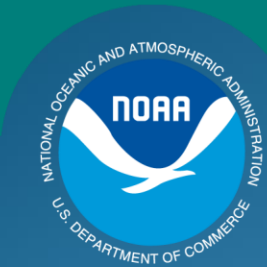


*Science, Service, Stewardship*



# Northeast Fisheries Observer Program 2016 Sea Day Accomplishments update

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**NOAA  
FISHERIES  
SERVICE**

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# This Presentation Will Cover

- Types of Observer Sea Day assignments
- Background on the Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology (SBRM) Process, Products, and Timeline
- Total number of Sea Days Accomplished in 2016 SBRM
- Contributing factors to Under Accomplishments of Sea Days
- Ideas to improve Sea Day Accomplishments for the future SBRM schedule

# Main Take-Aways from this Presentation

- Observer coverage allocations are set annually
- There are a variety of programs with complex logistics
- Not meeting coverage allocations is a concern
- Under accomplishment this past year was mainly in the Mid-Atlantic fleets, using the dock intercept method with observers/area provider requesting deployment
- We are working hard to improve sea day accomplishments and seeking your cooperative effort
- Not meeting targets can potentially lead to uncertain discard estimates and could lead to higher coverage in future years

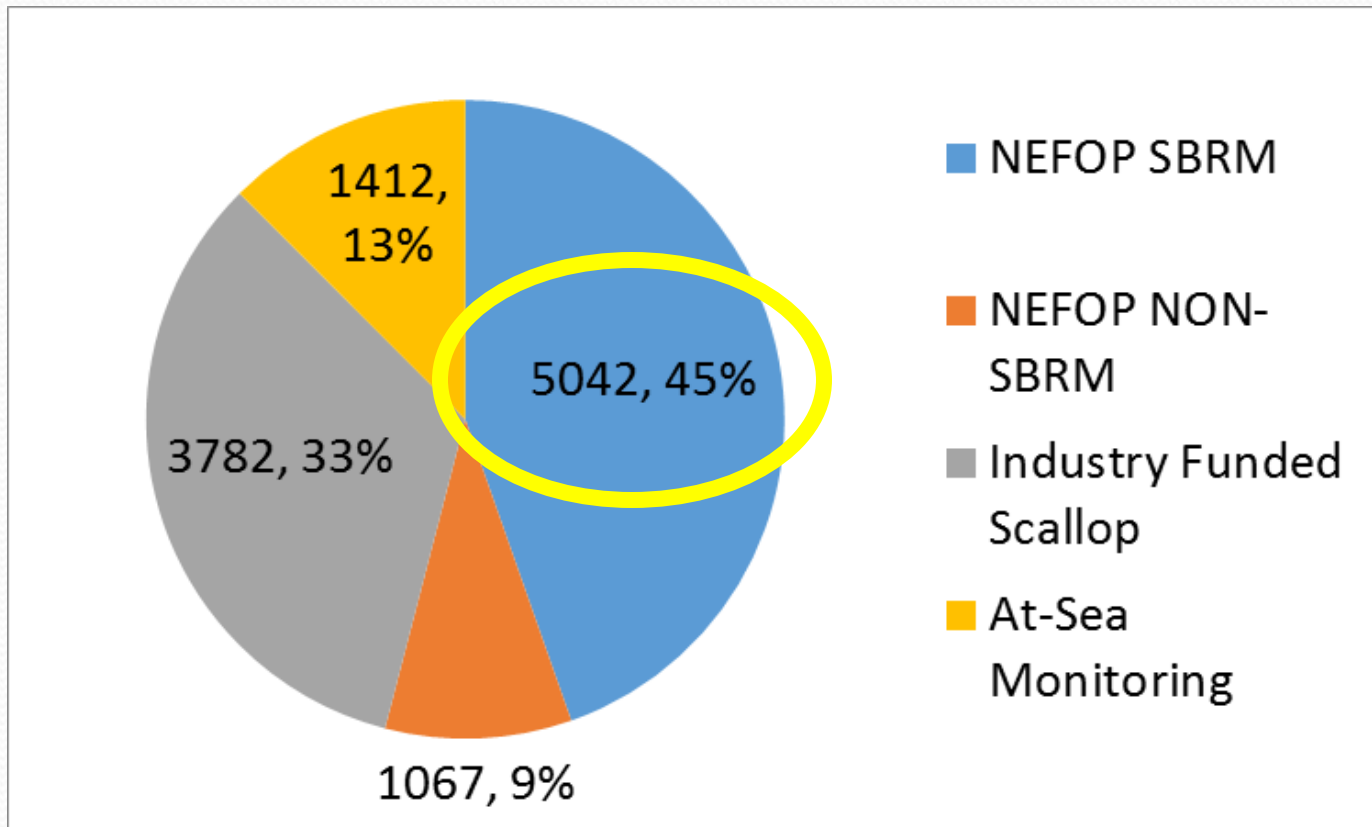


# Types of Sea Day Assignments in the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program

- NEFOP – Northeast Fisheries Observer Program
  - SBRM (Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology)
  - NON-SBRM
    - ACCSP, NY – Memorandum of Understanding with the New York Department of Environmental Conservation in conjunction with Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program
    - ACCSP, ASMFC - Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC)
    - MMPA – Marine Mammal Protection Act
- IFS – Industry Funded Scallop
- ASM – At-Sea Monitoring Program

# Types of Programs & Total Observer Sea Days

11,303 Sea days Completed (April 1, 2016 – February 28, 2017)





# Observer Service Providers

*There are 4 active service providers in our area – 2 under Federal contracts, and/or 4 approved & active under Fisheries Management Plans*

- Northeast Fisheries Observer Program (NEFOP)  
*(SBRM, MMPA, ACCSP, ASFMC Seadays)*
  - AIS, MRAG
- Industry Funded Scallop (IFS)  
