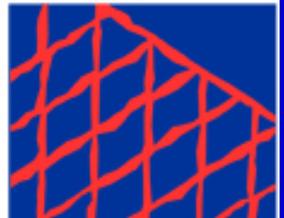
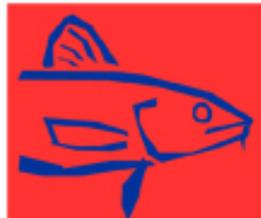
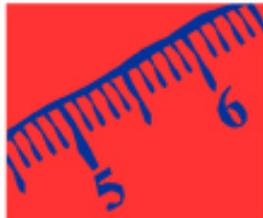


Observer Professionalism Working Group

5th IFOC Report

5th INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES OBSERVER CONFERENCE



Victoria, British Columbia, Canada ■ May 15–18, 2007

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Executive Summary

Fisheries-dependent information is critical for the responsible management and conservation of living marine resources, and many worldwide marine resource management regimes utilize fisheries observers for the collection of this data. A *fisheries observer* is an independent specialist who serves on board commercial fishing vessels, plants and other platforms, and is employed by a fisheries observer programme, either directly by a government agency or by a 3rd party contractor. Observers are usually the only independent data collection source for some types of at-sea information, such as bycatch, catch composition, and gear configuration data. A fisheries observer programme is responsible for providing the training and support necessary for deploying observers on board fishing vessels in order to collect the fisheries-dependent information essential to achieving the management objectives of the programme.

The integrity of a fisheries observer is a function of the conduct, morale, and performance of its employees. Moreover, the stature and stability of a programme has direct bearing on the quality of its data products and on the level of confidence that scientists, managers, and policy makers are able to ascribe to the use of this data.

The Observer Professionalism Working Group (OPWG) was established in order to formally assemble and assess the working knowledge of fisheries observer employment (professionalism) practices on an international basis. The Group works within the structure of the International Fisheries Observer Conference (IFOC) series.

The primary focus of the OPWG is to investigate and categorize the international working knowledge of observer employment practices in order to outline principles that may foster the professional development of fisheries observers; whilst working to ensure and strengthen the scientific and technical integrity of the fisheries observer profession and observer programmes. The Group designed and implemented a survey to assist in the information gathering and analytical process. The actions of the Group in the run up to the 5th IFOC, during the conference itself and thereafter, are as follows:

- ❖ **June 2006:** OPWG Established by the IFOC
- ❖ **October 2006:** OPWG members are selected
- ❖ **November – December 2006:** 5th IFOC objectives identified
- ❖ **January 2007:** OPWG Survey created and disbursed
- ❖ **April 2007:** Survey analysis begins
- ❖ **May 2007:** Preliminary survey findings reported, discussions coordinated, and future objectives charted at the 5th IFOC
- ❖ **October 2007:** Survey closed as the 5th IFOC proceedings are published
- ❖ **June 2008:** OPWG 5th IFOC report completed

The goals of the survey were to: (1) begin to better define employment terminology as pertains to the observer profession; (2) gather together the various issues and initiatives that have bearing on the professional development of observers in a manner in which they might be sorted into three categories of observer employment practices (Wages and Benefits, Support and Opportunities, and Employment Standards) and prioritized based upon what works well and what is desired among each category, and (3) initiate discussions regarding some of the larger observer professionalism issues in order to help provide guidance for the Group's future investigations.

The OPWG survey design was derived from past IFOC proceedings, beginning with the 2000 IFOC and emphasizing the “Observer Bill of Rights” (OBR) document formulated at the conference.

Survey responses were sought from fishery observer stakeholder groups from the across the spectrum of fisheries observer programmes in operation worldwide.

Although respondents could remain anonymous if they wished, they were asked to at least identify their current involvement in the fisheries observer profession. Many respondents provided us with much more detailed profile descriptions.

The survey presented 42 multi-choice questions, where respondents were asked to indicate how they felt regarding each question in accordance with six pre-defined criteria statements (A – *Works Well*, B – *Desire*, C – *Other / No Comment*, D – *Not Applicable*, E – *No Desire For* and E – *Doesn't Work Well*) on the basis of their own experience with fisheries observer programmes.

There were also six ‘short answer’ questions and one ‘additional comments’ field where respondents were asked to elaborate their views on various elements of the profession. The survey is presented in Annex VII to this report.

- ❖ 45 responses were received, originating from 12 different countries.
- ❖ Respondents represented programmes covering a wide geographical area.
- ❖ 61% of responses were submitted by observers, 30% from agency staff members (the majority of whom were also former observers), 7% from data analyst / end users and 2% from a perspective other than these options.

In order to undertake the analysis of the survey responses, the Group subdivided into three committees to examine appropriate elements of the responses. These committees are:

Wages and Benefits Committee (Remuneration policies, reimbursable items, and plans set to promote the health and general welfare of observers).

Support and Opportunities Committee (Conflict resolution instruction, grievances procedures, counselling options, recognition where due, inclusion in professional fora, and assistance for advancing themselves among careers in fisheries management).

Employment Standards Committee (National training standards, codes of conduct, eligibility and competency statutes, data collection standards, employee retention goals, and rules concerning the observer/ fisher working relationships).

The survey results were analyzed in detail by the members of the three respective committees, by utilizing the relative responses to the survey on the basis of the six criteria to the multi-choice questions. The short answer and additional comments questions were also closely examined to obtain further information about the profession. Section 3 of this report prides full details of the analysis undertaken. Percentage responses were only mentioned in the analysis where appropriate. Hence, small percentages are not always specifically mentioned., though all percentages can be viewed in the OPWG Survey Analysis Tables listed in [ANNEX IX](#).

It was noticed that, in terms of priority estimated by positive responses, Wages and Benefits ranked highest, followed by Support and Opportunities, with Employment Standards apparently having either the lowest priority or the highest ambiguity or lack of definition.

The points of views of staff members and observers also differed for the same questions in some cases, as might be expected.

In terms of results, it is stressed that the OPWG does not consider that 45 responses can be taken as statistically representative of the profession. That said however, the analysis revealed some consistent views which has enabled the researchers to draw up a list of recommendations. [Annex I](#) presents a list of 30 recommendations for continued work by the OPWG and for implementation at the programme level. For the OPWG recommendations, some are for immediate follow-up for the 2009 conference, and others are longer term objectives for implementation when the group begins to work up international standards for the profession.

Three other important initiatives to aid the development of the profession will commence or are ongoing:

- *Networking*: using online resources to connect observers worldwide;
- *Central Body*: the creation of a global body with online identity which will coordinate the development of the profession, international standards, exchange programmes and establish and maintain a global 'pool' of observers which will be available for use in any participating programme;
- *Observer Book Project*: this project has begun and will be publicized at the 2009 conference.

Social Equity: In the course of OPWG discussions, it became apparent that there were social equity issues (i.e. gender) with respect to the work of the fisheries observer which needed to be considered. A staff member of the World Fisheries Trust (WFT) agreed to take on this task and designed a questionnaire to highlight the key issues (see [Annex VIII](#)). Analysis of the responses indicates that although women are becoming more active in the fisheries observer profession, there are still barriers to entry. Such barriers may be deliberate (vessel owners and captains declining to take female observers), cultural (social conditions, beliefs and superstitions) or technical (hygiene and generally unsuitable conditions onboard vessels). Whether agencies and governing bodies can or will address these issues remains to be seen.

1. Terms of Reference

1.1 Background

At-sea fisheries-dependent information is critical for the responsible management and conservation of living marine resources, and marine resource management regimes worldwide utilize observer programmes for coordinating the observers who collect the at-sea field data necessary for achieving programme-specific fisheries-dependent management objectives.

A variety of management objectives can drive an observer programme, however the term “Fisheries Observer Programme” is commonly used to describe any observer programme, and observers from any observer programme are commonly referred to as “Fisheries Observers”. Nevertheless, observer programmes can be categorized by three general types, and the duties tasked to observers in a particular type of programme reveal the scope of a programme’s main objectives. The three types¹ are:

1. *Scientific Observer Programme*

- a. **Objectives:** include stock (targeted and /or bycatch species) assessments and predictions of future fisheries exploitation of stocks
- b. **Observer Duties:** include collection of catch composition and environmental / ecological information, and biological sampling of catch

2. *Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Observer Programme*

- a. **Objectives:** include assessments of fishing and /or transshipment activities to ensure that fisheries management measures are followed
- b. **Observer Duties:** include verification of logbooks with fishing and /or transshipment activities and registering compliance with all regulations

3. *Fisheries Observer Programme*

- a. **Objectives:** include objectives found in both Scientific and MCS observer programmes
- b. **Observer Duties:** include observer duties found in both Scientific and MCS observer programmes

Note: Fisheries inspection programmes, conducted by officials with enforcement powers are not to be considered observer programmes. Though observers may be tasked to register compliance with fisheries regulations, it must be noted that observers do not have enforcement powers and are not to be considered enforcement agents.

For all programme types, observers are tasked with collecting vital fisheries management information, and in order for observers to acquire a thorough understanding of the fisheries they are required to monitor and to professionally fulfil their duties in an

¹ The observer programme types listed here are primarily derived from referencing the *Guidelines for developing an at-sea fisheries observer* (FAO, 2002) and *Guidelines of the IOTC Tuna Fisheries Observer Programme (TOP)* (Nishida, 2005) documents.

independent and often un-supervised manner, they require proper training and support. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations reports that “There is a direct relationship between the professionalism and morale of observers and the quality of the data they collect,²” and the integrity of an observer programme is directly linked to the professional ethics of its observers. The level of confidence and respect for an observer programme that fisheries scientists, managers, policy makers, or any of those who utilize observer data have, is dependent upon the ability to produce quality data outputs. Consequently, it is in the best interest of many of the stakeholders to attract, mould, and maintain a corps of highly knowledgeable and skilled observers.

The mechanisms required to accomplish this may be the responsibility of one, some, or all of the stakeholders with interests in a given fisheries observer programme - the agency administering the programme, the observer provider companies, observer unions and advocacy organizations, industry and the fishers, observer data end-users and fisheries policy makers, and of course the fisheries observers themselves. Since the beginning of the fisheries observer profession, individuals of various worldwide observer programmes and perspectives have undertaken a variety of initiatives to achieve their own observer professionalism goals. Nevertheless, many observer employment issues were not formerly discussed on an international level until the Canada / US Fisheries Observer Workshop, held in St. John’s Newfoundland in the year 2000.

Early on during that conference, the ***Observer Bill of Rights (OBR)*** document was formulated from discussions held at a substantial break-out session. The following day, the outlined initiatives (rights) in the OBR were presented to the conference delegation by two Canadian observers and two American observers (of which, two are present members of the OPWG), and the panel was moderated by Teresa Turk (the OPWG Steering Committee Liaison, SCL). Following the panel presentation, there was a lengthy question and answer session clarifying some of the presented items while outlining possible provisions that may help observer programmes accommodate these ‘rights’. Nevertheless, all OBR discussions were presented simply as suggestions.

For the following two IFOC meetings (New Orleans 2002 and Sydney 2004), several presentations were given that specifically dealt with additional observer professionalism issues. During the Closing Session of the 2004 Sydney conference, the Steering Committee recommended changing part of the future structure of the IFOC by synthesizing working groups that could dig deeper into some of the major reoccurring issues and produce some clear outcomes that build upon the conference proceedings.

1.2 Foundation

In May 2006, the IFOC Steering Committee initiated the three standing working groups - Observer Training, Observer Safety, and Observer Professionalism. These IFOC working

² FAO. 2002. Guidelines for developing an at-sea fisheries observer . FAO Fisheries Technical Paper. No. 414. Rome, FAO, 116p. This paper was prepared within the framework of FishCode in regards to the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF).

groups were established in order to formalize the international working knowledge of these important observer programme topics and to help build the mechanisms for providing outcomes.

The Observer Professionalism Working Group's SCL and Working Group Liaison worked closely over the next few months to draft the group's terms of references and to carefully select the OPWG members. Our goal with convening this group was to be expansive in our geographical representation, while creating a representation that is also broadened among interested stakeholders. We completed membership selections in October 2006. While many of the OPWG presently hold significantly higher roles within fisheries management schemes, 11 of 16 made their start as fisheries observers, with the group's observer experience reaching beyond the 100 year mark in total. Active observers, debriefers, trainers, observer programme managers, providers, fisheries managers, observer union representatives, a data analyst, a graduate studies student and a fisheries conservation group's representative are all part of the OPWG. The group's geographical representation spans out among five US regions, two Canadian Provinces, two countries of Africa, Japan, Australia, and the European Union.

SCL:		
Teresa Turk ³	NOP- Science and Tech./ International Affairs	Silver Springs, M.D., USA
WGL:		
Keith Davis	Fisheries Observer; APO	USA
Members:		
Rueben Beazley	Fisheries Observer; Union Representative	Newfoundland, Canada
Larry Beerkircher	Operations Manager	Southeast, USA
Dawn Golden	Trainer/ Debriefer	Pacific Islands, USA
Chris Heineken	Training Director/ Deployment Coordinator	South Africa, Africa
Elwin Kruger	Operations Manager	Namibia, Africa
Tracey Mayhew	Observer Union Representative	Alaska, USA
Jon McVeigh	Debriefers/ Trainer	West Coast, USA
Tom Nishida	International Fisheries Research Officer	Japan
Mike Orcutt	Operations Assistant/ Port Supervisor	British Columbia, Canada
Glenn Quelch ⁴	Fisheries Legislation / International	European Union
Courtney Sakai	Oceana Campaign Director/ International	Washington D.C., USA
Bob Stanley	CCAMLR Technical Coordinator	Australia
Elaine Ward ⁵	WFT Social Equity Specialist/ International	British Columbia, Canada
Sara Wetmore	Data Quality Control	Northeast, USA

³ Following the 5th IFOC, Teresa Turk left her SCL position to become an OPWG member, while Vicki Cornish, of the Ocean Conservancy, began as our new SCL

⁴ As of May 2008, Glenn Quelch now shares the WGL (Chair) position with Keith Davis

⁵ Elaine Ward began consulting us in March 2007 and became a member in May 2007

1.3 Mission Statement

To investigate, categorize, and prioritize the international working knowledge of observer employment practices in order to outline principles that foster the proficient professional development of fisheries observers, while working to ensure and strengthen the scientific and technical integrity of fisheries observer programmes and the profession.

1.4 Committees

OPWG Committees are sub-groups which work to complete precisely directed objectives of the group. Leads for each committee are ultimately responsible for the final outcomes of their committee, and are listed first under each of the committee headings.

Survey Committee:

[Keith Davis, Tracey Mayhew, and Larry Beerkircher]

- Compile all OPWG member comments and revisions, draft the final version of the [Observer Professionalism Survey](#) for the IFOC website, along with detailed respondent submission instructions
- Collect and appropriately categorize all of the survey submissions

Wages and Benefits Committee:

[Tracey Mayhew, Rueben Beazley, Elwin Kruger, and Courtney Sakai]

- Draft a detailed overview and complete analysis of the responses to the *Wages and Benefit* initiatives addressed in the survey
- Provide all background research and developments upon issues raised regarding observer *Wages and Benefits*

Support and Opportunities Committee:

[Dawn Golden, Mike Orcutt, Jon McVeigh, and Larry Beerkircher]

- Draft a detailed overview and complete analysis of the responses to the *Support and Opportunities* initiatives addressed in the survey
- Provide all background research and developments upon issues raised regarding observer *Support and Opportunities*

Employment Standards Committee:

[Bob Stanley, Glenn Quelch, Sara Wetmore, Chris Heineken, and Tom Nishida]

- Draft a detailed overview and complete analysis of the responses to the *Employment Standards* initiatives addressed in the survey
- Provide all background research and developments upon issues raised regarding observer *Employment Standards*

OPWG Report Committee:

[Keith Davis, Glenn Quelch, Teresa Turk, Jon McVeigh, Elaine Ward, and Sara Wetmore]

- Coordinate OPWG discussions and reporting
- Manage the drafting and editing of all group outputs and reports

1.5 5th IFOC Actions

May 2006: The SCL selects the WGL

June 2006: The OPWG Terms of Reference is drafted and the IFOC steering committee announces all of the working groups on the IFOC website.

July – September 2006: Applications for working group memberships are received.

October 2006: Selected OPWG members are invited to join the working group.

November 2006: OPWG Foundation Tasks are completed by the members.

December 2006: The first OPWG Conference Call is conducted; the Survey Committee is formed; a private on-line discussion board is created on ObserverNet.org in order to track group discussions

January 2007: The OPWG Survey is completed by the Survey Committee, is placed on to the IFOC website, and is announced (via e-mail) to all on the IFOC list-serve

February 2007: Completed OPWG Surveys are retrieved and three analysis committees (*Wage and Benefits, Support and Opportunities, and Employment Standards*) are established

March 2007: Additional completed OPWG Surveys are retrieved; the Second OPWG Conference Call is conducted during the last week of the March

April 2007: With respect to the analysis committees, we gather, consider, and categorize survey responses. Mechanisms for analysis and conference reporting are discussed.

May 2007: The Conference Report Committee is established and each analysis committee returns preliminary findings to this committee in order to finalize the OPWG plan for reporting and discussions at the 5th IFOC. We physically meet the day before the 5th IFOC commences in order to organize all preliminary group findings, finalize the plan for the group's conference presentations, and to brainstorm discussion topics. We physically meet after the conference in order to finalize our Report (including all conference discussions) and begin to lay out the group's plan for the future.

October 2007: Survey closed as the 5th IFOC proceedings are published

June 2008: OPWG 5th IFOC Report completed

2. Survey Overview

The overall purpose of the OPWG Survey is to (1) begin to better define employment terminology as pertains to the observer profession, (2) gather together the various issues and initiatives that have bearing on the professional development of observers in a manner in which they can be sorted into three categories of observer employment practices (Wages and Benefits, Support and Opportunities, and Employment Standards) and (3) initiate discussions regarding some of the larger observer professionalism topics in order to help provide insight for the group's future investigations.

The founding content in our survey was derived from the outlined goals and initiatives addressed in the 2000 "[Observer Bill of Rights](#)" document, and the 2002 and 2004 IFOC proceedings were carefully sifted through in order to identify additional observer professional development approaches. Additionally, many online references were made when designing its structure, clarifying its content, and considering general biasing issues. An initial draft of the survey was synthesized in November 2006, when all OPWG members had an opportunity to review and comment on it before the group's first conference call meeting in December 2006. We had a final draft in early January and [the survey](#) was on the IFOC website⁶ by mid-January.

