

NOAA UAS Working Group
Marine debris surveys, Northwestern Hawaiian Islands

Category: Visual Surveillance/Detection Capability

Description of Visual Observer Plan

(Revised 8/7/2007)

It is anticipated that the UA will remain within visual line-of-sight of the operator (who will be located on the mother ship) or an observer located on a small boat. The observer(s) will be in direct radio contact with the UAS operator and with the officer on deck of the mother ship. The observer will be positioned no greater than one nautical mile laterally and 3,000 ft vertically from the UA.

Multiple open-ocean UAS flights are anticipated and will be used to augment the ship-based surveys for marine debris and derelict fishing gear. These surveys may be conducted by autonomously flying the aircraft in a predetermined survey pattern and then flying to a designated waypoint for a water landing and recovery. The survey pattern may extend beyond visual line-of-sight of the mother ship. Although interactions with other manned aircraft are extremely improbable due to the remote nature of the mission site, observers located in a small boat will still be utilized during the times the UA is beyond visual line-of-sight of the UAS operator.