*(Industry Funded Scallop Seadays)*
  - AIS, EWTS, Fathom Research
- At-Sea Monitoring Program (ASM)  
*(Groundfish Sector At-Sea Monitoring)*
  - AIS, EWTS, Fathom Research, MRAG



# What is the Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology (SBRM)?

- Sampling design, data collection procedures and analyses used to estimate bycatch in multiple fisheries
- A structured approach for evaluating the efficacy of the allocation of observer days to multiple fleets under Greater Atlantic fishery management plans (FMPs)
- Integrated allocation approach for observer coverage is based on relative precision **and** the relative importance of discards
- **Ensures that sea day allocations are not driven by imprecise estimates of small quantities**



# SBRM Timelines and Products

Step	SBRM year		
	2015	2016	2017
Conduct analysis	October 2014 - March 2015	October 2015 - March 2016	October 2016 - March 2017
Data used	July 2013 - June 2014	July 2014 - June 2015	July 2015 - June 2016
Sampling frame for vessel selection	April 2015 - March 2016	April 2016 - March 2017	April 2017 - March 2018
Produce final sea day schedule, reports	May 2015	June 2016*	

- Required annual report (available through [NEFSC web site](#)) Pop Dynamics branch
  - [Annual discard report with observer sea day allocation](#)
  - [Discard estimation, precision and sample size analysis](#)
- NEFOP [Sea Day Schedule](#)



# 2016 SBRM Operational Details

## How are sea day needs determined?

### Stratification:

- 15 species groups: fish, invertebrates & turtles
- 57 fleets: region, gear/mesh, trip category, access area, & quarter

### Sample size analysis:

- Need coverage to achieve a 30% Coefficient of Variation (CV) on discards estimates of the 15 species groups
- Variance of discard estimate used to derive sample size
- Apply importance filter (remove cells with low discards and low total mortality)
- Maximum sea days across 15 species groups determines coverage

# Operational details

## How are observers deployed?



- **Dock-intercept process** (non-groundfish trips) via Sea Day Schedule
  - Sea days are allocated by quarter & state within a fleet based on VTR reported activity
- Pre-Trip Notification System (PTNS) (groundfish trips)
- Phone call-in (herring and mackerel)
- Phone call-in (Industry-Funded Scallop)



