



# Word on the Waves

a publication of the Fisheries Observation Science Program at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center

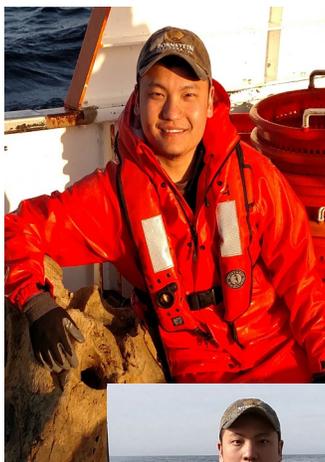
## Observer Spotlight:

### Kitt Lee

Observing since 2012  
Currently stationed in Newport, OR  
with Alaskan Observer, Inc.

Kitt Lee has an exuberant smile and unflagging enthusiasm for fish. He arrived on the West Coast from Kansas in 2012 and hasn't looked back.

A native Jayhawker, Kitt was born and bred in Hutchinson, Kansas. He attended Kansas State University graduating with a degree in fisheries biology. He worked for the Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks after college at their Milford Fish Hatchery. This is where he “heard rumors from the hatchery biologists about other fisheries opportunities, such as observer programs.” He says, “I loved working at the hatchery, but I’ve always had a sense of adventure. I figured a change of pace would be nice. So I gave it a



shot.” He’s been observing ever since.

Kitt joined the WCGOP in 2012 and has been stationed primarily in Oregon ports. He says he loves the sunrises, sunsets and occasional marine mammal sighting when he’s out on the boats. He also values “traveling to new places and ports, and meeting new, interesting people.” This makes changing ports fun. As much as he loves his job, it did take him a while to transition from landlubber to seaman. He contended with seasickness for 7-8 months before he finally found his sea legs.

Kitt prefers working the Catch Shares deep-water trawl fishery. “It’s pretty laid back. You get a fair amount of work on deck after the haul back, during sorting and sampling, and you get a decent amount of down time between the hauls,” he says. His “#1 favorite fish” is Lingcod. Not only are they tasty and have a “mean-looking jaw,” they also remind him of home and his favorite freshwater sportfish, the walleye.

When he’s not observing, Kitt and his energetic group of friends like to go bowling and dancing. They also like playing poker, which leads to Kitt’s dream job: professional high-stakes poker player. He says, “My dream job is to win a



## From the Program

Jon McVeigh,  
Program Manager

Hello Observers!

The temperatures are dropping in Seattle and the leaves are turning colors. It’s hard to believe it is fall already. As the Observer program starts gearing up for annual briefings and the 2017 training season, I want to take a moment to reflect on our experience at the recent 8th International Fisheries Observer & Monitoring Conference (IFOMC) in San Diego, CA.

So often in our line of work we find ourselves explaining what it is we do and why it’s important. The IFOMC afforded us a respite from that norm. Over 240 participants from 31 countries attended and all the topics centered around observing, monitoring, and what’s happening in our industry. It was great! Topics ranged from observer/monitor training to electronic monitoring to observer career development to at-sea safety to observing recreational and artisanal fisheries to bycatch estimation methods... you get the idea.

I walked away from the event with two major positives. First, observer programs are making a difference in fisheries management and health around the world. With so much concern about overfishing and stock health, this is a sorely needed ray of hope.

Second, listening to presentations and meeting delegates from around the world made me see how much depth and sophistication our program has. We are incredibly lucky. We have a cadre of passionate, intelligent, hard-working people who make the program go, namely you - the observers, our debriefers, our analysts, and our management team. We also garner unprecedented support from the government. Many programs do not get the financial and political

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## From Decksheets to Spreadsheets: Integrating Observers beyond Data Collection

Lindsey Nelson, At-Sea Hake Observer, Saltwater, Inc.

*This is a synopsis of the presentation Lindsey gave at the International Fisheries Observer & Monitoring Conference in San Diego. If you'd like to contact her regarding her conference experience or any of the information presented here, please contact Vanessa Tuttle (vanessa.tuttle@noaa.gov) and she will connect you with Lindsey.*

Observing is a unique occupation that allows you to pursue other work opportunities or prepare for graduate school while keeping an active certification. Both the job market and school admissions are extremely competitive, but your role as an observer is a huge advantage. It's just a matter of making the most of it. Here are ways to tailor your resumé so you can maximize your observer experience on paper.

**Quantify:** Add numbers wherever possible. They are definitive and stand out against the sea of words. Examples include length of observing career (e.g., sea days, contracts, years), number of vessels assigned, number of different fisheries involved in, number of companies, number of observer programs, and species verified.

