

Request for Comments: NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement Priorities

March 15, 2023

NOAA Fisheries seeks public comment on enforcement priorities for 2023–2027. The comment period is open through April 17, 2023.



Feature Story | National

NOAA Fisheries released the Office of Law Enforcement's [Draft Enforcement Priorities for 2023–2027](#). These priorities were developed through an extensive stakeholder engagement process. They will help our enforcement team accomplish its mission, guide its strategic planning, and focus the use of law enforcement

assets where they are most needed.

We invite additional [public comments](#) on the document for the next 30 days as we work to ensure that all voices are heard in this process.

Goals and Objectives

Effective marine resource management depends on effective enforcement. We are dedicated to protecting marine wildlife and habitat by promoting compliance with domestic laws and international treaty obligations through law enforcement activities.

[NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement](#) supports NOAA Fisheries' mission by enforcing and promoting compliance with marine resource protection laws and implementing regulations under NOAA's purview. In addition, we focus efforts to:

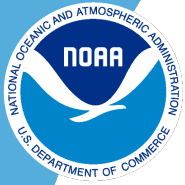
- Combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing
- Support international fisheries; reduce seafood fraud
- End wildlife trafficking

The 2023–2027 enforcement priorities were designed to support and implement these goals.

While the Office of Law Enforcement enforces marine resource laws, the [Office of the General Counsel's Enforcement Section](#) is NOAA's civil prosecutor. Together, the two offices make up NOAA's enforcement program and work with other offices to establish national law enforcement policy.

How To Provide Comment

You can [provide comments online](#). The comment period is open **through April 17, 2023**.



**NOAA
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Office of Law Enforcement
Enforcement Priorities
2023-2027



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About NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement

NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement protects marine wildlife and habitat by enforcing federal marine resource laws and regulations, including those that implement treaty obligations of the United States designed to ensure the conservation and management of global resources for future generations. OLE special agents, enforcement officers, and enforcement support staff also provide stakeholders with compliance assistance and education about the nation's marine resource laws.

While OLE enforces marine resource laws, the Office of the General Counsel's Enforcement Section (GCES) is NOAA's civil prosecutor. Together, the two offices make up NOAA's enforcement program and work with other NOAA program offices to establish national law enforcement policy.

OLE supports the core mission mandates of NOAA Fisheries—maximizing the productivity of sustainable fisheries and fishing communities, as well as protection, recovery, and conservation of protected species—through its efforts to enforce and promote compliance with the marine resource protection laws and implementing regulations under NOAA's purview.

OLE's jurisdiction generally covers ocean waters between 3 and 200 miles offshore of all U.S. states and territories; this is called the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Jurisdiction includes:

- 3.36 million square miles of ocean.
- More than 95,000 miles of U.S. shoreline.
- 15 National Marine Sanctuaries and five Marine National Monuments.

Setting Priorities

OLE has established a 5-year priority-setting process to help accomplish our mission, guide our strategic planning, and focus the use of our enforcement assets where they are most needed. To guide this process, OLE uses NOAA and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) strategic plans, historical enforcement data, emerging threat information, and stakeholder input to identify areas in greatest need of enforcement effort—whether to maintain an existing level of compliance or to target areas where increased compliance may be required.

The goal of any priority-setting process is to make the best use of limited resources to maximize results. By design, the priority-setting process must make calculated choices about where to focus efforts and how best to leverage existing capabilities to successfully address responsibilities. The OLE priority-setting process is no different and seeks to ensure that we have the right people, in the right places, focusing on the right priorities.

Although OLE uses this priority-setting process to identify areas where we will focus our efforts, we will continue to enforce all the laws and implementing regulations under our jurisdiction.

National Priorities for 2023-2027

The OLE priorities are designed and conducted in a manner that supports three overarching NMFS' strategic goals:

- Maximize fishing opportunities while ensuring the sustainability of fisheries and fishing communities. (“Sustainable Fisheries”)
- Recover and conserve protected species while supporting responsible fishing and resource development. (“Protected Resources”)
- Improve organizational excellence and regulatory efficiency.

As further defined and explained below, OLE supports these goals, as well as the related areas of combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and supporting international fisheries; reducing seafood fraud; and interdicting wildlife trafficking as national priorities within every OLE office. Further, and as a cornerstone of OLE's enforcement approach, increasing outreach and education to foster voluntary compliance is also an integral national priority throughout OLE.

