delivery or as soon as possible.
5. Finish paperwork and start trip in the database within **3 days** of the disembarkation date.
6. Complete entry of trip into database within **3 days** of disembarkation date.

After the First Trip

Observers must contact their debriefer after their first Catch Shares trip to ensure all proper sampling protocols were followed (see the manual appendix for all debriefer contact information).

Observers should also contact their debriefer;

- If there are any questions about data or sampling protocols
- If observer is sampling on a new gear type
- If observer is sampling in a new fishery

Debriefers will review the data from the trip and, depending on the quality of the data, may make arrangements to meet in person to go over the data and to discuss sampling procedures.

V. Gear

Observer Personal Gear

Dressing to work on the deck of a vessel off the West Coast can be challenging; usually, the conditions are cold (45°F or colder) and wet, but in the summer there are days when the outside temperature can reach into the 70's or above. A suggested list of clothes and belongings observers may want to bring to sea is provided below. This list is not exhaustive and personal needs must be considered. If you have questions on what to bring to sea, ask for advice from the WCGOP staff or an active observer. Rather than taking a lot of clothes, focus on bringing a few clothing items that are bulky and warm and can be worn in layers. Layered clothing provides protection from the elements and helps prevent overheating if the weather gets warm. Synthetic or wool materials are recommended because they have a greater ability than cotton to retain body heat when wet. Inexpensive clothes are also recommended, since the smell of fish is difficult to remove from fabric. Some observers find appropriate, inexpensive work clothes at Army-Navy Surplus or used-clothing stores.



Here are some suggestions for personal gear needed at-sea:

- Toiletries (towel, soap, toothbrush, tooth paste, deodorant, travel size shampoo, wet wipes).
- Personal medications.
- Food for special dietary needs.
- Extra contact lenses or glasses.
- Water
- 2-3 pairs of socks.
- Clothes that can be layered for warm weather (thermal, sweatshirt, fleece).
- Baseball hat, cap.
- Sunglasses, sun block and chap stick.
- Small first-aid kit.
- Small pocketknife.
- Flashlight with extra batteries.
- Sleeping bag/blanket.
- Travel pillow.
- Reading material, knitting, radio/walkman/mp3 player, etc.

Tip: Remember, sea bags (small duffel bags are ideal) should be packed so items are easily accessible.



Considerations for Fishing Trips

- Exposure to wet conditions, even when it's not raining.
- Exposure to direct sunlight.
- Exposure to wide range of temperatures and quick weather changes.
- Possible exposure to strong wind conditions.
- LIMITED amount of space aboard the vessel.
- Observer may or may not have a bunk.
- Vessels may not have a head (bathroom) or a shower.
- Dietary restrictions: discuss with the captain and/or the cook before departing. Example: It is unlikely a vessel will cater to the needs of special diets such as vegan/vegetarian. If you have special dietary needs, be prepared by bringing food on each trip.

Observer Safety and Sampling Gear

The WCGOP will supply sampling and safety equipment for observers. Observers should check sampling gear to see that it is in good working order when issued. It is the responsibility of each observer **to maintain** their gear and return it in the best condition possible. Observers may be charged for misuse or neglect of sampling/safety gear. Observers rely on their equipment to perform their sampling duties, so making gear cleaning and upkeep a daily routine is recommended.

Observer Safety Gear

Safety gear is the most important equipment issued to observers. All safety gear is inspected to ensure it is in working order at the time of issue. Safety gear requires routine maintenance and inspection. Observers should test their safety gear once a month and document it in the Observer Logbook. The WCGOP provides the following safety gear:

- Immersion Suit (See Chapter 11 Gear).
- Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB).
- Personal Flotation Device (PFD).
- Strobe for Survival Suit.
- Strobe for PFD.
- Whistle
- First Aid Kit.

In addition, observers are issued gear to help prevent injuries such as safety glasses, hard hats, back braces, earplugs, and carbon monoxide detectors.

Safety equipment is provided to help survive an emergency at-sea and to reduce reliance on the vessel's safety equipment. **While at-sea, the immersion suit should be:**

- Kept in a safe place that is dry.
- Easily accessible at all times (consider storing in galley or near outside hatch).
- Kept separately from the crew's.

In addition, keep the WCGOP-issued EPIRB in the immersion suit.

