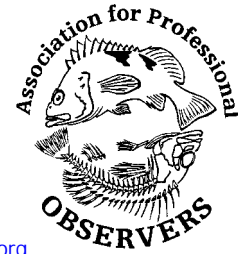




The Mail Buoy



A publication of the Association for Professional Observers

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Interactive Table Of Contents:

(Ctrl + click on the title you wish to navigate to and it will bring you to that page)

APO BIZ:	2
<i>THE APO RESURGENCE IS GAINING STEAM</i>	2
NATIONAL AND GLOBAL SCOPE:	3
<i>OBSERVER WORKING GROUPS FOLLOW-UP</i>	3
REGIONAL UPDATES:	6
THE PACIFIC ISLANDS (USA):	6
<i>WE'RE MOVING INTO SAMOA</i>	6
<i>THE US MAY BECOME A MEMBER OF THE WCPFC</i>	7
THE EAST COAST (USA):	8
<i>AN OBSERVER SUCCESS STORY</i>	8
THE NORTH PACIFIC (USA):	11
<i>THE SEAFARERS UNION HISTORY AND UPDATES</i>	11
NATURE NOTES AND QUOTES:	13
<i>AN ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION</i>	13
NEWS FROM THE BOARD:	14
<i>TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS AND A BOARD MEETING SCEDUALED FOR NEXT MONTH...</i>	14
<i>WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU!</i>	15
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:	15
IMPORTANT CONTACTS AND WEBSITES:	15

THE APO RESURGENCE IS GAINING STEAM

Since the last Mail Buoy edition (sent out in July 2005), we have had some wonderful feedback, a promising influx of observers who wish to become involved, and great support from agency, union, and contractor personnel alike. The APO is announcing two new Board Members, David Wagenheim and Mark Wormington, who have both already started to play integral roles in the APO, by: sharing ideas, helping maintain e-mail contact activity, and by helping create a plan for the APO's future.

As many of you may already know, David Wagenheim is the creator and manager (along with the help of several other volunteers) of ObserverNet.org, a great on-line forum for people involved in observer programs around the globe to interact with one another. The APO wishes to expand it's scope outside the North Pacific and North West region of USA fisheries. We wish to help raise the observer voice and empower observers who wish to become involved. The APO hopes to utilize ObserverNet and David's expertise to help organize and strengthen the observers' voice. Mark has showed his commitment to tackling large observer issues through his active involvement at the last International Observer Conference in Sydney, Australia. We are happy to have both Dave and Mark on our team.

Although both Dave and Mark are active observers in the North Pacific program, we are actively recruiting for and continue to communicate with potential future Board Members in several other regions of the USA. We should be able to announce more members from other regions in the next newsletter. Besides new and potential future Board Members, we have had several active observers offer their help... from writing an article for this newsletter to helping to revamp our website. We are quite encouraged by the great feedback we have received. Don't hesitate to contact us if you think you can help to organize and build upon our network of observers who wish to have a say in the larger scope of fisheries management and conservation.

- Letter from the APO Board

***Do you know anything about Websites and/or Non-profit laws? If so, please contact us ASAP- we need the most help in this department!**

NATIONAL AND GLOBAL SCOPE:

OBSERVER WORKING GROUPS FOLLOW-UP

Keith Davis; Observer/ Mail Buoy Editor; USA

At the most recent International Observer Conference in Sydney, Australia, this last November, many interesting issues facing observer programs throughout the world were raised. The conferences have always been a great opportunity for observers and managers from all over the world to meet and share ideas... and this conference was no exception.



The final day, in the final discussion, it was suggested by several observers and fisheries management personnel alike that we follow up on these discussions with the creation of International Working Groups set to tackle some of these issues (<http://www.fisheriesobserverconference.com>). In the meanwhile, the National Observer Program (NOP) and the Association for Professional Observers (APO) have both respectively had some personnel changes and restructuring. As an indirect result, this project has yet to be started.

