

**NORTHEAST FISHERIES SCIENCE CENTER
FISHERIES SAMPLING BRANCH**

A comparison between At-Sea Monitors and Northeast Fisheries Observers

This table will help describe the difference between the At-Sea Monitoring Program (ASM) monitors and Northeast Fisheries Observer Program (NEFOP) Observers. Both programs are developed and overseen by NMFS Fisheries Sampling Branch at the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC). The main difference between the two is that monitors will be collecting a reduced set of data, thereby reducing training time, gear requirements, and internal support resources.

NEFOP observers and ASM monitors are trained by the NEFSC. Data collected by both programs are processed by the NEFSC. Observers and monitors identify and record all species caught, are trained in sub-sampling methodology, and receive advanced training in vessel safety.

Listed below is a table highlighting the differences between the ASM monitors and the NEFOP observers.

TASKS/ REQUIREMENTS	ASM MONITOR	NEFOP OBSERVER
BACHELOR'S DEGREE	No (high school diploma or equivalency)	Yes
NMFS TRAINING DURATION	11 days	15 days
DATA COLLECTION	Basic & Focused	Advanced & Diverse (more logs/sheets, higher complexity, greater variety)
BIOLOGICAL SAMPLING	Length frequencies of certain key fish only (few physical samples)	High degree and diversity of catch sampling, including collection of biological samples and necropsies of mammals, turtles, birds, fish, and crustaceans
AMOUNT OF GEAR ISSUED	45 items	85 items
SUPPLEMENTAL RESEARCH PROJECTS	No	Yes