Our survey is comprised of four sections:

- I. **Definitions**- is a set of terms that respondents are asked to define based upon their own experience.
- II. **Multiple Choice**- respondents are asked to mark one multiple choice answer in this section, indicating how each of the outlined initiatives fulfills or falls short of the need and desires of their observer programme.
- III. **Short Answer**- is a set of questions designed to uncover and address some of the larger observer employment issues.
- IV. **Additional Comments**- this section of the survey is designated for commenting upon the basic structure and content of the survey and upon any observer employment practice, either addressed or not addressed in this survey. Responses to this section are integrated into numerous parts throughout this report.

Though respondents could remain anonymous, we asked respondents to identify their current involvement in the fisheries observer profession by answering the following basic identity question:

My current involvement in the Fisheries Observer Profession is:

- 1- as an Observer
- 2- as an observer staff member for a governing body (e.g. NMFS, AFMA, DFO)
- 3- as a staff member of an observer provider/contracting company
- 4- as an observer data user (e.g. scientific analyst, NGO member)
- 5- Other (describe):

⁶ IFOC website: www.fisheriesobserverconference.com

The survey outlines numerous observer employment goals and initiatives, including such topics as:

- Observer remuneration policies, including wages and benefits.
- Support mechanisms.
- Employee eligibility and conduct standards.

The survey also solicits for information upon international professional development approaches that have and haven't worked for observer programmes, such as:

- Educational and career options and pathways.
- Advancement opportunities among observer programmes and fisheries management.
- Measures that help ensure diverse, fair, and supportive working conditions for Observers.
- Methodologies and protocols that promote observer professional development and help to recruit and maintain a solid core of skilled employees
- benefit observer programmes

At our second conference call meeting in March 2007 we initiated our three survey analysis committees each tasked with reviewing, analyzing, and providing developmental research upon the three thematic sections of our survey (*Wage and Benefits*, *Support and Opportunities*, and *Employment Standards*). We began analyzing survey responses in April 2007 and gave a preliminary report upon our survey findings at the IFOC in May 2007. The survey remained open in the months following the conference, until the conference proceedings were published in October 2007, and we have integrated in all new responses in our final analysis.

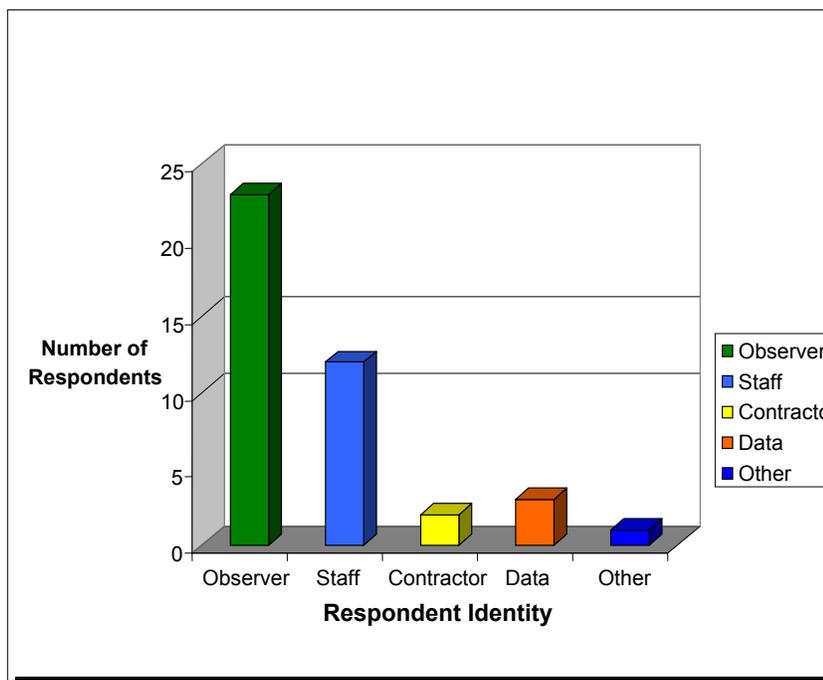
3. Survey Analysis

3.1 Respondent Identification

As of the 2007 IFOC, we have received 45 responses to the OPWG survey, with responses originating from 12 different countries. The scope of respondents' experience has been quite geographically broad, spanning across many of the world's seas.

Our aim was to reach the stakeholders with the most vested interests in observer employment practices, with our main emphasis on hearing from observers. Of the 45 responses, 61% were submitted by Observers, 30% from agency Staff members, 7% from Data Analyst / end users, and 2% from a source Other than these options (see Fig.1).

Fig. 1 Survey Respondent Identification



3.2 Definitions

Survey respondents have defined the following terms upon their own experience and we have outlined a concise impression of submitted responses:

(i.) Professionalism:

- Maintaining expertise, while representing oneself and conducting ones job in a manner of high moral and ethical standards, such that the integrity and respect of the employee and the profession is not biased or compromised.
- Expressed knowledge of and adherence to the terms of reference, the bylaws, the standard of work, the codes of conduct, and the myriad of regulations applicable in the profession
- Exhibiting personal responsibility in work, and commitment to *professional development* with the ability to self regulate
- Acting with no conflicting interests

(ii.) Professional Development:

- The intentional ongoing advancement of an employee’s professional knowledge and competency by way of regular trainings, skill maintenance, accessibility of resources, career path opportunities, inclusion in workshops / conferences, and evaluations and recognition
- This is the responsibility of both the employee and the employer

(iii.) **Experienced Observer:**

- A ‘seasoned veteran’ observer who has demonstrated and continues to demonstrate his / her working knowledge and skills regarding all parameters of fisheries observer work within a bioregion, is well respected among employers and peers, has a good data sampling record, and has handled well all encountered conflicts and safety concerns while at sea
- Since ‘experience’ is often considered a function of time, many respondents have submitted their suggestions for an adequate time of work that defines an “Experienced Observer.” A rough average of these suggestions is approximately 1 year of full time observing or approximately 200 sea days.
- Some observer programmes signify a veteran experienced observer with a title such as ‘Senior Observer’. These observers often take on more responsible mentor-like roles, such as: advising, coordinating, and directing their colleagues in the field.

(iv.) **Professional Observer:**

- A dependable, well respected, observer who is dedicated to the observer programme objectives, ethics, code of conduct, who consistently collects high quality data, who never compromises the integrity of their data or their profession, and who always practices a high degree of safety.
- This person may think of observing (and / or fisheries science / management) as a career and assuredly possesses qualities that make them a leader amongst their colleagues

(v.) **Observer Living Wage:**

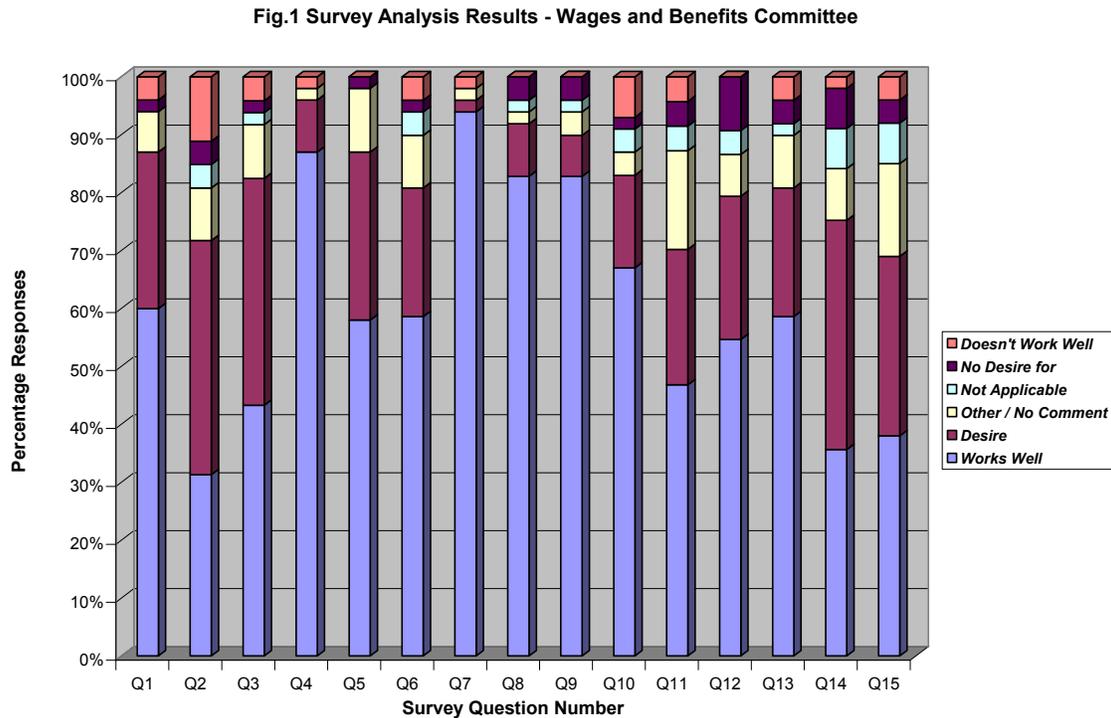
- A wage that allows an individual and his/her family to live, function, and sustain economic efficiency among their community.
- For seafarers such as observers, wages should be comparable to other professions (i.e. government) with similar risks and demands, the scale must reflect at-sea experience, and considerations should be made for the down time (land time) in between assignments

3.3 Analysis of Survey Results

3.3.1 Wages and Benefits

This part of our study addresses topics such as remuneration policies, reimbursable items, and initiatives set to foster the health and general welfare of observers.

Figure 2. presents the survey data as percentage responses in graphical form.



Analysis Highlights: The following were highlighted by respondents in terms of positive responses (combined *Works Well* and *Desire* percentage):

1. **Paid Trainings and Debriefings (96%)** - Observers are provided compensation for attending trainings and debriefings related to their profession
2. **Reimbursables** - Observers are reimbursed for **travel (95%)** to and from a vessel, and **lodging (89%)** and **food (91%)** allowances when deployed.
3. **“Stand-by” Land Based Pay (87%)** - Observers are compensated for while on land in between vessel deployments
4. **Experience-based Compensation (87%)** – Observers’ salary / wages are based upon their working experience
5. **Health Insurance (83%)** - Observers are either provided with health insurance or are compensated so that they may provide it on their own.

Complete Analysis: The following is an analysis of responses to each question raised in the Wages and Benefits section of the OPWG survey.

Question 1. Experience-based compensation system:

Overview: In the majority of professions, career progression is achieved through a combination of training, qualifications and experience. The fisheries observer profession does not differ in this regard. The importance of this issue was reflected in the survey results for this question.

This issue was viewed positively by respondents; 60% felt that the application of experience based remuneration systems *worked well* and 27% thought that such systems would be useful to the professional development of observers (*desire* response). Just 2% indicated *no desire* for (one respondent) – but this is thought to be an anomalous answer (perhaps the question was not well understood).

Recommendations: Whilst there are no immediate recommendations on this issue, experience-based compensation systems should be taken into consideration in any future work on developing international standards for the profession

Question 2. Performance-based bonuses and / or awards:

Overview: This question is less clear, since the application of performance based bonuses or awards may in fact have a deleterious effect on the profession (especially in compliance-based programmes). Such bonuses, if they are applied, need to be carefully planned and any negative effects which might be generated by them should be considered. That such systems are not as universally applied as those referred to in Question 1, is evident from the survey results.

31% of respondents thought that in their experience such systems *work well*, 40% of respondents felt that such systems might be useful to the development of the profession (*desire* response) and 11% felt that such systems *do not work well*.

Question 3. Experience transferability (between programmes):

Overview: Similarly to Question 1, the issue of the transferability of experience is fundamental to career development. This is reflected in the survey results.

42% of respondents indicated that experience transferability *works well* in their experience and 38% felt that it would be useful to the professional development of observers (*desire* response). 9% of respondents chose the *no comment* option.

Question 4. Paid trainings and debriefings:

Overview: Fisheries observers should reasonably expect to receive some form of remuneration for training and debriefing periods, since they are giving up their time for the profession and should be duly compensated for this. A strongly positive response to this question in the survey reflects this view.

87% of respondents indicated that in their experience being in receipt of payment for trainings and debriefings *works well* and 9% expressed a *desire* for such a provision. That such a high percentage have indicated *works well*, may be indicative that this practice has been adopted by the majority of programmes as a norm.

Recommendations: The OPWG should undertake further research into the provision of paid trainings and debriefings, by providing a similar question in the planned *focused interview* work for the 2009 conference.

Question 5. land-based ‘stand-by’ pay:

Overview: This question is a little more difficult to consider. Many observer jobs are subject to seasonality – a feature of the fisheries themselves, or management related restrictions such as closed seasons and / or effort control. This means that observer work can be highly irregular. Many observers deal with this by moving from fishery to fishery as opportunities open and close due to the various factors which affect the fisheries. The issue of land-based ‘stand-by’ pay can be a means of introducing stability into an otherwise unstable profession. The drawbacks of such a system however, can mean that an observer is tied to a given fishery / agency / Government department or , and has little opportunity to augment experience with time spent on other programmes.

For this question, 58% of respondents indicated that in their experience ‘stand-by’ pay systems *work well*, 29% expressed a *desire* for such a system and 11% chose not to comment.

Recommendations: The OPWG should continue to look into the practical realities of land-based ‘stand-by’ pay and continue to gauge the views of the profession.

Question 6. Year-round employment:

Overview: Again, a difficult question to be general about, since there are many variables which can affect an observer’s view of the attractiveness or otherwise of year-round work.

Some 80% of respondents gave positive responses to this question (58% works well and 22% desire). This indicates that, in general, observers have a favourable viewpoint to obtaining year-round work.

Recommendations: The OPWG should continue to undertake research into the possible mechanisms which might be developed to ensure year-round work – including the transferability of experience referred to in Question 3.

Question 7. Reimbursed / provided travel to / from vessel:

Overview: This issue should be a given, unless there are specific provisions in the observer salary which cover an allowance for transport. It is usual, and perfectly reasonable to take the view that once an observer leaves his or her home to undertake an assignment, they should be regarded as ‘on hire’ and all expenses related to that activity should be reimbursed at cost.

Some 95% of respondents gave a positive response to this question (93% works well and 2% desire), indicating that travel costs appear to be provided in the large majority of programmes of respondents’ experience.

Question 8. Reimbursed/provided food/per-diem on land:

Overview: For the reasons outlined in Question 7, such costs whilst ‘on hire’ should be reimbursed to the observer. The same general points apply also to Question 9.

82% of respondents indicated that this provisions *works well*, 9% indicated a *desire* for reimbursement of food costs and 4% indicated *no desire*.

Question 9. Reimbursed/provided lodging:

Overview: Lodging costs should also be reimbursed to an observer whilst ‘on hire’. These related issues elicited similar responses during the survey.

In this case, 82% of respondents indicated that reimbursement of lodging costs *works well* in their experience, 7% expressed a *desire* for this, and 4% indicated *no desire*.

For questions 8 and 9, those who have indicated *no desire* are staff, not observers.

Question 10. Health Insurance for Observers:

Overview: If it is accepted that ‘Health Insurance’ includes accident insurance, then there is most certainly a need for this in the observer profession. Moreover, in many countries, the provision of health and safety insurance to employees is a legal obligation. Fishing vessels are highly dangerous workplaces, and fisheries observers are exposed to the same hazards and dangers as the fishermen themselves. It is for that reason that

health and safety insurance provision to the fisheries observer whilst ‘on hire’ is absolutely vital.

For the survey, 67% of respondents indicated that the issue of health insurance *works well* in their experience, 16% indicated a *desire* for this provision, 4% felt it was *not applicable* and 7% indicated that the provision *doesn't work well*.

Recommendations: Given that insurance is such an important issue, it is recommended that the OPWG follows up on this issue through the forum of *focused interviews* planned for the 2009 conference.

Discussion Points: That some observers believe the provision of health insurance as not applicable and others do not see this provision working well, are both causes for concern. The recommended follow-up should seek to identify the underlying reasons for these trends.

Question 11. Retirement Plan for Observers:

Overview: Should observers be provided with a retirement plan by their employers? If observers as a professional group of people aspire to the development of a long-term career, then perhaps so. If however, observers are interested only in doing the work for a short time, to gain experience to secure a permanent job, or earn money for travelling, servicing student debt etc., then perhaps not.

Given the ambiguity of the issues surrounding this question, the survey results are not particularly surprising, with 44% of respondents indicating that in their experience, this provision *works well*, 22% have indicated a *desire* for the provision and 16% chose not to comment.

Discussion Points: What are the professional aspirations of fisheries observers as a group? Do they prefer to remain with one / company / agency throughout their careers, or do they enjoy moving around for the varied experience it gives? If the latter, what about the transferability of pension schemes? Are different employers able to contribute to the same scheme, or must the observer maintain several schemes with the various employers for whom he or she might work during the course of the year?

Question 12. Paid Vacation and Holidays for Observers:

Overview: This question sought to gauge the views of respondents on the issue of paid holidays for observers. This of course relates to the issues of stability, year-round employment etc. There are two main ways in which observers are employed: firstly either as established employees, paid a twelve-month salary, with all of the usual benefits of employment such as paid vacation etc. In such cases, observers may be paid a per diem augmentation for days spent at sea undertaking observation duties. Secondly,

observers may be employed on a contract basis for the period of observation. Under such contract conditions, the contract ceases when the period of observation ceases and fees paid during the observation period are deemed fees-in-full, and it is for the observer to cover his or her costs for periods between contracts. There may exist permutations of these employment systems.

The survey results indicate that 53% of respondents felt that in their experience, paid vacation systems *work well*, 24% expressed a *desire* for such systems, 7% had *no comment* to make and 9% had *no desire for* a system of paid vacation.

Without detailed information regarding the employment conditions of all respondents, it is not possible to infer much from these results.

Recommendations: In any future work on international standards for the fisheries observer profession, the OPWG should look into the issue of paid vacations in greater detail.

Question 13. Disability and sick leave for Observers:

Overview: It is usual in employment law, for there to be provision for disability and sick leave. Even under short term contracts, such provision should also be made. Of course, not all coastal states' legal systems will make provision for this.

The results of the survey indicate a generally positive view of this provision, as one would expect. 58% of respondents indicated that such provisions *work well* in their experience, 22% indicated a *desire* for the provision and 9% had *no comment* to make.

Recommendations: The issue of disability / sick leave should be fed into any future work on international standards for the profession.

Question 14. Dental Insurance for Observers:

Overview: This question sought to gauge the views of respondents as to whether observers should be provided with a dental insurance provision as part of their employment package. One would expect views on this matter to be highly variable as experiences, cultures, policies etc. differ greatly throughout the various coastal states in which fisheries observer programmes are operated. The survey results reflect this.

36% of respondents indicated that such provisions *work well*, 40% expressed a *desire* for the provision of dental insurance, 9% made *no comment*, 7% felt that the issue was *not applicable* and 7% had *no desire* for this provision.

As one might expect, the view of respondents was in majority positive, though without further detailed information, nothing may be inferred.

Discussion Points: What are the features of the programmes which offer dental insurance to their observers? What are the employment conditions? Can they be standardised?