The ability of Fisheries Management Agencies to successfully manage their respective fisheries is predicated upon the collection of the highest quality of scientific data. The APO believes that the maintenance of these standards of high data quality must begin at the ground (observer) level before managers further removed from the data collection process interpret, utilize, and develop policy based upon the data. The APO would like to help coordinate the Observer contingent of the International Conference Working Group (coordinated by the NOP), tasked at researching the present issues that face numerous observer programs throughout the world.

The Observer Working Groups (OWG) will be expected to discuss, research, and report on possible solutions to the group's particular topic. The APO have come up with a list of suggested working group topics (following) that we consider to be issues facing many observer programs (several of which were brought up at the Conference in Sydney), but we are completely open to other suggested pressing topics. Many topics may naturally overlap, but we think it imperative for each working group to focus on tackling specific issues so that the research and reports tasked to each OWG are more organized and concise.

The APO considers ObserverNet to be the most appropriate medium for the Observer Working Groups to discuss and organize their arguments. David Wagenheim will help us by creating password protected areas for the groups to meet and discuss. The hope is to have a limited, organized, group of observers discuss, research, and develop arguments and solutions on their respective topics before reporting to the rest of us and

opening the topic to public discussions. Since this will undoubtedly be an on-going process, the Observer Working Groups will periodically generate updates that will first be published in the Mail Buoy newsletter and then open to further discussion on ObserverNet (Public Forums), following the publication. A report should be generated by each group by Spring 2007. Subsequently, an OWG task leader will compile all generated reports into a final report to present to the International Conference Working Group and to essentially represent the observer contingent to the this group at the next International Observer Conference in Victoria, B.C., Canada, May 2007.

The APO's suggested Observer **Working Group topics** are:

1. **Observer Safety-**

- Observer training and instructor, Alaska Marine Safety Education Association (**AMSEA**) training.
- Coast Guard Safety Decal- Does it work to ensure Observer safety?
- Safety drills- Are they reliable? Are they even preformed? Etc.
- Do observers feel they can realistically refuse an "unsafe" vessel.
- Wheel Watches- Are they always preformed? What can observer programs do to ensure they do?
- What is the Coast Guard's responsibility to Observer safety? What do we want them to enforce more of?
- What is the governing agency's support system for Observers?
- Are observer providers' always looking out for Observers' best interest when it comes to safety?

2. **Observer Retention-**

- What defines "retention" and what defines an "experienced observer?"
- What is/should be the observer providers' and governing agencies' responsibility in retaining experienced observers?
- During Contractor change over- Who is responsible?

3. **Observer Program Standardization-**

- Eligibility standards- Hiring/Firing, educational/experience requirements.
- Data quality control variance (debriefing).
- Data forms, database, and species code compatibility from one fishery to the next. Are translator databases the best fix?
- Regional Management vs. National Management- what are the varying issues?

4. **Observer Career Track-**

- Do observers wish to observe as a career- could they?
- Benefit and retirement package desires and reality.
- Those who would like to move up into higher levels of Fisheries management- what would make that track easier and more encouraging?

5. Observer Mobility and Communication-

- Does/should observer experience in one fishery/region equal observer experience in another fishery/region?
- What would make it easier for observers to work in several fisheries/regions?
- Would observer program standardization help with this?
- Observer Exchange: is it a reality and what can we gain from it if it is?
- Observer Forums and other modes of communication- suggestions for improving these systems.

6. Conflict of Interest (observers, contractors, Industry, unions, and Governing Agencies)-

- Observer/Union/Contractor relationships and contracts.
- Contractor/Industry relationships and contracts.
- Industry/Observer relationships.
- “Whistleblower” retaliation.

7. Observer Program Advocacy, Labor, and Fisheries Conservation groups-

- Labor Unions- their need, role, and reliability.
- Other Observer program advocacy groups- their need, role, and reliability.
- Fisheries conservation groups- their need and role.

