



NOAA FISHERIES



Office of Law Enforcement
Alaska Enforcement Division
December Report To
North Pacific Fisheries Management Council



October 2024 to September 2025
Report fisheries or marine mammal violations,
call our National Hotline at 1-800-853-1964
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/enforcement>

NOAA Fisheries, Office of Law Enforcement, Alaska Division

Report to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council

December 2025

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Alaska Enforcement Division

Due to the government shutdown, NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement, Alaska Division's Fiscal Year 2025 Report to Council provides new numbers but is less in-depth than prior reports. The Council should note, too, that the format has changed; the General Counsel Enforcement Section has provided their "Case Updates" section in our Council report in previous years, and this year that report is provided as part of B3, NOAA General Council Report.

1. Enforcement Operational Highlights



From April 1, 2025, to September 30, 2025, the Office of Law Enforcement (OLE), Alaska Division (AKD) conducted extensive patrols for enforcement and educational purposes. In addition to daily dockside and vessel patrols, AKD conducted several multi-day patrols. OLE patrols are often coordinated with partners, including U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Alaska Wildlife Troopers (AWT), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and National Park Service (NPS). Partnering with

multiple agencies broadens enforcement and outreach opportunities and allows for force multiplication, and cross pollination, between agencies.

In April, a Supervisory Enforcement Officer (SEO), an Enforcement Officer (EO), and a Special Agent (SA) conducted two at-sea patrols aboard a patrol vessel to investigate reports of vessels using unlawful gear during a parallel Pacific cod jig fishery near Kodiak. Twenty-four participating vessels were observed and three vessels were boarded, resulting in two violations for operating without the required federal fisheries permit endorsement. Also in April, an EO conducted a dockside patrol in Southcentral Alaska, boarding 13 IFQ vessels and finding multiple gear-marking, recordkeeping and reporting (R&R) violations, and one catch seizure.

In May, two dockside patrols out of Southcentral resulted in 19 boardings, 3 seizures of catch, and 15 violations, including a SSL closed area incursion, multiple R&R (logbook) violations, multiple state violations referred to AWT, and multiple catch seizures of chunked halibut.



In May, June, and July, two EOs participated in both phases of the Canadian-led North Pacific Guard patrol. The patrol began in Victoria Canada (Phase I) and

ended in Osaka, Japan. Phase II departed Osaka and returned to Hakodate, Japan. The operation had fisheries inspectors from Canada, Japan, South Korea, and the United States. In total, North Pacific Guard 2025 resulted in 41 inspections and 40 potential violations on Chinese, Chinese Taipei, Japanese, and Russian-flagged vessels. The majority of the Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) violations consisted of shark finning, illegal dumping of catch, illegal possession of anadromous fishes and other prohibited species, High Seas Fishing Compliance Act violations, Marine Pollution, various R&R violations, and Mobile Transmission Unit (or VMS) noncompliance in NPFC and WCPFC convention waters.

In June, an EO conducted a week-long patrol in the unstaffed port of Nome, Alaska. An inspection of the community's shoreside processor was conducted, and eight commercial fishing vessels landing Norton Sound Red King Crab were boarded.

In July and August, an SEO and three EOs conducted at-sea patrols in the Upper Cook Inlet salmon fishery. They boarded 54 vessels and documented 31 violations, including: no or non-functioning VMS (at a much higher rate of noncompliance in FY2025 compared to the first year of the fishery); no SFFP; R&R violations; no Marine Mammal Authorization Program permit; and state violations referred to AWT. The few Chinook that were detected onboard were largely accounted for properly by fish tickets in FY 2025.

In August, an SEO and EO conducted a four-day 300 nautical mile (NM) patrol of the Central Gulf of Alaska. Two remote Western DPS Steller Sea Lion rookeries, six haulout sites, and the ports of Homer and Seldovia were visited. Nine at-sea vessel boardings and multiple vessel queries were performed, documenting nine violations.