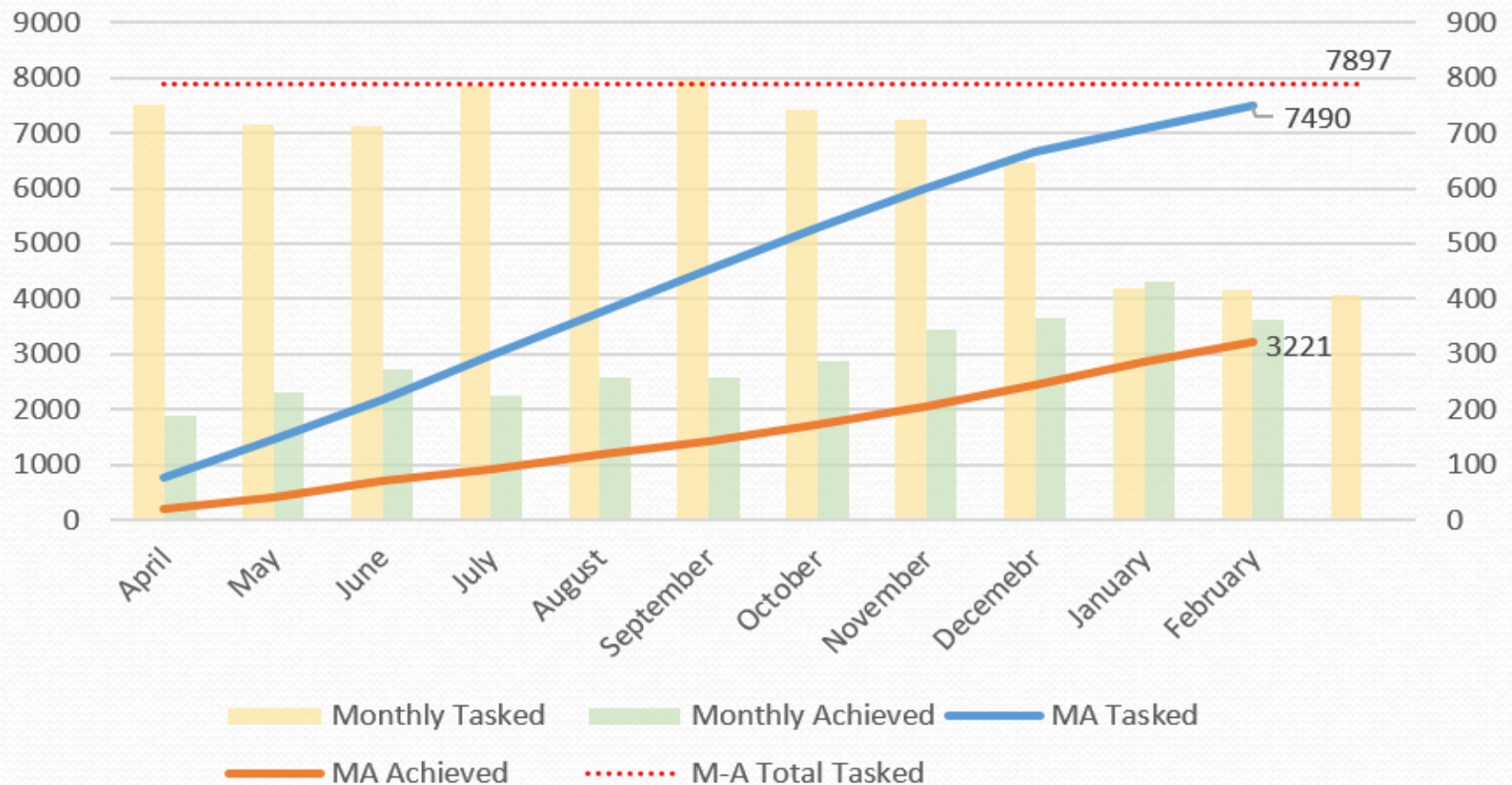
# SBRM Sea Day Accomplishments are a concern....

Type	Seadays Tasked to Date (Apr 1, '16 – Feb 28, '17)	Seadays Accomplished to Date (Apr 1, '16 – Feb 28, '17)	Percent Accomplished to Date (Apr 1, '16 – Feb 28, '17)
SBRM	8,829	5,042	57.1%

- NEFOP working closely with the observer provider & area coordinators to deploy observers on available vessels
- Improving outreach & communication with vessels
- Achieving 2016 SBRM sea days is challenging

# Tasked vs. Achieved in the Mid-Atlantic from the Sea Day Schedule (not including PTNS)

Mid- Atlantic Tasked vs. Achieved, NEFOP Seaday  
Schedule





# Contributors to Unaccomplished Days

- Shifts in fishing effort from year to year
- Missed deployment opportunities (i.e. fishing effort)
  - Not having observers in the right place at the right time
  - Observer avoidance by vessels (before & after selecting)
- Reduction in observer availability
  - Not enough observers hired, trained, retained at times
  - Observers working part-time in this program
- Delays in getting final schedule (uncertain funding)
- Industry's tolerance with taking an observer becomes strained when they don't know what to expect for coverage