The APO and ObserverNet wish to solicit observers to reply to either ObserverNet or the APO with the topics they desire to discuss (Please, limit yourself to three topics you feel the most strongly about). OWG members may be added and removed as their desire arises and as the need of the group dictates. The APO will assign a Task Leader for each group (one individual can be a task leader for only one group). The Task Leader will be responsible for: coordinating the research, organizing and moderating discussions and meetings, and producing updates and a final report for each respective Observer Working Group. The Task Leaders will be carefully selected based upon experience, knowledge, and perceived dedication to the task. The APO will act as an overseer and will provide resources, contacts, and research leads as needed. This will be an on-going project and some topics may need more research and discussion than others. Therefore, there are no initial deadlines assigned to the reports, although we will continually keep an eye on the progression of things and will ideally have reports to present with the International Conference Working Group at the next Observer Conference, Summer 2007. The APO believes that observers could/should play a more active role in promoting and maintaining sound fisheries management. We believe the Observer Working Groups will help project the Observers’ voice in the goal of collecting and preserving high standards of scientific data. Please, help give Observers a clear organized voice in fisheries management- tell us how you can help.

REGIONAL UPDATES:

****Observers, please submit descriptions/observer stories from any observer program that you believe to be under-represented or not represented at all.*

The Pacific Islands (USA):

WE'RE MOVING INTO SAMOA

Joe Arceneaux; Training Coordinator; NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office

Commercial Fishing and America Samoa

The port of Pago Pago (pronounced Pah-ngo Pah-ngo) on the island of Tutuila, American Samoa, is a major fishing port for the US and the region as a whole. Currently, there are two canneries operating there; Cannery of Samoa (Chicken of the Sea) and Samoa Packing (Star-Kist). Many tuna fishing vessels from several countries off-load to these canneries- most are purse seiners and pelagic longliners. Freezer boats, loaded with tuna from high seas longliners also deliver to the canneries. The purse seiners primarily target Skipjack (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) & Yellowfin (*Thunnus albacares*) tunas. The longliners in the region target Albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*) tuna for delivery to the canneries.

The pelagic longline fleet based in American Samoa is managed by NMFS in two main sectors; vessels greater than 40' and vessels less than 40'. The smaller vessels (<40') are primarily aluminum catamarans called *alia*. A typical *alia* is 30' long and has a partially enclosed cabin and a tarp covering much of the remaining deck. They are powered by 40-50hp outboard motors. They fish 10-12nmi of pelagic longline gear on a hand cranked mainline reel, and usually operate within 50nmi of the island- trips typically last 1-2 days. Due to a lack of space and other limiting factors, observers will not be deployed on these vessels at this time. The larger longline vessels (>40') typically range in size from 60' to well over 100'. These vessels may fish 50-60nmi of longline, and make trips lasting over 1 month. Some of these boats freeze their catch, allowing longer trips. There are approximately 24 of these larger longline vessels active in the territory.

The American Samoan Observer Program

The main purpose of the National Marine Fisheries Service/Pacific Islands Regional Office (NMFS/**PIRO**) America Samoa (AS) longline observer program is to provide quantitative data on protected species (sea turtle, sea bird, and marine mammal species) interactions in the fishery. Other secondary objectives are to provide fishery managers & scientists with information on species composition and catch/discard rates. Once the office and storage spaces are completed, we will also be able to provide support to other regional and national observer programs operating in the **South Pacific and Micronesia**.

A complicating factor is the location of the place. Supporting an observer program from 2,400 miles away, can present some logistical problems. Communications and data links can be greatly affected by weather or lack of replacement parts on hand. We are factoring these issues in the development so the program has an adequate capability to run self-sufficient. The local support infrastructure for the AS observer program is being “built” from scratch. Presently, the observer program has housing for the staff personnel and space for observers, in transit or between vessels. The program in AS will consist of one debriefer, a port agent, and 4-5 observers. We are planning to fly a few observers down to AS to start things off in early 2006. Once the program is up and running, we may have an Observer training down there for locally identified observer trainees. The debriefing process will take approximately 2-3 days. Both trainings and debriefings will be of similar content and length as those found in the Hawaii program.