Sustainable Fisheries

NOAA Fisheries—in close coordination with the regional fishery management councils and state partners—is responsible for fostering healthy, productive, and sustainable living marine resources and habitats. NOAA Fisheries achieves these outcomes through effective, transparent management actions supported by strong science; habitat conservation and restoration programs; an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management; partner and stakeholder coordination and communication; and effective enforcement.

Increasing compliance and enforcement of fishing regulations are integral parts of meeting NMFS's goal of ensuring the sustainability of fisheries and fishing communities. OLE will continue to emphasize investigations related to violations that jeopardize the safety of observers and the integrity of observer data, such as assaults, interference, or harassment of observers. OLE will also play a vital role in the development and implementation of the agency action plan in conjunction with the Observer Program Safety Review. Additionally, OLE will prioritize investigations involving violations of gear restrictions and closed-area regulations; limitations on bycatch and catch of prohibited species; landing requirements; and incidents of fraudulent or inaccurate reporting of required data.

Protected Resources

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) were enacted to help recover species that are facing extinction and to protect marine mammals. NOAA Fisheries is responsible for the conservation and recovery of protected species and their habitats, as mandated by the MMPA and ESA, through specific efforts focused on reducing the negative effects of human activities, enforcing regulations against harming marine mammals and endangered species, and developing plans to guide the recovery and conservation of these protected species.

In addition, the conservation and protection of key marine and estuarine areas are critical to sustaining marine resources for future generations. The National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA) plays a vital role in protecting these areas. Protected within these areas are important habitats like breeding and feeding grounds, coral reefs, kelp forests, and important artifacts of underwater cultural heritage.

To foster the conservation of protected resources and places, OLE will continue to focus on enforcement of bycatch reduction, gear, and area regulations designed to conserve protected species; unlawful human interactions with protected species; and marine protected areas. OLE will give particular attention to noncompliance that threatens

resources and places that are particularly vulnerable, such as violations that threaten endangered species or their habitat.

IUU Fishing/International

The vast majority of the seafood consumed in the United States is imported. This demand for seafood makes the United States a potential market for IUU fish and fish products, and also places pressure on wild stocks from all over the world. Like domestic fishery management councils, international Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and Arrangements (RFMO/As) work to ensure that seafood caught within their area or competence is taken in an authorized and sustainable manner. Those who circumvent RFMO/A conservation and management measures are engaged in IUU fishing. IUU fishing disadvantages legal fishermen globally, including U.S. fishing fleets and coastal communities, and negatively impacts global fish stocks. Furthermore, IUU fishing can be co-occurring with labor abuses in the seafood sector and supply chain.

In accordance with the Maritime Security and Fisheries Enforcement (SAFE) Act, and in support of the U.S. Interagency Working Group on IUU Fishing 5-Year Strategy for Combating IUU Fishing, OLE will coordinate across the U.S. Government and with foreign partners to: promote sustainable fisheries management and governance; enhance the monitoring, control and surveillance of marine fishing operations; and ensure only legal, sustainable, and responsibly harvested seafood enters trade. OLE will continue to prioritize our efforts within RFMO/As, and with foreign countries, federal partners, and non-governmental organizations to deter, detect, and prevent IUU fish and fish products from entering U.S. markets and to bring to justice those who seek to profit from this activity. In support of this priority, OLE will continue to work with the U.S. Coast Guard to implement the Port State Measures Agreement and will aggressively investigate interstate or foreign trafficking of illegally-harvested or fraudulently represented fish or fish products. In addition, OLE will provide technical assistance to international partners in fisheries law enforcement to enhance their abilities to detect IUU fish and fish products before they enter the stream of commerce, and to investigate and prosecute IUU fishing violations.

Seafood Fraud

Seafood fraud—typically in the form of mislabeling or other forms of deceptive misidentification of seafood products with respect to quality, quantity, origin, or species—undermines the economic viability of U.S. and global fisheries and deceives consumers. Seafood fraud is generally driven by economic motives and can occur at multiple points along the supply chain.

OLE will prioritize monitoring and investigating major seafood fraud violations including increased efforts to deter and detect illegal products at ports of entry into the United States through implementation of the Seafood Import Monitoring Program and other NOAA trade monitoring programs. We will work with international partners as well as state, local, and other federal agencies on strengthening seafood fraud detection throughout the supply chain through continued coordination via interagency task forces and information-sharing mechanisms.