Proper maintenance of all safety gear is a priority for WCGOP observers. More information regarding safety gear is located in Chapter 9, “Health and Safety Info” and Chapter 11 Gear.

Observer Sampling Gear

The majority of sampling gear will be issued at training (see Chapter 11 Gear).

1. Keep gear in a secure place aboard the vessel. Avoid leaving gear on the vessel's deck. If there is no alternative to leaving it out on deck, be sure that everything is well secured and protected from the weather.
2. Keep forms, books, pencils, pens, and unused equipment in a dry safe place, such as the forepeak, stateroom, or a secure lazarette.
3. Keep all gear as clean as possible. Use deck hoses to rinse slime, scales, and blood off the baskets, deck sheets, length boards, clipboards, scalpel, and knife after each use. Rinse gear with fresh water after each trip.
4. Keep metal parts clean and well oiled.
5. Do not put scales, scalpels, knives, thumb counters, measuring tapes, or other metal objects in plastic bags or boxes when they are wet or they will rust.
6. Follow protocols for maintaining motion compensated scales in Chapter 11 Gear.
7. If something does happen to the issued gear, document what happened in the Observer Logbook. Observers will not be charged for gear damage or loss due to uncontrollable, documented circumstances.
8. Keep sampling gear consolidated. This will minimize the chance of forgetting something when disembarking and will be appreciated by the vessel crew during the trip.
9. ***Do not check the WCGOP issued laptop computer when traveling by air. It should be a carry on item for all flights.***

If replacement gear is required, contact the WCGOP program or your respective contractor. More information can be found regarding scale care and scale testing in Chapter 11 Gear.



VI. Data Collection and Data Entry

Data Collection

Data is collected every 2 to 4 months and then debriefed with WCGOP debriefing staff. During this period, observers may be assigned to one or multiple vessels and may employ many sampling methods. Be familiar with the sampling protocols for the gear type to be observed before embarking on a trip. This will ensure the correct equipment and forms are brought and hopefully, ease some anxiety. The observer manual, field manual, debriefing staff, and more experienced observers are excellent resources for learning about new gear types and fisheries.

Collection of fishing effort and catch data while at sea is crucial, but timely entry of that data into the database is also important. Observers are required to complete entry of each trip's data into the database within 3 days of disembarkation. This aids in ensuring that the program is attaining its data quality and coverage goals. It is more likely sampling details and data will be forgotten by the observer if entered weeks after a trip is observed. Entering data immediately after a trip (before the next trip is taken, if possible) increases the chances of the data accurately reflecting what was collected and documented during the trip.



Data Entry

After returning from a trip, budget time for data entry. The following information is entered into the WCGOP Database:

- **Data**
 - All Trips must be completely entered within **3 days** of disembarkation. A Trip is considered started when a Trip Number has been assigned and the first page of the database, the Trip Information, has been completed.
 - All data collected on vessels, including information on Trip Forms, Catch Forms, Species Composition Forms, Length Frequency Forms, Biospecimen Forms, and Marine Mammal/Seabird/Sea Turtle Interaction and Sighting Forms, must be entered within **3 days** of disembarkation.
- **Activity:** Observers should have each month's activity entered no later than the 3rd of the subsequent month. (non Catch Shares)
- **Communications:** All communications with vessels must be entered into the database. (non Catch Shares)

VII. Debriefing

Data collected by West Coast Groundfish Observers is vital to the successful management of many fisheries off Washington, Oregon, and California. In order to ensure that data are consistently collected according to program guidelines, observers are required to go through a debriefing process every two months.

The debriefing process consists of six steps.

1. Initial data review and edits by observer.
2. Data submission to debriefer.
3. Data reviewed by debriefer and returned to observer for corrections (if needed).
4. Data corrections completed by observer on paper forms and database and mailed back to the debriefer.
5. Debriefing interview between debriefer and observer.
6. Written Performance Assessment and Evaluation by debriefer.

Initial Data Review by Observer

Trip Data

Prior to submitting data to debriefers, all calculations and forms must be double-checked for accuracy and legibility. All data must be entered into the WCGOP database and a trip error report (TER) must be run for every trip. The TER will flag problems in the data as either errors (E) or warnings (W). Errors indicate potentially serious problems with data collection, documentation, or entry while warnings indicate data that is atypical or falls outside of expected ranges. Any errors detected need to be corrected and any warnings must be double-checked for accuracy before submitting data to debriefers.