PIRO has other staff & programs already operating in the territory. They are the US [South Pacific Tuna Treaty Monitoring Program](#) and agents from the NMFS Office of Law Enforcement. The guys in the Tuna Treaty monitoring program are essentially plant observers, working at the canneries. They are managed by the PIRO Office of International Fisheries. As can be expected, the responses from the industry span the gamut, from for to against. The America Samoa Government (ASG) support & assistance for the project has been helpful. In fact, the ASG’s Department of Marine & Wildlife Resources had been desirous of an observer program for 3 years before the planning & development stages began.

****Excerpts from a posting by Joe Arceneaux on ObserverNet.org, October 3rd, 2005. Joe served as a Fisheries Observer for several years and has since moved into the NMFS office.*

THE US MAY BECOME A MEMBER OF THE WCPFC

Keith Davis; Observer/ Mail Buoy Editor; USA

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) plans to hold it’s second regular session of the Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean the week of 12-16 December, 2005 in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). According to the Federal Register (vol. 70, no. 201) on the PIRO website (<http://swr.nmfs.noaa.gov/pir/>), the US will participate in this upcoming session as a “Cooperating Non-Member.”

On November 17 the U.S. Senate approved the WCPF Convention by unanimous vote and provided its advice and consent to U.S. ratification. This is a big procedural step in the process of our becoming members. The last significant step is for our Congress to pass implementing legislation. This process is well underway and should allow the United States to become a member during the first half of the forthcoming year.

Major issues for the upcoming second session of the WCPFC relate to the scope and nature of a regional observer program, bycatch issues (turtles, sharks, seabirds), and conservation and management measures for Yellowfin (*Thunnus albacares*) and Bigeye (*Thunnus obesus*) tunas. Two subsidiary bodies operate under the WCPF Convention: Scientific Committee (SC) and Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC). The SC held its first meeting in August 2005 and the TCC will convene for the first time during the week prior to the WCPFC session in December 2005.

The US National Marine Fisheries Service is currently preparing for potential regulatory changes that will be necessary if the US Congress passes implementing legislation in the future. The national Marine Fisheries Service is currently seeking public input. Please, contact Rhea Moss ((808) 944-2153; pir.wcpfc@noaa.gov) for further information and/or to comment.

The East Coast (USA):

AN OBSERVER SUCCESS STORY

Danny Lawson; Observer; the East Coast (USA)

As a whole, Observers comprise one of the most integral parts of the fishery management system, and I applaud those who have worked to convince others that the interest and concerns of observers are of vital importance to the overall soundness of well managed fisheries. We all share a common interest in maintaining and promoting healthy fisheries through the collection of accurate information in a safe and credible manner.

An important part of the entire observer community sticking together is to inform everyone about what is currently happening in the different programs, and looking at where the potential for future opportunities may lie. As someone who has had the chance to work in many different fisheries, all throughout US waters and beyond, I believe there is great value from the individual observer's point of view in being knowledgeable and experienced with a diversity of fisheries. From a professional standpoint, this helps to prevent burnout and works to establish observing as more of a career oriented job instead of a quick stop along the way to somewhere else.

I understand that individual programs like to keep "their people" around as a way to ensure the highest data integrity possible, but a large base of experienced people circulating throughout different programs instead of relatively high turnovers of inexperienced observers is more desirable in the long term. In addition, I have found that having that variety of experiences makes you more marketable when you are looking to move on to other jobs, or competing for spots in graduate school. I was very fortunate over the years that the timing of things allowed me to get involved with different programs. I thought I would pass along some of my experience to give others an idea of what is going on, particularly on the East coast... where I think more is happening than most people realize.