Wildlife Trafficking

Illegal wildlife trafficking is a multi-billion-dollar-per-year enterprise that targets some of the most iconic and endangered species on the planet. As economic opportunists, wildlife traffickers are also frequently involved in other illegal activities such as human trafficking, illegal weapons sales, and the illicit drug trade.

OLE will identify and investigate fish and other marine wildlife illegally taken, possessed, shipped or transported through airports, ports, or borders. To support this priority, OLE will continue deployments of enforcement personnel to strategic ports of entry throughout the United States to better interdict these shipments. OLE will also continue its efforts to detect and investigate the illegal trafficking of marine mammals and endangered species parts or products.

Outreach and Education

A primary goal of OLE is voluntary compliance by members of the public and regulated industries with marine resource protection laws and implementing regulations. Engaging in outreach and education activities to foster voluntary compliance is the cornerstone of this goal. OLE staff perform outreach and education every day. While conducting patrol efforts, OLE enforcement officers have day-to-day interactions with industry members and the general public and use these daily opportunities to answer questions and provide information. As part of the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) program, OLE investigative support technicians routinely answer calls from industry members concerning regulations and make proactive contact with owners of vessels at sea when it appears that a vessel may be out of compliance with restricted area or reporting requirements.

OLE will, in addition to our day-to-day interactions, continue to conduct regular outreach and education initiatives regarding new and changing regulations to foster voluntary compliance. OLE will work with our federal and state partners to encourage and promote voluntary compliance with marine resource laws and regulations. OLE will continue to use social media, outreach events, web stories, compliance liaisons, and news articles—as well as face-to-face contact with our stakeholders—to help the public understand and follow the law.

Enforcement Priorities by Division

Alaska Division

Alaska supports a massive seafood industry and has the greatest number of domestic fish landings in the United States, with 59 percent of all U.S. seafood landings (measured by weight) occurring in Alaska. If it were a country, Alaska would be the ninth-largest seafood producer in the world. The geographic area of responsibility for the Alaska Division covers 28 percent of the U.S. EEZ, 70 percent of the U.S. continental shelf, and five of the 11 Large Marine Ecosystems located within the U.S. EEZ.

OLE's Alaska Division is unique in that the region only includes the State of Alaska, which comprises the mainland and more than 200 islands. Within this boundary lie some of the most productive fishing grounds on the planet. Waters off Alaska account for more than half of all annual U.S. seafood harvests. Alaska also has five of the nation's top 10 fishing ports ranked by value of landings.

Sustainable Fisheries

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Fisheries observer assault, sexual assault, sexual harassment, harassment, and safety violations.
 - Violations involving prohibited and protected species bycatch.
 - Fishing during closed seasons or in closed or protected areas.
 - Violations that negatively impact Fisheries Management Plans, stock health, or agency data collection including but not limited to observer data, electronic monitoring, and recordkeeping and reporting requirements.
 - Charter fishing violations of a recurrent nature that negatively impact management and resources or result in unfair competitive advantages.
 - Illegal subsistence fishing by individuals without subsistence rights.

Protected Resources

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Intentional illegal killing or injuring of Steller sea lions, Cook Inlet beluga whales, large whale species, and other marine mammals.
 - Violations resulting in marine mammal stranding, vessel strikes, entanglement, injury, or mortality.
 - Harassment of whales and other marine mammals during commercial or recreational activities.
 - Commercial vessel incursions into closed or protected areas.
 - Illegal and wasteful harvest of marine mammals.
 - Illegal transport and sale of marine mammal products.
 - Violations of the Marine Mammal Protection Act incidental take authorizations including permitting and reporting.

IUU Fishing/International

- Collaborate with law enforcement partners and utilize emerging technologies to deter and detect:
 - Illegal fishing and transshipments by foreign vessels.
 - Maritime Boundary Line incursions by foreign fishing and fishing support vessels.
 - Illegal or undeclared imports of Seafood Import Monitoring Program (SIMP) species.
 - Illegal seafood export, imports, and transfers at Canada-Alaska maritime boundaries and land borders.

Seafood Fraud

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to seafood mislabeling, misreporting, and misbranding violations with a significant impact on marine resources or commerce.

Wildlife Trafficking

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Transport of marine wildlife and enforcement of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) through Alaska ports of entry.
 - Illegal trade or transport of marine resources.

