

Observer Life

Introduction	10-3
First Days.....	10-3
<i>Start Dates and Contacts</i>	10-3
<i>Getting to Know the Port</i>	10-3
Communication and Contacting Vessels	10-4
<i>Contacting Vessels</i>	10-4
<i>Vessel Safety Checks</i>	10-4
Before and After a Trip	10-5
<i>Observer Checklist: Before Every Trip</i>	10-5
<i>Checklist: After Every Trip</i>	10-5
<i>Initial Contact and the First Trips</i>	10-5
Gear	10-6
<i>Observer Personal Gear</i>	10-6
<i>Considerations for Fishing Trips</i>	10-7
<i>Observer Safety and Sampling Gear</i>	10-7
<i>Observer Safety Gear</i>	10-7
<i>Observer Sampling Gear</i>	10-8
Data Collection and Data Entry	10-9
<i>Data Collection</i>	10-9
<i>Data Entry</i>	10-9
Debriefing.....	10-9
<i>Data Submission to the Debriefer</i>	10-14
<i>Data Review by Debriefer</i>	10-15
<i>Data Corrections by observer</i>	10-16
<i>Debriefing Interview, Expectations and Scheduling</i>	10-16
<i>Written Performance Assessment and End of Contract Evaluation</i>	10-18
<i>Maintaining WCGOP observer Status</i>	10-20

Introduction

This chapter provides information about the day-to-day routine of West Coast Groundfish Catch Share 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.

First Days

Start Dates and Contacts

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

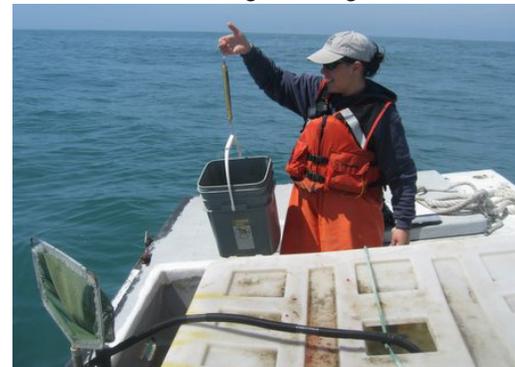
It is the observer's responsibility to provide their contractor and the WCGOP, with updated contact information and to keep an up-to-date mailing address (PO Boxes not acceptable), email address and phone number(s) in the WCGOP database.

Tip: Contact information for program staff and observers can be found in the WCGOP database, the WCGOP field manual, the observer logbook, and observer Manual Appendix.

Getting to Know the Port

When observers 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 advice 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.



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.

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 an observer needs to contact 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 Share 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 Safety Checks

A Vessel Safety Checklist should be completed as early as possible 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, faxed, or emailed to the observer's contractor 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 contractor's office and leave a verbal confirmation that the vessel has passed inspection. A copy of the Safety Checklist must be mailed, faxed or emailed as soon as possible after disembarkation.

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 month.

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 (See observer logbook for Vessel Safety Checklist) prior to the first trip on the vessel.
3. Mail, fax, email or text message a copy of the Vessel Safety Checklist to the observer contractor prior to departing on the first trip. If you are unable to send a copy of the Vessel Safety Checklist to your contractor, 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 contractor 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 lubricated 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 PLB, 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. Always check to see if there are multiple fish tickets for each trip.
5. Leave the vessel's copy (YELLOW) of the IFQ Priority Species Tracking form with the skipper. Leave the Catch Monitor copy (PINK) in a sealed envelope.
6. Finish paperwork and complete entry of trip in the database within 3 days of the disembarkation date. In most cases, observers will be able to enter data, at sea, using the Offline Observer Database.
7. Scan and upload all paperwork, using the Trip Scan tab in the Online Observer Database. As with data entry, this must be completed within 3 days of disembarking.

Initial Contact and the First Trips

Observers must contact their debriefer before their first trip. The debriefer will review the boat the observer is assigned to, provide sampling advice and discuss common errors to avoid.

