



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

**Office of Law
Enforcement**

NOAA Fisheries Enforcement Programs and Operations

Bruce Buckson, Director

October 25, 2012

Mission

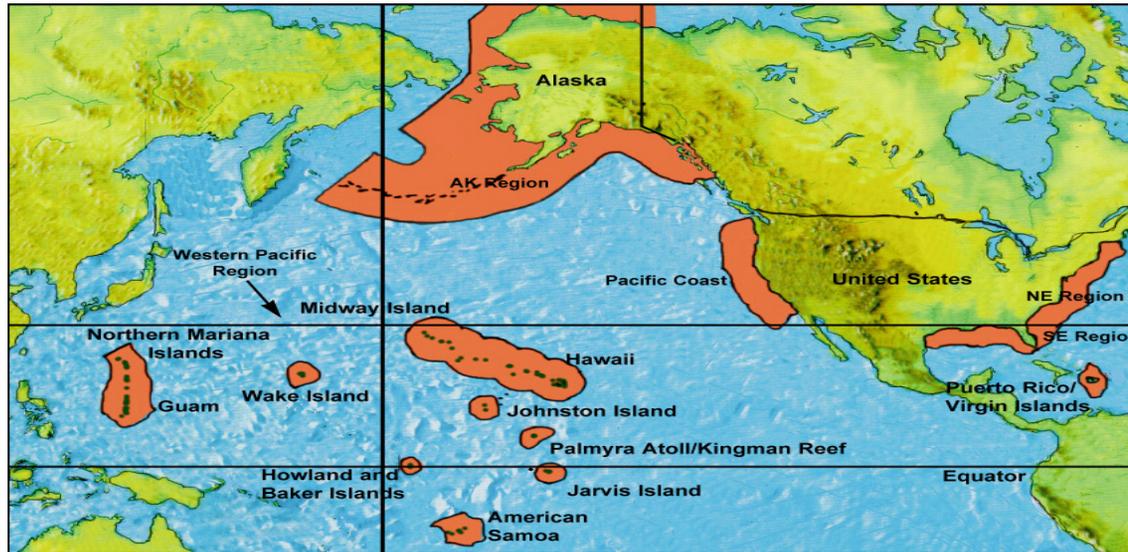
- The mission of NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement is to **protect global marine resources** by **enforcing domestic laws and international treaties and obligations** dedicated to **protecting wildlife and their natural habitat** for the use and enjoyment of future generations.



About us

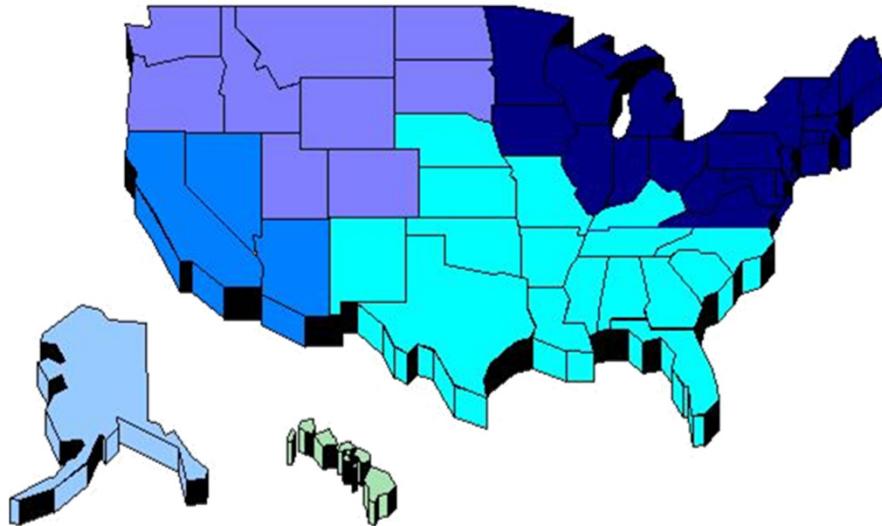
- The Office for Law Enforcement has a mission across all NOAA lines as a matrix program.
- The Office of General Counsel Enforcement Section is the primary legal partner of OLE and prosecutes civil cases.
- The Department of Justice and U.S. Attorney's Offices are the legal advisors and prosecutorial partners in criminal matters.
- U.S. Coast Guard is our primary federal enforcement partner.

