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### **NOAA Office of Law Enforcement helps the hungry**

NOAA Office of Law Enforcement donated almost 33,000 cans of tuna to the Community FoodBank of New Jersey on Wednesday.

"The call from NOAA Office of Law Enforcement advising of the tuna donation couldn't have been timed better," said Timothy J. Vogel, director of food sourcing for the FoodBank. "With food requests reaching an all time high, 33,000 cans of tuna, an important source of protein, will go a long way in supporting members of the community who are struggling to feed their families."

The cans were seized from a Peruvian company that attempted to import tuna mislabeled as bonito, a different species of fish, into the United States in violation of the Lacey Act, which prohibits the failure to accurately mark/label shipments of fish and wildlife.

The tuna was tested for safety by NOAA's National Seafood Inspection Laboratory before it was donated to the food bank. There are no safety concerns with the product.

NOAA OLE decided to donate the tuna to the Community FoodBank of New Jersey because it distributes more than 23 million pounds of food and groceries a year, ultimately serving three-quarters of a million low-income people in 18 of New Jersey's 21 counties.

"NOAA hopes that the tuna will ease the burden of hunger for numerous families during the holidays and through these tough economic times," said Special Agent Anthony Truong of NOAA OLE's Northeast Division.

The investigation was conducted by special agents in NOAA OLE's field offices in New Jersey and New York with the assistance of NOAA's Tuna Tracking and Verification Program in Long Beach, Calif. The TTVP monitors the domestic production and legal importation of all frozen and processed tuna products nationwide.

Agents first suspected the fish was illegal after suspicious import documents were submitted to NOAA. The seizure resulted from a two-month investigation, during which agents obtained an admission from company representatives that the shipment contained mislabeled tuna. Subsequently, the company abandoned all legal right and interest in the tuna.

"NOAA considers the mislabeling of imported products a serious violation that could defraud consumers," explained Special Agent in Charge Andrew Cohen of NOAA OLE's Northeast Division.

The mission of NOAA OLE is to ensure compliance with the laws and regulations enacted to conserve and protect our nation's marine resources. To report any suspected Fisheries violation, please contact the NOAA OLE national hotline at 1-800-853-1964.