Observers are required to turn in the data from their first three trips immediately after each trip is completed. The debriefer will review each trip as it is turned in, and discuss any errors the observer is making.

After the first three trips are completed, the data will be reviewed and debriefed. If the data is acceptable, the observer will receive a deployment endorsement, allowing them to continue observing in the WCGOP Catch Share program. If an observer is not performing to WCGOP standards, they will not receive the deployment endorsement and will not be allowed to be deployed on Catch Share vessels.

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. After three trips have been completed an Initial Deployment Debriefing will be set-up.

A trip is generated each time a vessel leaves the dock with an observer on board.

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, including those for seasickness.
- 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/mp3 player, etc.
- Dietary restrictions: discuss with the captain and/or the cook before departing.

Tip: 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 must test their safety gear once a month and document it in the observer logbook. The WCGOP provides the following safety gear:

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.
- Immersion Suit (See Chapter 11, "Gear").
- Personal Locator Beacon (PLB).
- Personal Flotation Device (PFD).

- Strobes for Survival Suit and PFD.
- Whistle
- First Aid Kit.
- In addition, observers are issued gear to help prevent injuries such as safety glasses, hard hats, back braces, and earplugs.

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 PLB 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 Information” and Chapter 11, “Gear.”

Observer Sampling Gear

The majority of sampling gear will be issued at training. For a comprehensive gear list and maintenance requirements see Chapter 11, “Gear.” Below are some common sense guidelines, to ensure that assigned gear will remain serviceable throughout the contract.

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. Ask the crew to show you how to lash the gear down properly.
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.**

NOTE: Vehicles are NOT considered to be secure locations, especially if items are in plain view. When at home or on travel, trip data and gear should be stored inside the garage, hotel room, etc. Should a theft occur, contact the proper authorities immediately and notify the program, as soon as possible.

If replacement gear is required, contact the WCGOP gear technician. If the gear is vital to safety or sampling your contractor must also be informed.

Data Collection and Data Entry

Data Collection

Data is collected every month and then reviewed by WCGOP debriefing staff. 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 training manual, field manual, debriefing staff, and more experienced observers are excellent resources for learning about new gear types and fisheries.

Data Entry

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 three days of disembarkation and before deploying on another trip. 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.

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 promptly follow all the steps in the data quality process.

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). Data corrections will be documented on the WCGOP data correction sheet (DCS) and provided to the observer with their reviewed data. Also provided in this document will be performance feedback and Areas for Improvement for the observer. It is very important to read and follow the instructions on the DCS to maintain observer certification.
4. Data corrections promptly completed by observer on the paper forms and in the database and sent back to the debriefer. This process should be completed and all corrections submitted within 15 days, unless otherwise stated by the debriefer.
5. Debriefing interview between debriefer and observer, if needed. The need for an interview will be determined by the debriefer and the observer and provider will be notified. At a minimum, an observer can expect an interview after their first three trips, every six months, and at the end of their contract. Performance concerns may also lead to additional debriefing interviews at the discretion of the WCGOP staff.
6. Written Performance Assessment and Evaluation by debriefer. A full written evaluation will be given at each debriefing interview. In addition to this, performance feedback will be given monthly to the observer through the DCS.

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 showstoppers (S), errors (E) or warnings (W). Showstoppers and errors indicate potentially serious problems with data collection, documentation, or entry. Showstoppers are more serious and will actually prevent data from being used to update vessel quotas. Warnings indicate data that is atypical or falls outside of expected ranges. Any showstoppers and/or errors detected need to be corrected immediately. Warnings must be double-checked for accuracy before submitting data to debriefers. If unable to resolve one or more trip errors, contact your debriefer for support. **DO NOT** simply leave trip errors unaddressed.

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

- Fishery Sector is circled, CS is for all Catch Share Trawl trips. If EFP, name of EFP must be written on the form.
- Pages are numbered.
- Trip # recorded (generated by database).
- USCG number recorded for any vessel that has one. If no USCG number, then State Registration Number recorded.