The following checklist will help to catch mistakes prior to submitting data. Keep the checklist handy and refer to it when data is being edited. This list is not all-inclusive. Refer to the form instructions for each gear type for a detailed listing of how to complete each form.

Trip Form / Hauls:

- Year is recorded as YYYY.
- Fishery Type is circled, CS is for all Catch Shares Trawl trips. If EFP, name of EFP must be written on the form.
- Trip # recorded (generated by database).
- USCG number recorded for any vessel that has one. If no USCG number, then State Registration Number recorded.
- Pages are numbered.
- Vessel Logbook Name and page number field should be completed for all fisheries with a vessel logbook.
- Skipper's name recorded. If not found in database, contact debriefer.
- Landing and Departure dates are recorded as MM/DD/YYYY.
- Landing and Departure times are recorded in 24-hour notation (4 digits, XXXX).
- Fish Ticket and State Agency Code recorded. If there was no fish ticket issued for a trip (no fish delivered) include a note indicating this in the Trip Notes field.
- Check that all OTC's are recorded to two decimal places.
- OTC keypunch check is completed.
- Verify that Total Hooks/Pots field is filled in for all fixed gear sets.
- Total Hooks/Pots keypunch check is completed.
- Gear Performance Codes recorded for all hauls.
- Seabird avoidance methods used (Fixed Gear only)
- Comment on anything that is unclear or out of the ordinary.

Trip Form/ Haul Locations:

- Hauls/Sets numbered sequentially by retrieval time.
- Latitude and Longitude recorded in degrees, minutes, and 1/100^{ths} of a minute.
- Verify that target strategy codes are valid.
- Check that both Depth of Catch fields per haul/set are completed. If only one depth is available, write it in both fields.
- Verify that all trip notes including Area Fished, First Receiver and Hold Verification Information, are entered verbatim into the database.



Catch Form:

- Haul number is recorded.
- Page is numbered.
- Date is recorded as MM/DD/YY.
- Trip number is recorded.
- USCG number is recorded for all vessels that have them.
- Catch # column is filled in sequentially.
- Volume and Density columns are filled in for any catch category with weight method 2 (Trawl/Prawn Catch Form).
- Weights and volumes (if used) are recorded to two decimal places (Trawl/Prawn Catch Form).
- # of Fish column completed for weight methods 8, 19, 20 and, if an actual #, for methods 14 and 6 (Trawl/Prawn Catch Form).
- # of Fish column completed for weight methods 14, 6 and 20 (Fixed Gear Catch Form).
- Discard Reason column is filled in only for discard catch categories with no associated species composition sample.
- # Hooks/Pots sampled column filled in (Fixed Gear Catch Form). All fixed gear catch categories in a given haul MUST have the same number of sampled Hooks/Pots.
- # Hooks/Pots keypunch check is completed (Fixed Gear Catch Form).
- Sample/Catch Weight keypunch check is completed.

Species Composition Form:

- Haul number is recorded.
- Page is numbered.
- Date is recorded as MM/DD/YY.
- Trip number is recorded.
- USCG number is recorded for all vessels that have them.
- Catch Category codes and the corresponding catch number match those on the Catch Form.
- Sample Method codes are 1, 2 or 3 for trawl, and 4, 5, or 6 for fixed gear.
- Weights are recorded to one or two decimal places.
- KP Weight and KP Number fields are completed for every catch category recorded to one or two decimal places.
- Species common names are fully written out and match the common names that appear in the database.

- Species codes are correct.
- Discard reasons are recorded for all discarded species.
- Release method provided for each species of discarded rockfish (**fixed gear only**)

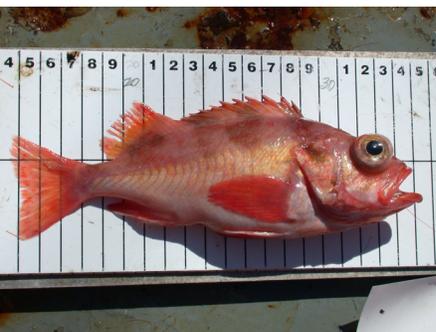
Length Frequency Form:

- Haul number is recorded.
- Page is numbered.
- Date is recorded as MM/DD/YY.
- Trip number is recorded.
- USCG number is recorded for all vessels that have them.
- Catch Category codes and the corresponding catch number match those on the Catch Form.
- Species common names are fully written out and match the common names that appear in the database.
- Species codes are correct.
- Reason for discard code is correct.
- Sex column is filled in only if an attempt was made to ascertain the sex of the individual. If no attempt was made, leave the field blank.
- Keypunch checks (length and frequency) are completed for all species.
- Verify that individuals that are recorded on the Biospecimen Form are **NOT** recorded on the Length Frequency Form, also. If any information other than sex and length are collected, record the information only on the Biospecimen Form.