**Field Specifics:** List any duties you've performed or have learned to do regarding observing or biology, including

random sampling design and implementation, specimen collection, enforcement duties, safety training, gear types, fisheries, and locations.

**Practical Skills:** These are skills or experience gained while observing but aren't necessarily biology or fisheries related. Do not underestimate this! They can be applied to any job anywhere. They demonstrate your depth. Examples include power tool operation, communication and language skills, conflict resolution, teamwork, leadership and independence, exposure to the elements, working in factories, safety awareness, vehicle and boat licenses, time management, documentation, and organization.

**Cover Letter:** Be concise. Carefully read the job announcement and list your most relevant information. If a letter of interest is required, use that space to expand and describe your qualification and experiences.

*Lindsey's observing career is currently four years and 13 contracts strong. She works primarily in Alaska, however, she also participates in the At-Sea Hake Observer Program.*

### Featured Observer - continued



World Series of Poker tournament event in Las Vegas and become a professional high-stakes poker player." Think twice before you sit down at a card table with him.

Like most observers, Kitt loves the outdoors. His bucket list reflects this. His list includes: visiting the

Redwood National Park, elk hunting, and steelhead fishing. As with all of Kitt's recreational activities, "with friends" follows each of these dreams. He knows adventures and fun are best when shared.

Kitt's upbeat attitude and superior work ethic distinguish him in the field, as well as with his colleagues. Thank you, Kitt, for your continued efforts and dedication. They are greatly appreciated.

### From The Program - continued

support we do. It's a testament to our country that fisheries sustainability and management is considered vital.

As the seasons change and we begin to look to the New Year, I hope you'll take a moment to reflect on what the IFOMC represents: a worldwide collaborative effort to manage and sustain the world's fisheries. We're part of that effort and we're making a difference a one haul at a time. Be proud of that.

As always, thank you for your ongoing hard work. It is appreciated more than you know. If you ever have any questions or issues you'd like to discuss, my door is open. Feel free to send an email or give me a call.

Stay safe.



## From the Galley

John LaFargue, CA Coordinator

The seasons are changing, which means cold and flu season is here. Given that deck work is usually a crowded, cold, damp environment, this time of year can be a killer when it comes to catching whatever bug is lurking on the docks or on the boats. The best you can hope for is to succumb to it when the trip is winding down so you can convalesce at home.

Nothing compares to homemade chicken noodle soup when you're sick, except maybe chicken and dumplings. When I was a kid, my mother always made me chicken and dumplings when I picked up a bug. I continue the tradition in my household with my own culinary twists.

I like to use heaps of wild mushrooms and homemade chicken stock. Regular button mushrooms and store bought chicken broth will work but aren't as flavorful. Many recipes are cream or roux-based. My mother's version is stock based, which is what I've come to prefer.

This recipe is for drop dumplings versus rolled dumplings. I find families are strongly opinionated about which one is the best. In my world, the drop dumplings are the right dumplings.

Enjoy!

### Chicken and Dumplings

#### For the soup

1 T olive oil  
1 chicken cut into pieces or approximately 3-4lbs pieces of your fowl of choice. Turkey works well.  
kosher salt and black pepper  
4 stalks celery, chopped  
2 onions, chopped  
approx. 1lb mushrooms, sliced  
2 T fresh thyme leaves or 2 tpsps dried thyme  
4 cloves garlic, chopped  
2 bay leaves  
Chopped parsley for garnish  
2 quarts chicken stock, homemade or low sodium if store bought

#### To make the soup

Heat the oil in a large pot or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Brown in batches, 4 to 6 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate.

Add the onions, mushrooms, and thyme to the pot and cook, stirring, until the they begin to soften, approximately 5 to 7 minutes.

Add the chicken, garlic, bay leaves, and broth. Return to a simmer, reduce to med/low and cook until the chicken is cooked through, 25 to 30 minutes.

While the chicken is cooking mix the dumpling dough.

After the chicken is cooked through, add the celery and drop the dumplings on top of the chicken and vegetables. This is easiest using two spoons, one to scoop the dough and the other to scrape the dough off the first spoon into the pot.

Cover and simmer on low for 10 min without peeking. I prefer the texture of the dumplings best if they are steamed sitting on top of the chicken and not submerged in the broth.

Alternatively, you can remove the chicken before cooking the dumplings, shred it and return it to the pot (discarding the skin and bones). If you do this I would remove some of the broth so the dumplings can steam on top of the chicken meat and vegetables versus in the broth. You can add the broth back in before serving.

Serve it up with chopped parsley and more cracked pepper.

