



January 3, 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR: A.I.S., Inc.
Northeast Fisheries Observer Program Observers

FROM: David Potter
Branch Chief, FSB

SUBJECT: Training Trip Policy

Each observer candidate, upon successful completion of the NMFS Observer Training Session, will observe their first trip with a certified training trip trainer. Current certified training trip trainers are: Paul O'Donnell, Denise Craft, Jack Harrington, Pete Scola, Jason Dean, Gwynne Schnaittacher, Chelsea DoEpp, Dan Coffman, Matt Jarvis, Neal McIntosh and Cara Sands.

The first trip will be a *complete* gillnet trip and if possible will take place in the area the observer will be located. If there are no gillnet trips available on the sea day schedule then the first trip can be a bottom otter trawl trip or a scallop dredge trip both no longer than a day. It is required that the observer's first gillnet trip, regardless of what number trip it is for the observer, be a *complete* trip with a certified training trip trainer. If there are no gillnet trips on the Mid-Atlantic seaday schedule then the first gillnet trip, for Mid-Atlantic observers, will be a *complete* gillnet trip in the Northeast. If this occurs, and to avoid delays, the Mid-Atlantic observer candidates should be scheduled as a priority over observer candidates from the Northeast. If, after a week, a Mid-Atlantic observer has not been able to accomplish a Northeast training trip the Data Editor Lead and the Data Quality Lead will evaluate the situation and take appropriate action. If the first two options aren't possible then the observer's first trip can be a on a gear type other than gillnet. This last option should be implemented only if timely coordination is impossible and would require approval by the Data Editor Lead or Data Quality Lead. The idea is to have the first gillnet training trip be *complete*, if at all possible.

The next 3 trips are considered 'training trips', and are coded as such in the database (program code 010). The observer is working independently during these trips, but is still considered to be in training status and is restricted to day trips. It is preferred that new observers complete an otter trawl training trip with a certified training trip trainer as one of the 3 training trips, but it is not required.



Each training trip must be sent to Falmouth Technology Park immediately (observers should be sending individual trips in after landing and overnight them through the mail system); training trips will be edited as a priority over other trips and data editors will be in contact with observers after each trip has been fully edited. As a general rule, observers should not be sent out on another training trip until their editor has contacted him/her, and the Data Editor Lead has sent an e-mail approving the observer for their next training trip.

After the 4th training trip the Data Editor Lead and Data Quality Lead will review the data and if approved, the observer will become 'NMFS certified'. Once certified, trips will no longer be coded as 'training trips' in the database. Soon after the observer has been certified they will be required to meet their editor at Falmouth Technology Park for a debriefing, which will be scheduled by the data editor. If not logistically convenient the observer and editor will set up a phone debriefing. After certification, and upon approval from the Data Editor Lead and the Data Quality Lead, the observer may begin to schedule multi-day trips.

The observer's first multi-day trip must not be a trip that has special reporting requirements (i.e. US/Canada Management Area, Regular B-Day Program, Access Area Scallop, Haddock Hook Special Access Program, etc.). The observer must hear from their editor after their first multi-day trip before going on another multi-day trip. However, while the trip is being edited, the observer may still go on day-trips of gear types they are already certified on.

The observer, at a minimum, must not go on more than one trip of a new gear type before being debriefed by their editor. This trip will be treated as a priority and as soon as the editor has completely edited it, the editor will call the observer to debrief them on this trip. If requested by the editor or the Data Editor Lead, the observer may be required to come to Falmouth Technology Park to be debriefed in person. The first trip of each new gear type observed, and the first *complete* gillnet trip observed, will be coded as a training trip (program code 010) for data quality purposes. It is the responsibility of the observer's Area Coordinator to contact the Data Editor Lead prior to scheduling the observer on a new gear type. The observer should code their trip as program code 010 when uploading their iPAQ. In addition, Area Coordinators must report a program code of 010 if calling/emailing in OBSCON for observers.

If for any reason, any of these protocols cannot be met, it is the responsibility of the Area Coordinator to contact the Program Manager. The Program Manager will then contact the Data Editor Lead and discuss the situation.

Thank you.