Northeast Division

The OLE Northeast Division covers 20 states from Virginia to Maine to Minnesota and includes the Great Lakes. The Division's area of responsibility covers more than 100,000 square nautical miles of the U.S. EEZ, one Marine National Monument, four National Marine Sanctuaries, 110 international Ports of Entry, and 265 individual domestic ports.

Four of the top 10 international ports of entry, by weight and value, are found in the Division—New York, Portland, Boston, and Norfolk. Additionally, the Division has four of the top 10 states for domestic fish landings in the nation; this includes the port of New Bedford, Massachusetts, which has led the United States for 19 years as the top port in terms of value landed—a direct result of the scallop fishery. In a typical year, the Division also is home to more than 200,000 individual fishing trips, which results in hundreds of millions of pounds of fish landed within its area of responsibility.

Sustainable Fisheries

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Assault and/or harassment against fishery observers and other interference that may significantly impact Observer Program goals.
 - Non-compliance with reporting and recordkeeping requirements that may have a significant individual or cumulative impact on the collection of data for effective science and management of managed marine resources.
 - Illegal sales of commercially- or recreationally-harvested fish.
 - Violations of federal closed areas/seasons.
 - Unpermitted fishing activity.
 - Use of illegal fishing gear or methods.

Protected Resources

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Illegal takes (including harassment activities) of endangered, threatened, and marine mammal species.
 - Noncompliance with laws and regulations implemented to prevent the take of endangered, threatened, and marine mammal species.
 - Noncompliant or illegal fishing gear or fishing methods that may impact endangered, threatened, and marine mammal species.
 - Noncompliance with the North Atlantic Right Whale vessel speed regulations.
 - Noncompliance with the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP).
 - Illegal takes of wild Atlantic salmon.

IUU Fishing/International

- Collaborate with U.S. and foreign law enforcement partners and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) to detect, deter, and investigate:
 - Transshipment or fishing activity in violation of U.S. law, including U.S. treaty obligations.
 - Maritime boundary line incursions by U.S. and Foreign fishing vessels.
 - Illegal imports, exports, or undeclared products entering ports of entry in the Northeast Division, with an emphasis on Seafood Import Monitoring Program species.

Seafood Fraud

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Seafood safety violations under the jurisdiction of NOAA where public health and safety is at risk.
 - Mislabeling or misbranding violations that have a significant impact on national or international commerce.

Wildlife Trafficking

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Fish and wildlife illegally shipped or transported through airports, ports, or land borders into domestic or foreign commerce.
 - Illegal trafficking of fish and wildlife, including marine mammals and endangered species.

National Marine Sanctuaries and Monuments

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Violations that may significantly impact sanctuary and monument protected areas and resources in the Northeast Division.
 - Moving, removing, injuring, or possessing, or attempting to move, remove, injure, or possess a sanctuary historical resource or other protected marine resources from within a sanctuary or monument.
 - Noncompliance with conditions of any permits associated with sanctuary or monument use.
 - Illegal or unpermitted discharges of waste or hazardous materials.
 - Vessel groundings.

Pacific Islands Division

The Pacific Islands Division was established in October 2004 and is geographically the largest division in OLE. Bounded by the Hawaiian Islands in the north, American Samoa and U.S. Pacific remote island areas in the south, and the Mariana Archipelago, including Guam in the west, the Division encompasses the largest management area within both NOAA Fisheries and the regional fishery management council system. The total area of the U.S. EEZ waters included in the region is more than 1.5 million square nautical miles, which accounts for nearly half of the entire U.S. EEZ.

Within this massive marine area is the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (PMNM)—which OLE is charged with protecting and spans nearly 583,000 square nautical miles—the Marianas Trench, Pacific Remote Islands, and Rose Atoll Marine National Monuments, as well as the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary and National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa.

The Division serves as the center of activity for the implementation of both domestic and international responsibilities related to the Port State Measures Agreement. Numerous longline and purse seine vessels within the U.S.-permitted fleet operate extensively throughout the U.S. and international waters. Effectively monitoring these U.S. vessels, along with foreign vessels that may be engaging in IUU fishing, is an over-arching focus area for the Pacific Islands Division.

Sustainable Fisheries

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Observer assault, harassment, or interference violations.
 - Closed area violations and illegal tampering with NOAA VMS equipment and data.
 - Recordkeeping violations.
 - Violations committed by U.S. vessels on the high seas.