- Year is recorded as YYYY.
- Vessel Logbook Name and page number field should be completed for all fisheries with a vessel logbook.
- First Receiver (place where fish are delivered) must be recorded. This must match available options in the database. Contact debriefer if not on list.
- 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. Fixed gear OTCs should be 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 1/100ths of a minute.
- On trawl vessels, check that excluder presence is marked absent, present, or is left blank if you did not

check for its presence.

- 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 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.
- Catch # column is filled in sequentially.
- Volume and Density columns are filled in for any catch category with weight method 2 (trawl only).
- Weights and volumes (if used) are recorded to two decimal places (trawl only).
- # of Fish column completed for weight methods 8, 9, and 19; and, if an actual #, for methods 14 and 6.
- 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 only). 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 only).
- 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.
- 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 two decimal places.
- KP Weight and KP Number fields are completed for every catch category.
- 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.

Length Frequency Form:

- Haul number is recorded.
- Page is numbered.
- Date is recorded as MM/DD/YY.
- Trip number is recorded.
- 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.
- 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 absence/ presence (Y/N) of Dungeness

crab eggs is documented whenever female crabs are sampled.

- If dissections taken, dissection type(s) and associated barcode(s) recorded.
- Ensure that tag/band information is documented in the appropriate field (i.e., Tag/Band ID).
- 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.
- 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.
- If report applies to all or multiple hauls, check the appropriate box and document additional hauls in the Notes box.
- 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 checked 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.
- Tag information must be recorded in the Tag/Band ID field of Biospecimen form.

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.
- 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

Data collected by observers are sent to their debriefers. Catch Share data must be submitted to your debriefer each month. All materials from the prior month will be expected in the office no later than the 5th of the following month. Materials to be submitted include all Trip Data, Logbooks, Species ID Forms and appropriate Biospecimens. Data can be handed to a debriefer in person or sent via UPS. UPS mailing labels will be provided at training or by a debriefer.

Remember that data should be received by the debriefer on the 5th, not postmarked by then. Keeping up with paperwork 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! All dates are subject to change! Your debriefer or other staff will contact you with updated due dates. Instances where this might occur include:

- New observers will be required to submit data after their first or first three trips to allow for an early evaluation of sampling procedures. This is required in order to receive the Deployment Endorsement.
- Observers leaving the program will be required

to submit data after every trip in the weeks before conclusion of their contract, allowing debriefers 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/Seabird/Sea Turtle Interaction and Sighting; Tagged Fish; and other misc. forms.
- Copy of the IFQ priority species form.

Species IDs

- Submit the required five IFQ species identification forms per trip, either with the corresponding trip or placed inside cover of the logbook, as per debriefer request.
- The debriefer will verify that the correct # of forms have been fully completed and that all overfished/protected/prohibited species encountered have IDs submitted with photographs

Logbooks

- Logbooks should be submitted with trip data each month.

Fin Clips/ Fin Rays

- Attach sample envelopes to the associated trip data with paper clips.

Otolith Vials

- Otoliths must be clean and dry prior to submitting them to your debriefer.
- 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.

Salmon snouts and marine mammal snouts

Salmon snouts and marine mammal snouts must be shipped to your debriefer's office with the rest of your data, unless otherwise specified by the debriefer. If you are going to ship the snouts, they 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 your debriefer's office. Before you ship a snout, call your debriefer to ensure they will be in the office to receive the snout package. Snouts should never arrive at the office on a weekend or holiday.

Coral and green sturgeon tissue samples

Tissue samples should be submitted to your debriefer

with your data each month. If you are going to ship your tissue samples, follow the shipping instructions listed above.

Data Review by Debriefers

When trip data is received by the debriefers, they double check sampling strategies data documentation, any calculations and forms, and verify that barcode numbers on the paper forms match those on the otolith vials and sample envelopes submitted. All data forms with errors are flagged. All corrections that need to be made to the data will be documented on a Data Check Sheet (DCS) and provided to the observer. All Areas for Improvement the observer needs to address will be provided in the DCS as well. The trips containing errors and a list detailing what needs to be corrected are returned to the observer.

