



Word on the Waves

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

Observer Spotlight: Donald Frank

At-Sea Hake Observer since 2014
Currently stationed in Eureka

“Keeping busy and staying curious” led ASHOP observer Donald Frank from Iowa to the west coast where he fell in love with the sea.

Donald Frank is a native Iowan who is in love with the sea. Currently an observer with the At-Sea Hake program, Donald is an anomaly back home where many people have never seen the ocean. He says, “my family is pretty imaginative about my job... They think it’s interesting, but probably wish I would’ve picked a job a little closer to home.”

A University of Iowa graduate, Donald started observing seven years



ago after earning an environmental sciences degree. He started his observer career in Alaska in 2011 and joined the At-Sea Hake program in 2014. He enjoys observing because it “has so many unique qualities you can’t find at other jobs,” like the ocean and “the camaraderie on the boats.” He admits it can be tedious. However, he also “appreciate[s] both the very humbling and very awe-inspiring aspects that come when you spend long periods at sea. As soon as you think you’ve had enough, those awesome moments hit you and you remember why you do it.”

Donald’s been at the edge of the deadline: “300 miles away from port with nobody around and the ice coming down toward the ship. The sun refusing to go completely away, or in contrast, the sun never peeking out were totally mind-saturating experiences.” Observing near the Aleutians “redefined beauty.” You definitely don’t get those views in an office.

Donald is currently working towards a master’s degree in Natural Resource Management. He says: “It has helped me to understand the importance of the many levels of effort and complexities that go into resource management.”

It’s no surprise that Donald is outdoors and on-the-go when he’s not observing. He doesn’t let his “underdeveloped sense of direction” hinder his love for travel. On road trips, he’s “really good at finding discrete camping spots with

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From the Program

Jon McVeigh,
Program Manager

Hello Observers!

It is hard to believe 2017 is winding down and 2018 is just around the corner. The program had a very successful year (again), largely due to your hard work. As the holidays approach and we reflect on this year’s accomplishments, I’m also looking ahead to next year’s goals and activities.

One of the more exciting happenings next year are two conferences that align closely with our work. The Western Groundfish Conference takes place in Seaside, CA in February 2018. This conference covers current West Coast research on groundfish biology, assessments, conservation, and management strategies. The second conference is the International Fisheries Observer and Monitoring Conference (IFOMC) in Vigo, Spain in June of 2018. This is the primary international forum for fisheries observer and monitoring programs. See page 6 for more details. We’ll share funding opportunities with you as they become available.

Our annual briefing season starts in December. The debriefing and training teams are busy preparing materials and lessons. As usual, there are tweaks and changes to sampling and data collection to update you on. You’ll also get your annual chance to don your immersion suit and take a swim in the bay!

The observer program co-hosted an exciting workshop in November that focused on ways to mitigate seabird bycatch due to cable interactions on catcher processor vessels. A-SHOP observer data brought this issue to light. We’ll share the final report and any findings when they become available.

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Data Collection is Going Digital

Eric Brasseur, Electronic Technician

Tired of paper data collection forms? Ready to go digital? You're in luck. The Observer Program Technology Enhanced Collection System, a.k.a. OPTECS, is getting closer to being finished. By the end of 2018, you may be saying bye-bye to your paper forms.

The OPTECS project started in 2015. Software Version 1.0 went to sea in August and September (2017) for field-testing. Results? Two thumbs up. Test observer Morgan Golding says: "I finished my third trip... pretty smoothly. Entry is getting faster and operation more fluid. I'm most definitely enjoying the freedom from paper."

Testing did uncover several bugs and our testers requested important feature changes. This resulted in Version 1.5. The testing also uncovered glitches with the tablets, which we've since investigated and addressed.

By the time you read this, Version 1.5 will be ready for field tests. Highlights? The ability to enter data in the order it's collected on deck. The software helps drive your sampling based on your decisions. A balance between flexibility and data protection. For instance, the current record must be completed before switching screens.

There are a host of other features designed to expedite data collection. We can't wait for you to see them.