Protected Resources

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Illegal takes of endangered Hawaiian Monk Seals.
 - Illegal takes of ESA-listed sea turtles or other turtle species protected by the Endangered Species Act (ESA) or Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA).
 - Illegal takes of Spinner Dolphins and violations of approach regulations.
 - Illegal takes of Humpback whales and violations of vessel approach regulations with an emphasis on the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary.
 - Illegal takes of any other species protected by the ESA or MMPA.

IUU Fishing/International

- Collaborate with law enforcement partners to enforce Port State Measures Agreement requirements and to detect, deter, and investigate violations of international treaties or agreements, including those related to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, South Pacific Tuna Treaty, South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization, and Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources.
- Enforce U.S. laws implementing international commitments relating to fishing on the high seas.
- Provide support to monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) operations with the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, US Navy/ Department of Defense, National Guard Bureau, and the U.S. Coast Guard to prevent IUU fishing.
- Participate in capacity building with the Pacific and Asian countries to support development of their ability to execute Port State Measures Agreement inspections and enhance their abilities to detect, investigate and prosecute IUU fishing violations.
- Collaborate with U.S. and foreign law enforcement partners and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) to detect, deter, and investigate illegal imports, exports, or undeclared products entering ports of entry in the Pacific Islands Division, with an emphasis on Seafood Import Monitoring Program species.

Seafood Fraud

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Mislabeled seafood.
 - Illegal capture according to NOAA seafood trade monitoring program requirements, as well as RFMO and other foreign law and international requirements.
 - Seafood in interstate or international commerce under the jurisdiction of NOAA may put public health and safety at risk.

Wildlife Trafficking

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Fish and wildlife illegally shipped or transported through airports, seaports, or borders.
 - Illegal trafficking in marine mammals and endangered species parts or products.
 - Illegal trafficking in species associated with the aquarium trade.
 - Enforcement of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)-listed fish and wildlife parts entered illegally into interstate or foreign commerce.

National Marine Sanctuaries and Monuments

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Illegal fishing and other designated non-permitted activity within marine protected area boundaries
 - Illegal or unpermitted discharges.
 - Vessel groundings.
 - Unlawful removal or possession of historical artifacts or other protected marine resources from within the sanctuary or monument boundaries.
 - Noncompliance with conditions of any permits associated with sanctuary or monument use.

Southeast Division

The OLE Southeast Division is the largest continental division, with approximately 3,230 miles of coastline covering the South Atlantic, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Caribbean. The Division's area of responsibility spans from North Carolina to the international border between Mexico and the United States in Texas. The Caribbean area of responsibility includes Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. In total, the Division is charged with monitoring and enforcing marine resource laws over 350,000 square nautical miles of the EEZ.

The fishery fleet in the Division is comprised of smaller commercial vessels relative to other areas of the nation but has the largest recreational fisheries sector in the continental United States. The Division's federally permitted commercial fleet conducted more than 154,900 trips in a recent year, totaling upward of \$608.5 million in revenue, while the number of recreational fishing trips far exceeded those numbers with an estimated 119.7 million trips.

In addition to domestic fisheries, the Division is responsible for three national marine sanctuaries—the Florida Keys, Gray's Reef, and Flower Garden Banks—and is actively engaged in combating IUU fishing and seafood fraud through the monitoring of seafood entering through U.S. ports of entry, including the Port of Miami and the U.S.-Mexico gateways.

Sustainable Fisheries

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Assault and/or harassment against fishery observers and other interference that may significantly impact Observer Program goals.
 - Non-compliance with reporting and recordkeeping requirements that may have a significant individual or cumulative impact on the collection of data for effective science and management of managed marine resources.
 - Illegal sales of commercially- or recreationally-harvested fish.
 - Violations of federal closed areas/seasons.
 - Unpermitted fishing activity.

- Use of illegal fishing gear or methods.

Protected Resources

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Illegal takes of endangered, threatened, and marine mammal species.
 - Noncompliance with laws and regulations implemented to prevent the take of endangered, threatened, and marine mammal species.
 - Noncompliant and/or illegal fishing gear and/or fishing methods that may impact endangered, threatened, and marine mammal species.
 - Noncompliance with the North Atlantic Right Whale vessel speed regulations.
 - Noncompliance with the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP).