Biospecimen Form:

- Haul number is recorded.
- Page is numbered.
- Date is recorded as MM/DD/YY.
- Trip number is recorded.
- USCG number is recorded for all vessels that have them.
- Catch Category codes and the corresponding catch number match those on the Catch Form.
- Species common names are fully written out and match the common names that appear in the database.
- Species codes are correct.
- Verify that Discard reason is recorded for each species.
- Weight Method recorded

- Sex column is filled in only if an attempt was made to ascertain the sex of the individual. If no attempt was made, leave the field blank (**never record sex for Pacific Halibut**).
- Verify that Pacific Halibut Viability Codes are for the appropriate Gear Type.
- Verify that adipose presence/absence is documented whenever salmon snouts are collected.
- Verify that Maturity stage for Dungeness crab eggs presence/absence is documented whenever female crabs are sampled.
- If dissections taken, dissection type(s) and associated barcode(s) recorded.
- Verify that individuals that are recorded on the Biospecimen Form are **NOT** recorded on the Length Frequency Form, also. If any information other than sex and length are collected, record the information only on the Biospecimen Form.



Trip Discard Form:

- Page is numbered.
- Trip number is recorded.
- USCG number is recorded for all vessels that have them.
- Date discard occurred recorded as MM/DD.
- Time discard occurred recorded in 24-hour notation.
- Common name of species discarded recorded.

MM/SB/ST Interaction and Sighting Form:

- Date, time, haul and location fields completed.
- Species name recorded.
- Write in Notes and Identifying Characteristics field ALL key characteristic used to identify the animal.
- Sketch of animal completed.
- All behaviors and interactions are circled and documented in the Notes box.
- Photo/Videos barcode and frame #s recorded.
- Trip Number recorded.
- Federal Groundfish Permit Number recorded (if vessel has one).
- USCG number or State Registration number recorded in Coast Guard documentation # field.

Tagged Fish Form:

- All fields completed.
- Tag attached securely to form.

- Otolith vial attached to form with tape if otoliths collected.

Observer Logbook:

Make sure that all required sections of the logbook are completely filled out (**Pen Only!!!**). These include but are not limited to:

- Name and trip limit period (including year) clearly noted on logbook cover.
- Vessel and captain name, USCG # and dates of observed fishing trips.
- Vessel safety checklists completed and signed, for all vessels observed.
- Observer Safety Survey completed for each vessel observed.
- Equipment Test Checklist completed at least once a month.
- Scale Test Record documented.
- Detailed vessel diagrams completed for all vessels covered. Any calculations double-checked for accuracy and ensure hook counts and average hook calculations are clearly documented if needed.
- Net key completed for all trawl vessels observed.
- Comprehensive descriptions of all OTC, Catch Category and Species Composition Weight/Sample Methods utilized for each vessel covered. Include details on how random sampling/biological sampling techniques were implemented.
- Daily Notes completed for each day at sea, with thorough documentation of sampling strategies, problems encountered, interesting encounters, etc. including safety concerns and difficulty with crew.

Data Submission to the Debriefers

In general, data collected by observers are sent to their debriefers. However, some items are shipped to the Newport Office. Specifics on where to send each type of data are summarized below.

All dates are subject to change! Your debriefer or other staff will contact you with updated due dates.

Item	Ship To
Trip Data	Debriefer
Logbook	Debriefer
Species ID Forms	Debriefer
Otoliths	Debriefer
Tagged Fish Forms (with tag attached)	Debriefer
Salmon fin clips/ Scales	Debriefer
Salmon Snouts	Seattle Office
Marine Mammal Snouts	Newport Office
Sturgeon Fin Ray	Newport Office
Samples	
Other Tissue Samples	Newport Office

Data should be submitted to your debriefer either in person or via UPS (UPS mailing details can be provided either at training or by your WCGOP debriefer).