What's next? We're currently testing Version 1.5 on land to see how it performs before sending it to sea. The goal is to test on vessels by late November or early December. We're estimating that to be mid-2018.

The current system is trawl-focused. A fixed gear version is also being developed. We expect it to be ready late 2018.



These backdeck systems are the tip of the digital iceberg. By 2020, we hope to have Bluetooth scale communication, barcode scanners, photo integration, and more.

Interested in being an OPTECS tester? If you're working in the catch share sector and have an awesome sampling record, you qualify. Contact Eric Brasseur at ebrasseur@psmfc.org or talk to your debriefer if you're interested.

Featured Observer - continued



nice views." He likes "doing grueling hikes that make you wonder why you're doing it until you hit the top." He's learning to rock climb and hopes to be a trip leader someday. He's an avid list-maker although he has yet to make a bucket list. When he does get around to it, visiting Africa will be at the top.

It's hard to imagine Donald with a desk job.

His energy and curiosity are too effusive to be confined. "I try to keep busy and curious about everything around me" he says. "And when I do, really good things happen." We're thankful you were curious about observing, Donald. Thank you for your outstanding work and continued efforts.

From the Program - continued

On the data and reporting side of things, we continue to revamp our database, which is a large effort. Our electronic back deck system, OPTECS, is progressing with great success. See page 2 for an update. We'll be reaching out to more observers in 2018 to test the system.

And finally, we're experimenting with infographics in our data reports. We used the [Pacific Halibut Bycatch report](#) as a test case this year. See the result on page 3 of the report. We hope to do more of these in our other data products to make them more accessible and highlight the observer program. We welcome any feedback you might have.

Thanks again for all of your hard work out on the water. As always, stay safe out there!

Steve T. McVeigh



From the Galley

John LaFargue, CA Coordinator

I love Thai curries. They seem exotic to me, nothing like the food I grew up with. The Thai flavor philosophy involves sweet, sour, salty, spicy and bitter. Often all these elements are experienced in one dish with many different textures. I try to incorporate this ideology in all my cooking with great results.

You can make curry with anything you have on hand. Left over rotisserie chicken? Why not! That half butternut squash languishing in your fridge? Sure! One of my favorites is fish curry.

I was introduced to fish curry on swordfish boats. Chunks of shark-bit swordfish were tossed in a curry paste and coconut milk broth and served on rice. It was simple, but delicious. On land, with many more ingredients to experiment with, I try to elevate the dish.

Initially, I tried making my own curry pastes, but never created one I liked. I soon learned to add aromatics to store-

bought pastes. The commercial pastes are good, usually quite hot, almost overpowering on the chili front. I balance them by adding citrus leaves (when I can get them), lemon grass, and ginger. I also learned that Thai curries usually include sugar to offset the heat and sour. Palm sugar is my favorite, but any sugar works. Jon McVeigh uses sweet potatoes to boost his curry's sweetness.

I don't follow a curry recipe, but here is one to get you started. Don't be afraid to veer from it. Many of my favorite curries have been concocted with what I had on hand. Yellow pumpkin curry, simple green curry with beef and onions.... If you want to try something really special, add fresh coconut milk. Talk about good!



Thai Fish Curry

2 tbsp olive oil
 3 garlic clove, minced
 1 tsp fresh ginger, minced
 1 small chili pepper (Thai chili, serrano, etc.)
 3-4 kaffir lime leaves or lime zest
 1 small white onion
 1/2 red bell pepper
 Handful of fresh snow peas or frozen peas
 2 1/2 tbsp Thai red curry paste
 1- 2 tbsp palm sugar
 1 pound firm white fish (Rockfish, halibut)
 A few prawns, scallops or hand full of crab meat (optional)
 1 can coconut milk
 1/2 tbsp fish sauce
 1 stalk of lemongrass smashed with the back of your knife (optional)
 1/2 lime
 handful fresh coriander, chopped
 Jasmine rice, steamed, to serve

Instructions

Finely slice the onion. Remove seeds and white filaments from the bell pepper and finely slice.

