



MRAG is hiring multiple Fisheries Observers to collect data onboard domestic fishing vessels in the Northeast fisheries from North Carolina to Maine. The next training opportunity is tentatively scheduled for September 9<sup>th</sup> to September 29<sup>th</sup>. Training consists of 15 classroom days and additional at-sea training trips until certification is achieved. Fisheries Observers collect scientific, management, compliance, and other data, at sea through observations of fishing operations, interviews of vessel captains and crew, photographing catch, and taking measurements of selected portions of the catch and fishing gear.

Observers' responsibilities include:

- Conduct pre-trip safety inspection;
- Communicate observer duties and data collection needs with vessel crew;
- Collect operational information, such as trip costs (i.e. price of fuel, ice, etc...);
- Collect fishing gear information (i.e. size of nets and dredges, mesh sizes, and gear configurations);
- Collect tow-by-tow information (i.e. depth, water temperature, wave height, and location and time when fishing begins and ends);
- Record all kept and discarded catch data on observed hauls (species, weight, and disposition)
- Record kept catch on unobserved hauls (species, weight, and disposition);
- Collect actual catch weights whenever possible, or weight estimates derived by sub-sampling;
- Collect whole specimens, photos, and biological samples (i.e. scales, ear bones, and/or spines from fish, invertebrates, and incidental takes); and
- Record information on interactions with protected species, such as sea turtles, porpoise, dolphins, whales, and birds.

The information collected by observers is used to monitor amount and disposition of catch and bycatch, understand status and trends of fish stocks and protected species, record interactions with protected species, determine the benefits derived from fishing activities, and predict impacts of existing and proposed management actions.

Groundfish vessels routinely operate out of ports from North Carolina to Maine. Trips can range from 1-14 days in duration. The vessels operate in ocean waters, 3-200 miles offshore in all weather conditions. Vessels are generally 30-100 feet in length; however, some vessels are smaller, particularly in the Virginia and North Carolina near shore fisheries. Crewmembers and Fisheries Observers live and sleep in cramped quarters, often in damp conditions and share common facilities. On some vessels, the crew does not speak English. Because of the size of the vessels, motion sickness can be debilitating for some individuals. Fisheries Observers must be willing to travel to cover locations other than their primary ports.

The position requires:

- A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with a major in one of the natural sciences.
- A minimum of 30 semester hours or equivalent in the biological sciences.
- At least one undergraduate course in math or statistics
- Experience with computer data entry
- Physical fitness, including the ability to swim 100m, tread water for three (3) minutes, don an immersion suit in 60 seconds, climb a ladder, lift and carry 100 pounds correctly.
- Not susceptible to chronic motion sickness.
- The ability to live in confined quarters.

- Current First Aid/Adult CPR certifications

MRAG will require a one-year commitment to the program if hired. Observers will earn between \$220 and \$281.50 per sea day while deployed. Land hours start at \$14.53 for hours worked and are eligible for overtime at \$21.80/hr. Regular pay grade steps will be based on seaday experience in the fishery and prior experience in other MRAG observer programs. MRAG provides a comprehensive benefit package that includes vacation and holiday pay, life insurance, and health coverage. Additional coverage, including critical care, vision and dental coverage, is available at reasonable rates, with options for family coverage as well.

Other incentives MRAG provides to our NE staff:

- Employee bunkhouses in the major ports depending on capacity
- Direct deposit of paycheck biweekly
- Expense reimbursements paid with payroll on biweekly basis
- Flexible scheduling and time off request policy
- Transparent, forthright communication between management, area coordinators, and observers
- Incentive program to reward good performance and data quality
- Opportunities for special projects and advanced training in other programs

Work will begin immediately following training and certification.

**Please send your resume, cover letter, three (3) references, and college transcripts to Bruce Lambert at [bruce.lambert@mragamericas.com](mailto:bruce.lambert@mragamericas.com)**