This recipe is easy to tweak. Try different types of mushrooms, peas, carrots, shallots... you can even add herbs to the dumplings.

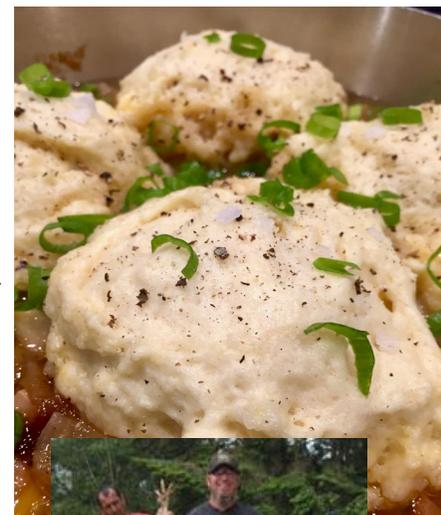
#### For the dumplings (from The Joy of Cooking)

2 cups all-purpose flour  
4t double acting baking powder  
1t salt  
2 eggs  
2 cups milk

Mix dry ingredients in a bowl.

Break eggs in a 4-cup liquid measuring cup. Add milk to eggs until you have two full cups of eggs and milk. Mix egg and milk mixture

Add wet ingredients to dry ingredients and mix with a fork until fully combined. Set aside until it's time to add to the soup.



# The 8th Annual International Fisheries Observer & Monitoring Conference: Photo Moments

August 29, 2016 to September 2, 2016 • San Diego, CA

An entire week devoted to all things fisheries observing and monitoring was inspiring, interesting, and invigorating. The best part? Getting together. Whether we were listening to each other's presentations or sharing a meal together, getting face time was a real treat.



Bo Whiteside



Ryan Shama, Scott Leach, Bo Whiteside, Rebecca Hoch, Taylor Howe, Phillip Bizzell

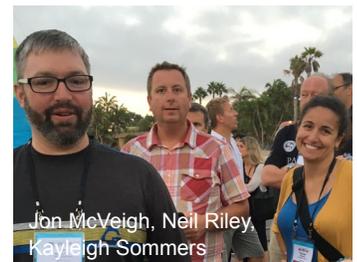
Special thanks to observers Michael Lindley, Toby Shewan, Steve Todd, David Chandler, and James Grunden for preparing posters and joining us. It's always good to have observers participating.



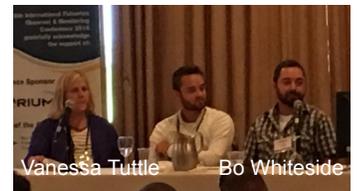
James Grunden, Toby Shewan, Michael Lindsley



Toby Shewan



Jon McVeigh, Neil Riley, Kayleigh Sommers



Vanessa Tuttle Bo Whiteside

Big kudos to Yong-Woo Lee, Jason Jannot, Kayleigh Sommers, Vanessa Tuttle, Bo Whiteside, Christa Colway, and Scott Leach for giving great oral presentations.



Jim Benante, Taylor Howe, Cassandra Donovan

And last but not never least, a big pat on the back to John LaFargue who not only prepared a poster, but was also on the conference steering committee. Great work John!



Eric Brasseur



Phillip Bizzell, James Grunden, Toby Shewan, Kaliegh Sommers, Cassandra Donovan, Michael Lindsley

## Contact Us

Word on the Waves is published quarterly by the Fisheries Observation Science Program at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center to maintain communications with current observers. We want to hear from you! Please send submissions, suggestions and questions to the newsletter editor.

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# Observations in the California Halibut Trawl Fishery

James Grunden, AOI observer based in Ventura, CA

James Grunden was one of five Fisheries Observation Science Program observers who attended the International Fisheries Observers & Monitors Conference in San Diego, CA in August. The following is a summary of the poster he presented. If you'd like more information about his poster, you can reach James at JGrunden@psmfsc.

California (CA) halibut are a large, predatory flatfish inhabiting North America's west coast from Washington to Mexico's Baja peninsula. People have targeted them for millenia. After Europeans arrived, recreational and commercial fisheries emerged and targeted CA halibut using gillnets, hook and line, spears and trawl vessels. Concerns over the fishery's exploitation were

expressed as early as 1916. Since then, an evolving array of regulations and closures have been implemented to ensure the health of the population (Jow 1990). Federal groundfish observers have been deployed on CA halibut trawl vessels to collect data specific to halibut stock management since 2002.

by trawl gear from 1990 through 2015. The WCGOP has deployed observers on CA halibut trawlers fishing in federal waters since 2002 and vessels fishing in state waters, at CDFW's request, since 2006. Observers collect a multitude of data specific to the fishery as well as interactions that occur with other parts of the ecosystem.