Cut fish into bite size chunks

Heat a large wok or cast iron skillet with olive oil over medium heat. Add the garlic, ginger, whole chili pepper, onion, bell pepper, and snow peas. Stir fry for 2 minutes.

Add the Thai red curry paste and sugar. Cook for another minute.

Move the vegetables to the sides of the wok. Add the fish to the center followed by the scallops and prawns if using. Stir fry for 1 minute.

Add the coconut milk and fish sauce, lime leaves, and lemongrass. Cook for 4-5 min until fish is done.

Remove lemongrass, lime leaves, and whole chilli pepper. If the sauce is too thick, add a splash of water or chicken stock. Adjust seasoning to taste. If you want it saltier, add more fish sauce (cautiously!). For sweeter sauce add sugar.

Remove the wok from the heat. Squeeze half lime over the curry. Sprinkle with fresh coriander on top.

Serve with steamed jasmine rice and extra lime on the side.

Enjoy!

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 our newsletter editor, Rebecca Hoch, at rebecca.hoch@noaa.gov. You can also contact your debriefer.

Inspected Safety Equipment Saves East Coast Crew and Observer



Photo compliments of the U.S. Coast Guard

Safety, safety, safety. We can't stress it enough. Ensuring your equipment is inspected and up-to-date is crucial to your survival during an at-sea emergency.

To hammer this point home, we're sharing this report from the Coast Guard regarding a successful rescue on the east coast. They also released this [video footage](#).

On September 11th, Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City (North Carolina) helicopter crews rescued five people after their fishing vessel sank 60 miles east of Cape Charles, Virginia. Of the five rescued, one was an observer.

The vessel was fishing for squid and had a large tow with a basking shark. As the vessel released the shark from the net, it began to list. The list was compounded by full refrigerated seawater tanks and a couple of large waves. The boat took on water and sank in approximately five minutes.

The fishing vessel crew and observer were able to deploy the life raft before the vessel sank and activated their EPIRB. Several (but not all) were able to don survival suits. The crew and the observer were in the water (some in a life raft, some hanging onto debris) for an estimated 1.5 hours before being airlifted by the USCG.

"The success of this rescue is directly attributed to the crew's 406MHz EPIRB, a serviceable and inspected life raft and quick use of survival suits," said OS1 Joe Watford, SAR controller for the case.

Fisheries News

The southern distinct population segment (DPS) of eulachon native to the west coast has been on the Endangered Species List since 2010. NOAA recently finalized a [recovery plan](#) to rebuild the stock. Full recovery is estimated to take 25 to 100 years and cost \$12.2 million.

The Trawl Catch Share Program turned five in 2016. This milestone requires a five year review. The Pacific Fishery Management Council is conducting said review and released a [draft of the review](#) in September. Our colleagues in the [Economic and Social Science Research Program](#) were instrumental in producing the report.

If you've visited Morro Bay, CA recently, you may have noticed its beaches are looking bare. The eelgrass that usually blankets the tidal flats has mysteriously disappeared. This is prompting [research efforts](#) to try to determine why.

Unusually warm waters in the Pacific Northwest are causing anchovy, hake and sardines to spawn early. A [study](#) published in *Global Change* highlights findings by scientists from the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, Oregon State University, and the Northwest Fisheries Science Center.

On the international front, [global fishing wars](#) are becoming a serious concern. The pending National Defense Authorization Act asks the Navy to step in to help curb illegal fishing.



Photo: The Indonesian navy scuttles foreign fishing vessels caught fishing illegally in Indonesian waters near Bitung, North Sulawesi, on May 20, 2015. (Antara Foto/Reuters)



Professional Development Series: Résumé Tips

Christa Colway, WCGOP Training Coordinator/Debriefers

Hardworking, professional observers like you are key to successful observer programs. Our program is a prime example. Of course, we'd like to keep you with us indefinitely, however, we know that's unrealistic. Eventually, some of you will move on.

