

Position ID

E17-56

Position Title

Bycatch and Observer Program Specialist

Office Name

Office of Science & Technology, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Portfolio Summary

Fisheries observers are trained biological scientists who collect data critical to the mission of NOAA Fisheries, including data for stock assessments and annual catch and bycatch limits. Observers may spend days, weeks, or months aboard fishing vessels to gather first-hand data on what is caught and thrown back. This Fellowship opportunity is based in the NOAA Fisheries Office of Science & Technology's National Observer Program (NOP). The NOP coordinates 14 regional observer programs that deploy approximately 900 trained biological scientists each year. NOAA Fisheries uses observer data to create a series of U.S. National Bycatch Reports, which are of great interest to U.S. environmental organizations, as well as international organizations such as the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. The Bycatch and Observer Program Specialist Fellow will serve as a Co-Editor of the U.S. National Bycatch Report Second Edition and support the work of the NOP.

The NOAA Fisheries U.S. National Bycatch Report Second Edition is scheduled to be published at the end of 2017. This report will include bycatch estimates of fish, marine mammals, sea turtles, and seabirds for 2014 and 2015 for major U.S. fisheries around the country. The Fellow will make valuable contributions to this major national report by analyzing bycatch trends and the quality of bycatch monitoring programs. The Fellow also will have the opportunity to shape the communication of this report's conclusions by developing talking points, news stories, fact sheets, and journal articles. As a result of the Fellow's substantial contributions to U.S. National Bycatch Report Second Edition, he or she will be credited as Co-Editor of the report upon publication.

In addition, the Fellow may be able to help implement the NOAA Fisheries Action Plan for Fish Release Mortality Science by improving communications to recreational and commercial fishing communities regarding how release mortality estimates are created and used.

The Fellow also will have the opportunity to support the critical work of the NOP as it works to strengthen regional observer programs. In particular, the Fellow will be able to attend two national meetings of the National Observer Program Advisory Team. One meeting is scheduled for April 2017 at the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary in Santa Barbara, California. The fall meeting will be held at a location to be determined. For these meetings, the Fellow will be able to help administer the online agenda for the meeting, prepare meeting minutes, and, most importantly, make meaningful connections with NOAA Fisheries scientists and observer program managers from around the United States.

The Fellow may also:

- Assist with implementing national recommendations from a November 2016 Observer Provider Insurance Workshop.
- Develop outreach materials related to a major 2016 observer survey.
- Support the NOAA Fisheries Electronic Technologies Work Group.
- Help implement recommendations of an Observer Safety Program Review, which is of great interest to NOAA Fisheries leadership.

The Fellow will enjoy opportunities to participate in other national projects, such as organizing symposia on bycatch and/or observer program-related science at conferences such as the annual meeting of the American Fisheries Society. In addition to the travel opportunities listed above, the Fellow will have opportunities to travel to meetings in the Washington, DC area and various NOAA Fisheries Science Centers. By the completion of the Fellowship, the Fellow will have developed a professional network and gained a firm understanding of NOAA Fisheries science programs, as well as contributed to NMFS Technical Reports.

Related websites:

National Observer Program <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/observer-home/index>

National Bycatch Report <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/observer-home/first-edition-update-2>

Release Mortality Action Plan <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/ecosystems/bycatch/discard-and-release-mortality>

Electronic Technologies <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/advanced-technology/electronic-monitoring/index>

Safety Review <http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/stories/2016/10/observer-safety-review.html>

Expertise Desired

Strong data analysis skills, including the ability to analyze and display data using Microsoft Excel; strong written and verbal communication skills; interest and enthusiasm about fisheries data collection and fisheries management; ability to work independently, as well as in a team setting.

Travel within DC (days per month)

3-5

Travel outside DC (days per month)

3-5

Accepts Foreign Nationals

Yes