Catch Shares data must be submitted to a debriefer 2 times a month. See table below for data due dates. Be aware that debriefers may ask for data earlier or later than this schedule. All Trip Data, Species ID Forms, Otoliths are to be mailed to a debriefer.

Data Collected	Due in the debriefer office by dates
1st - 15th of the month	20th of the month
16th - 30th of the month	5th of the following month

*Logbooks due every 2-4 months, check with your debriefer when this is due.

REMEMBER! Due dates are the dates that data **must be received by** the debriefer, not the day it needs to be sent. Keeping up with paper work and computer entry is a must. If data is due during the dates of a scheduled trip, you must submit your data prior to leaving port! Debriefers may request that data be sent earlier than in the schedule outlined above. Instances where this might occur include:

- New observers will be required to submit data after their first or first few trips to allow for an early evaluation of sampling procedures.

- Observers leaving the program will be required to submit data after every trip in the weeks before conclusion of their contract, allowing debriefer enough time to review data.
- Other instances may occur at the discretion of the debriefer.

Group data **by trip**, with forms arranged in the following order:

- Trip Form(s).
- Haul data: hauls in sequential order with each haul's forms arranged in the following order:
 - a. Catch Form(s).
 - b. Species Composition Form(s).
 - c. Length Frequency Form(s).
 - d. Biospecimen Form(s).
 - Trip Discard Form(s).
 - Marine Mammal Sighting, Tagged Fish, and/or Seabird Sighting Form(s).

Salmon Fin Clips

- Attach scale/ fin clip envelopes to the associated trip data with paper clips.

Otolith Vials

- ***Otoliths must be clean and dry prior to shipping.***
- Bundle and **clearly label** (with trip # and haul #) all otolith vials for trips being sent. Otoliths should be grouped by trip and, if more than 10 specimens have been collected for a single trip, by haul.

Logbooks should be submitted with trip data at the end of each period. Check with a debriefer when logbooks are due.

Bring all dissections to the debriefing interview so that barcode numbers can be verified.

After the debriefer interview:

Salmon Snouts: Salmon snouts must be shipped to the Seattle office within a week of the debriefing interview. All salmon snouts must be salted prior to shipping! To prepare snouts for shipping:

- Salt snout (either at collection or upon return from trip).
- After a day or two, dump out used, nasty salt and replace with new salt.

- Repeat if necessary until snout is shipped.
- Double or triple bag salted snout.
- UPS snouts **overnight** to the Seattle office. ***Before you ship a snout to Seattle, call a Seattle debriefer to ensure they will be in the office to receive the snout package. Snouts should never arrive at the Seattle office on a weekend or holiday.***

Marine Mammal snouts: Marine mammal snouts should be salted and sent to the Newport office as soon as possible **after** the debriefing interview is completed. Follow all salt and shipping instructions listed above.

Coral and green sturgeon tissue samples - Tissue samples should be sent to the Newport Office as soon as possible **after** the debriefing interview is completed. Follow shipping instructions listed above.

Data Review by Debriefer

When trip data is received by the debriefers, they double check sampling strategies, all calculations and forms, and verify that barcode numbers on the paper forms match those on the otolith vials and scale envelopes submitted. All data forms with errors are flagged. The trips containing errors and a list detailing what needs to be corrected are returned to the observer.

Debriefers review the observer logbooks before the debriefing interview. The logbook allows debriefers to become familiar with the sampling methods employed on the vessels covered prior to the interview.

Data Corrections by Observer

Observer data with errors will be returned to them for correction. Data errors will be flagged and error explanations will be documented on an attached spreadsheet. Data corrections must be made in a timely manner. Data corrections must be made to the paper forms **and** the database! Once observers make trip error corrections on all paper forms and database, another Trip Error Report should be run in the database and then mailed back to the debriefer.

Debriefing Interview

Once all required materials have been received and reviewed by the debriefer, a debriefing interview will be arranged. The debriefing interview is a vital part of the observer's job. The interview is the observer's chance to demonstrate understanding of the methods learned in training and proficiency at applying them in the field. It is also an opportunity to give personal insights to WCGOP personnel about potential improvements to the program.