Question 15. Life Insurance for Observers:

Overview: This question is linked to Question 10 (Health Insurance). Insurance cover provided to fisheries observers whilst ‘on hire’ should always contain a provision for death benefit. The points raised in the overview of Question 10 are reiterated here. There should always be the provision of insurance cover to observers whilst ‘on hire’ – and such insurance should always include the provision for death benefit.

For the survey results, 38% of respondents indicated that the provision of life insurance *works well*, 31% expressed a *desire* for such provision, 16% had *no comment* to make and 7% felt that this issue was *not applicable*.

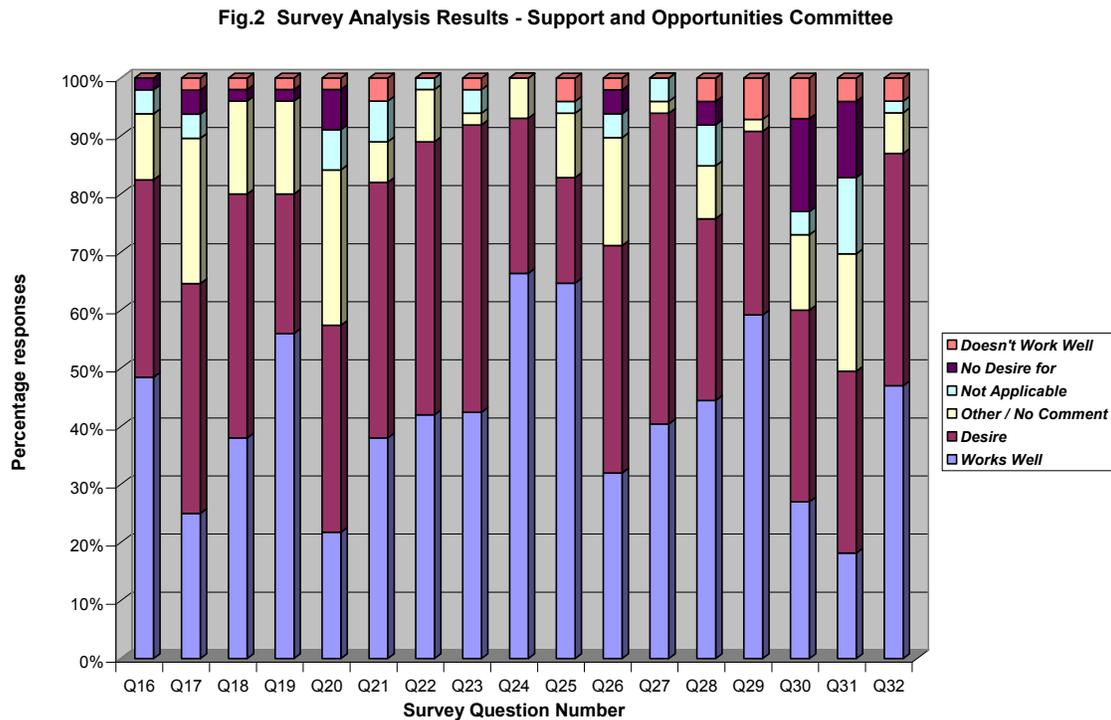
Recommendations: The planned *focused interviews* for the 2009 conference should include a detailed question on the issue of the provision of insurance cover to fisheries observers.

Discussion Points: It is a cause of some concern that 23% of respondents to the survey either had no comment to make or felt that the issue of life insurance was not applicable. During the work for the 2009 conference, it is imperative that this issue is examined in detail.

3.3.2 Support and Opportunities

This part of the study addresses topics such as: conflict resolution instruction, grievances procedures, counselling options, awarding credit where due, inclusion in professional fora, and assistance for observer advancement among careers in fisheries management.

Figure 3 presents the survey responses in percentage terms in graphical form.



Analysis Highlights: The following were highlighted by respondents (combined *Works Well* and *Desire* percentage) indicating a positive view.

1. **Other Scientific Opportunities (93%)** – Observers are provided with opportunities to participate in scientific ventures outside of observing duties.
2. **Vessel Profiles Provided (94%)**- Observers are provided with information that sketches a profile of the vessel that they will be deployed upon
3. **Support to attend Professional Fora (91%)**– Observers’ attendance and involvement at professional fora (i.e. the IFOC) are supported
4. **Performance Evaluations (89%)**– Observers are regularly evaluated upon their performance and this information is fed back to the observers
5. **Career Advancement (82%)**– Observers are provided the opportunities and resources to advance their professional development and careers
6. **Prioritized employment, graded by experience (80%)** – Observers are paid and given assignments according to a scale based on experience. More experience equals more compensation.
7. **Publication Credit (69%)** – Observers are credited in final publications that use their data and these publications are available for observers

Complete Analysis: The following is an analysis of responses to each question raised in the Support and Opportunities section of the OPWG survey.

Question 16. Prioritized employment, graded by experience:

Overview:

When considering the data from all respondents, it is evident that most of the respondent programmes either have such employment, or don't have it and want it. However, the picture becomes a little more interesting when looking at observers and staff members as separate respondent categories. The majority of observers (43%) tended to view their programmes as *not* having prioritized employment (graded by experience), while the majority of staff members (61%) viewed their programmes as having it and it working well. Such differences may only be an artefact of the respondents coming from different observer programme, but in at least one case, observer and staff member respondents can be identified as coming from the same programme, and yet view their programme differently.

Recommendations: Observer programmes and service providers should work to implement prioritized employment, or if they have it, make sure their observer cadre is well informed as to such, and clearly told what kinds of experience they need in order to receive prioritized employment.

Question 17. Grievance procedures:

Overview:

The responses to this question are much like question 16. The majority (62%) of all respondents indicate either already having grievance procedures, and that they work well, or desire grievance procedures. This seems to indicate that grievance procedures are an important programme aspect to most. However, once again there is a disconnect in the view of observers and staff; while 52% of observers who don't have grievance procedures desire them, only 31% of observer staff members desire them.

Recommendations: For programmes with formalized grievance, share information regarding how such procedures work with other programmes that desire them.

Question 18. Programme and contractor performance evaluations:

Overview:

The majority (42%) of both observers and staff do not have, but desire performance evaluations, although a substantial amount of respondents (38%) indicate already having such programmes. Again it seems like an ideal opportunity for those programmes without evaluations to learn from those who have them. Again, there seems to be a different perception between observers and staff (42% desiring vs. 31% desiring)

Recommendations: Observer programmes and contractors should have in place a feedback and/or evaluation process for observers and staff to provide constructive criticism in order for fisheries observer programme to improve.

Question 19. Conflict resolution and harassment training:

Overview:

The largest amount of respondents (56%) indicates having such training and it working well, but when examined separately between observers and staff, some differences are obvious. While only 46% of observers responded that they have a conflict resolution and harassment training programme that works well, 77% of staff members responded in the same fashion. Again, whether this is simply a result of the respondents being from different observer programmes, or represents a real difference in how these respondent groups value or perceive this type of training, is unknown.

Recommendations: Conflict resolution training should be included in observer training programmes.

Question 20. Counselling options:

Note: This question did not specify what kinds of counselling options are being discussed (i.e. Career, grief, substance, financial). This may be why there was a surprising number of no comment, N/A, and no desire for responses.

Overview:

A majority of respondents (58%) desire or have counselling options that are working well. There are a higher percentage of those that desire this than those that have it working well in the overall responses as well as in the observer responses. With staff it's about even. This may be the result of the respondents not understanding the question fully, or that counselling options that observers have in their programme are not clearly conveyed to them. This misunderstanding of counselling options might also be supported by the 12% of observers who responded that it was not applicable to their programme while no staff answered that way. There is also a high instance of no comment answers (27%) which also may be a product of vague wording and them not understanding exactly what the question is asking. 16% of staff responded that they either had no desire for it or had it and didn't want it. No observers answered this way. This may also support the idea that observers didn't understand it well enough to answer effectively (but didn't want to miss counselling opportunities) or that some may not know that counselling opportunities exist.

Recommendations: Implement counselling options in observer programmes, whatever they may be, they are desired. Clearly convey to observers the types of counselling options that they have available to them in their observer programme. In future research, the OPWG should rephrase the question to increase understanding by respondents, defining what types of counselling opportunities are being discussed.

Discussion Points: What are counselling options? What particular options are most desired by observers? Should these services be supplied in-house by staff or outsourced?

Question 21. Career-advancement opportunities for Observers:

Overview:

There is no surprise that an overwhelming majority of respondents (82%) have opportunities and like them or desire to have career-advancement opportunities for observers. Observer and overall responses had more *desire* answers than *works well*, while staff had more *works well* than *desire* answers. Here again we may be seeing a issue in observers knowing what their programme has to offer as far as advancement or a disagreement in what is considered an advancement opportunity. There was also a 15% staff response of *doesn't work well* while no observers responded in this manner. This may also indicate that staff have opportunities they believe are career-advancing while observers don't see it that way or aren't aware of them.

Recommendations: Career-advancement opportunities should be available within observer programmes. Research and determine how observers define “career-advancement opportunities”, and push for those types of offerings. Clearly convey what options are currently available in existing programmes with career-advancement opportunities.

Discussion Points: What is career-advancement to an observer? Is there a difference between what observers desire for career advancement? For example what does an observer desire for career-advancement that is using observing as a “stepping-stone” versus that of someone who desires observing itself a career? How much focus should be placed on advancing observers given the current high-turnover rate? Would more opportunities reduce turn-over? Is it cost-effective for programmes to help their observers move on to other careers, maybe not even in the observing realm?

Question 22. Professional development and training opportunities:

Overview:

This question is similar in scope and responses to question 21. The vast majority, 89%, of respondents, as well as observer and staff only respondents think development and training opportunities are a positive. This is not surprising as this is a common desire in any field. Of the majority, roughly half respondents were in a programme with these opportunities and half desired them. So it looks as if this is being implemented and observers are taking advantage of this in some programmes.

Recommendations: Using the OPWG definition of “Professional Observer” coming from the survey, opportunities should be offered to observers that help them achieve a

professional status. Professional Observers should also be offered opportunities that help them become more effective and well-rounded.

Discussion Points: What kinds of opportunities are available to those observers wishing to use observing to get another job or to stay in observing for the long term? Are career-advancement opportunities for those observers wishing to move beyond observing and professional development for those observers wishing to have observing as a career available? Would both avenues benefit from both types of training?

Question 23. Support for observers to attend professional fora:

Overview:

Overwhelming majority of respondents have or would like to see support for observers to attend professional fora (91%). The interesting point here again is the difference between staff and observer responses. 46% of staff responded that there is this type of opportunity and it works well and 46% desire it. Observers responded with 50% desiring this support and 38% said it worked well. Maybe there are opportunities missed out on by some observers. IFOC as an example offers monies via the WFT, NOP and / or the APO for funding to attend but the response rate is generally very low.

Recommendations: Observer programmes should offer support to attend professional fora for their observers. Determine why observer support / interest in professional fora may be low.

Discussion Points: How can observers be encouraged to participate in professional fora? Does a high-turnover rate affect the willingness and interest in professional fora for observers? More generally, how do we get more observers to participate in any and all types of groups and fora that affect their field directly? Other than IFOC, what other professional fora are available for observers to attend? Should there be more?

Question 24. Observer provided with vessel profiles:

Overview:

Based on this assumption, 67% of the respondents feel that their programmes are doing a good job providing them with vessel profiles, and the remainder have a desire to receive vessel profiles.

Recommendations: Programmes / Observers compile a database of vessel profiles for each vessel in the fleet. Programmes supply Observers with complete vessel profiles for all assignments as part of briefing. OPWG develop some general standards for what constitutes a “vessel profile”.

Discussion Points: What is a vessel profile? What needs to be included in the profile (vessel deck layout, work areas, processing procedures, historic crew cooperation, specific safety issues ... etc)

Question 25. Policy to allow observers to refuse a vessel:

Overview:

The majority of responses (64%) indicated that the policies set out work well for allowing Observers to refuse a vessel. The remainder of respondents (who provided an answer) have the desire to have policies that would allow them to refuse a vessel.

Recommendations: Programmes need to establish and implement policy and procedures for Observers to refuse vessels. OPWG develop some general reasons why / how Observers should be allowed to refuse a vessel.

Discussion Points: What are the guidelines for vessel refusal? These of course will vary programme to programme, but there are a number of common elements that should apply to all programmes.

Question 26. Observers credited in final data publications:

Overview:

70% of the respondents either felt they were either being credited or desired to be so, in final data publications, and only 7% of the respondents indicated *no desire* for credit. This would suggest that recognition is an important part of the profession. 23% of the respondents expressed either *other / no comment* or *not applicable*, which may suggest that they have not had the opportunity to participate in a programme that has resulted in a final publication.

Recommendations: Programmes should strive to properly credit Observers for their contributions / efforts in any final publications.

Discussion Points: How should Observers be credited and have their efforts acknowledged in final publications? What is an appropriate method to credit Observers in these publications?

Question 27. Other scientific opportunities:

Overview:

40% of the respondents felt they had good access to other scientific opportunities, and 53% had a *desire* to have access to other opportunities. This indicates that having access to different areas of work and other opportunities is important for, and sought after by Observers (as supported by observer responses to short answer “D”). A greater variety of

work opportunity allows for further professional development, and also helps to relieve boredom and / or apathy.

Recommendations: Programmes should identify Observers who have the necessary skills, and also the desire to work on other scientific projects. Programmes should be encouraged to seek out opportunities for observer staff to be utilized on other scientific opportunities and should be encouraged to do so.

Question 28. Data-generated reports provided back to observers:

Overview:

44% of the respondents answered that providing data generated reports *works well* and 31% have a *desire* for these reports. This indicates that the majority of observers and programme staff think that it is important for observers to see how the data they are collecting is being used and to see the results.

When splitting the responses between staff and observers only 45% of the observers that responded felt that they had access to these reports while 54% of staff members replied that their programmes provided reports. When comparing response between observers and staff from the same region there was different responses among several programmes. This could be the result of two issues: there may be a communication issue in some programmes. This could be due to the high turnover rate of observers or due to the fact that most observers spend much of their time out at sea and do not take the time to look at what is available when they are on land.

Recommendations: Programmes should look into ways to provide reports on data collected back to observers. Programmes that do provide these reports may want to look into making it more accessible to observers. Smaller programmes may be able to mail reports to observers addresses. Have a link on a website where all articles relating to observer data is posted. Provide observers with reports during briefings.

Question 29. Observer Performance Evaluations:

Overview:

89% of all respondents felt that having observer performance evaluations *works well* or they *desire* it for their programme. 69% of staff that responded to this question said they have performance evaluations and that they *work well* and the remaining staff said that they have a *desire* for evaluations. The response was slightly different among observers. 58 % said it *works well*, 31% said they *desire* it, and 12% said that their programme has it and it does *not work well*.

Recommendations: Observer programmes should provide feedback in the form of evaluations for observers in the field.

Discussion Points: How specifically should an observer performance evaluation be conducted and fed back to the observer?

Question 30. Observers encouraged to help out in “the office”:

Overview:

60% of respondents felt that this *worked well* or that they *desire* it for their programme. 7% of all respondents said that their programme has this and it does *not work well*, and 16% had *no desire* for it.

15% of observer respondents said that they were encouraged to help out in the office and that it worked well while 54% of staff respondents felt that their programme encourage observers to help out and that it worked well. 53% of observer respondents have the *desire* to help out in the office.

Recommendations: Observers should have access to some type of office and/or land based duties to offer a more complete role in fisheries science.

Discussion Points: Gives observers another perspective and more experience. May help to limit burnout factor. Observers become more invested in the programme and have a greater connection.

Question 31. Drug and alcohol education / training:

Overview:

49% of all respondents responded that they have this and it *works well* or they *desire* it for their programme. 15% of observers stated that this works well in their programmes while 27% said they desire it for their programme. 23% of staff respondents stated that it works well while 31% expressed the desire for this type of training.

Recommendations: Programmes should provide the option for drug and alcohol education.

Question 32: Support to encourage observer communications

Overview:

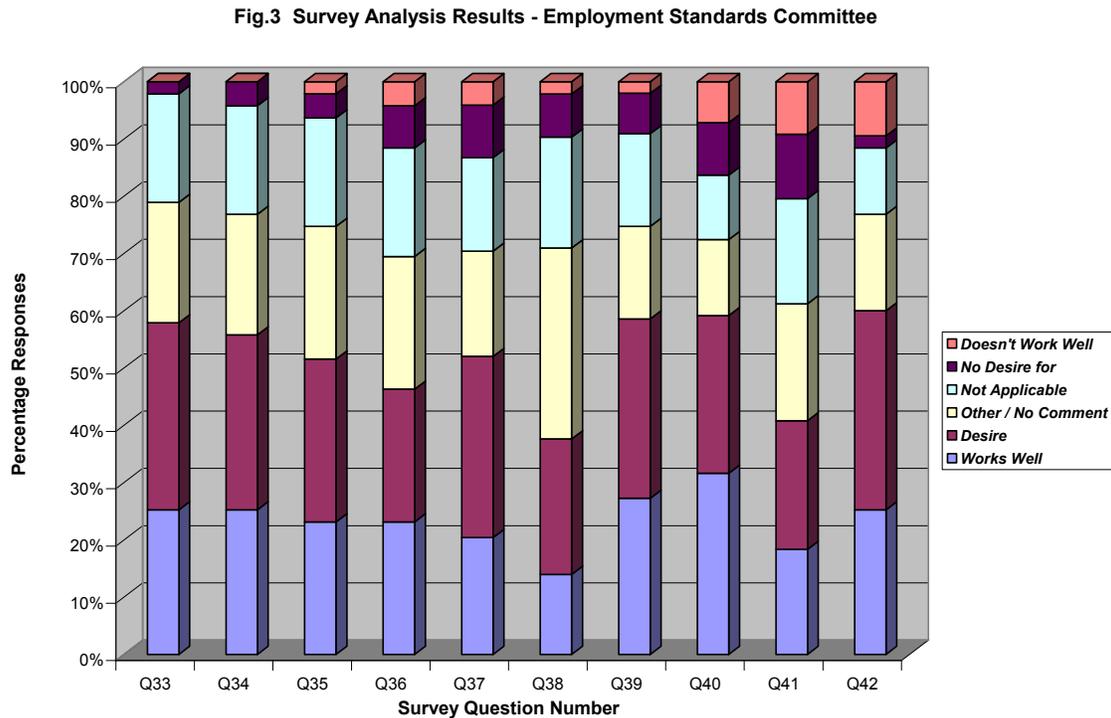
47% of all respondents answered that there is support to encourage observer communications while 40% answered that they would like this type of support. 38% of observers responded that they have this support and 42% answered that they desire this kind of support. 61% of staff respondents answered that their programme provides this type of support while 31% showed the desire for this type of support.