# Incidents Reported By Observers

(Not including injuries, vessel sinkings/collisions)

*It is unlawful to intimidate, oppose, harass, or interfere with an observer*

Incident Type	CY 2015 Reports (ntrips=4,179)	CY 2016 Reports (ntrips=4,619)
Captain didn't show at arranged time	95	30
Difficulty setting up trip	27	17
Interference	11	7
Harassment	3	6
Intimidation	4	5
Failure to provide equal accommodation, reasonable assistance	0	4
Gear tampering	0	1

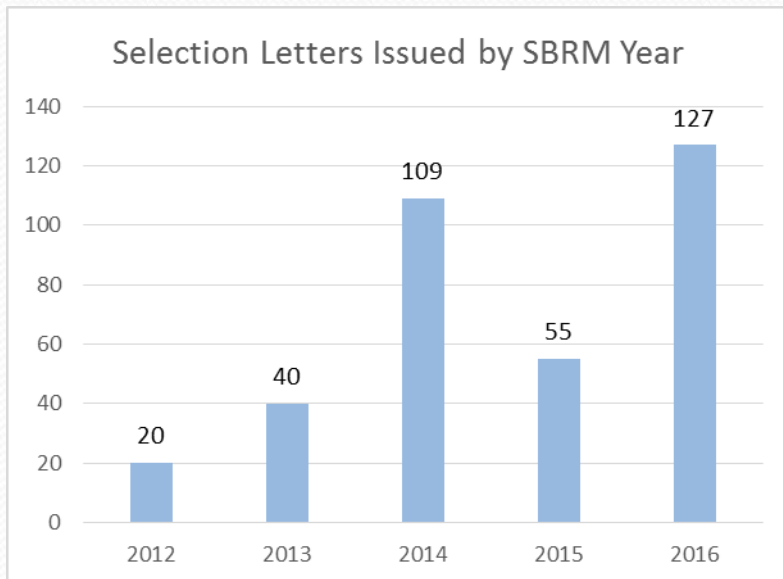
In 2015, 38% of compliance reports were with the NEFOP Program (compared to 53% with ASM and 9% IFS)

In 2016, 61% of compliance reports were with the NEFOP Program (compared to 28% with ASM and 11% IFS)



# Trip Refusals

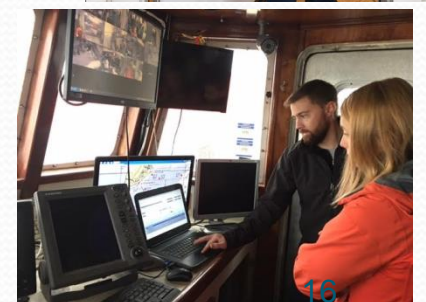
- Once selected for coverage, a vessel is prohibited from sailing without an observer or a waiver
- Compliance issues are reported to OLE when a selected vessel refuses to take an observer
- If selecting vessels at the dock is difficult, selection letters are mailed to permit holders



Trip Refusal Status (n=27 in '16 SBRM Year)	Number Refusal Cases Referred to OLE
Compliance Assistance	13
Summary Settlement	4
Written Warning	3
Ongoing	6
Closed – No Further Action	1
Total	27 15

# Ideas for Improving Sea Day Accomplishments

- Establish a core of Federally employed observers to deploy in times of need or in areas difficult to cover
- Allow observer providers access to real-time fishing effort information
- Restrict coverage to certain size vessels or landings
- Improve dock access/safety to board vessels
- Reinitiate Alternative Platform monitoring of small boats (observer onboard scientific vessel not commercial vessel)
- Outreach with State Biologists and Managers
- Find mutually beneficial uses of observer data





# What may also help?

- Regular updates on sea day accomplishments at Council meetings
- Permit holder letters with clear expectation of coverage needs once sea day schedule is announced
- Reminders of observer regulations
- Develop a mandatory observer awareness requirement as part of the permit process
- We would like to hear your recommendations and feedback

# Thank you!

<http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/fsb/>





# Heads Up: 2017 SBRM Release

- The 2017 SBRM analyses have been completed
- There are two documents that contain the required SBRM Annual Discard Report information
  - 2017 Discard Estimation, Precision and Sample Size for 14 Federally Managed Species Groups in the Waters off the northeastern US (Center Ref Doc 17-07)
  - 2017 SBRM Annual Discard Report with Observer Sea Day Allocation
- These documents will be available online at the Northeast Fisheries Science Center's SBRM webpage