U.S. Primary Jurisdiction



- 3.36 million square miles of open ocean
- More than 95,000 miles of U.S. coastline
- 13 National Marine Sanctuaries and 4 Marine National Monuments
- High seas and international trade relating to U.S. treaties and international law

OLE Divisions



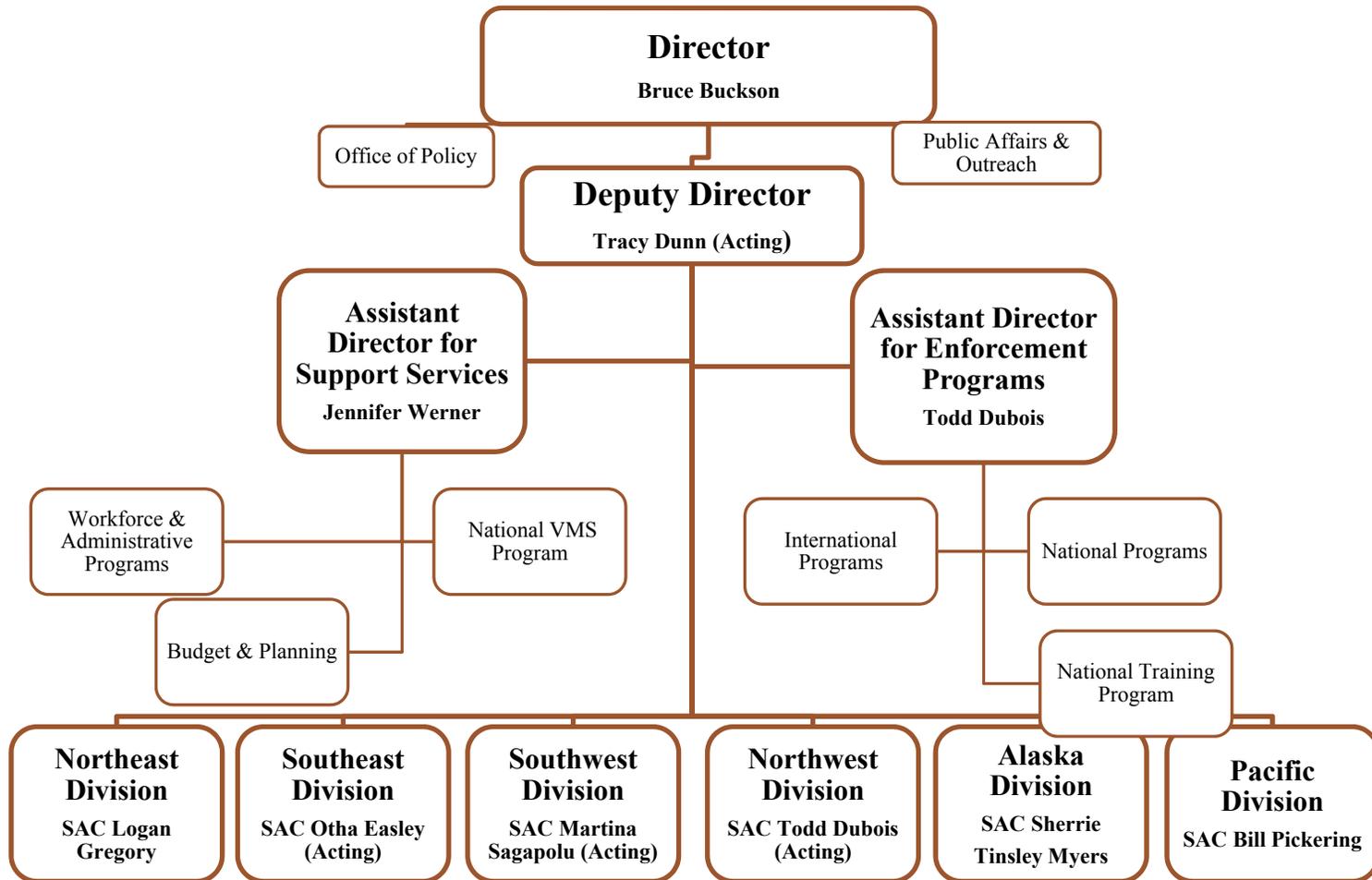
Headquarters in Silver Spring, MD

Six Divisions co-located with Regional Offices (NE, SE, AK, NW, SW and PI)