The CA halibut fishery's trawl sector historically sold dead fish to local restaurants and at fish markets. In the 1990s, live markets emerged, increasing the value of individual fish (Tanaka 2013). Today the majority of halibut are delivered live to local businesses or at fish markets where fishermen sell fresh/dead fish directly to the public, maintaining artisanal qualities rarely seen in California's commercial fisheries. My poster compares California state trawl landings with West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP) data and scientific literature to outline the current state of the CA halibut fishery.

Observers record the locations, times and depths of fishing effort, as well as identifying and recording all retained and discarded species landed by the vessel. Length frequencies are collected from five randomly selected CA halibut as well as 42 other groundfish species with otolith samples and sex information collected from priority rockfish.

Observer data helps scientists determine the locations of deep sea coral habitats by identifying specimens and collecting genetic tissue samples for analysis. Occasionally there are incidental takes of marine mammals, sea birds and threatened species by CA halibut trawlers. Observers document sightings and interactions with vessel gear, in addition

Landings data for halibut were submitted by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and reflect only halibut caught

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**Observations in the California Halibut (*Paralichthys californicus*) Trawl Fishery**  
James Grunden, NOAA Fisheries, West Coast Groundfish Observer Program, Ventura, CA

**INTRODUCTION**  
California halibut are a large predatory flatfish that inhabit the nearshore waters of the North American west coast and have been harvested for millennia. California's halibut are harvested from Washington to Mexico's Baja peninsula. People have targeted them for millenia. After Europeans arrived, recreational and commercial fisheries emerged and targeted CA halibut using gillnets, hook and line, spears and trawl vessels. Concerns over the fishery's exploitation were expressed as early as 1916. Since then, an evolving array of regulations and closures have been implemented to ensure the health of the population (Jow 1990). Federal groundfish observers have been deployed on CA halibut trawl vessels to collect data specific to halibut stock management since 2002. Today the majority of halibut are delivered live to local businesses or at fish markets where fishermen sell fresh/dead fish directly to the public, maintaining artisanal qualities rarely seen in California's commercial fisheries. My poster compares California state trawl landings with West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP) data and scientific literature to outline the current state of the CA halibut fishery.

**METHODS**  
**California State Landings**  
State landings of California halibut were submitted by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and reflect only halibut landed by trawl gear from 2000 through 2015.  
**Observer Collected Data**  
The West Coast Groundfish Observer Program has deployed observers on halibut trawlers fishing federal waters since 2002 and on vessels targeting halibut in state waters, at CDFW's request, since 2006. Observers collect a multitude of data specific to the California halibut fishery, as well as other federally managed groundfish, marine mammals, seabirds and endangered/threatened species like porpoises. Collected metrics include:  
• Location, duration, depth of hauls and retained fish  
• Identity, count and weight of discard species caught  
• Length frequencies of 42 other groundfish species  
• Sex and otoliths of priority overfished rockfish  
• Genetic tissue samples of deep sea corals  
• Interactions and sightings with marine mammals and seabirds with otoliths collected from discarded work.

**CALIFORNIA HALIBUT TRAWL HISTORY TIMELINE**  
1976 Trawling introduced to San Francisco Bay with gearless nets. Targeted species: English Sole and Dungeness Crab.  
1988 Trawling moved outside of San Francisco Bay from Sausalito to Marin County.  
1992 Trawling prohibited in all state waters.  
1993 Trawling allowed in San Francisco County waters.  
1994 Availability of combustion engines increased trawling from 100 to 1,000 horsepower.  
1994 Southern California port landings ceased.  
1995 Trawling open prohibited in all state waters.  
1996 Trawling prohibited in 100 miles offshore waters in Monterey and Santa Barbara counties.  
1997 California Halibut Trawl Closure (CHTC) established from 100 miles offshore to 100 miles onshore for 4 months during spawning season.  
1998 Spawning California halibut closed.  
2004 Trawling prohibited in all state waters except within the CHTC.

**RESULTS**  
**State Landings and Observer Recorded Discards by Trawl**  
Figure 1. California trawl catch landings of California halibut (red) and weight of discarded halibut (blue) collected by observers. Data from years 2002 and 2006 not available due to confidentiality and permitting requirements.

**CA Halibut Avg. Length Frequency**  
Figure 2. Average length frequencies of CA halibut by year. Data from 2002 and 2006 not available due to confidentiality and permitting requirements.