Debriefers also review the observer logbooks and species ID forms. The logbook allows debriefers to become familiar with the vessels covered during the period and informs them of any safety and/or sampling issues prior to the interview. The table below shows the data schedule for submitting and correcting data.

Month Data Collected	Date Data Due to Debriefer	Data Included	Data Returned to Observer for Corrections	Corrected data due back to Debriefer
January	February 5 th	All Trip Data, Species ID forms, logbook, Non-perishable specimens	March 5 th	March 20 th
February	March 5 th	All Trip Data, Species ID forms, logbook, Non-perishable specimens	April 5 th	April 20 th
March	April 5 th	All Trip Data, Species ID forms, logbook, Non-perishable specimens	May 5 th	May 20 th
April	May 5 th	All Trip Data, Species ID forms, logbook, Non-perishable specimens	June 5 th	June 20 th
May	June 5 th	All Trip Data, Species ID forms, logbook, Non-perishable specimens	July 5 th	July 20 th
June	July 5 th	All Trip Data, Species ID forms, logbook, Non-perishable specimens	August 5 th	August 20 th
July	August 5 th	All Trip Data, Species ID forms, logbook, Non-perishable specimens	September 5 th	September 20 th
August	September 5 th	All Trip Data, Species ID forms, logbook, Non-perishable specimens	October 5 th	October 20 th
September	October 5 th	All Trip Data, Species ID forms, logbook, Non-perishable specimens	November 5 th	November 20 th
October	November 5 th	All Trip Data, Species ID forms, logbook, Non-perishable specimens	December 5 th	December 20 th
November	December 5 th	All Trip Data, Species ID forms, logbook, Non-perishable specimens	January 5 th	January 20 th
December	January 5 th	All Trip Data, Species ID forms, logbook, Non-perishable specimens	February 5 th	February 20 th

Data Corrections by observer

Observer data with errors will be returned 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 sent back to the debriefer. Unless otherwise specified, corrections should be submitted to the debriefer within 15 days of initial receipt.

Debriefing Interview, Expectations and Scheduling

All new CS observers who have recently finished training are required to submit their first three trips for review. The debriefer will check that all required materials were received and review sampling and data form completion for these trips, then contact both the observer and observer provider to schedule an Initial Deployment Debriefing. The interview is a vital initial part of the observer's job. This early 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 sit down face to face with a debriefer and discuss how data was collected and hash out any problems that were encountered. In some ways, this meeting is considered an extension of training and should provide insight on how to sample more effectively.

After successful completion of the interview an observer is considered to have their deployment endorsement. During the remainder of the contract, if an observer is performing well an interview will be scheduled every six months. In addition, all CS observers will be required to debrief at the end of their contract or before a leave of absence (i.e. to leave for an extended time for time off or to work in another observer program etc.). Other scheduled debriefings and interviews will be at the discretion of the observer's debriefer based on their monthly performance. If a debriefer has concerns about a particular observer's data or performance they can contact the observer and observer's provider to schedule additional debriefings. If an observer is continually not meeting program standards, they will be requested to have an interview each month until their performance is improved sufficiently, as determined by the observer program. Depending on the observer's port location, they may be required to travel to the debriefer's office or the debriefer may travel to the observer's port.

In order to set up an interview a debriefer will communicate directly with the observer and formally request an interview via e-mail, from the provider. 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 hand them back to be completed again.

After the interview is over, the debriefer will provide:

1. A hard copy of the portions of the Data Check Sheet, including any Areas for Improvement.
2. A hard copy of the species identification forms that have been 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 End of Contract Evaluation

Observers receive a written performance evaluation following each debriefing interview. The number of debriefing interviews may vary, depending on performance, logistics, etc.; however, all new observers will be debriefed after their first 3 trips (Initial Deployment Debriefing), midway through their contract (Mid-cruise Debriefing), prior to an extended leave of absence >30 days, and at the end of each contract (Year-end or Exit Debriefing). The Initial Deployment Debriefing may be waived for returning observers in good standing.