IUU Fishing/International

- Collaborate with the Department of State and U.S. law enforcement partners and foreign partners to conduct Port State Measures inspections and to detect, deter, and investigate:
 - Transshipment or IUU fishing activity in violation of U.S. law or international treaty.
 - Illegal imports, exports, or undeclared products entering ports of entry in the Southeast Division, with an emphasis on Seafood Import Monitoring Program species.

Seafood Fraud

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Violations that may threaten public health and safety.
 - False labeling, mislabeling, and misbranding of seafood product with a significant impact on state, national or international commerce.
 - Illegal trafficking of fish and wildlife, including marine mammals and endangered species.

Wildlife Trafficking

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Illegal trafficking of fish and wildlife, including marine mammals and endangered species.

National Marine Sanctuaries and Monuments

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Violations that may significantly impact sanctuary protected areas and sanctuary resources in the Southeast Division.
 - Illegal or unpermitted discharges.
 - Vessel groundings.
 - Vessel anchoring/mooring violations.
 - Unlawful removal or possession of historical artifacts or other protected marine resources from within the sanctuary boundaries.
 - Noncompliance with conditions of any permits associated with sanctuary use.

West Coast Division

The OLE West Coast Division encompasses the coastal states of Washington, Oregon, and California. The area of responsibility also extends inland to Idaho, North and South Dakota, and Montana.

This division shares borders with Canada and Mexico, has five national marine sanctuaries along its coast, and includes 290 Marine Conservation Areas. The Division is responsible for 1,293 miles of Pacific coastline and 7,863 miles of tidal shoreline, 222,471 square nautical miles of EEZ, and 339,375 square miles of critical habitat land encompassing numerous rivers and tributaries feeding into the Pacific Ocean.

Two of the top 10 international ports for exporting and importing seafood products by weight and value are found in the Division—Seattle and Los Angeles. In addition to those two seaports, the Division monitors 16 international airports, 21 seaports, and numerous border crossings for imports/exports of seafood products.

Sustainable Fisheries

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Observer sexual assault, assault, harassment, observer safety, interference, and significant sample bias violations.
 - Violations that degrade agency data quality including electronic monitoring and reporting, recordkeeping and reporting, observer data, and observer coverage.
 - Other significant violations involving federally managed commercial fisheries include fishing during a closed period and fishing within a closed or restricted area.
 - Violations involving federally managed recreational fisheries for protected species and closed areas.
 - Lacey Act investigations in support of tribal treaty fisheries rights.

Protected Resources

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Illegal takes (e.g. Level A harassment, injuring, shooting, etc.) of ESA and MMPA listed species with a focus on:
 - Southern Resident Killer Whale protection measures
 - Vessel operations in close proximity to marine mammals
 - Whale strikes
 - Marine mammal and seabird take within a National Marine Sanctuary.
 - Destruction of listed salmon and steelhead critical habitat.
 - Illegal takes of Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed fish or mollusk species.
 - Establishment of regulations permitting the take and use of marine mammals by treaty tribes.

IUU Fishing/International

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Seafood Import Monitoring Program and all other NOAA trade monitoring programs.
 - Port State Measures Agreement.
 - Foreign transshipment and fishing activity in violation of U.S. law or international treaty.
 - Maritime Boundary Line incursions by foreign fishing and fishing support vessels.
 - Illegal imports, exports, and transshipment of illegal products on foreign vessels and at U.S. airports, seaports, and border crossings.
 - Transshipment and export of illegal products from U.S. fishing vessels.

- Violations of international treaty fisheries (e.g. albacore tuna, pacific halibut, pacific whiting, etc.).

Seafood Fraud

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Seafood safety violations under the jurisdiction of NOAA where public health and safety is at risk.
 - Mislabeling or misbranding violations that have a significant impact on national or international commerce.

Wildlife Trafficking

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations relating to:
 - Fish and wildlife illegally shipped or transported through airports, ports, or borders into domestic or foreign commerce with a focus on:
 - Illegal trafficking of shark fin, sea cucumber, sea urchins, abalone, corals and fish swim bladders.

National Marine Sanctuaries and Monuments

- Conduct patrols, outreach, and investigations to promote compliance and deter and detect violations within national marine sanctuaries relating to:
 - Violations involving Federal Designated Special Closures, Marine Reserves, Marine Conservation Areas, and Marine Restoration Areas.
 - Vessel sinkings and grounding.
 - Unlawful discharge violations.
 - Vessel anchoring/mooring violations.
 - Establishment of new national marine sanctuaries.