The Interview is where your debriefer sits down with the observer in a face-to-face meeting. The Interview includes data review, discussions of how data was collected and any problems that were encountered. This meeting is a question and answer between the observer and the debriefer.

During a catch shares observer's first contract, a mid-cruise debriefing interview may be requested by the debriefer to ensure all sampling protocols are being used properly.

Depending on the catch shares observer contract length, data quality and logistics, observers may be debriefed every 2-4 months. Depending on the observers port location, observers may be required to travel to the debriefers office or the debriefer may travel to the observers port.

Debriefers will call observers to set up a Interview date. As the interview date nears, debriefers will try to set up an exact time or approximate time for the interview, since sea days may interfere with meeting plans. Observers may be called out to sea unexpectedly, so keep in contact with your debriefer when you know they are planning on coming into the port to meet.

Debriefers will review all data, logbook, species id forms and all trips with the observer. If there are species id forms that are not completed or questionable, the debriefer will give it back and it will need to be completed again.

After the interview is over, the debriefer will provide:

1. A hard copy of the Assessment/Evaluation
 2. A hard copy of the species identification forms that have completed.
- At the end of the interview with the debriefer, the observer's trip data should be error free and corrected. The interview is a great time for the observer to give debriefers feedback about the program and experiences that were had. WCGOP has been built, in part, by the feedback staff receives from it's observers

Written Performance Assessment and Evaluation

Observers receive a job performance assessment and an evaluation after each debriefing interview that will be posted in the database. The assessment is primarily designed to provide constructive feedback to observers to help clarify program needs and requirements of them.

The assessment is broken down into several categories. Each category covers different portions of the job and has different criteria that are considered. The last category is the evaluation summary which summarizes all the assessment categories together for overall job performance.

The 10 categories in the assessment/evaluation are:

1. Sampling Procedures
2. Sampling Size
3. Data Forms
4. Calculations
5. Observer Logbook
6. Species Identification
7. Attitude/Reliability/Flexibility
8. Communication
9. Area for Improvement
10. Summary-Evaluation

The following is a blank Assessment/Evaluation form used by the WCGOP debriefing team.

Observers Name & Date

Sampling Procedures

Fishery –Vessels, Trips, Hauls

<i>OTC</i>	
WM-14	
<i>Catch Categories</i>	
<i>Biological Sampling</i>	
<i># of Hauls unsampled or otherwise not analyzable and reason(s)</i>	

Options for OTC and Catch Category Descriptors:

- Used Appropriately
- Minor Improvement Needed (comment required)
- Major Improvement Needed (comment required)

Options for Biological Sampling Descriptor:

- All/Most biological samples collected.
- Minor Improvement Needed (comment required)
- Major Improvement Needed (comment required)

Options for Reason(s) hauls unsampled or otherwise not analyzable:

- Catch dumped at-sea
- Weather/Safety (including rough seas)
- Safety due to last haul of trip
- Gear Issue
- Illness/Injury (including seasickness)
- Species composition failed
- Other

CHAPTER 10

Catch Shares-Observer Life

Sampling Size

1. Observer met program goal for sample size.	Average for non-whole hauled species composition weights was
2. Observer met program goal for number of fish used for average weight/number calculations.	

Options for Descriptors:

- Yes
- Generally (comment required)
- No (comment required)

Data Forms

1. Data forms are legible.	
2. Data forms are organized.	
3. All required fields filled in.	
4. Data fields completed according to instructions.	
5. No/minimal transcription errors.	
6. Raw data documented consistently.	
7. TRAWL ONLY - Raw data not transcribed and all appropriate data documented.	
8. TRAWL ONLY – Biological sampling list documented on all hauls.	
9. All fish ticket numbers documented.	
10. Clean Trip Error Report.	

Options for Descriptors:

- Yes
- Generally (comment required)
- No (comment required)
- N/A – not applicable

Calculations

1. All calculations clearly documented.	
2. Correct formulas always used.	
3. No/minimal calculation errors	

Options for Descriptors:

- Yes
- Generally (comment required)
- No (comment required)

Observer Logbook

1. List of vessels thoroughly completed.	
2. Vessel safety checklists appropriately completed.	
3. Observer safety equipment checklist completed both months.	
4. Observer safety survey completed.	
5. Scales calibrated according to protocol.	
6. All vessels properly diagramed.	
7. Footrope Key completed (Trawl only).	
8. All OTC weight methods thoroughly described.	
9. All catch category weight methods, species composition sample methods, and biological sampling techniques described.	
10. Random sampling techniques thoroughly documented.	
11. Daily notes thoroughly written for each observed day.	