53 field offices throughout the United States and U.S. territories

108 Special Agents - 26 Enforcement Officers - 73 Support Staff

Organization



Primary laws OLE enforces



- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
- Endangered Species Act
- Marine Mammal Protection Act
- Lacey Act
- National Marine Sanctuaries Act

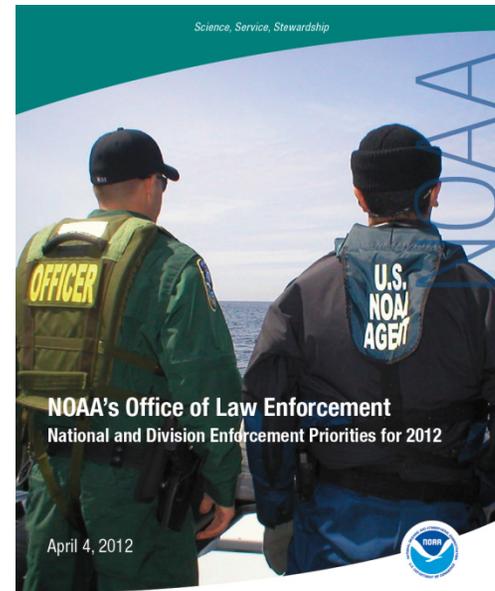
902 cases opened in 2012

- Endangered Species Act 91
- Lacey Act 120
- Magnuson-Stevens Act 438
- Marine Mammal Protection Act 49
- National Marine Sanctuary Act 53
- All Others 151



Enforcement priorities for 2012

- National Priorities
 - Support Sustainable Fisheries and Safe Seafood
 - Support Recovered and Healthy Marine and Coastal Species and Healthy Habitats
- Supporting Priorities
 - Compliance Assistance
 - Observers



- http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ole/docs/2012/ole_priorities_2012.pdf

How we accomplish our priorities

- Criminal and civil investigations;
- Patrols, inspections and monitoring;
- Partnerships with state, tribal, federal and nongovernmental organizations;
- Cooperative fisheries enforcement to implement international treaties and obligations;
- Outreach and compliance assistance; and
- Use of innovative technological tools.

Cooperative fisheries enforcement to implement international treaties and obligations

- Investigation of IUU fishing activity and trafficking in illegal fish and fish product
- Fisheries Enforcement Capacity Building
- RFMO Participation
- Port State Measures and other IUU-related legislation
- NOAA “Level the Playing Field” Plan 2012



Federal partnerships

U.S. Coast Guard
27 JEA State & U.S. Territory Partners
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
U.S. Customs & Border Protection
U.S. Marshals Service
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms
Drug Enforcement Administration
Food & Drug Administration
U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Offices



State partnerships



- Joint Enforcement Agreements with 27 coastal states and U.S. territories
 - Alabama, Alaska, American Samoa, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, US Virgin Islands and Washington

Communication, education and outreach

- Developed a comprehensive communications and engagement strategy
- Increased number of uniformed enforcement officers and dock patrols aimed at education
- Created and utilized opportunities for direct engagement between fisheries stakeholders and OLE director



Compliance assistance



OLE has established a comprehensive and effective compliance program.

- Built on input from stakeholders
- Expand existing programs and partnerships around the country
- Non-enforcement context

Pilot program in Northeast Division

- Compliance assistance liaison
- Outreach coordinator

Vessel Monitoring System

- Operational Since 1994
- 4,512 active vessels equipped with VMS
- Active in 17 fisheries nationwide
- 7 active monitoring locations
 - HQ
 - NE
 - SE
 - AK (Juneau and Kodiak)
 - NW
 - PI
- 5 type-approved mobile transmitters

Why does a strong enforcement program matter?

