

INTERNATIONAL DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM
PROGRAMA INTERNACIONAL PARA LA CONSERVACION DE LOS DELFINES

PERMANENT WORKING GROUP ON TUNA TRACKING

13TH MEETING

ANTIGUA (GUATEMALA)

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**ESTIMATED COSTS OF KEEPING OBSERVERS ABOARD VESSELS
UNTIL THE CATCH IS UNLOADED**

During the 12th meeting of the Working Group in February 2003, the Secretariat explained the cases in which the party responsible for the providing the TTF to the Secretariat was listed as “unknown”. This occurs when the observer leaves the vessel before it reaches its port of unloading; if the TTFs are not subsequently sent to the Secretariat, the Secretariat does not know where the tuna was unloaded. The idea that the observer stay aboard the vessel until it reached its port of unloading had been explored in the past, but on this occasion the Secretariat was asked to prepare estimates of the cost of this approach.

Observers are usually disembarked in a port other than that where the vessel unloads if the vessel cannot load more fish, because it is full to capacity, has mechanical problems, or insufficient crew, or for some other reason, or if it is leaving the eastern Pacific. Disembarking an observer usually reduces costs of sea pay, meals and lodging, and travel.

The most common reasons for disembarking the observer are:

1. The vessel arrives in Panama to transit the canal and unload in a port in the Caribbean (60 trips in 2002); and
2. The vessel arrives at a port in the Pacific, usually Panama, and continues to another port in the Pacific, usually in Central America, to unload (10 trips in 2002).

In the first instance, the additional costs associated with keeping the observer aboard the vessel until it arrives at the unloading port depend on the country of unloading (Colombia or Venezuela) and on the observer’s nationality: Panamanian and Colombian observers are assigned to the Panama office, Venezuelan observers (IATTC and PNOV) to the Cumaná office.

The additional costs in the second instance depend on which field office the observer is assigned to and on the unloading port.

Based on the 70 such trips in both categories in 2002, the projected total additional costs for keeping the observer aboard the vessel until it reaches its unloading port are as follows:

Salaries, meals and lodging	US\$ 13,400
Travel (land and air)	US\$ 12,100
Total	US\$ 25,500

These calculations assume that the competent national authority would meet the vessel when it arrives in port to collect the original TTF; otherwise, the program would incur additional costs.

Also, at the 12th meeting of the Working Group, Colombia requested that the Secretariat investigate the procedures used by its office in Panama for sending original TTFs to the Colombian national authority. The Secretariat has looked into this matter, and can report that the procedures are correct, and that its offices in Ecuador, Panama and Venezuela are following them properly.