**CA Halibut Trawl with Observer Coverage**  
Figure 3. Number of California halibut trawls observed by WCGOP observers. Data from years 2002 and 2006 not available due to confidentiality and permitting requirements.

**Yearly Average Length Frequencies**  
Figure 4. Yearly average length frequencies of CA halibut by year. Data from 2002 and 2006 not available due to confidentiality and permitting requirements.

**Number of California Halibut Trawls**  
Figure 5. Number of California halibut trawls observed by WCGOP observers. Data from years 2002 and 2006 not available due to confidentiality and permitting requirements.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**  
Thanks to the WCGOP for the opportunity to help with collecting the data. Thanks to the WCGOP staff for the field assistance, and to the WCGOP staff for their contributions to the WCGOP. Thanks to the WCGOP staff for their contributions to the WCGOP. Thanks to the WCGOP staff for their contributions to the WCGOP.

**REFERENCES**  
Jow, J. 1990. The California Halibut Fishery. California Department of Fish and Game, Fish Bulletin 100. 100 pp.

**CONTACT**  
James Grunden, NOAA Fisheries, West Coast Groundfish Observer Program, Ventura, CA. Photo Credit: Hugh McManis.

## Fisheries News

Safety always comes first. This applies to our program as well as to observer programs around the world. In an effort to keep safety standards high, NOAA recently launched a comprehensive safety review of all observer programs. The final report will be released in 2017. Read the official announcement [here](#).

Electronic monitoring (EM) continues to be a hot topic in the fishing industry. NMFS recently released a proposed rule that would make EM possible on midwater trawl (Pacific

whiting fishery) and fixed gear vessels (IFQ). Click [here](#) to read the rule in its entirety.

The West Coast Dungeness fishery is the star of the Discovery Channel's new show, [Deadliest Catch: Dungeness Cove](#). The show focuses on boats based in Newport, OR. While we don't cover this fishery, many of you observe on the featured vessels (i.e., WESTERN BREEZE, GALWAY BAY, EXCALIBUR, LADY LAW, REDEEMER, and WINONA J). The EXCALIBUR is also chartered annually for the Trawl Survey.

Didn't make it to the International Fisheries Observer & Monitoring Conference? The United States Coast Guard did. Check out [their press release](#) on the hands-on safety training they conducted during the conference using their damage control platform.

Selfies are a societal norm. Unfortunately, our zeal for taking them can have negative — even deadly — repercussions for wildlife. NOAA released [this reminder](#) to be mindful when sharing the beach with our marine mammal friends.

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## Observations in The California Halibut Trawl Fishery - continued

to recording tagging information and collecting tissue samples from dead individuals.

### Discussion

Historical data indicates the highest CA halibut landings occurred in 1917 (3.5 million pounds landed). It gradually decreased through the 1940s and 50s (Tanaka 2013). Landings from the early 20th century include all gear types and are not comparable with trawl fishery landings in Fig.3, but are presented in Fig.1 to illustrate the decline in overall landings since 1917.

Trawl landings since 1990 appear relatively stable. Corresponding peaks are seen between landed and discarded halibut since observers began collecting data aboard CA halibut trawl vessels in 2002. The corresponding rises in legal and sublegal CA halibut suggests the stock may be influenced by oceanographic conditions. This conclusion is reiterated in a 2011 stock assessment of CA halibut conducted by the California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

Average lengths of sublegal CA halibut have increased since observers began recording them in 2007. They've fluctuated between 44 and 48cm since 2009 (Fig.4). The increase in average lengths coupled with the increases seen in total discards of sublegal fish suggests healthy recruitment is taking place.

The 2011 stock assessment suggests CA halibut are comprised of two regional stocks north and south of Pt. Con-

ception. Since the 1980s, the northern population has increased to levels above the maximum sustainable yield. The southern stock appears to be depleted to only 14% of its unfished biomass (Tanaka 2013).

The northern region's increase is attributed to past El Niño events, where ocean conditions allow larval fish to settle closer to shore, taking refuge in protected areas where survival is significantly better. Possible causes for the southern stock's low biomass were the result of lost nursery habitat, poor water quality, and a series of unfavorable recruitment years.

The assessment noted that CA halibut are highly fecundant and that recruitment is independent of biomass, meaning fishing pressure is not influencing the population at the current rate of catch. Despite halibut's high reproductive potential and the assumption that depleted stocks result from poor ocean conditions, continued observations of the fishery and management actions may be needed to avoid genetic bottlenecks or the collapse of the fishery.

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- Tanaka, T. 2013. Status of the Fisheries Report an Update Through 2011. 16:1-16 California Halibut, *Paralichthys californicus*. California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. Marine Region.