Our work

- sustains fish stocks for commercial, recreational, tribal and US territorial users;
- prevents the illegal, unregulated and unreported harvesting and trafficking of fish and wildlife;
- protects marine mammals and endangered species;
- maintains and restores marine and inland water habitats;
- conserves coral reefs and marine protected areas;
- levels the playing field for all industry participants; and
- holds accountable those who violate the law.

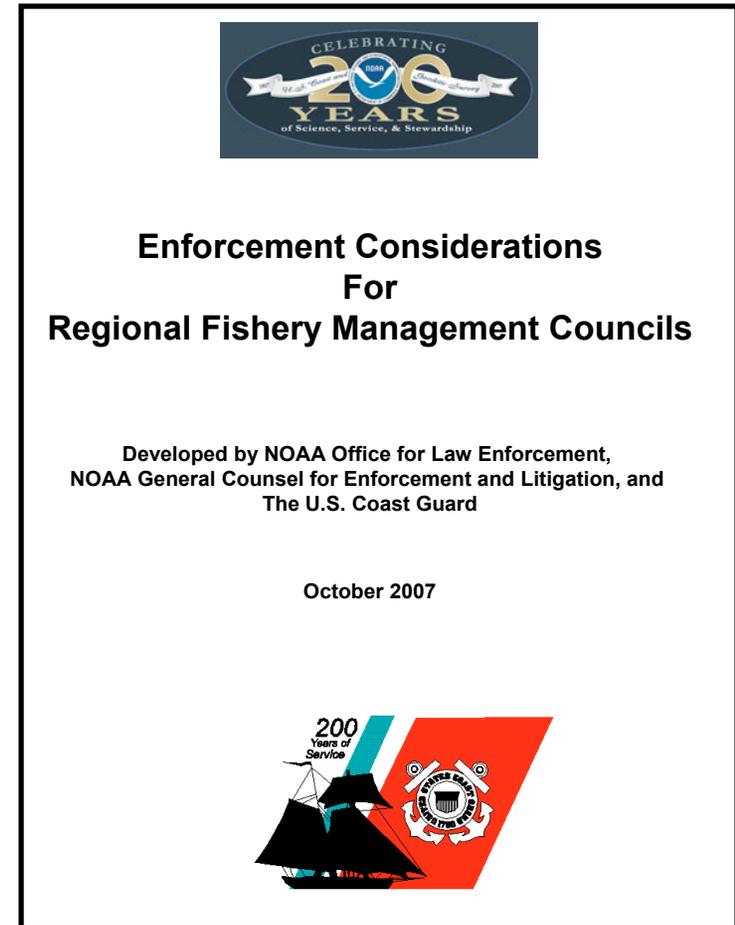
Enforcement is critical to fisheries management

- NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in climate, weather, oceans, and coasts; to share that knowledge and information with others; and to conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources.
- Meeting this mission requires not only state-of-the art **science** and **management** programs, but also a fair, effective, and comprehensive compliance and **enforcement** program.

How can Councils help?

Effective regulations:

- Simple and easy to understand
- Few as possible and/or concise
- Fish is accountable and traceable throughout the wholesale process



Other considerations

Compliance and/or enforcement are difficult if regulations are:

- Man power intensive (monitoring offloads or weighing, etc.)
- Complex or convoluted
- Lack accountability (effective paperwork trail)
- Use estimates (estimated weight of catch, catch composition, discards, etc.)
- Law enforcement resource intensive (resource limits of OLE, Coast Guard, and States)

In conclusion

- OLE is integral to the success of NOAA's mission of protecting and conserving marine resources and their habitats.
- Effective fisheries law enforcement is critical to creating a level playing field for legal fishermen and enabling sustainable fisheries to support vibrant coastal communities.
- OLE has made specific changes that are resulting in a significant transformation in the organization.
- Collaboration and communication are critical to stopping illegal fishing.