Recommendations: Programmes should look into ways to encourage observer communications. Web or phone based communications probably will work best. Utilize and encourage use of already in place online observer resources such as www.ObserverNet.org and www.apo-observers.org.

3.3.3 Employment Standards

This part of the study addresses topics such as: national training, codes of conduct, eligibility and competency statutes, data base and data collection standards, employee retention, and rules concerning the observer / fisher working relationships.

Figure 4 presents the survey responses in percentage terms in graphical form.



Analysis Highlights: The following were highlighted by respondents (combined *Works Well* and *Desire* percentage); where > 50% of respondents held a positive view.

1. **Rules for Observers assisting Fishers (58%)** – The Observer / Fisher relationship is well defined with rules that outline how observers can and can not assist fishers
2. **Employee Retention Standards (58%)** – Observer programmes have standards that mandate how their observer employee force is retained
3. **National Training Standards (56%)** – A set of observer training standards that each observer programme in that nation adheres to
4. **National debriefing (data accountability) standards (53%)** – A set of observer Code of Conduct standards that each observer programme in that nation adheres to
6. **National Observer "minimum wage" (51%)** The guarantee of a fixed standard of income
7. **National data-form and species-code Standards (58%)** Standardisation of reporting protocols

Complete Analysis: The following is an analysis of responses to each question raised in the Employment Standards section of the OPWG survey.

Question 33. National training standards:

Overview: This question was designed to gauge respondents views on the existence, provision and application of training to the fisheries observer profession at the national level. Of 45 valid responses, 24% of respondents indicated that training *works well* in their experience and 31% indicated that they felt training to be a useful initiative in the development of the profession. Some 18% of respondents indicated that training standards was *not applicable*; each of these respondents were identified as observers.

Recommendations: The OPWG should continue to define the training needs of the profession in terms of the types of training required, length of training courses and the frequency at which such training should be undertaken. The Group should also continue to elaborate thinking on the development of an international standard preparation course for those wishing to enter the fisheries observer profession.

Discussion Points: It appears strange that 18% of respondents should consider training standards to be *not applicable*. In a profession with all of the associated physical and psychological dangers inherent in fisheries observing, one would have thought that there would exist unanimity on the issue of training. The provision of effective, appropriate and ongoing training to the profession is fundamental to its continued development. The Group should examine this issue to determine why some observers might not agree that training standards are essential for the profession. Depending on the findings, there may be a need for appropriate follow-up.

Question 34. National debriefing (data accountability) standards:

Overview: The purpose of this question was to determine the views of respondents regarding debriefing practices in the programmes of their experience. Some 24% of respondents indicated that debriefing *works well* in their programmes, whilst 29% felt that debriefing is useful to the development of the profession. Similarly to question 33, some 18% of respondents indicated that debriefing is *not applicable*. Again, these respondents were all observers.

Recommendations: The OPWG should work on the possibility of developing a core set of standards to be used in debriefing design. Whilst there will be certainly fisheries-specific elements which mean that each debriefing should be slightly different, it may be possible to identify a set of core elements which could be used to structure an internationally standardized debriefing design.

Discussion Points: It is again curious why observers might consider debriefings to be *not applicable* in this profession. A debriefing provides vital feedback to management on the performance of programmes, personnel, vessels involved in the fishery and highlights any problems which should be addressed. The Group will look into this issue further to try to identify whether these results are a survey anomaly or do in fact reflect certain opinions within the profession. That 29% of respondents have indicated that they *desire* debriefings, indicates that this has not been a feature of the experience of respondents. The reasons for this will also be looked into by this Working Group.

Question 35. National Code of Conduct standards:

Overview: It is a matter of some debate whether or not the fisheries observer profession requires a ‘Code of Conduct’. Some might argue that such a code is necessary to maintain and enhance the credibility of the profession; whereas others might take the view that the need for such a code is indicative of performance problems within the profession. This question then, was designed to gauge attitudes and opinions on this issue on the basis of respondents’ experience.

22% of respondents indicates that Code of Conduct standards *work well* in their experience, some 29% of respondents indicated a *desire* for such standards and 18% felt that this was *not applicable*.

Recommendations: The OPWG should continue to define the need for a Code of Conduct for observers, and the overall view of the profession on this issue. A question to this effect should therefore be incorporated into the *focused interviews* planned for the next Conference as part of the ongoing work of the OPWG.

Discussion Points: Is there really a need for such a ‘Code of Conduct’ in the profession? If so, what should be laid down in the code, and who should be responsible for drafting it? Could an international code be developed, or should such codes remain at the national / programme level?

Question 36. National eligibility and competency standards:

Overview: Eligibility (i.e. entry criteria) and competency are key issues to the successful development of a fisheries observer – whether scientific or compliance-based. What then, were the views of the survey respondents on this issue?

22% of respondents indicated that these standards in their experience *work well*, 22% expressed the view that such standards would be useful to the development of the profession and 18% felt that such standards were *not applicable*.

Recommendations: To continue work on defining exactly what the eligibility and competency standards are for the profession.

Discussion Points: The 18% of responses which indicated that these standards are not applicable, are thought to be anomalous, since for this profession, there will always be entry criteria and will always be (however minimum) competency standards. The OPWG should consider whether it is possible to work up a set of internationally recognized entry criteria and competency standards for the profession, or whether such criteria should remain at the national / programme level.

Question 37. National Observer "minimum wage":

Overview: The issue of a minimum wage is a thorny one. In many fisheries in which observer programmes feature, the managing company or agency is in the majority of cases appointed by a process of open tendering. By dint of sheer economics, those who are granted the contract are often the lowest bidders in the tender process. It is usual that such minimalist economic planning filters downstream to those who are charged with data collection at sea – the observers themselves. Whilst many observers would agree with minimum wage standards, economics dictates that this is often simply not possible – especially in the case of countries such as the ACP States. The survey results reflect this.

20% of respondents indicated from their experience that such standards *work well*, 31% indicated a *desire* for such standards, 18% had *no comment* to make and 16% felt that this issue was *not applicable*.

Recommendations: The OPWG should continue to define what is meant by “Minimum Wage” in the context of the observer profession – both at the national level and internationally. The ultimate goal of this work should be to determine whether an international standard might be established, and in what form this could be expressed (as a percentage of the per capita mean income for the country in question, related to national legislation on minimum wages etc.).

Discussion Points: The reasons why 16% of respondents indicated that this issue was not applicable should be examined in greater detail. It could be that this is an expression of realism, or it could be that for those specific programmes, there are no minimum income provisions.

Question 38. National observer programme database standards:

Overview: The management of databases is usually a specialist area; the fisheries observer profession being no exception. Whilst fisheries observers themselves are charged with the collection of raw data, the collation, organization, analysis and interpretation of results is usually undertaken by the management companies / agencies. It may sometimes be the case that observers themselves can work on the data, but usually this work falls to specialists in the area of data handling. The somewhat ambiguous survey results may reflect this.

13% of respondents indicated that database standards *work well*, 22% indicated that such standards may be useful to the professional development of observers, 31% made *no comment* and 16% expressed the view that such standards were *not relevant*.

Discussion Point: Whilst database standards are clearly important, do they in fact fall within the wider realm of fisheries management itself; rather than being an issue with direct bearing on the development of the fisheries observer profession?

Question 39. National data-form and species-code Standards:

Overview: It makes sound sense to standardize the forms used for the collection of raw data, and the codes used to identify species caught and interacted with in the fishery. Such standardisation could be at the national level, or may be international. The survey sought to gauge the views of the profession at the national level.

27% of respondents indicated that data form and species code standardisation *works well*, 31% of respondents felt this was useful to the development of the profession, 16% had *no comment* to make and 11% felt that it was *not relevant*.

Recommendations: Since standardisation of data forms and species codes is such an important and fundamental matter, it is recommended that the OPWG looks again in greater detail as to why some persons in this profession might not comment on this type of standardisation, and why some might consider that it is not relevant. This issue can be addressed through the planned *focused interviews* work for the 2009 conference. It is also recommended that the Group examine the possibility of developing international standards in this regard.

Discussion Points: The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), has already developed a coding system for the major species, which is available via the FAO Fisheries website. The many Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) have also developed standardised data recording formats and forms for the various international programmes in operation. Undoubtedly, there will be similarities in these formats which could be used as a basis for the development of international data form standards.

Question 40. Rules for observers helping fishers with their duties:

Overview: This is clearly another interesting issue, on which there might exist several camps of opinion. Some might argue that helping fishers may compromise the position of the observer, whereas others might say that helping fishermen gives access to excellent first-hand observations. Some observers (and indeed managers) might argue that there should not be rules, that observers should be able to make these decisions in the field,

according to circumstances. Responses to the survey were in the majority positive (58%) regarding the establishment of rules regarding observers helping fishers.

31% of respondents indicated that the application of such rules *works well*, 27% indicated that this would be useful to the development of the profession, 13% had *no comment* to make and 11% felt that such rules were *not relevant*.

Recommendations: It would be interesting for the OPWG to further examine the issue of observers helping fishers via the planned *focused interview* procedure. Whilst it would be useful to gather more information regarding this issue, at this stage it is felt that such rules should remain at the level of the programme. Local conditions will determine whether such rules are necessary and if so, what they should specify.

Discussion Points: From an international perspective, whilst it is not practicable to develop a general standard on this issue, it might nevertheless prove possible to develop policy guidelines for managers.

Question 41. Rules for vessel owners hiring their own observers:

Overview: In most fisheries observer programmes, the hiring of observers is undertaken by Government departments and agencies, or private companies contracted with the management of given programmes. There might arise circumstances in which vessel owner might offer to or express a wish to hire their own observers. Whilst such situations may seem attractive to policy makers from an economic viewpoint, caution should be exercised and rules should exist to deal with this. Depending upon the reasons why vessel owners might seek to hire their own observers, it is clear that the observers' independence might be seriously compromised by this practice. The observers' ability to make objective observations and collect data which truly reflect the fishery could easily be affected by the fact that their salary is paid by the vessel owner. Since this is a situation which does not occur often, one would expect there to be a balanced range of views on this issue across the fisheries observer profession. The survey results reflect this.

Of 45 respondents, 18% indicated that in their experience such rules *work well*, 22% felt that such rules might be useful to the development of the profession, 20% made *no comment*, 18% felt that such rules were *not relevant* and 11% felt that such rules were not needed for the professional development of observers.

Recommendations: The OPWG should try to gather specific information regarding the practice of vessel owners hiring their own observers. It is recommended that the OPWG devote some time to determining the types of fisheries in which vessel owners hire their own observers, the extent of this practice, the specifics of rules governing this practice and the employment conditions under which observers work in such cases.

Discussion Points: Under what circumstances might vessel owners seek to hire their own observers? What are the reactions of policy makers to this practice? What are the details of any rules which exist to regulate this practice?

Question 42. Employment retention standards and evaluations:

Overview: The terms “profession” and “career” as applied to the work of the fisheries observer imply some sense of work continuity which in term suggests that retention is an issue of importance. This survey question was designed to obtain an overview of the views of the profession regarding employment retention standards.

24% of respondents indicated that such standards work well, 33% felt that retention was useful to the development of the profession, 16% had no comment to make and 11% felt that the issue of retention was not applicable.

Recommendations: It is recommended that the OPWG continue working to identify the specific policies that programmes have in place to ensure employee retention. This work should be undertaken with a view to identifying common elements, which may then be used to work up a strategy for retention in the profession on an international level.

3.4 Short Answers

Short answer A. Prioritize your top three employment initiatives, when considering the development of the Observer Profession:

20 respondents provided an answer to question A. Of those; one seemed to have misunderstood the question. Of the remaining 19, 11 respondents described themselves as Observers and 8 described themselves as staff members for a Fisheries Observer governing agency. Although there were a great variety of responses, the employment initiatives can be broken down into nine rough groupings: increasing compensation (pay, benefits, and more available work), safety initiatives, career advancement opportunities, adding support programmes, better training, job security, involvement in data outputs, rationalization of data collection protocols, and implementing or increasing performance evaluations.

Initiatives related to increases in compensation were the most common response; 7 of the 11 observers and 4 of the 8 staff members mentioned compensation as an important initiative. In fact, among the observer respondents, no other category of initiative was indicated as important for the development of the observer profession by multiple respondents, with the exception of initiatives related to improvements in job safety, which was mentioned by 2 observer respondents. Among staff respondents, the other initiatives suggested most often (after compensation) were related to career advancement opportunities, job security, and the provision of better training.

In summary, initiatives relating to increasing the compensation of observers were seen by the respondents as being the most important factor in the development of a professional observer corps. However, other initiatives are also important, although there are some differences between what observers and staff member view as important.

Short Answer B. May other observer programmes or regions benefit from observer employment practices you have had experience with? What, specifically?:

There were 28 respondents to this question; 17 observers and 11 staff members. Most believed their programme did have something to offer other observer programmes. Some type of monetary benefit was the most common response with quality training, particularly safety training, as a close second. Monetarily respondents believe that observers would benefit from making a high-wage, as well as compensation for work beyond the call of duty and 2 respondents replied with year-long employment being a big plus. Other respondents also commented on the competency, friendliness and approachability of observer staff. 2 respondents cited their contractor situation being good for other programmes although one wanted a competition based programme and 2 others wanted not for-profit contractors. Other suggestions were to have observers direct national standards similar to that of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. As well as having a variety of duties to perform. There was also one response that simply stated “yes.”.

In addition to the other responses it is interesting that 5 respondents said that they had no experience with or didn't know if their programme would benefit others. This could be because of a lack of exposure (which is why IFOC is a great forum), or not understanding the question. 4 respondents commented that there were no practices they employed that other observer programmes would benefit from, and there was a bit of a negative tone to these responses. This may represent a lack of satisfaction in the profession. This is worth looking at under the context of retaining observers and reducing turnover.

Short Answer C. Prioritize your top three eligibility and competency standards, when considering the recruitment and retention of “professional observers” (i.e. education level and experience level)?:

To analyze this question, a general approach was taken - all eligibility requirements were first listed and then the number of responses were tallied according to the ranking given by the respondents. There were 29 total respondents for this question; 19 observers, 10 staff members, 2 data users and 1 contractor.

Overall the biggest requirement given by respondents was the need for education. This had the most #1 requirement answers and tied for the most #2 requirement. This was obviously believed to be very important. The question of whether or not education needs to be university level which comes up in many discussions about observing was observed here as well. Many of the respondents listing education in their top 3 requirements believed that a degree qualification was not needed to be an observer. In fact the

message from many of the responses was that observers should or should not be required to have a science degree. This will be an important discussion point in the future, especially internationally where the best workforce available may not be those with science degrees.

After education, experience was the next most common response with a lot of respondents listing it somewhere in their answer. The experience needed was not limited to observer fields but was mostly referring to some type of vessel, at-sea, and fisheries type experience. Personality and ability to deal with stress and specifically fishers and the life at sea was also mentioned a few times. Physical and mental fitness also got some attention as well as passing training and receiving good performance / evaluation reviews. Seaworthiness, flexibility in assignments and schedule, longevity, independence and an interest/passion for the field all received more than one mention. Ability to do paperwork, willingness to improve, covering at least one deployment per month, literate, speaking English, and work ethic all received one mention as well.

It should be pointed out that the survey listed education and experience as examples in the question and this may have skewed the responses. For future work of the OPWG, it may be better to not provide examples for respondents.

Short Answer D. Can the programme you work with benefit from cooperation with other observer programmes, specifically regarding observer employment practices?:

25 respondents provided an answer to this question. 13 were observers, and 12 were programme staff or data users. All of the 25 respondents stated that they believe their programme would benefit from cooperation from other programmes, or that their programme could provide some benefit to other programmes.

There were 4 main benefits that were expressed by both programme staff and observers, and they can be summarized as follows:

Recruitment and Hiring:

- Uniform employment and training standards would create a “pool” of observers that could be drawn on for recruitment from programmes worldwide or within regions.
- Programmes could “share” staff from other programmes to meet peak activity demands, which may help alleviate the overstaffed / understaffed situations that can lead to observer attrition.

Access to other opportunities and experiences:

- Observers would like to have the opportunity to work with other countries / fisheries and programmes in order to broaden their experience and provide further skills development.
- Uniform training and employment procedures would allow observers to easily move between programmes.

Standardization of Procedures

- Standardization of training, catch estimation methods, sampling and data reporting procedures would more easily allow the sharing of information between programmes and help contribute to a more “global approach” or possibly international database structures.

Decreased Attrition

- Cooperation between programmes would allow the sharing of practices that work well and don't work well. This would allow programmes to develop a better awareness of the support systems required by observers and allow them to more easily ensure that observer rights and needs are being met.
- Greater attention to the rights and needs of observers may lead to a higher of experience and lowered attrition

3.5 Social Equity Analysis

Elaine Ward, of World Fisheries Trust (WFT), acts as the OPWG Social Equity Specialist. To gather information regarding social equity issues specific to the Fisheries Observer profession, WFT had synthesized a questionnaire that has given us much insight into these matters.

I. Introduction

Gender equity in a cultural context was addressed in several ways at the Conference: A conscious striving to achieve gender parity in CIDA-funded participants; Participation of a WFT gender and human rights specialist, Elaine Ward, in the Observer Professionalism Working Group (OPWG) – paid for by the conference and WFT; Assessment focusing on gender and diversity of the overall conference programme by the WFT specialist; Gender specialist's presentation entitled, “Social Equity in Fisheries Monitoring Programmes” as part of the panel on observer professionalism (identifying factors affecting participation of women in fisheries monitoring programmes and promoting the development of best practices that foster gender equity in general); Participants' evaluation of the conference's role in potentially enhancing future gender and ethnic equity in their own countries' observer programmes; and Participants' evaluation of their home country fisheries observer programmes for gender and ethnic equity by way of a dedicated questionnaire.

Since the IFO Conference organizers did not screen participants along gender lines, the data obtained from the various surveys were not disaggregated by gender or other diversity categories (e.g. age, ethnicity, religion). However, the Fisheries Monitoring Programme Overview questionnaire, under its Observer Programme Management heading, included a question relating to the gender ratio of the respondent's observer corps. Also, the Safety Survey acknowledged “His/Her Contact Information” via the e-mail; however, it will likely be unclear as to the sex of the respondent given only their e-mail address.

In the OPWG survey, specific gender-related questions were not asked; however, there were opportunities within the Short Answer and Additional Comments sections to address matters otherwise not explicitly covered in the Definitions and Multiple Choice sections. Therefore, if a survey respondent wished to elaborate on gender-sensitive issues with respect to wages and benefits, support and opportunities, or employment standards and definitions, they could do so.