Like many others observers, my experience started in Alaska (<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov>), and over my two years in Alaska I worked five contracts. The training and experience there certainly laid the groundwork for me to become a successful Observer in other programs. During my time in Alaska, I also began to seek out opportunities along the East coast. Then, I began splitting my time between working in Alaska and working on Sea Scallop (*Plactopecten magellanicus*) boats fishing in closed areas off of New England (<http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov>). That led to contact with people at Woods Hole and the chance to work on the initial Monkfish (*Lophius spp.*) survey along the Northeast coast and a trip on one of the big NOAA boats doing an experimental acoustic survey for herring and mackerel. These are the kinds of opportunities that one can never hang one's hat on, but they do seem to pop up just by being around and available.

The bulk of my work during the last four years has been with the Pelagic Longline Program based out of the SEFSC in Miami (<http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov>). This had me traveling to ports from New England, all the way around to the Gulf Coast of Texas, including Puerto Rico. I really enjoyed that aspect of getting to know so many different people and places. At the same time I started with this program, a significant cooperative experimental fishery on the Grand Banks of the coast of Newfoundland began. The area had just been closed as a result of sea turtle bycatch, primarily **Leatherback** (*Dermochelys coriacea*) and **Loggerhead** (*Caretta caretta*) sea turtles. The goal of this program was to develop new ways to reduce sea turtle bycatch and to minimize the impact on turtles being caught. As the observer, we were tasked with coordinating and monitoring the fishing activity through an experimental protocol, and collecting the resulting data. In addition, we began attaching **satellite tags** to try and track the behavior of these turtles, post release. Over the course of three years, we tried a variety of methods and evaluated different tools for dehooking and line removal.

Not that everything we did worked perfectly, but now (as a result of our work) the area is open for further fishing. And, subsequently other observer programs (i.e. the Pacific Islands Regional Observer Program, PIROP, <http://swr.nmfs.noaa.gov/pir/>) have begun to implement some of the sea turtle dehooking techniques and gear modifications that we have learned to work here on the East Coast. This kind of cooperative research is a great way to approach problems, and Observers who participate in experimental projects such as these, should be given due **credit** for working as scientists. In fact, this year a new project was initiated throughout the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico that involves studying aspects of more precisely when and where different pelagic animals are being caught using varying hook types and baiting techniques. Once again, Observers are at the forefront of making sure the data is worth the money being spent by the government to conduct research.

These special research projects and the regular coverage of the Longline fishery have provided fairly steady work for Observers. Nevertheless, there have still been some periods of downtime. Many of us are able to fill in with other observer related activities. For instance, I spent one month in Massachusetts and Maine working on a wintertime Atlantic Cod (*Gadus morhua*) survey designed to demonstrate that the net was open and on the bottom fishing correctly, via a Net-Minder system. The system communicates data regarding door spread and headrope height back to the boat. Then, I had the opportunity to

spend six weeks last summer working on another cooperative experimental fishery involving pound nets in the Chesapeake Bay. There, we made modifications to the leader gear with the hopes of reducing sea turtle bycatch, entanglement, and mortality levels. In addition, we **unexpectedly** found successful results in relation to target species selectivity. Later, I spent a month aboard a tug boat in New York Harbor as a Dredge Inspector for the Army Corps of Engineers monitoring dredge material placement and endangered species interactions. Once you establish yourself as a reliable field biologist, people will come looking for you. I for one have received entirely unsolicited calls for: marine mammal survey techs, dredge inspector jobs, and sea turtle projects of which I have been unable to commit to because of lack of time. It's a comforting feeling to know that work should be there for you tomorrow even if it isn't there today.



