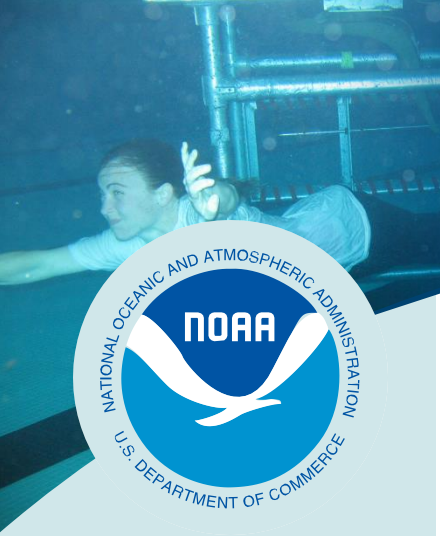

Interested in Becoming an Observer?

Northeast Fisheries Observers deploy on commercial fishing vessels in ports from Maine to North Carolina. Trips can range over a variety of fisheries and gear types and typically last one to fifteen days at sea. Before each trip, observers complete a vessel safety check to ensure that the vessels have the required safety gear. During a fishing trip, observers collect economic information, detailed gear configuration, kept and discarded catch weights, biological samples (e.g. lengths, otoliths and scale samples), and document sightings and interactions with protected species (marine mammals, sea birds, turtles, sturgeon).

Observer programs are a vital component of the fishery management process because they are one of the best ways to gather information on the status of marine resources.

Observers in training from left: Clam dredge gear, New Bedford; Trawl training trip; Cold water survival skills
Photo Credit: NOAA, Northeast Fishery Observer Program

Expected Qualifications

- Bachelors degree in the natural sciences
- A minimum of one course in math and statistics
- Current CPR/First Aid certification

Training

- Selected candidates will be sent to training in East Falmouth, Massachusetts
- Trainings occur throughout the year and range from 11-15 days in length
- Trainees are expected to pass written and practical exams
- Trainees deploy on a fishing vessel during training to gain hands on experience before being sent into the field
- Topics covered in trainings include:
  - Safety and survival training
  - Fish identification (shown in photo to left)
  - Gear type identification/characteristics
  - Methods for estimated catch weights
  - Maintenance of sampling equipment
  - Electronic data submission
  - Collection of biological samples

What is observer data used for?

The information collected by observers is used for stock assessments, supports fishery management plans, bycatch reduction strategies, protected species plans and regulations.

NOAA, NEFOP

For more information or questions regarding observer programs in the Northeast, visit: www.nefsc.noaa.gov/fsb

Fisheries observers have proven to be a valuable source of information. Data acquired by our programs have been important in identifying the species and size selectivity of marine fisheries in the Northeast, reducing bycatch of protected species and improving biological and economic assessments of the region's fisheries.

How can you get involved?

There are three different observer programs in the Northeast: Northeast Fishery Observer Program (NEFOP), At-Sea Monitoring (ASM), and Industry Funded Scallop (IFS)

- **NEFOP Observers:** Collect catch, gear and biological data over a range of commercial fisheries (gear types) from Maine to North Carolina. Some gear types covered include: gillnet, bottom trawl, midwater trawl, purse sein, clam dredge, lobster & fish pot, longline and more.
- **At-Sea Monitors:** Collect catch, basic gear and biological data on commercial ground fish vessels that are part of sectors in the Northeast. ASMs observe on gillnet, bottom trawl and longline gear types.
- **IFS Observers:** Collect catch, gear and biological data on Atlantic sea scallop dredge and scallop trawl vessels in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic.

Photos: NOAA, Northeast Fisheries Observer Program

Observers are hired by approved observer service provider companies that hold contracts with NOAA Fisheries. For employment opportunities please contact any of the companies listed below.

Service Provider	NEFOP	ASM	IFS
AIS Inc.		X	X
East West Technical Services		X	X
Fathom Research LLC		X	X
MRAG Americas	X	X	
Atlantic Catch Data		X	

Service Provider Contact Information		
AIS Inc.	aisobservers.com	508-990-9054
East West Technical Services	ewts.com	860-910-4957
Fathom Research LLC	fathomresearchllc.com	508-990-0997
MRAG Americas	mragamericas.com	978-768-3880
Atlantic Catch Data	Atlanticcatchdata.ca	902-749-5107

For more info visit www.nefsc.noaa.gov/fsb

U.S. Department of Commerce | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration | National Marine Fisheries Service
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