Options for Descriptors:

- Yes
- Generally (comment required)
- No (comment required)
- N/A (not applicable)

Species ID

1. # of Species ID forms completed during assessment period	
2. # of Species ID forms not accepted	
3. % of species with completed forms for assessment period.	
4. All forms thoroughly completed.	
5. Met program expectation of 10 forms completed in assessment period or at least 85% of species seen during assessment period have completed forms.	

Options for Descriptors for questions 4 and 5:

- Yes
- No (comment required)

Attitude/Reliability/Flexibility

1. Observer entered all trips within 3 days of disembarking.	
2. Observer has positive attitude and interactions with debriefer.	

Communication

1. Observer maintained good communications with debriefer.

Options for Descriptor:

- Yes
- No (comment required)

Areas for Improvement

Previous Assessments:

Category	Level	Issues	Status

New Areas for Improvement:

Category	Level	Issues	Status

Level Descriptors:

- Improvement
- Task
- Requirement

Status:

- New
- Completed
- Not completed – observer had opportunity to complete task but did not.
- Pending (use in circumstances when the area could not be improved because the situation/species/issue was not encountered during assessment period).

Summary - Evaluation

(Debrifer writes a short summary of observers performance during trip period here)

Assessment and evaluations include written comments on each category and are posted in the database. Although there are no numerical scores associated with the assessment and evaluation, each category's comments will include notes on both **Accomplishments** (areas in which the observer met or exceeded program expectations) and **Areas for Improvement** (areas in which program expectations were not met - this may be left blank if all expectations were met or exceeded). If there are serious problems with data quality or any other portion of an observer's duties, or if the same deficiencies are repeatedly noted as 'Areas for Improvement' the evaluation may include **Tasks or Requirements**.

Tasks and Requirements

Tasks are duties the observer **must** complete prior to the next debriefing or prior to an assigned date. Examples of Tasks include re-reading a specific chapter of the manual to improve understanding of sampling protocols or a stringent guideline requiring the completion of a duty neglected in previous periods (e.g. Species ID Forms must be completed for all new species encountered). If a Task is not completed by the time of the next evaluation it will be noted as a Requirement.

Requirements are duties the observer must complete or disciplinary action will be taken. In addition to unfulfilled Tasks, problems that severely affect an observer's ability to adequately perform their job may be listed as Requirements. Examples of such items include an observer refusing to follow proper sampling protocol or significant problems with communication and/or attitude. Any time a

Requirement is listed, the following items will also be documented:

1. Consequences if Requirement is not satisfactorily met.
2. Timeline in which Requirement must be met.

A mid-cruise debriefing must be done within a month of any evaluation containing a requirement.

Usually, observers will receive a draft assessment and evaluation from the debriefer at the debriefing interview. During the interview, observers may make



clarifications that could potentially lead to modifications of the draft assessment and evaluation. A final assessment and evaluation will be made available on the database after the interview is completed. ***Observers are required to read and sign off on the assessment and evaluations in the WCGOP database.*** The assessment and evaluation may be edited until the observer signs off on it. If an observer feels that their assessment and evaluation does not fairly represent the job they have done, they may contact their debriefer directly or, if they are uncomfortable doing that, they may contact the lead debriefer or the Team Lead. By signing an assessment and evaluation, the observer verifies that they have seen the assessment and evaluation regardless of whether or not they agree with its contents. The observer contractor will monitor the status of assessment and evaluations and will contact observers who have not signed off on recent assessment and evaluations.

VIII. Maintaining WCGOP Observer Status

Observers continuing with the program must:

1. Adhere to WCGOP Standards of Conduct, Data Confidentiality, and Conflict of Interest requirements. (see Chapter 2, “West Coast Groundfish Observer Program”).
2. Demonstrate proficiency during each trip.
3. Receive satisfactory performance evaluations.
4. Maintain current First Aid and CPR certifications.
5. Pass a yearly fish test.
6. Complete a yearly WCGOP-approved safety training course.