

## Northwest's region description of regional issues regarding data confidentiality and data suppression

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### Introduction:

As the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act in 2006 included provisions for confidentiality of data, specifically observer data, revision of regulations and NAO 216-100 are necessary. In the redrafting of the appropriate regulations and NAO 216-100, the Northwest has three major areas of concern regarding data confidentiality and data suppression:

- 1) Staff resources given/needed to maintain data confidentiality.  
Currently, confidential data is to be maintained and tracked by staff. NAO 216-100 outlines requirements, standards and practices in maintaining confidential data. In the redraft of NAO 216-100, no additional, inappropriate requirements should be added.
  
- 2) Level of aggregation of observer data released publicly.  
Until the reauthorization, the regions varied in their interpretation of observer data confidentiality. While some programs released only summarized data (using the 'rule of three'), other programs released haul specific data after removing the vessel identifier. Currently, the release of observer data has varied from program depending on regionally-specific view of what data is confidential. While this may work for each specific region, it is an inconsistent Agency response for a data request for all observer data nation-wide. Agreement is needed on a minimal level of aggregation that maintains data confidentiality under the reauthorization yet still continues to meet the needs of regional stock assessments and management use of observer data.