Performance evaluations will be posted in the database and a hard copy will be provided to the observer during the interview. The evaluation is primarily designed to provide constructive feedback to observers to help clarify program needs and requirements of them. Each evaluation consists of three sections, the Assessment, the Areas for Improvement, and the Summary.

The categories in the assessment/evaluation are:

Assessment

The Assessment is broken down into several categories. Each category covers different portions of the job and has different criteria that are considered. The categories in the

Assessment are:

1. **Sampling Procedures:** Proper use of weight methods. Correct biosampling and Pacific Halibut sampling. Number of unsampled hauls.
2. **Biological Sampling:** Appropriate lengths and biospecimens collected. Pacific Halibut sampled according to protocol.
3. **Sampling Size:** All species sampled according to protocol. Overall species composition size. Collection of basket weights and fish counts.
4. **Data Forms:** Data organization and legibility. Completion of fields. Transcription errors. Review of TER.
5. **Database Entry:** Completed for all trips with no/minimal errors. Clean Trip Error Report.
6. **Calculations:** Clearly documented with correct formulas used and minimal errors.
7. **Observer Logbook:** All sections complete. Vessel diagrams are adequate. OTC and sample methods described. Randomization techniques detailed. Daily notes present.
8. **Species Identification:** SIDs for all encountered overfished species were submitted. Correct # of forms vs # of trips. Accurate and thorough form completion.
9. **Attitude/Reliability/Flexibility:** Timely data entry and submission. Overall attitude toward at sea sampling and shoreside duties.
10. **Communication:** Open lines of communication. Prompt responses to e-mail and phone calls.

Areas for Improvement

With each month's data review sheet provided by the debriefer, the Areas for Improvement will be tracked for the observer. When problems or issues are first identified an **Improvement** is noted and what the observer needs to do to address the issue is explained in writing. If the same problem is seen again with the next month's data submission the Improvement escalates to a Task. **Tasks** are duties the observer **must** complete before the next month's data submission. 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 overfished species encountered). One Task may not warrant bringing in an observer for an interview, but a few of them may. It will be at the discretion of the debriefer and the observer program. If the problem continues, the Task will escalate to a Requirement and the observer's provider (AOI) will be notified of the continuing problem.

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

protocols or significant problems with communication and/or attitude. Observers with Requirements on their Areas for Improvement feedback will need to come in for an interview monthly until the problems are resolved. A meeting of the observer, debriefer and the observer provider may be requested. If corrections are not made after an issue becomes a Requirement, it will be requested that the observer repeat training or be decertified.

All observers will have Improvements and some Tasks at various times throughout their deployment but Requirements are rare.

Summary

The summary provides an overview of the Assessment and Areas for Improvement sections, as well as the overall performance of the observer in meeting the standards of the program. The final summary of the contract will include any briefing or training requirements for the observer to complete in order maintain their certification.

Receiving and Signing Off on Evaluations

Observers will receive a draft evaluation from their debriefer each debriefing interview. During the interview, observers may offer clarifications that could potentially lead to modifications of the draft evaluation. A final evaluation will be made available on the database after the interview is completed.

Observers are required to read and sign off on all evaluations in the WCGOP database. An evaluation may be edited until the observer signs off on it. If an observer feels that their 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, the Program Manager or observer provider. By signing an evaluation, the observer verifies that they have reviewed the final evaluation, regardless of whether or not they agree with its contents. The observer's contractor has access to and will monitor the status of the end-of-contract evaluations and will contact observers who have signed off to facilitate gear check-in and finalize any end-of-contract details.

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.
7. Complete an annual briefing or training and attend any other briefings or trainings as instructed by the observer program to maintain their training, annual and deployment endorsements.