Gender parity in conference participation was not fully achieved: 7 out of 22, or 32%, of the CIDA-sponsored participants were female. The numbers reflect the current lower participation of women in fisheries observer-related programmes worldwide. Previous International Fisheries Observer Conferences had resulted in a ratio of female participants to male participants of 2:3 which was considered by organizers as a fair representation of people employed in this sector. Nevertheless, female participants appeared to be largely very active at the 2007 conference and two well-respected women served on the IFOC Steering Committee.

Some of the quantitative indicators of increased gender equity included a determination of the following: The Observer Professionalism Working Group (OPWG) leadership exhibited gender parity, with a female Steering Committee Liaison and a male Working Group Leader. Thirteen other members of the OPWG included four females and nine males, each of whom served on one of five sub-committees. By conference's end, the gender specialist was made a permanent member of the OPWG. A number of conference participants commented that there were surprisingly more female observers in attendance and actively working in fisheries monitoring programmes than expected.

As evidenced during the Conference and within the questionnaire responses, some of the qualitative indicators of enhanced gender equity included: a willingness to identify barriers which exist for women's participation with respect to wages, benefits, opportunities, support or employment standards; an appreciation concerning certain working conditions which adversely affect the equal participation of women; several suggestions to improve opportunities for women and to influence equity; and an acknowledgement of lessons learned about overcoming barriers faced by women, as well as ethnic minorities and local communities, in participating equitably in fisheries observer / monitoring programmes.

II. IFOC Impact Assessment - A Few Responses to the WFT Questionnaire

A. Current involvement in the fisheries observer profession:

Of the 25 respondents in total, 6 were fisheries observers (4 females; 2 males); 4 were shore-based members of an observer provider/contracting company (1 female; 3 males); 12 were staff of a governing body (5 females; 7 males); 12 were users of observer data, for instance, fisheries managers, scientific analysts, NGO members (5 females; 7 males); 1 was a female student; 1 was a male NGO representative; and none were fishers or fishing industry representatives.

B. Gender and ethnicity of respondents:

Out of a total of 25 respondents, there were 11 females and 14 males, none of whom reported being a member of an ethnic minority within the country they represented.

C. Countries represented:

The females hailed from El Salvador, Ghana, Namibia, Brazil, Indonesia, Russia, New Zealand, and the USA (3), while the males came from Peru, Panama, Brazil, Ecuador, Vietnam, Venezuela, Central America, Guatemala, New Caledonia, Canada, USA, 2 IATTC, 1 AIRCP.

Responses to Questions:**D.1 What have you learned about overcoming barriers that women, ethnic minorities or local communities face in participating in fisheries observer/monitoring programmes? Will these be applicable to your situation?**

Two women reported no barriers to participation (Namibia and Russia), while another was surprised at the number of female observers there were in Canada and the USA for instance. Four men reported that it is not applicable (including Brazil, Central America and USA), one reason being suggested that they have no support from member governments (IATTC/AIRCP). Another man from Guatemala reported that it was applicable, especially those barriers to women's participation.

Cultural barriers and discrimination:

Two women reported discrimination based on sex and cultural barriers (ie. boats that won't take women onboard due to superstitions and/or concerns from fishermen's wives). One man from Ecuador acknowledged cultural barriers, but indicated that generally speaking, having women conducting interviews has really positive effects on the results achieved.

Conditions on vessels at sea:

Two women reported inappropriate conditions on board vessels as a barrier to women's participation (Indonesia and USA), indicating that some boats have no bathrooms.

Potential future social equity initiatives:

Three women expressed the need to do better in terms of practicing gender equality and educating girls and women about the fisheries observer profession (El Salvador, Ghana and Brazil). Another woman was heartened by the participation of so many women at the Conference. One woman from New Zealand acknowledged many barriers worldwide, and suggested that in the future, for example, a woman's group deliberating on safety and employment issues would be in order. A number of men looked to the future to overcome some of the barriers----to better utilize female observers (Panama), to involve more women in recruitment (Ecuador), community empowerment for better participation (Vietnam), to look for opportunities to start placing women on boats (IATTC), and to find ways to apply the theme of social equity (Venezuela and Central America).

III. Social Equity, Gender Equality and Diversity in Fisheries Observer Programmes - Responses to WFT Questionnaire

A. Current involvement in the fisheries observer profession:

Of the 19 respondents in total, 8 were fisheries observers (2 females; 6 males); 5 were shore-based members of an observer provider/contracting company (2 female; 3 males); 8 were staff of a governing body (3 females; 5 males); 9 were users of observer data, for instance, fisheries managers, scientific analysts, NGO members (5 females; 4 males); 1 female was a fisher or fishing industry representative; and 1 male was a trainer on by-catch collection data.

B. Gender & ethnicity of respondents:

Out of a total of 19 respondents, there were 8 females and 11 males, none of whom reported being a member of an ethnic minority within the country they represented.

C. Responses to Questions:

C.1 What barriers exist for ethnic minorities and/or local community members to work in observer programmes?

Three women reported no barriers existed in their countries, one of which was Russia. In contrast, eight males reported no barriers existed in their countries based on ethnicity, race and/or local community status, which included Peru, England, Panama, USA.

Educational barriers:

Two women reported that education was a barrier. In Ghana, the fisheries observers come mainly through agricultural training colleges. In the USA, the educational requirements are high, but could be lowered without compromising the integrity of data. The same barriers exist for observers that exist for minorities in the sciences in general.

Four men reported education as a barrier in that ethnic minorities and local community members usually have lower levels of education. They are also usually poorer and hence have more limited access to secondary or university levels of education. They also lack adequate funding to support their own schooling. In the USA, observers are hired from a pool of natural sciences college graduates, an area of study not traditionally sought by minorities.

Cultural barriers:

One woman cites a cultural barrier, in that there are strong feelings that having women on boats will lead to problems among the crew and their family, especially their wives. One man reported discrimination and harassment as barriers to immigrant observers or female observers---one incident every three years (Eastern Canada). Another man reported language and cultural barriers between a local community and the management authority. (USA)

Economic barriers:

One woman reported that the equipment, the safety issue, and a lack of financial resources are three factors which prohibit the equitable involvement of minorities in her country.

Institutional barriers:

One woman reported that because the fisheries observer profession is just beginning in terms of government and law, they have created an association in Brazil, but are yet to be organized.

C.2 What barriers exist for participation by women with respect to wages, benefits, opportunities, support or employment standards?

Five women reported no barriers, including Russia and Ghana. Six men reported there were no perceived barriers or discrimination with respect to wages, benefits, opportunities, support or employment (including Peru, England and USA).

Conditions on board vessels:

One woman reported poor conditions on vessels (lack of bathrooms). Another woman reported that sometimes women are not deployed on some vessels (USA), for apparently good reasons (which were not cited).

One man reported that some aspects of working on small vessels discourage women, although the playing field is more level in terms of post observer employment with government agencies (Canada). Another man from Panama reported that while women are able to become fisheries observers, vessels are very small or uncomfortable to accommodate different sexes and hence women are not working in observer programmes.

Discriminatory practices:

One woman reported a lack of female participation in a local association (Brazil), and that women are sometimes utilized as volunteer observers rather than receiving pay as men do.

Three men reported discrimination against women as a barrier---citing harassment (USA), common occurrences of sexual harassment, and the fact that female observers only achieve the scientific ship observer degree. One of these males acknowledged that women may require various support systems that males may not need to the same degree. Another man admitted that some vessels prefer to not carry a female observer (USA), although that did not change the fact that a female observer will get on their vessel.

C.3 What components of working conditions affect the equal participation of women in fisheries monitoring programmes?

Three women reported there are none, and one went on to say that fishermen are gentle with them.

Inadequate onboard conditions:

One woman reported that hardships exist at sea or during field work, especially for women (Russia). Another woman reported that in Brazil, for example, there are only a few boats structured to receive a woman onboard, i.e. a separate bathroom for them. Two women indicated that there is little to no privacy (i.e. no toilets or showers) to perform bodily functions, and that sharing rooms or bunk space with men might deter some women (USA). Two women reported harsh living conditions onboard vessels which they considered were “not the best for females”.

One man from Panama indicted that working conditions in his fleet are the first barrier to women’s equal participation. As to the issue of respect, he went on to say that except for the purse seine tuna boat, the rest of the fleet is very uncomfortable with gender equity “but the thing is that there are no such programmes”. Another man from Peru suggested that gender inequities arise because of rough working conditions at sea for his fisheries (small vessels, long trips in some or most fisheries, etc.).

Three males, one from England, acknowledged that it is mainly shared accommodation and washroom facilities that hamper the type of vessel female staff can go to sea on. Two other males spoke directly to the issue of a lack of privacy on fishing vessels and also mentioned the lack of a separate bathroom for women.

One man from the USA felt the working environment may be less palatable to a woman than a man because of certain environmental conditions specific to sex. Another American male thought that, depending on a female observer’s personal level of comfort, small vessels with no head (wash/bath room), on extended day trips may hinder their ability to cover them. Finally, one male spoke of the safety conditions of ships as being a concern.

Discriminatory practices and cultural restraints:

One woman acknowledged that while observers have been traditionally a male-dominated in Ghana, recently a woman has been recruited. Two others reported pornography as a problem, which creates a hostile working environment onboard vessels. Couple that with being the lone woman on a boat full of men far from land could potentially be scary, says one woman from the USA. Another woman reported that for some skippers, a woman onboard could cause problems at home with jealous wives or feed into a cultural superstition of a resultant “bad fishery”.

One man concurred, indicating that sometimes fishers believe that having women on board affects their success at fishing. Another man agreed that some skippers make a fuss. And a Canadian male reported that “a culture in which participation of women in the fishery is slowly gaining acceptance is also a factor. I still hear complaints from fishermen’s wives – ridiculous I know!”

Two men mentioned the fact of all male crews, implying a gender bias may exist onboard vessels. Another man pointed out that regarding relationships with the crew, in his

country, it feels uncomfortable to have a female observer onboard. A different male reported that women are rare as observers due to traditional views from fishermen (i.e. what he termed the “Latin view of women”).

C.4 What suggestions do you have to improve opportunities for women in fisheries monitoring programmes?

One woman and one man did not have any firm suggestions on how to improve the situation.

Occupational health and safety while at sea:

One woman suggested that it is important to guarantee women’s safety. Another woman from Russia called for the improvement of observer work conditions, especially on-board of small to medium size vessels, while one man suggested making the working platform or vessel more female-friendly.

Awareness-raising and education:

One woman from Ghana suggested that more girls should be made aware and encouraged about the observer , since their lack of participation stems from ignorance of it and the fact that they feel its for boys and men. A Brazilian woman thought it necessary to offer courses and promote the fisheries observer profession. She acknowledged that there is still much prejudice surrounding women at-sea, and it is a continual obstacle that needs to be overcome.

One man indicated that what is needed is a change of mind and more education. Another felt that worldwide, increasing women’s literacy levels would help. An American male recommended that female observers need to be well-informed of working conditions in advance and then left to make their own choices.

Observer professionalism:

One male indicated that it is important to increase professionalism of some female observers who have sexual liaisons with fishermen onboard vessels. He believed this to be the source of a lot of gender harassment as the conduct was felt to be quite common onboard vessels and that fishermen begin to expect it.

Employment equity and affirmative action:

A Canadian man recommended the hiring of more women and inviting those who are already participants to help pave the way for others. Another male from Panama expressed his opinion that the idea to give opportunities to women are very interesting, but respect that could take some more years to achieve this. Within the at-sea observer working environment, one man from the USA recommended making sure that living conditions do not impose sex-specific limitations upon female fisheries monitors.

C.5 What programmes exist to train local community members and/or ethnic minorities to participate in fisheries observer programmes in your country?

One female and three males reported there were no such programmes in their respective countries.

A Brazilian woman indicated a national observer programme exists, including the Pro Jexo Albatnaz Observer Programme; however, she went on to say that most are biologists or “oceanonographers.” Another female reported that such programmes exist at regional and local levels in Russia. A woman from Ghana mentioned the Community Based Fisheries Management in her country.

One American woman only knew of the hook programme on longline, tuna purse seine, and shrimp trawl net fishery in AluLike, Hawaii. Similarly, an American man acknowledged that programmes, like AluLike in Honolulu, Hawaii, are “fabulous avenues for including local populations (natives) in the observer workforce. Nevertheless, you must be careful to guard that the standards be kept as high as possible (given the environment) so that professional respect is not lost.”

An Englishman reported that all sections of the community are equally able to receive training to become observers. And a Canadian male said that because he works in an enforcement context, he prefers to avoid use of observers from the same community as a vessel, knowing this exerts extra pressures. He goes on to say that in Canada, First Nation participation is his prime concern in opportunities for ethnic minorities.

A Peruvian man indicated that in his country, NGOs work with locals to become observers (either fishermen or former fishermen and others). Another male indicated that local courses are sponsored by a government agency. A man from Panama indicated that his country’s authority does not have any observer programme working at this moment, and that all monitoring programmes are lead by Commission or ONG’s.

C.6 Is there a policy in place to handle such matters as sexual harassment in the observer programme that you work with, and if so, what are the procedures?

Four females reported there were no specific sexual harassment policies in their programme, including Russia and Brazil. However, the latter reported that every time a female observer boards a vessel, she is “reminded about the behaviour”. Three males reported there were no such policies they were aware of.

Legislation, Policies and Procedures:

Three women reported there were policies. Underpinned by a Domestic Violence Bill, sexual harassment is not treated lightly in Ghana, and people report occurrences to the authorities. Likewise, in the USA, individuals are encouraged to confront the situation immediately, document the incident, report it to the OP personnel and/or report to the employer.

One man from England reported his organization had a sexual harassment policy prohibiting such behaviour and any such act is dealt with using the appropriate legal channels. Another man from Panama was aware that his country has some legislation in this matter, but could not elaborate since the two observer programmes have only males working.

One male enforcement officer from Canada reported that it is treated as a criminal matter and would involve the police. He went on to say that in terms of pro-activity, he stresses that all observers merit the same respect regardless of gender or ethnicity. A male from the USA indicated that one of the first things a debriefer will ask upon returning from sea is whether there have been any enforcement issues, and he felt that is where sexual harassment should come out. Another male from the USA indicated the procedure to follow was to first report the incident to the observer coordinator, and then to the law enforcement arm in order to investigate and prosecute if necessary.

Harassment is rarely reported says one man. Another says that the policy is to report to office staff and government officials. Finally, one male indicated there was such a policy, even though he didn't know what it was. However, he contemplated the fact that he too could be the recipient of unwanted sexual attention.

C.7 Do you feel that the observer programme can influence equity in the fishing fleet?

Two women responded in the negative (Russia and USA), the latter indicating that it is not an objective of any observer programme at the moment and suspects that NOAA Fisheries would NOT support any sort of activity in this direction because it is outside the scope of the Agency.

Five women responded positively, including Ghana. All eight men responded favourably to this suggestion, acknowledging the need for better coverage (England), leading by example (Canada), setting and modeling equity standards (USA), encouraging and educating a fleet by not bowing to a request for a male observer (USA), exposing the fleet to a better way, and demonstrating over time that women are equally competent as fisheries observers.

Other comments:

From female respondents:

One female thinks the future is bright for females taking part in observers in Ghana. She says that females need to be encouraged and their awareness raised. Another female indicated her responses were more general to the USA environment; however, her observer experience was in the North Pacific.

From male respondents:

One male felt that fishing data are very few, and that Panamanian authorities are actually changing structures. Another male agrees that data are few, and that statistical analyses are basic, unspecific and based on landings.

* For a complete WFT Gender Analysis and Impact Assessment, please navigate to [ANNEX VIII: WFT Questionnaire](#).

4. Discussions and Outlook

4.1 Discussions

This section combines responses from the *Short Answer* part of our survey (which either exhibit additional observer professionalism issues or build upon topics previously presented) with discussion points raised during our 2007 IFOC breakout session and additional discussion points that have arose in our analysis.

Prioritized Observer Support entities:

On a scale of 1-3 (1 being the highest priority), the three major observer supporters (Contractors, Agencies, and Labour organizations/observer-advocacy groups) were rated upon their expected responsibility to the livelihood of observers. Following is a prioritized list:

- Governing agencies rank 1st, observer providers/ contractors rank 2nd, and observer-advocacy groups and Labour organizations rank 3rd

Eligibility and Competency Standards:

- **Education:** Some suggest that a college degree be required for observer employment, and some state that there is no need for a degree. Nevertheless, many do agree that some sort of post-secondary academic science and math based training be required
- Many agree that at-sea (or remote field) experience be preferred
- Physical, emotional, and mental abilities to perform the job, independent work ethic, and seaworthiness were all said to be important when rating observers.
- Regular employee evaluations were suggested

Additional initiatives that may foster fisheries observer professional development:

- Consistent and increased funding for observer programmes
- Increased enforcement of existing observer programme regulations
- Observers provided with: insurance, performance-based bonuses, full-time employment, retirement plans, and support for stress management and counselling
- Unbiased placement of observers on to vessels
- Hiring locally when possible
- Recognition and transferability of sea-day credit from one programme to the next, as well as to other seafaring professions

- Establishing national and international standards for employment and trainings
- Engaging observers in programme outputs
- Fisheries Observers as educators on vessels
- Minimizing bureaucratic complexities

Recognized Social Equity issues:

- Absent data, disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, & class
- Discrimination in the workplace based upon sex, age, ethnicity & class
- Lack of gender balance, gender policies and gender-sensitive indicators among many fisheries monitoring programmes
- Sexual harassment, particularly on board fishing vessels
- Privacy/security of accommodations and bathing facilities while at sea
- Medical examinations to determine aptitude for work
- Parental/family leave, day care, and maternity leave provisions

Ways to ensure social equity among fisheries monitors:

- Promote respect for the human rights & dignity of all worldwide observers
- Identify the factors affecting the equal participation of women & other minorities
- Identify the means to ensure that both sexes & minorities participate equitably as decision-makers in programming & all stages of project lifecycles
- Ensure senior management is committed to GE & adequate resources set aside to promote it via accountability frameworks & gender policies

How can programmes learn from one another regarding Observer Professionalism?

- Via shared experiences, protocols, technologies, and training methodologies, programmes may learn to refine procedures, reduce redundancies, and promote the practices that produce the highest of quality outcomes
- Share and improve upon observer safety and survival training techniques
- Identify the provisions that are needed to foster heightened employee retention
- Through building a broad work force and a network of available work opportunities, paths towards full-time year-round employment may be identified
- Employee exchanges can increase knowledge transferability
- Identify the pros and cons of the various observer service delivery models

Future of Observers and the Fisheries Observer profession:

- As fisheries continue to be stressed and remedial measures are sought, the observer profession may expand and be more recognized, and the demand for highly skilled fisheries observers could increase
- Heightened observer transferability between programmes and fisheries, a more diversified job, with heightened retention and efficacy of execution, can create more career advancement opportunities and job security for observers
- Automated technology (i.e. electronic fish boards, digital data-collection systems, and electronic monitoring) and heightened offshore communications may improve upon observing

- Establishment of national and international standards may help to enable collaborative management upon trans-border stocks and work towards more-harmonized databases and data collection procedures.
- On the down side, some see fisheries closing and observers losing their jobs, and some have mentioned that if consistent funding is not secured, standards will be compromised and fishery observation products will lose their viability

4.2 Outlook

Considering the tremendous quantity of international working knowledge regarding observer professionalism practices, the OPWG has been charged with quite a task to gather, categorize, and prioritize it. Nevertheless, we have taken some vital initial steps in an iterative process important to promoting the proficient professional development of observers, while serving to preserve and to heighten the integrity of the Fisheries Observer profession as a whole.