I know of a few other Observer programs that appear to be well established and worth looking into. For instance: The Northeast Groundfish (<http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov>) program has expanded all the way down the Mid-Atlantic and may provide solid work for Observers looking to relocate to the East. There are also seasonal shark longlining and gillnet fisheries in the Southeast that need coverage. And, in the Gulf of Mexico, there is also a voluntary observer program to watch for the bycatch and the capabilities of different bycatch-reduction devices used in the shrimp trawl fishery (<http://galveston.ssp.nmfs.gov>). NMFS is presently looking into changing this observer program from voluntary to mandatory coverage (Contact: Elizabeth Scott-Denton, (409) 766-3451). Who knows what to expect after what has just transpired with the catastrophic storm damage in the Southeastern Region of the United States? I would anticipate some significant research into the **impact and recovery** of species and fishers in that area. I do know some observers from around the New Orleans area and I have worked with some fisherman down from the bayou- let us please send some pleasant thoughts down their way.

I think the immediate and long term future for observer work on the East Coast is very promising. Funding for cooperative research projects appears likely, and some of the fisheries that were in trouble in the past, may be on the rebound. I only speak from my experience, but the observer providers I have worked with here on the East Coast have treated me quite well. There have been plenty of tough trips to say the least, and my travel schedule has been ridiculous at times. But, overall, it's all been worth it! This last August, I entered Graduate School in Road Island to further my research and education in Fisheries Management and believe my observer experience to be an essential step to my present fortune.

I wish everyone out there bearing the elements at sea the best of luck, and smooth sailing! I'd like to thank the APO and my old friend Keith Davis in particular for reaching out to the observer community throughout the country and other groups around the world.

The North Pacific (USA):

THE SEAFARERS UNION HISTORY AND UPDATES

Tracey Mayhew; Previous Observer/ Seafarers Union Representative; USA

Those of you that have been observing for years know the changes we have seen over the past decade in the North Pacific; from the formation of the Association for Professional Observers (APO), to finally receiving Union representation, to being represented in the Council process, to having a pension plan. All of these things were achieved through the grassroots efforts of Fisheries Observers and it all started with the formation of the APO. We can all be proud of the achievements made in the past decade.

The Alaska Fisheries Division of the United Industrial Workers (UIW) began as the Alaska Fishermen's Union (AFU) in 1902 and originally represented cannery workers up and down the West Coast. Over the years, the AFU has represented: fishermen, cannery workers, tender crews, beach crews and culinary workers at shore-side processing plants (altogether, representing as many as 55,000 members). In 1995, the AFU became a division of the UIW and its parent union, the Seafarers International Union of North America (SIU). The Seafarers International Union is the largest maritime union in the United States, and its affiliates together represent 80,000 members. The UIW and SIU support the Alaska Fisheries Division with legal counsel, affiliated insurance plans, and pension plans. In 1997, Fisheries Observers in the North Pacific organized to receive much-needed union representation.

In the first year of unionizing, North Pacific Fisheries Observers saw a 35% increase in wages. As of January 2006, there will have been a 71.6% increase in wages, which is truly an incredible number. Also with the 2005 contracts there is a Pension Plan for observers. I believe this to be a perfect plan for observers. The employer makes contributions (pre-tax) into an account for you based on a negotiated percent of the wages. You can also make contributions into your own account (post-tax). If you leave the industry you can continue to make your own contributions into the plan, roll it over into another account or even cash it out, although there are tax implications for cashing out before retirement. Those of you working for companies that participate in the pension plan should have received a plan booklet. If not, feel free to contact the Union Hall and one will be sent to you (tmayhew@seafarers.org).

The UIW held its 12th Quadrennial Convention on August 30-31, 2005 in Piney Point, Maryland. This was a meeting organized to review the progress of the previous four years and to set the goals for the next four years. Paul Wilkins, a North Pacific Groundfish Fisheries Observer since 1998 who has been fairly active with the APO and the union in regards to observer issues for the last several years, attended as the delegate from Alaska. I would like to thank Paul for attending- everyone enjoyed talking with him and learning more about Fisheries Observers and the vital role they play in our nation's fisheries.

