How to Become a Fisheries Observer

If you like working outside, enjoy being on boats, like math and science, have initiative and can work independently you might want to be a Fisheries Observer.

Training offered by the hiring company including written and oral tests. Also activities that will help you demonstrate your potential to collect good data and react to unfamiliar situations on the sea.

Take as many science and math classes as possible. Also look for summer camps and volunteer opportunities to get experience in the field.

Bachelor’s degree in the natural sciences, biology, or similar.

Look for internships for summer experience in marine science and fisheries work.

* Different observing organizations may have more or less requirements. This is a generalized example to get you started on the right path.
Fisheries Observer Job Description:
Fisheries observers monitor and record catch data from fishing vessels and processing facilities. Some of the information observers collect is fish length, weight, sex, age-structures, and species. They may also keep track of bird and marine mammal sightings along with any interactions. Observer programs often are responsible for collecting the largest part of fisheries management data and is a very important job. Opportunities to do marine mammal and crab observing work are also available.

Pay Range:
$3,900 - $6,340 a month

Location:
Mostly Dutch Harbor and Kodiak areas

A few organizations that hire Fisheries observers:
- Alaskan Observers, Inc.
- Saltwater Inc.
- Northwest Observers
- TechSEA International Inc.

Schools in Alaska that offer degrees for observer careers:
- University Alaska Fairbanks
- University of Anchorage
- University of Alaska Southeast
- Alaska Pacific University
- Prince William Sound Community College
- Kenai Peninsula College

Places to find more information:
- Organizations websites
- Future Alaskans Website - summer opportunities, internships, camps, jobs, etc. (http://www.sfos.uaf.edu/future)
- Job boards (some examples):
  - http://www.jobs.state.ak.us
  - http://www.sfos.uaf.edu/jobs
  - http://www.alaskajobfinder.com