By combining, from the different sections of our analysis, the top highlighted observer professionalism initiatives, we have created the following flow diagram:



Each observer employment initiative listed in this diagram has been selected, by at least the majority of survey respondents, as a principle they either *Desire* or indicates *Works*

Well at fostering the professional development of fisheries observers. Social equity issues may arise among execution of any of the listed initiatives, and should be considered.

The primary tools utilized in our investigations have been: 1. submitted responses to the OPWG survey, 2. WFT questionnaire submissions, 3. discussions during our break-out session and during the closing session at the 2007 IFOC in Victoria, British Columbia, and 4. further research and discussions among OPWG members.

With hopes to increase feedback and to broaden representation, we kept the OPWG survey open for approximately five months following the 5th IFOC. During the conference week and after the close of the conference, we received 9 additional responses to the survey. We decided to close the survey as soon as the 5th IFOC proceedings were published in October 2007, concluding that: the survey had completed its function, that it was time to complete our analysis upon our findings to date, and that it was time to begin to initiate new steps towards achieving the objectives of the group. We greatly appreciate and would like to thank all of those who have taken the time to share with us their perspectives via the: OPWG survey, the WFT Questionnaire, and during the 5th IFOC proceedings.

Where we are confident that the design and structure of the OPWG Survey and WFT questionnaire are satisfactory with consideration to our mission, we have identified certain limitations to these tools that must be addressed. First, although we are contented with the diversity of perspectives among respondents who have submitted, we acknowledge that sample sizes for both survey and questionnaire are small and should not be considered fully representative on an international basis. Most wide scale surveys have a response rate of around 3-4% for studies that have a well-defined universe and a population which is land based. Communications and correspondences with observers in particular, our primary respondent group, can be very challenging because of the sometimes transient and predominately sea-based nature of the profession, and we have not received as much feedback as we would have hoped to have received from observers. Another factor which may affect the results is that even though respondents were given the opportunity to remain anonymous, they might not have felt comfortable being candid around gender issues since they would likely submit their results electronically (for the OPWG survey), and thereby leave an e-trail. Additionally, a few respondents have noted that they had trouble understanding the nature of a couple of the OPWG survey questions, presumably due to misinterpretations of terminology or wording. Finally, for the survey, we have noticed that responses from fisheries observers and staff members working in the same programme have sometimes been quite different or even contradictory.

This trend is evident among many of the highlighted observer professionalism initiatives. Some of these variations may simply be the result of differences of perspective, but others may bring to light communication barriers or misinterpretations within programmes. This may also indicate that an issue exists with regards to observer / management relations, and is something the OPWG will be paying particular attention to in future work.

With consideration to the limiting factors of our findings, we feel this group has taken some crucial steps towards investigating, categorizing, and prioritizing the international working knowledge of observer employment practices. We have: begun to better define certain important observer employment terminology, outlined some of the top “works well” or “desire” for initiatives which have been highlighted as fostering the professional development of observers, and have begun to lay out the steps that we may take in the future in order to continue to work towards the objectives of our group.

Primary Future Goals

- ❖ Continue our information gathering and refine our gathering techniques
- ❖ Building upon what we have found, fine-tune our investigations, while digging deeper (i.e. *focused interviews*) into certain prioritized areas and identifying the provisions that may be used in order to implement highlighted observer professionalism.
- ❖ The following is a list of ideas for future projects that the OPWG may help to coordinate, oversee, or take an advisory role with:
 - ***Observer Short Story Book***- While helping to raise international public awareness of the Fisheries Observer profession from the observer perspective, this project may help raise funding for career-advancement opportunities for observers.
 - ***Fisheries Observer Exchange***- Although much more complicated than it may sound, initial steps for this project would be to build a network of observer programmes and contractors willing to participate and probe into the parameters by which educational exchanges can work for all parties.
 - ***Observer Professionalism Central***- The idea for this project would be to create an on-line site that will act as a public reference library of fisheries observer related publications which would act as a job site where observers and contractors from around the world could meet- observers can post their experience (i.e. sea days, fisheries, gear types, etc.) and employers can post their profiles.

The findings and recommendations of the OPWG to date are simply meant to bring to light important issues connected with the proficient development of fisheries observer employees and the profession. In 2003, in the context of the of the FAO’s Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), an FAO Fisheries Technical Paper was published entitled “Guidelines for developing an at-sea fisheries observer Programme.” Being that this paper presents some primary guidelines for the design and maintenance of an observer programme, it addresses the importance of the inclusion of a variety of observer professionalism initiatives within an observer programme, such as: motivation through recognition and a reward system, “quality employment conditions,” a “clear career path,” “monitoring and evaluating” performances and developing a “code of conduct” for observers, proper “data verification,” communicating to observers how “they are part of a bigger picture,” and retaining “good observers.” It should be noted that many of these FAO outlined initiatives reflect aspects of this group's findings. Though we may still be, and essentially always should be, in an information gathering

stage, we have begun to assemble a foundation to our purposes and have started along a pathway towards heightened observer professionalism.

ANNEX I: List of Recommendations

- * Experience-based compensation systems should be taken into consideration in any future work on developing international standards for the profession.
- * The OPWG should undertake further research into the provision of paid trainings and debriefings in programmes, by providing a similar question in the *focused interview* work planned for the 2009 conference.
- * The OPWG should continue to look into the practical realities of land-based ‘stand-by’ pay and continue to gauge the views of the profession.
- * The OPWG should continue to undertake research into the possible mechanisms which might be developed to ensure year-round work – including the transferability of experience
- * Given that insurance is such an important issue, it is recommended that the OPWG follows-up on this issue through the forum of *focused interviews* planned for the 2009 conference.
- * In any future work on international standards for the fisheries observer profession, the OPWG should look into the issue of paid vacations in greater detail.
- * The issue of disability / sick leave should be fed into any future work on international standards for the profession.
- * Observer programmes and service providers should work to implement prioritized employment, or if they have it, make sure their observer cadre is well informed as to such, and clearly told what kinds of experience they need in order to receive prioritized employment.
- * For programmes with formalized grievance, share information regarding how such procedures work with other programmes that desire them.
- * Implement counselling options in observer programmes, whatever they may be, they are desired. Clearly convey to observers the types of counselling options that they have available to them in their observer programme. In future research, the OPWG should rephrase the question to increase understanding by respondents, defining what types of counselling opportunities are being discussed.
- * Research and determine how observers define “career-advancement opportunities”, and push for those types of offerings. Clearly convey what options are currently available in existing programmes with career-advancement opportunities.

- * Using the OPWG definition of “Professional Observer” coming from the survey, opportunities should be offered to observers that help them achieve a professional status. Professional Observers should also be offered opportunities that help them become more effective and well-rounded.
- * Observer programmes should offer support to attend professional fora for their observers. Determine why observer support/interest in professional fora may be low.
- * Programmes / Observers compile a database of vessel profiles for each vessel in the fleet. Programmes supply Observers with complete vessel profiles for all assignments as part of briefing. OPWG develop some general standards for what constitutes a “vessel profile”.
- * Programmes need to establish and implement policy and procedures for Observers to refuse vessels. OPWG develop some general reasons why / how Observers should be allowed to refuse a vessel.
- * Programmes should strive to properly credit Observers for their contributions / efforts in any final publications.
- * Programmes should identify Observers who have the necessary skills, and also the desire to work on other scientific projects. Programmes should be encouraged to seek out opportunities for observer staff to be utilized on other scientific opportunities and should be encouraged to do so.
- * Programmes should look into ways to provide reports on data collected back to observers. Programmes that do provide these reports may want to look into making it more accessible to observers. Smaller programmes may be able to mail reports to observers addresses. Have a link on a website where all articles relating to observer data is posted. Provide observers with reports during briefings.
- * Observer programmes should provide feedback in the form of evaluations for observers in the field.
- * Programmes should provide the option for drug and alcohol education.
- * Programmes should look into ways to encourage observer communications. Web or phone based communications probably will work best. Utilize and encourage use of already in place online observer resources such as www.ObserverNet.org and www.apo-observers.org.
- * The OPWG should continue to define the training needs of the profession in terms of the types of training required, length of training courses and the frequency at which such training should be undertaken. The Group should also continue to elaborate thinking on the development of an international standard preparation course for those wishing to enter the fisheries observer profession.

- * The OPWG should work on the possibility of developing a core set of standards to be used in debriefing design. Whilst there will be certainly fisheries-specific elements which mean that each debriefing should be slightly different, it may be possible to identify a set of core elements which could be used to structure an internationally standardized debriefing design.
- * The OPWG should continue to define the need for a Code of Conduct for observers, and the overall view of the profession on this issue. A question to this effect should therefore be incorporated into the *focused interviews* planned for the next Conference as part of the work of the OPWG.
- * To continue work on defining exactly what the eligibility and competency standards are for the profession.
- * The OPWG should continue to define what is meant by “Minimum Wage” in the context of the observer profession – both at the national level and internationally.
- * Since standardisation of data forms and species codes is such an important and fundamental matter, it is recommended that the OPWG looks again in greater detail as to why some persons in this profession might not comment on this type of standardisation, and why some might consider that it is not relevant. This issue can be addressed through the planned *focused interviews* work for the 2009 conference. It is also recommended that the Group examine the possibility of developing international standards in this regard.
- * It would be interesting for the OPWG to further examine the issue of observers helping fishers via the planned *focused interview* procedure. Whilst it would be useful to gather more information regarding this issue, at this stage it is felt that such rules should remain at the level of the programme. Local conditions will determine whether such rules are necessary and if so, what they should specify.
- * The OPWG should try to gather specific information regarding the practice of vessel owners hiring their own observers. It is recommended that the OPWG devote some time to determining the types of fisheries in which vessel owners hire their own observers, the extent of this practice, the specifics of rules governing this practice and the employment conditions under which observers work in such cases.
- * It is recommended that the OPWG continue working to identify the specific policies that programmes have in place to ensure employee retention. This work should be undertaken with a view to identifying common elements, which may then be used to work up a strategy for retention in the profession on an international level.

ANNEX II: OPWG Member Profiles

Reuben Beazley (Newfoundland, Canada): Under direct personal services contract with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Canada, Reuben started his career as a Canadian Fisheries Observer 30 years ago, in 1978.



Since 1981 until the present, Reuben has been an employee of Seawatch Inc. in the Newfoundland and the Labrador region, where he has also acted as a Teamsters Union (Local 855) Shop Steward. Reuben has been active in all of the past four International Fisheries Observer Conferences: at the Newfoundland conference, he played a large role with the “Observer Bill of Rights” panel; he sat on the “Observer Support” panel in New Orleans; and, he presented on the “Career Paths” panel in Sydney. Reuben was recently on a committee that helped create the Canadian Observer Standards and has helped define the present Canadian Observer Contracts. He says that “(his) experience explaining the limitations and needs of Observer employment to people not directly involved with the Observer Programme,” is one of his greatest skills.

Reuben feels that the true potential of Observers has not yet been found and hopes that the OPWG will help define who Fisheries Observer exactly are and help folks understand that Observing “is a Profession” and that “the only way that programmes can work is to work with full commitment by the agency that governs them.” Reuben hopes to help raise the awareness of government, fishers and the general public regarding what has been and is being accomplished by Observers, and to help investigate the future potential of Programmes.

Reuben asserts that “Fisheries Observers are invisible!” Although many Fishers may sadly view Observer Programmes as interfering with their ability to maximize profits, Reuben believes that this attitude is slowly changing for the better. Reuben believes that Observer Programmes have the potential to address the needs of both enforcement and conservation regimes and that, in order to maximize results, a stable programme with long-term goals, staffed by qualified, experienced, and motivated Observers is required.

Larry Beerkircher (Southeast, USA): Larry works as the Team Leader of the Pelagic Observer Programme (POP), NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC), Miami Laboratory. This programme has the responsibility to place observers on board U.S.-flagged pelagic longliners operating in the northwestern Atlantic Ocean. Larry has been involved in observer programmes on many levels: starting in 1998 as an

observer for the NMFS Pelagic Observer Programme (POP), on to a logistical coordinator and safety trainer, then as the POP debriefer and database manager, and culminating with his recent appointment as the Programme Coordinator. Larry says, “One of the advantages of working in a small programme, like the POP, has been the frequent contact and conversations with our observers.” In addition to Larry’s observing experience, he has authored several peer-reviewed fisheries science publications.



Larry feels that in many regions/countries, observers may display a measure of “professionalism” in their work, but if they only remain in the profession for a few years or less, can they truly be considered “professionals”? Larry hopes that the Observer Professionalism Working Group can develop initiatives that will help Observer Programmes throughout the world form a corps of true “professional observers” and believes that the key to creating and

maintaining this corps is to properly recruit observers and to provide them with attractive compensation in order to retain them in the fisheries system.

Dawn Golden (Hawaii, USA): Ms. Golden began work as a Fisheries Observer in 1998 and has observed in the: Alaska Groundfish fisheries, the Alaska Marine Mammal Observer Programme (Alaskan salmon drift and set gillnet fishery), the California Driftnet fishery, with the International Halibut Commission, and lastly, in the Hawaii longline observer programme. In 2002, Dawn accepted a position as an observer programme Debriefer in the Pacific Islands Regional Observer Programme (PIROP) in Honolulu, Hawaii and has additionally been tasked with training observers in the region.



Her responsibilities have included: interviewing observers, consultation regarding data collection procedures, data analysis, observer safety aboard commercial fishing vessels, and enforcement related issues. Dawn has also helped review fishery regulations, developed and conducted observer trainings, and created curriculums for the observer trainings. Ms. Golden is a member of the U.S. National Observer Programme (NOP) safety committee that develops National Safety training standards and builds curriculums for US observer programmes. Additionally, she has worked with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community/Forum Fisheries Agency (SPC/FFA) observer programme, training observers

on protected species identification and handling procedures as well as providing recommendations for training-material development. Ms Golden's boat time is now spent on research cruises, where she has been able to work on a number of at- sea research projects. Dawn is presently attending graduate school in the field of fisheries policy at the University of Washington in Seattle, WA.

As an OPWG member, Dawn hopes to help expand upon existing programmes and to help develop a strong career path for their observers, in order to retain their experience. Dawn hopes that this valuable practical (Observer) experience can be incorporated into future fisheries management practices.

Chris Heineken (South Africa, Africa): Chris is the current Training Director and Observer Deployment Coordinator for *Capricorn Fisheries Monitoring (Capfish)* based in Cape Town, South Africa. After graduating, Chris served in the South African Navy for seven years, during which time he obtained a B.Mil Natural Science Degree from the University of Stellenbosch, his Bridge Watch Keeping Certificate, and qualified as a navy diver. He then resigned from the SA Navy to return to university, to study Marine Biology at the University of Cape Town. Chris completed his honours in Ichthyology and Fisheries Science from Rhodes University in 1985. Thereafter, he commenced a career in mariculture, farming both shellfish and sea-run trout. In 1995 he returned to sea as a Scientific Observer working on projects monitoring by-catch in the demersal trawl fishery and as an International CCAMLR Scientific Observer. In April 1999, together with Dave Japp and Jan Wissema, he founded *Capfish*.



From its inception, *Capfish* has built up a strong management team to support its operations, and it currently employs up to 50 observers in the South African offshore fishery and 20 international observers. Chris's navigational experience as an executive officer in the navy and his extensive qualifications in fisheries science, together with his practical experience as an observer, has provided him with a solid background to train and manage observers and the observer programme staff. Over the last seven years Chris has been responsible for both the training and coordination of the company's international observers. Key contracts for these deployments include the CCAMLR Scientific Observer Programme, Indian Ocean Tuna Tagging Programme, and supplying fisheries liaison officers to Seismic Survey vessels operating on the South African continental shelf.

Chris has participated at the last three Conferences. Some issues that Chris believes should be investigated by an international Observer body;

- Qualifications, training and experience to meet unified international requirements
- Observer rates
- Living and working conditions and safety onboard vessels
- Communication (language differences)
- Unified sampling strategies and data recording.

Chris says that “in the future there is going to be a greater international demand for professional observers. There is increasing pressure on countries and companies to prove that they are fishing responsibly and to comply with international norms, with respect to by-catch, shark fining and the prevention of the incidental catch and mortality of seabirds and marine mammals.”

Elwin (EC) Kruger (Namibia, Africa):

The Observer Programme in Namibia was started about two years after independence in 1992, under the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources. The objective of the at the time was to create more employment opportunities in the fishing industry. As a result, many people were recruited with no experience or any formal training in the field. “Special Fisheries Inspectors” were deployed to fishing vessels harvesting in the Namibian EEZ, with the purpose of monitoring harvesting activities in compliance with the Namibian Fisheries Legislation. In 1996, the was further developed to allow for the collection of sampling data by observers.



From 1992 until 1994, Elwin was partially involved with training the “Special Fisheries Inspectors.” He was further involved with the investigation of reported cases from observers since the inception of the programme in 1992 until 2003, when he left the employment of the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources to take up his current position as Operations Manager at the Fisheries Observer Agency (FOA), at the regional office in Lüderitz, Namibia. Since, Elwin joined the FOA about a year after the organization’s inception, he has participated in the formulation and drafting of varying policies that help guide its operations.

As Operations Manager, the key performance areas for Elwin would include, but are not limited to the following: in charge of the Lüderitz Operations and as such be responsible for the efficient and effective management and administration of the department; in

accordance with the overall strategic objectives of the FOA, planning of operational activities in order to ensure quality services to the fishing industry and all other relevant stake holders; and is responsible for the coordination of all operational activities of the department including the briefing, training, deployment, supervision, and debriefing of observers.

With more than 17 years of experience in the fishing fraternity in Namibia, Elwin is able to provide a perspective of the entire fisheries management regime and the development of the observer programme in Namibia and the region.

Since the observer in Namibia still faces many challenges, Elwin would like to upgrade his competency and understanding of other observer s around the world which will allow him to make a greater contribution towards the sustainability of his own programme in Namibia.



Tracey Mayhew (Alaska, USA): Tracey is the Anchorage port representative for the Seafarers International Union (SIU), the largest maritime union in North America. In this position, she also acts as the union representative for the Alaska Fisheries Division–United Industrial Workers, which represents, among others, Fisheries Observers in the North Pacific Groundfish Observer Programme (NPGOP) and the Pacific Islands Region Observer Programme (PIROP).