Supporting you is one of our primary objectives. This includes your professional growth. We know opportunities for career development can be limited in coastal towns. To bridge the gap, we've created this professional development series. Each article highlights tips, tricks and suggestions you can implement now while you're observing to enhance your marketability and increase your professional skills.

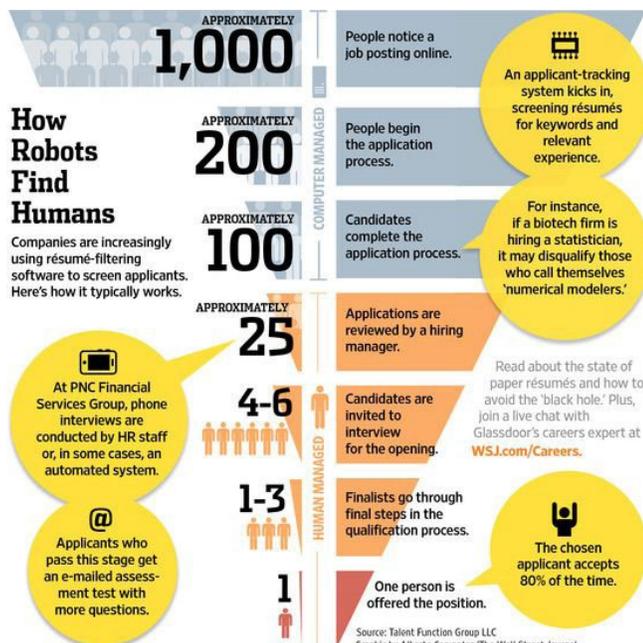
As every career move begins with a résumé, here are tips to consider when updating yours:

- Research the organization. If it's a government job, look for the department within the agency that's hiring. A quick Google search should get you to their website. Is there a mission statement? What projects are they working on? Pay attention to the overall goals. Look for keywords you can add to your résumé or cover letter.

- Pay attention to the job announcement's details and relate your experiences towards them. If a responsibility is to 'plan, conduct and evaluate research dealing with biology' you can highlight that you, 'evaluated changing sampling conditions, and adapted sampling frames to obtain large, random samples.'
- Read the entire announcement. Is there a section stating Specialized Experience or Desirable Skills? If so, you'll want to point out how you meet those requirements.
- It can help to make a list of all the attributes, skills, and knowledge you noted so far. Highlight any of your experiences that are relevant. List your strongest attribute which is the best match first.
- About those keywords, use them! Your résumé may be screened electronically to see if it's a match. Or, the person initially reviewing your resume may be from the personnel office and not familiar with your field. Make it easy for someone to connect your skills to the job opening.
- Point out results of your achievements if you can do so briefly. Have you resolved a conflict, or used problem-solving skills? What was the result? Once you land the interview you'll have time to go into how you achieved the result.
- More is not always better. Use bullet points and keep it under two pages. If you are new to the field one page is probably enough.
- Edit and proofread your résumé! There are apps and programs available that check grammar and look for passive writing. Find human reviewers at community job centers, ask a friend, or your debriefer!

Good luck!

Did you find this article helpful? Have a few résumé tips of your own? We'd like to hear them. Send your comments, tips, or suggestions to [Rebecca Hoch](mailto:rebecca.hoch@noaa.gov) at rebecca.hoch@noaa.gov. We'll use them in future articles.



Keywords are crucial in the hiring process. Be thoughtful when incorporating them into your résumé for optimal success. Remember, it may be read by a robot or a very busy HR recruiter before ever reaching the hiring manager.



Coming Soon! The 2018 International Fisheries Observer and Monitor Conference

The 9th Annual International Fisheries Observer and Monitor Conference (IFOMC) is scheduled for June 11-15, 2018 in Vigo, Spain.

The IFOMC is the only conference designed specifically for fisher observer and monitoring programs. It addresses critical issues facing fisheries observer programs, emerging monitoring technologies, and other approaches to fishery-dependent data collection and analyses. It's also an opportunity to network with observers, monitors, scientists, and industry specialists from around the world.