Following, is a first-hand account from Paul Wilkins regarding his thoughts of the Convention:

“Last August, I was pleased to be invited by my union representative, Tracey Mayhew, to go to the United Industrial Workers (UIW) Quadrennial Convention. Having never been to such a large union meeting before, I didn’t know what to expect. At the very least, it would be a way for me to see the inner workings of the union, and maybe meet a few people. What I got out of it was so much more.

“For the convention, I was to be a non-voting fraternal delegate, one of 11 delegates from the West Coast and North Pacific regions. The voting delegates are “rank and file” members elected by the union membership, one for every 300 members. The convention was held at the Paul Hall Center, the Seafarers International Union affiliated training facility. After having spent the entire summer on Kodiak, it was actually refreshing to experience some hot and humid East Coast weather. I arrived at the hotel-style dorms just in time for dinner, and was introduced by Tracey to several prominent people involved in the union, including Tommy O (Vice President of the Midwest Region), and John Spadaro (the National Director). It had been a long day of flights from Anchorage, so I decided to call it a night. The meeting was to begin early the next morning and I wanted to feel refreshed for this extraordinary opportunity.

“I woke early the next morning for breakfast and went to the auditorium to find a seat. Outside the auditorium, there was a table set up with literature about the Union Plus Program- a group of benefits available to all UIW members, including car rental, internet access and health care discounts. The day began with opening remarks by the UIW president Michael Sacco, reports were then given by the regional vice presidents and various committees; and guest speakers like Elaine Chao (the U.S. Secretary of Labor) rounded out the presentations.

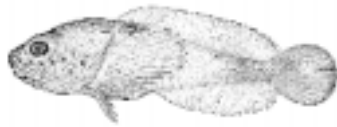
“It was not all speeches and business though. Later that afternoon, we were given a scenic trip aboard a former Chesapeake Bay oystering skipjack. The captain was very enthusiastic- being a former commercial oyster fisherman, he dropped the dredge for a bit to give us a nice mid-afternoon snack of fresh oysters on the half shell... the best I’ve ever had. And, we let out the sails for a bit, which was a real treat for me. The Convention continued into the next day when more presentations and voting were performed.

“Looking back on the meeting, I had such a good time. I met quite a few great people in the Union from the Union chiefs, to the factory workers from Texas, to the people that run the locks on the Panama Canal. I was very impressed with the organization that goes to bat for us. The diversity of jobs, backgrounds and races were great to witness. From my understanding, the managers of the UIW have a good grasp of who Fisheries Observers are, for they all began as working members of the union, just like us. I look forward to the next eight successful years of the UIW and the Seafarers International Union (SIU).”

We observers have much to be proud of, but we have numerous challenges ahead. Not the least of which is the action being taken by the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council to change the current Service Delivery Model. While these changes have the potential to be beneficial for observers, industry and the sustainability of the fisheries (and our jobs); it is important to be represented in this process. The North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc>) is currently scheduled to take initial action at its February meeting with final action slated for April. The Observer Advisory Committee will meet in Seattle on January 30th and 31st to discuss the issue and make recommendations for the Council's February meeting. As a member of the Observer Advisory Committee, I (Tracey) will be attending these meetings. I encourage anyone in Seattle at that time to attend. I hope to see you there.

NATURE NOTES AND QUOTES:

AN ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION



“One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds. Much of the damage inflicted on land is quite invisible to laymen. An ecologist must either harden his shell and make believe that the consequences of science are none of his business, or he must be the doctor who sees the marks of death in a community that believes itself well and does not want to be told otherwise.”

“The government tells us we need flood control and comes to straighten the creek in our pasture. The engineer on the job tells us the creek is now able to carry off more flood water, but in the process we lost our old willows where the cows switched flies in the noon shade, and where the owl hooted on a winter night. We lost the little marshy spot where our fringed gentians bloomed.”