Tracey first trained as a fishery observer in 1994 and has participated in many US observer programmes, including: the North Pacific Groundfish Observer Programme, the

California/Oregon Drift Gillnet Programme and the Alaska Marine Mammal Observer Programme. Tracey served on the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council Advisory Panel as the observer representative and has been active for many years in the Association for Professional Observers (APO). Recently, Tracey was elected as the North American Chair for the International Transport Workers’ Federation Fisheries Section.

Tracey participated in the 2002 International Fisheries Observer Conference where she learned about other observer programmes worldwide. She sees this group as a tool for sharing challenges and successes and developing solutions in an international forum.

“Prior to the 2002 conference I didn’t realize the number and variety of observer programmes worldwide,” she said. “After the 2002 conference I wanted to learn more about these programmes. I am excited to have that opportunity to increase my

understanding and to participate in developing solutions to benefit all observers and observer programmes.”

Jon T. McVeigh (West Coast, USA):

Jon has worked exclusively in the observer realm since college, observing in three different programmes- Alaska Groundfish, Pacific Whiting, and with the West Coast Groundfish Observer Programme (WCGOP).



Jon began work as an observer with the WCGOP at its inception in 2001. He was quickly promoted to a lead observer position. After 3 years observing in the WCGOP and a 4 year total at-sea observer career, he took a federal staff position as a NOAA Fisheries Marine Biologist.

Jon’s duties for the WCGOP mainly include debriefing observers and assisting with training, especially safety training. This perspective has shown Jon how varying pay schemes and benefit packages affect observers. He has seen and experienced its goal of retaining a core of professional year-round observers in addition to eight-month contracted observers. Jon has worked his way from “newbie” to staff, has had the privilege to work and grow with the WCGOP since it began, and knows what it takes to blaze a career path in the observer realm. In Jon’s observing career, he has worked short and long contracts, sampled on small and large vessels, and worked in small and large programmes.

Jon is interested in working on projects that can help open the door to others seeking a career path in the observer world network, from a path of someone seeking out observing as a profession to those aiming to simply use observing as a jumping off point to other biological and management careers. Jon is also interested in exploring ideas of standardizing aspects of observer professionalism across national and international programmes and hopes to help investigate a clear definition of what it means to be a professional observer.

Tom Nishida (Japan): Dr. Nishida is the Research Officer for International Marine Fisheries Resources, in Japan. Tom has been investigating worldwide observer programmes for many years in order to improve upon Japanese Observer Programme operations. He has examined 77 different Observer Programmes worldwide (in 15



separate countries), conducted by 46 different fisheries Agencies and by 5 different international organizations. During these investigations, Dr. Nishida covered numerous aspects relating to the Observer Programme operations- for instance, he covered employment issues, observer livelihood, retention, data quality, and many other topics. Tom has submitted two summary papers to the IOTC (Indian Ocean tuna Commission) with his findings. Tom is also very versed with spatial data

analysis technology, such as Geographical Information Systems (GIS).

Mike Orcutt (British Columbia, Canada): Mike has been with Archipelago Marine Research Ltd. (AMR) since March of 1998 and is currently the Operations Assistant / Port Supervisor for the at-sea observer programme. Mike began his career with AMR as an observer on the Groundfish trawl fleet and accumulated about 700 sea days working on vessels in a variety of fisheries and on several stock assessments and tagging charters.



During his career as an observer, Mike was elected to the Fisheries Observer Programme Advisory Committee (FOPAC) with AMR. FOPAC was established to identify, address and make recommendations about policy and procedural issues and develop ideas that may affect at-sea fishery observers and the delivery of the observer service.

Mike is currently responsible for coordinating recruitment, hiring, training, briefing, and debriefing of observers, as well as supervision of field staff. Mike is currently a peer member of AMR's Critical Incident Stress (CIS) team. The goal of this team is to provide timely and effective support for employees and their family members who have been involved in a critical incident, or who are suffering from work related or personal stress. Mike hopes to help strengthen lines of communication among observers, programme staff and company management and is looking forward to learning from other members of the OPWG in order to garner insight and ideas of how to better serve Observers in terms of both professional and personal development.



Glenn Quelch (UK, European Union): Glenn has a wide variety of fisheries observer and managerial experience and has a particular interest in the efficacy of observer schemes, as applied to fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) programmes. Glenn's experience includes work as a Senior Observer in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) regulatory area and as a Scientific Observer for Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), zone 48.3. He has also worked as a senior fisheries protection officer in the British Indian Ocean Territory; an integral part of this role being the deployment, recovery and field management of fisheries observers placed upon tuna

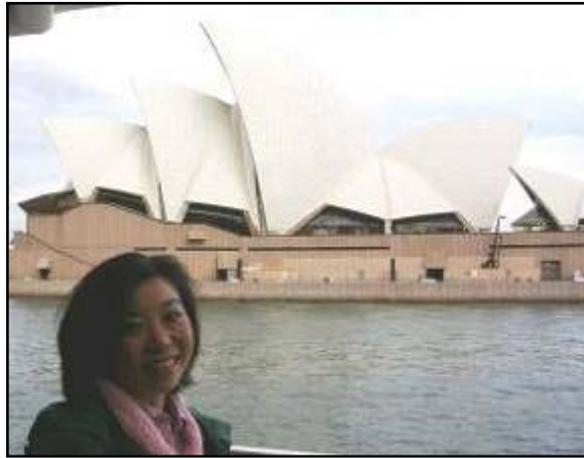
purse seiners, Asian longliners and artisanal reef fishing vessels.

Recently, Glenn has been involved in monitoring the application of European Community fisheries legislation (in the Member States), and has worked with control aspects of bilateral partnership agreements with third countries. Glenn has offered up his services to join Keith Davis as a co-chair of the OPWG for our efforts going into the next conference.

Courtney Sakai (Washington DC, USA): Ms. Sakai is a public affairs specialist with more than 16 years of experience in political campaigns and marketing communications, including substantial work in education and outreach, media and advertising, coalition building, opinion research, research and writing, and community relations. Ms. Sakai currently is a campaign director at Oceana, an international organization dedicated to protecting the world's oceans. Ms. Sakai created and runs a campaign to address dirty-fishing in North American fisheries. One of the key components of this campaign is to support and expand fishery observer programmes. Specifically, Oceana's efforts have focused on three key areas: 1) increasing funding for observer programmes, 2) improving observer science, methodology, and data quality, and 3) helping apply technology to improve the service and reach of observer programmes.

Approximately five years ago, Ms. Sakai initiated a comprehensive PR and advocacy effort to increase federal funding for observer programmes, including outreach to more than 200 congressional offices. Since then, total federal funding for observer programmes has been nearly doubled. In addition, these efforts have helped maintain existing funding levels, despite a difficult budget climate where many programmes have seen reductions in the past few years.

Oceana also spearheaded new scientific work on how to design and run observer programmes that produce reliable data, including, in particular, how to account for the bias created by a change in behavior by fishermen when observers are present. Oceana presented the findings of this study at the 2004 IFOC, in New Orleans, U.S.A.



Ms. Sakai leads a number of international trade projects related to fisheries and serves as a formal advisor to the U.S. Trade Representative. In this capacity, Ms. Sakai has cultivated relationships with fisheries and trade officials in dozens of developed and developing countries, which provide a potential network to address observer, monitoring, and enforcement issues.

Overall, a key goal of Oceana’s work is to educate key audiences about why observers are important. However, we also believe that addressing issues related to professionalism is crucial, because through development and cultivation of individual observers, programmes as a whole will benefit, which will further reinforce their need and value.

One of Oceana’s priorities is to continue to raise awareness about observers with key audiences and to address emerging issues. Oceana has parallel campaigns and projects on observers in our other regions that could serve as a resource and/or possible outlets for the implementation of the working group’s recommendations and ideas. Courtney says, “We would potentially be interested in pursuing new scientific, policy, or communications work based on the findings and results of this working group.”

Bob Stanley (Canberra, Australia): Bob holds the delegation as Australia’s Observer Technical Coordinator to CCAMLR. He began observing in 1987 on Japanese processing vessels that took southern bluefin tuna catches from Australian purse seine or pole vessels. That work was on-going, until 1991 when Bob started observing on Japanese longliners. He also worked on Norwegian, Japanese and Russian joint venture trawlers between 91 and 92. Regions covered ranged from the Coral Sea to the Tasman Sea and around southern Australia to 25 degrees south off Western Australia.

Bob started with the Japanese high seas tuna fleet in 1992, with what was then known as the Real Time Monitoring Programme (conducted by CSIRO). He completed five cruises which were up to 3.5 months in duration. The regions covered included the South Atlantic, the South East Indian Ocean, and the Southern Oceans.



In 1996, Bob was appointed senior observer and was based in Canberra. He continued to do sea duty on a regular basis until March of 2005. This included a number of trips to Australia's Antarctic fisheries, work on auto demersal longliners and factory processing trawlers and shark gill net vessels.

The 1996 appointment, gave him the responsibility for the management training and placement of observers in a number of fisheries. Bob has since helped develop observer exchange agreements and protocols with other CCAMLR nations. Additionally, Bob was responsible for the programme's budgeting and its invoicing for the provision of observer services.

Bob is currently focusing on the integration of technologies as complimentary to present Observer and Logbook programmes. He has an engineering background and tends to prefer a project management approach within his working environment. Bob has "great faith in the worth of most observers and of the worth of many of the programmes" and "sees the great possibilities in technology being able to add both value and safety to observer work." In 2001 and 2002, Bob developed the Competency Standards and the Curriculum for Observers Training provided by third party Technical Training Institutions.

Bob would like to see:

- A longer term vision for what is observing.
- A framework for acceptance of standards (competency and professional) across jurisdictions and indeed internationally.
- The establishment of a network of observer mentors both local and more widely.
- An agreed system of objective observer performance assessment.

Elaine Ward, M.I.L., LL.B. (British Columbia, Canada): Elaine is the Gender and Diversity Specialist for World Fisheries Trust (WFT)

Elaine was invited to join the Observer Professionalism Working Group during the May 2007 International Fisheries Observer Conference held in Victoria, BC. On behalf of World Fisheries Trust, she gave a presentation on *Social Equity in Fisheries Monitoring Programmes* as part of the OPWG panel.

Elaine holds a law degree from the University of Calgary (Alberta, Canada) and a Masters of Public International Law from Lund University (Sweden). She has specialized and published in human rights and the environment, with a focus on gender and racial equality. She has worked with aboriginal groups in Canada and Greenland, as well as with community-based Maasai organizations in Tanzania to develop a gendered approach to environmental management and land rights. Elaine is currently a board member for the Canadian Executive Service Organization. She has worked on World Fisheries Trust's CIDA-Brazil Inland Fisheries project and developed gender equity and diversity policy guidelines on the use and conservation of aquatic resources in our IDRC Aquatic Resources Development project. This was part of her recent study on *Gender and Aquatic Biodiversity*.



Sara Wetmore (Northeast, USA): Sara has worked as a Fisheries Biologist for the Northeast Fisheries Observer Programme (NEFOP) for over 5 years now, and, for the first 2.5 years, was the programme's training coordinator. Currently, Sara works with data quality control and data processing within the NEFOP programme. While developing the NEFOP's training programme, she had the opportunity to sit-in on trainings held in the Alaska and in the Southeast Regions. She was fortunate enough to travel to Australia for the last Observer Conference, where she presented a talk on training in the NE. At the conference in New Orleans, she co-presented a poster on Poundnet observing.

Sara has various experiences in the NE programme that she believes will be helpful to the working group. This experience ranges from developing training methods, training observers, working in the field, data processing/management, communicating with fishermen, and working with observers to improve data quality. She says that “each piece of a programme must be tied together well in order for any programme to obtain its objectives, and having experience with a variety of issues is quite useful.” As part of the working group, Sara hopes to develop ideas for improving involvement of observers in certain aspects of the programme (e.g. developing data collection protocols and helping with data analysis) - she believes that this will improve observers’ understanding of the true importance of data collection and will include them in the overall mission of the programme.

Working Group Leader (WGL):

Keith Davis (USA): During Keith’s nine year career with the fisheries, he has observed in various regions throughout the United States (the North Pacific/Alaska region, the Northwest Atlantic, and the Pacific Islands region) and has participated in numerous fisheries (Groundfish, Pelagic species, King Crab, and Scallops). From 2004 to 2005, Keith worked as a Debriefeer for the Pacific Island Regional Observer Programme (PIROP), in Honolulu, Hawaii.

While in Hawaii, Keith assisted with managing observers with their protected species duties, updated instruction manuals, debriefing guides, and species identification guides, and helped redesign data collection forms to be utilized in the field. In order to manage the PIROP observer coverage levels appropriately, Keith was also tasked with cooperating with the regional observer contractor, the vessel logbook and VMS managers, and the fish auction/plant supervisors to keep track



of the regional commercial fishing vessel activity. Keith also helped train observers regarding identification of and biopsy-sampling protocols for marine mammals and various at-sea marine safety procedures while working in Hawaii. And, while assisting with two marine mammal research cruises off Kona, Hawaii, he compiled several hours worth of marine mammal video footage for observer training purposes.

In the summer of 2005, Keith returned to field observer work and took on an active role with the Association for Professional Observers (APO). Currently, Keith is a certified North Pacific and Pacific Islands fishery observer and still volunteers much of his time with the APO. He has participated at the last four International Fisheries Observer

Conferences, presenting on panels in both Newfoundland (2000) and Sydney (2004), and coordinated the Observer Professionalism Working Group's efforts at the 2007 IFOC in Victoria.

During Keith's career with the fisheries, he has witnessed a degree of disparity among various Observer Programme's operations, trainings, and professionalism guidelines. Keith's main focus continues to be centered upon helping to heighten and maintain elevated standards of observer data collection procedures and observer employment practices. He hopes to help the OPWG frame some basic observer employment principles, which may work to guide fisheries observers and programmes towards successful outcomes.

Steering Committee Liaison (SCL):

Teresa Turk (National Observer Programme, USA): Teresa is a fisheries biologist with NOAA Fisheries, National Observer Programme (NOP), Office of Science and Technology and Office of International Affairs, in Silver Spring, MD.

Ms. Turk began her career in fisheries as an observer working on board Russian trawlers in the Bering Sea of Alaska in 1988. Later she participated as a domestic observer on board crab and scallop vessels, was an observer field coordinator for a private contractor, and designed the Northwest Fisheries Science Center's groundfish observer programme prior to joining the Office of Science and Technology in 2003. Recently Ms. Turk has assisted in the design of the new ICCAT transshipment observer programme. Ms. Turk has served as a member of the International Fisheries Observer Conference steering committee since 2000, served as the Steering Committee Liaison (SCL) to the Observer Professionalism Working Group until after the 2007 IFOC in Victoria, and is now a OPWG member.



Prior to joining NMFS, Ms. Turk co-founded the Association for Professional Observers (APO). She received her B.S. in Zoology and M.A. in Anthropology from the University of Arkansas and her M.S. in Fisheries Science from the University of Washington. Ms. Turk's career has focused on improving fisheries at sea data collection, quality, transmission and analysis through the use of automated and electronic data collection software and hardware in both fisheries independent surveys and observer programmes. Currently she is the national coordinator for the development of the FSCS 2.0 at sea data collection system. Prior to joining the Office of Science and Technology, Ms. Turk was the team leader for the Northwest Fisheries

Science Center's survey programme and has led or participated in survey operations throughout U.S. waters and Antarctica.

Teresa strongly believes that many of the best scientists serving at sea are current or past observers. Teresa says, "The high quality data collected under adverse conditions should not go unrecognized and a greater awareness of their contribution to the sustainability of marine stocks is needed both by improving their compensation and providing international recognition."

ANNEX III: Acknowledgments

- We would like to thank the 5th IFOC Steering Committee for founding this group and for overseeing our efforts at the conference and on the IFOC website.
- We are very grateful to all who have taken the time to respond to our survey and to all who participated during OPWG discussions at the 2007 IFOC in Victoria, British Columbia. The following is a list of respondents to the OPWG survey, in the order that we received their survey: Ross Halsted, Tod James Gravel, Neal Donegani, Syed Makhdum Hussain, John Hopper, Brooks Doughtie, Jason Teem, Pete Canavin, Diana Cowan, Melanie Hutchinson, Eric Siemer, Wolfgang Rain, Sara Monteiro, Brad Justin, Rueben Beazley, Cyril J. Forward, Colleen Duifhuis, Peter M. Scola, Jason Vestre, Luke Holden, Corrin Flora, Pat Bellew, Kim Dietrich, Rebecca L. Hailey, Sara Hauck, Sarah Cierpich, Robert Cooper, Jon McVeigh, Sheku Sei, Mark Eisenman, Vosca Alana Greenwood, Elwin Kruger, Bryan Belay, Tiffany Vidal, Matthew Weeks, Steve Auld, Francis Van Oordt, George Hinteregger, Neal McIntosh, Evan Bing Sawyer, Timothy C. Lescher, Doug Amidon. Three additional respondents have chose to remain anonymous.
- We would also like to acknowledge the efforts of Dave Wagenheim and the ObserverNet.org staff for coordinating a private on-line OPWG discussion board

ANNEX IV: Glossary of Terms

Acronyms and Abbreviations:

<u>Term</u>	<u>Description</u>
IFOC	International Fisheries Observer Conference
OBR	“Observer Bill of Rights” document
OPWG	Observer Professionalism Working Group
SCL	Steering Committee Liaison
WGL	Working Group Lead

Definitions:

<u>Term</u>	<u>Description</u>
Fisheries Observer	An independent biologist who serves on board commercial fishing vessels, plants and other platforms, who is employed either directly by a government agency or by a 3rd party contractor
Stand-by Time	Time in-between vessel deployments, while in port
Transshipment Operations	Vessel and crew engaged in receiving fisheries products from smaller ships and then transporting these products to distant ports. Observers on board monitor receiving and offloads of fisheries products.
Underdeveloped Programme	New, small, difficult-to-monitor, or inadequately funded observer programmes

ANNEX V: Resources and References

Referenced Web Resources

Resource Title:	Website:
Association for Professional Observers (APO)	www.apo-observers.org
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	www.fao.org
General Professionalism Standards	http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/tutorials/professionalism/prof.html
International Fisheries Observer Conference (IFOC)	http://www.fisheriesobserverconference.com
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov
ObserverNet on-line Fora	http://www.observernet.org

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ANNEX VI: Observer Bill of Rights

This document has been summarized and re-formatted from the proceedings of the 2000 Canada/U.S. Observer Programme Workshop held in Newfoundland, Canada.

"I have no desire to sail with anyone who does not show the sea respect."