We know this is an expensive trip. The National Observer Program or the Fisheries Observation Science Program may have funding options for attending. We'll notify you if they become available.

Early bird registration is open. For more information, visit the [conference website](#). You can also contact IFOMC Steering Committee member, John LaFargue at john.lafargue@noaa.gov.

Observing in 2018?

Are you a current WCGOP observer? Planning to observe with us next year? You'll need to attend an annual briefing before deploying in 2018. Here is the current schedule:

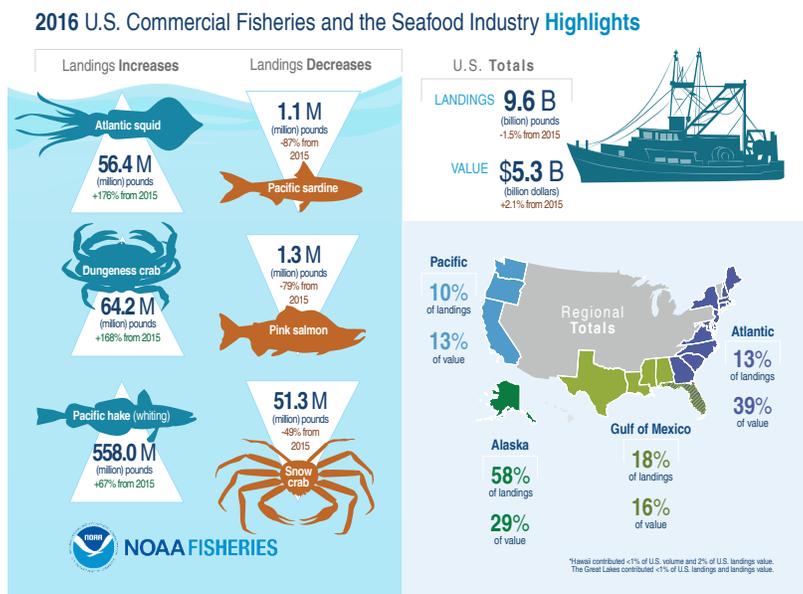
- December 11-14, 2017
- January 8-11, 2018
- January 22-25, 2018
- March 12-16, 2018

If you've been away from the WCGOP for a year or more, you need to attend one of these three-week trainings:

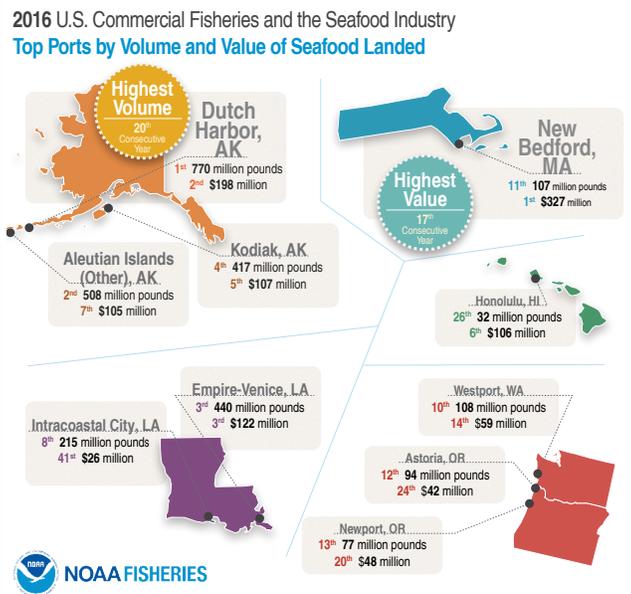
- February 5-23, 2018
- March 5-23, 2018
- May 7-25, 2018

Talk to your observer provider company to register.

Just Released: The Fisheries of the United States, 2016 report



The Fisheries of the United States, 2016 report is now available. It's chock-full of national fisheries statistics (commercial and recreational). The report includes infographics illustrating fisheries' economic impacts, as well as how they affect coastal communities, how the catch is used, where it's



traded and other interesting facts. The report also highlights domestic seafood production through environmentally responsible aquaculture.