“Some engineers are beginning to have a feeling in their bones that the meanderings of a creek not only improve the landscape but are a necessary part of the hydrologic functioning. The ecologist sees clearly that for similar reasons we can get along with less channel improvement on Round River.”

***Excerpts from [*Round River*](#) ([Oxford University Press](#), New York, 1993, pg. 165),

By Aldo Leopold

NEWS FROM THE BOARD:

TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS AND A BOARD MEETING SCEDUALED FOR NEXT MONTH

The APO has recently enlisted two great new APO Board members, but we are ideally looking to recruit a Board member for each of the national Fisheries Management Regions not currently represented and one international representative for each region of each country who wishes to join us. We have yet to receive any nominations for potential APO officers to be elected. Nominations must be in by Dec. 16th, by our annual APO Board Meeting. Nominee names will be announced following the Board meeting on ObserverNet.org and elections will held during the third week of January.

We are holding our annual meeting for the APO Board members in Eugene, Oregon on 16 December 2005 from 1200 to 1600. Following this meeting, we will open it up for a general APO meeting, which is open to anyone and certainly has the potential to carry over to a more entertaining local venue than Liz's living room. If you plan on attending the general APO meeting, just call Liz Mitchell for directions at 541/344-5503 or e-mail her at <emitch@efn.org>.

New Board Member Introductions

David Wagenheim: Not only has David been an observer now for over six years, he has been actively building communication among observers from around the world for the last three years, with ObserverNet.org (an on-line community of observers David has helped create and continues to build upon). David had the opportunity to present ObserverNet.org internationally at the last Observer Conference in Sydney, Australia. His presentation was at the forefront of one of the pressing themes at the conference, heightening communication among observer programs in order to share each others' pitfalls and successes. David hopes to help the APO tackle observer program issues, by coordinating communication efforts for the APO on ObserverNet.org, and essentially hopes to help observers be heard.

Mark Wormington: Since the summer of 1990 Mark has worked ten calendar years in the NPGOP- he completed 20 cruises and has been deployed on approximately 40 vessels and at 3 shore-side plants in the North Pacific. Mark has also spent eight months working in the West Coast Observer Program out of Port Orford, Oregon where he worked with local fishers and sustainability activists attempting to create a healthier stakeholder relationship to a management regime newly imposed on a declared disaster fishery. Mark believes that natural resource policy is evolving for the better, but that "There is too much wrangling over how we carve up a shrinking pie, and too little attention to securing its ingredients." Mark hopes to help the APO exert leadership with creating greater accountability for ocean resource policy-makers and those who seek to influence them.

WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU!

You can actively participate in the APO by: e-mailing us with any problems, concerns, or ideas; by writing articles or letters to the editor for the Mail Buoy; by alerting us of any job announcements or upcoming research; by becoming involved in the on-line working groups, or by occupying one or several of these suggested APO positions. Please, e-mail us at: apo_obs@hotmail.com (APO), emitch@efn.org (Liz Mitchell); lblegend@yahoo.com (Keith Davis), davewagenheim@hotmail.com (David Wagenheim), or siberio@hotmail.com (Mark Wormington). You should expect an answer within 3 weeks if we're all at sea or within a day or two if one of us is in between boats.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

*** None currently- Please submit Letters by e-mail with the phrase "letter to the Editor" in the subject heading, to be clear of the intent of the message.

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AMSEA (Marine Safety Instruction)	www.amsea.org
NOAA jobs	www.jobs.doc.gov
International Observer Conferences	www.fisheriesobserverconference.com

*** **NEW APO HATS, T-SHIRTS, AND PATCHES** will be available soon.

*** *Mail Buoy submissions for the next newsletter are due by the end of JANURARYt 2005.*

The APO wishes you and yours a:
Happy Holidays and Happy New Year