Moderator

Teresa Turk (U.S. Observer Programme) gave introduction and led directed discussions

Panelists

Keith Davis (U.S. Observer) presented Rights 1 and 2

Reuben Beazley (Canadian Observer) presented Right 3

Scott Buchanan (Canadian Observer Programme) presented Rights 4 and 5

Kimberly Dietrich (U.S. Observer Programme) presented Right 6

Introduction:

All programmes should develop guidelines and incentives that encourage a significant retention rate of experienced observers. Such mechanisms to provide incentives to the contractors may be a performance-based contract that specifies an 80% retention rate and incorporates observers' assessments of their contractor's performance.

List of Observer Rights:

In order to guarantee an experienced corps of observers, the following basic rights must be protected for all observer programmes:

- 1) Observers have a right to a living wage, including but not limited to:**
 - a) Health Insurance (Option for year-round coverage and consideration of a national pool to decrease cost)
 - b) Disability insurance
 - c) Life Insurance
 - d) 401-K retirement plan
 - e) Paid vacations and holidays
 - f) Counselling (peer as well as professional)
 - g) Personal and professional insurance
 - h) Transferability of observer credit for purposes of financial compensation from one programme to another

- 2) Definition of "Observer work" for the purpose of compensation should include the following for each programme:**
 - a) Training
 - b) Debriefing

- c) Deployment
- d) Stand-by time (including time between deployments and briefing/debriefing)
- e) Step-based pay system that encourages experience and exceptional work
- f) Travel
- g) Searching for vessel

3) Observers have the right to a safe working environment

- a) Right of refusal to any vessel without repercussions
- b) No observer to be placed on a vessel that is considered unsafe
- c) Define the procedure for what to do if a vessel is considered unsafe (A national protocol should be developed; information of the vessel's safety should be provided to observers)
- d) Increase minimum safety training standards for all programmes and design training to be observer programme-specific
- e) Establish better communications between Coast Guard and fisheries agencies
- f) Ensure reasonable accommodations and food
- g) Provide observers with vessel's past safety records via web access

4) Observers have the right to be acknowledged for their contribution to science and resource management, encompassing the following:

- a) Attendance at workshops
- b) Credit in publications and other literature

5) Observers have the right to support from their programme/agency

- The programme should develop support mechanisms for observers which cultivate a sense of belonging
- Each programme needs to develop protocols to improve communication, understanding, and support for observers
- A grievance procedure should be established that encompasses the work performed by the contractor or government agency

6) Additional goals suggested for observer programmes:

- a) Standardize data forms and species/gear codes nationally or internationally (e.g. electronic logbook programme)
- b) Creation of a clearinghouse on national/international level for certified observers who span various programmes
- c) Establishment of an electronic forum devoted to observer issues
- d) Direct management staff (e.g. debriefers and trainers) should be required annually to serve at sea as observers, but not as a displacement for regular observers

Some Panelist Suggestions:

- Safety is the first concern, with the observer on the wharf having the last call on accepting a position on any vessel.
- Asking observers to venture out in 18 foot speedboats hauling crab pots at 150 foot depths five miles from the nearest land is unacceptable. "When I have to place my own future and that of my family in the hands of a captain, it is not the (observer) company's call; it is mine." I have no desire to sail with anyone who does not show the sea respect," (*Reuben Beazley*).
- A national protocol as to reporting, inspection and clearance must be developed and followed before another observer is deployed to a vessel not meeting safety requirements.
- A full report on each vessel's safety must be made available to observers.
- There is an obvious need for better communication between Coast Guard, the Department of Transport, and (observer programmes).
- Along with safety concerns, comes the need for decent living conditions for observers. Cases of observers contracting scabies, scurvy, and lice infections on vessels were cited. Food and hygiene can vary from vessel to vessel, and unfortunately some vessels have low standards.
- Concerns were raised regarding observers living on sandwiches and canned goods, without benefit of showers, and then having to sail out again after a short stay on shore.
- Personal safety concerns were also raised, particularly in terms of confrontations with skippers and crews.
- In causing a fishing operation to stop because of violations, an observer effectively ceases the earning power not only of the crew but also his own. Working yourself out of a job is a "weird situation" in which to be placed.
- Observer Support and Acknowledgements should be classed together as fostering the professional development of observers
- An advisory committee involving observers who are selected by their peers can be formed where data users are invited to present projects involving the use of observer data and biological catch.
- Observer participation in workshops (and conferences) is essential.
- Provide observers with scientific reports and management documents that use observer data. This provision will heighten observer awareness about their duties and why they are required in the fishery.
- Observer Programmes should think about tying observer wage levels and development to data quality, involvement in peer debriefings, and helping with the development and training of new employees.
- A programme of professional development of observers should be established similar to those in other professions with apprenticeship and progressive stages.
- A committee composed of people from observer groups, science, and management could set appropriate levels and criteria allowing for such a progression.

Discussion Points:

The Question and Answer session following the Observer's Bill of Rights presentation elicited a host of cogent observations. Following, are some of the main points raised during this discussion:

- Don't put all the information required for proper training at the front end. Early trips begin with simpler work; one moves from sampling to biological information to by-catching information, then to surveillance and navigation skills.
- There needs to be accreditation programmes offered at appropriate institutions along with recognition of observers' current skills.
- There should be a training facility in a central location to cover all the training needs for observers in a particular region.
- Promote Observers who can act as instructors during observer training
- There are many discrepancies between regions regarding a host of observer issues.
- Defining safety can be difficult- Observers' opinions come from having worked on many vessels while fishermen serve usually on only one.
- It can be difficult to define "a living wage." An observer can be on a factory freezer trawler with a comfortable cabin and state-of-the-art technology. Yet a fisherman on that same trawler can often earn three times the observer's salary doing an easier job. In other words, depending on the situation one is placed in, it is not easy to understand what is meant by "a day's pay for a day's work." Sometimes observers have to work on vessels which are "run by crazies with guns and booze." And yet, observers have made the industry rich by sending them out to rich fishing grounds. "Empires have been balanced on the tip of my knife." (David Benson)
- There should be information and data provided that would allow for comparisons across all regions with observer programmes. Such data from operational observer programmes would include the following:
 - The number of vessels and the number of observers utilized
 - The average deployment length by vessel type and fishery
 - The attrition rates; the number of violations reported and the number pursued from observer reports.
 - The estimated annual value of various target fisheries
 - Are observer unionized in certain regions?
 - What are effective coverage rates?
 - What is the definition of a fishing day?

ANNEX VII: OPWG Survey

Observer Professionalism Work Group Survey

Certain topics have occurred repeatedly at the International Fisheries Observer Conference (IFOC) meetings but may not have been directly addressed in the historical conference format. As a result, IFOC work groups have been established to provide forums for ongoing developments upon these topics.

The Observer Professionalism Working Group (OPWG) is tasked with producing an observer professionalism framework and recommendations to be presented at the 2007 IFOC. The intention of the Observer Professionalism Survey is to collect information from a broad level of respondents among all known worldwide observer programs. We intend to reach out to respondents among all of the various levels and perspectives of observer programs.

Survey items have been derived from the 2000 IFOC “Observer Bill of Rights” panel session and from other noteworthy observer employment issues raised at previous observer conferences and workshops. This survey is comprised of observer employment goals and initiatives that have been suggested to encourage the development of the Observer profession. As it may be quite difficult to quantify the results of this survey, we hope that the gathered information will help to set a baseline for hopes, needs, and desires among programs to facilitate the growth and development of the observer profession. Details regarding the outcomes to this survey and the subsequent work group report will all be published in the IFOC conference proceedings and stored upon the IFOC conference website <http://www.fisheriesobserverconference.com>.

Survey Respondent Identification:

Name: _____

Title/Organization: _____

Brief description of your experience in the Observer Profession:

If you wish to remain anonymous, please answer the following question:

My current involvement in the Fisheries Observer Profession is:

- A. as an Observer
- B. as an observer staff member for a governing body (e.g. NMFS, AFMA, DFO)
- C. as a staff member of an observer provider/contracting company
- D. as an observer data user (e.g. scientific analyst, NGO member)
- E. other (describe):

This survey is comprised of four sections: I. **Definitions**- please define these terms based upon your own experience; II. **Multiple Choice**- please, choose only one answer and hold comments for the final section (please reference the answer, if applicable); III. **Short Answer**- these questions are designed to uncover and address some of the larger issues regarding Observer Professionalism. Please feel free to be brief or thorough- but, please keep these answers less than 500 words; IV. **Additional Comments**- please elaborate here upon suggestions regarding this survey's structure and content and upon any observer employment practice, either addressed or not addressed in this survey.

- I. **DEFINITIONS**: To help properly define certain fisheries observer program terminology in relation to specific observer program, please respond to each of these terms based upon your own experience and trainings. Please, be detailed yet concise- 1 to 3 sentences (50 words or less) should suffice:
 - a. Define "**Professionalism**" as it pertains to the observer profession
 - b. Define "**Professional Development**" as it pertains to observers
 - c. Define an "**Experienced Observer**"
 - d. Define a "**Professional Observer**"
 - e. Define a "**Living Wage**" (specifics in comparison to your local economy)

- II. **MULTIPLE CHOICE SECTION**: To indicate the level of fulfillment, need and desire for each of the outlined measures, please respond to each listed observer employment-initiative with one of the following multiple choice answers (please hold any comments regarding these initiative for section IV):
 - A. **Works Well**- from your experience, you find this initiative helps to promote the professional development of observers.
 - B. **Desire**- you have no experience with this initiative, but feel that it may be useful to the professional development of observers
 - C. **Other/ No Comment** - you either feel no other answer fitting to your situation or wish to remain neutral in regards to this initiative.
 - D. **Not Applicable**- you don't believe this initiative to be applicable to observer employment practices in your program or region
 - E. **No desire for**- you do not have experience with this initiative, but do not feel that it is needed for observer professional development.
 - F. **Doesn't Work Well**- you have experience with this initiative and feel that it is not needed for the professional development of observers

*Please mark only one answer with a bold "X" for each						
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Wages and Benefits:						
1. Experience-based compensation system						
2. Performance-based bonuses and/or awards						
3. Experience transferability (from program to program)						
4. Paid trainings and debriefings						
5. "Stand-by" land-based pay						
6. Year-round employment						
7. Reimbursed/provided travel-to-vessel						
8. Reimbursed/provided food/per-diem on land						
9. Reimbursed/provided lodging						
10. Health Insurance for Observers						
11. Retirement Plan for Observers						
12. Paid Vacation and Holidays for Observers						
13. Disability and/or sick leave for Observers						
14. Dental Insurance for Observers						
15. Life Insurance for Observers						
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Support and Opportunities:						
16. Prioritized employment, graded by experience						
17. Grievance procedures						
18. Program and contractor performance evaluations						
19. Conflict resolution and harassment training						
20. Counseling options						
21. Career-advancement opportunities for Observers						
22. Professional development and training opportunities						
23. Support for observers to attend professional forums						
24. Observers provided with vessel profiles						
25. Policy set to allow observers to refuse a vessel						
26. Observers credited in final data publications						
27. Other Scientific opportunities (i.e. research cruises)						
28. Data-generated reports provided back to observers						
29. Observer performance evaluations						
30. Observers encouraged to help out in "the office"						
31. Drug and Alcohol education/training						
32. Support to encourage observer communications						

	A	B	C	D	E	F
Employment Standards: (If questions 33-39 do not apply, please mark “D”. If they are applicable, provided documentation of your standards may help us understand them better)						
33. National training standards						
34. National debriefing (data accountability) standards						
35. National Code of Conduct standards						
36. National eligibility and competency standards						
37. National Observer "minimum wage"						
38. National observer program database standards						
39. National data-form and species-code Standards						
40. Rules for observers helping fishers with their duties						
41. Rules for vessel owners hiring their own observers						
42. Employment retention standards and evaluations						

III. **SHORT ANSWER SECTION:** These questions were designed to help uncover and address some of the larger issues facing worldwide observer employment practices. Please provide as brief or as thorough an explanation as you are comfortable with sharing, but please keep each response under 500 words. Following are “short answer” discussion topics:

- a. Prioritize your top three observer employment initiatives, when considering the development of the Observer profession? Please explain.
- b. May other observer programs or regions benefit from observer employment practices you have had experience with? What, specifically?
- c. Prioritize your top three eligibility and competency standards, when considering the recruitment and retention of “professional observers” (i.e. education level and experience level)?
- d. Can the program(s) you work with benefit from cooperation with other national and/or international observer programs, specifically regarding observer employment practices? What may be some possible benefits to the program(s) you work with?
- e. To what level should the governing agencies, the observer providers, and the observer advocacy and labor organizations support observers? Please prioritize these observer supporters in order (1-3) of desired responsibility to the future livelihood of observers and explain why.

- f. How do you see observer programs evolving over the next 15 years, 30 years, and how does observer livelihood fit into all of this?

IV. **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:** Please feel free to comment here upon any observer professionalism issue addressed or not addressed in this survey. Please reference the section and/or question # when you are elaborating upon a topic that has been raised in this survey.

ANNEX VIII: WFT Questionnaire – Equity in Fisheries Observer Programs

5th International Fisheries Observer Conference

QUESTIONNAIRE –Equity in Fisheries Observer Programs

Filled out and returned by Tuesday (May 15)

PLEASE PRINT YOUR RESPONSES with respect to the country you represent at the conference

1 Current involvement in the fisheries observer profession (check all that apply):

- fisheries observer
- shore-based member of an observer provider/contracting company
- staff of a governing body
- user of observer data (e.g. fisheries manager, scientific analyst, NGO member)
- fisherman/fisherwoman, fishing industry representative
- other: _____

2 Gender & ethnicity:

- Female
- Male
- Ethnic minority in working country

3 What barriers exist for ethnic minorities and/or local community members to work in observer programs of your country?

4 What barriers exist for participation by women with respect to wages, benefits, opportunities, support or employment standards?

5 What components of working conditions affect the equal participation of women in fisheries monitoring programs?

6 What suggestions do you have to improve opportunities for women in fisheries monitoring programs?

7 What programs exist to train local community members and/or ethnic minorities to participate in fisheries observer programs in your country?

8 Is there a policy in place to handle such matters as sexual harassment in the observer program that you work with, and if so, what are the procedures?

9 Do you feel that the observer program can influence equity in the fishing fleet?

Other comments:

Thank you for your contribution. Your comments will help us with reporting requirements to CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) and contribute to research on equity in fisheries programs.

Please return to the World Fisheries Trust table at the conference by Noon on Tuesday, May 8th, 2007 so that your answers can be incorporated into Thursday's Observer Professionalism Working Group session.

*World Fisheries Trust
204 – 1208 Wharf Street, Victoria, BC, V8W 3B9, Canada
Fax: 1-250-380-2621*

ANNEX IX: OPWG Survey Analysis Tables

Table 1. Wages and Benefits

Question Number	Question / Response Detail	A		B		C		D		E		F	
		Nr. of Responses	%	Nr. of Responses	%	Nr. of Responses	%	Nr. of Responses	%	Nr. of Responses	%	Nr. of Responses	%
1	Experience / wage	27	60	12	27	3	7	0	0	1	2	2	4
2	Performance bonus	14	31	18	40	4	9	2	4	2	4	5	11
3	Experience transfer	19	42	17	38	4	9	1	2	1	2	2	4
4	Paid training / debrief	39	87	4	9	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	2
5	Stand-by pay	26	58	13	29	5	11	0	0	1	2	0	0
6	Year-round work	26	58	10	22	4	9	2	4	1	2	2	4
7	Travel paid / provided	42	93	1	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	2
8	Food / per diem	37	82	4	9	1	2	1	2	2	4	0	0
9	Lodging reimbursed	37	82	3	7	2	4	1	2	2	4	0	0
10	Health insurance	30	67	7	16	2	4	2	4	1	2	3	7
11	Retirement Plan	20	44	12	22	7	16	2	4	2	4	2	4
12	Paid vacations	24	53	11	24	3	7	2	4	4	9	0	0
13	Sick / disability leave	26	58	10	22	4	9	1	2	2	4	2	4
14	Dental insurance	16	36	18	40	4	9	3	7	3	7	1	2
15	Life insurance	17	38	14	31	7	16	3	7	2	4	2	4

A = Works Well

B = Desire

C = Other / No Comment

D = Not Applicable

E = No Desire For

F = Doesn't Work Well

Table 2. Support and Opportunities

Question Number	Question / Response Detail	A		B		C		D		E		F	
		Nr. of Responses	%	Nr. of Responses	%								
16	Prioritised employment	21	47	15	33	5	11	2	4	1	2	0	0
17	Grievance procedure	11	24	17	38	11	24	2	4	2	4	1	2
18	Performance evaluation	17	38	19	42	7	16	0	0	1	2	1	2
19	Conflict & harassment	25	56	11	24	7	16	0	0	1	2	1	2
20	Counselling	10	22	16	36	12	27	3	7	3	7	1	2
21	Career advancement	17	38	20	44	3	7	3	7	0	0	2	4
22	Development / training	19	42	21	47	4	9	1	2	0	0	0	0
23	Support to attend fora	19	42	22	49	1	2	2	4	0	0	1	2
24	Vessel profiles	30	67	12	27	3	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
25	Vessel refusal policy	29	64	8	18	5	11	1	2	0	0	2	4
26	Observer credits	14	31	17	38	8	18	2	4	2	4	1	2
27	Science opportunities	18	40	24	53	1	2	2	4	0	0	0	0
28	Reports to observers	20	44	14	31	4	9	3	7	2	4	2	4
29	Observer performance	26	58	14	31	2	2	0	0	0	0	3	7
30	Office work	12	27	15	33	6	13	2	4	7	16	3	7
31	Drug / alcohol policy	8	18	14	31	9	20	6	13	6	13	2	4
32	Communications	21	47	18	40	3	7	1	2	0	0	2	4

A = Works Well

B = Desire

C = Other / No Comment

D = Not Applicable

E = No Desire For

F = Doesn't Work Well

Table 3. Employment Standards

Question Number	Question / Response Detail	A		B		C		D		E		F	
		Nr. of Responses	%	Nr. of Responses	%								
33	Training	11	24	14	31	9	20	8	18	1	2	0	0
34	Debriefing	11	24	13	29	9	20	8	18	2	4	0	0
35	Code of Conduct	10	22	12	27	10	22	8	18	2	4	1	2
36	Eligibility	10	22	10	22	10	22	8	18	3	7	2	4
37	Minimum Wage	9	20	14	31	8	18	7	16	4	9	2	4
38	Databases	6	13	10	22	14	31	8	18	3	7	1	2
39	Forms & Codes	12	27	14	31	7	16	7	16	3	7	1	2
40	Helping Fishers	14	31	12	27	6	13	5	11	4	9	3	7
41	Owner Hiring	8	18	10	22	9	20	8	18	5	11	4	9
42	Retention	11	24	5	33	7	16	5	11	1	2	4	9

A = Works Well

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