Operation Aleutian Adieu is an ongoing operation that extends over multiple years. The operation



focuses on the detection, deterrence and interdiction of illegally harvested and falsely reported groundfish. This catch is being exported by the U.S., or transported in interstate commerce by refrigerated cargo vessels and storage sites receiving catch from U.S. flagged catcher/processor and mothership fleets. Many joint boardings were conducted with the U.S. Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection and Joint Enforcement Partners at sea and dockside, resulting in multiple catch seizures and enforcement actions for violations involving unreported groundfish and groundfish products.

Many R&R violations were documented, including failure to submit Product Transfer Reports, and unreported or misreported offload information: 22 investigations remain ongoing.

2. Joint Enforcement Agreement and Enforcement Partners

The purpose of the Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA) between NOAA-OLE and the Alaska Wildlife Troopers (AWT) is to support enforcement of Federal laws and regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Lacey Act, and Northern Pacific Halibut Act. The reporting year for the JEA runs from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. AWT supports Federal enforcement through the following Execution Priorities:



1. Observer Violations and Federal Boardings
2. Operation Groundfish/Observer Pulse Op/IUU Patrol
3. Kodiak Medium Class Vessel Hook and Line Patrol
4. Marine Mammal Protection/Endangered Species Patrols
5. Med Class patrols Comm/Charter/ Subsistence -Halibut/Sablefish & Maritime Boundary Patrol
6. Cook Inlet Federal Salmon Patrol

Table 2.1. AWT Reported Actions in direct support of OLE and marine resource protection.

Vessel Boardings	Field Contacts	Outreach Contacts (6 events)	Federal Violations detected	State Warnings issued	State Citations issued	Cases referred back to OLE
291	1114	385	86	4	32	8

3. Outreach and Education

NOAA OLE outreach and education efforts facilitate and encourage responsible and sustainable uses of marine resources. NOAA agents and officers visit communities throughout Alaska and utilize multiple online and in-person venues to deliver a strong message of resource protection. The table below highlights formal outreach efforts from January 1, 2025, to September 30, 2025.



Table 3.1: Outreach and Education

Date	Description
1/3/2025-1/17/2025	SA, SEO, and Compliance Analyst Liaison (CAL) hosted and attended multiple meetings with interested industry representatives and operators from Fishermen’s Finest, Ocean Peace, Bristol Wave, Phoenix Processing Limited Partnership, Alaska Seafood Cooperative Amendment 80 Captain’s Meeting, American Seafoods, and Alaska Groundfish Data Bank and Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association, to discuss observer statements, noncompliance trends, and provide “Ensuring a Safe Working Environment for Observers” training for interested parties.
1/17/2025	Trident Seafoods representatives presented to SF and OLE CAL about their 2025 Exempted Fishing Permit for modifications to pelagic trawl gear.
April, May, June, 2025	EOs and SAs cross-trained with the United States Coast Guard, assisting with fish school training of new boarding team members.
5/2/2025	An SEO and two EOs attended the 38th Annual Kenai Sport, Recreation and Trade Show providing regulatory information to stakeholders and members of the public.
5/2/2025	An EO presented to 30 employees of Allen Marine Tours. They provided information on MMPA regulations and discussed examples of marine mammal harassment. Marine mammal viewing guidelines and stickers were provided to vessel operators and naturalists.
5/7/2025	An SEO and two EOs attended SE Alaska Whale Watch Association (SEAWWA) 2025 Captains Meeting. They presented Marine Mammal Viewing Guidelines and Regulations, Humpback Whale Approach Regulations, Prohibited Take Regulations, Level A&B Harassment, MMPA Violation Enforcement Actions, and recent local area MMPA violation incidents and results.
5/13/2025	An SEO participated in the virtual North of 60° meeting. British Columbia Conservation Officer Service, Parks Canada, Yukon Conservation, RCMP, USFW, USFWS Lab staff, US Nat. Park were in attendance. Canadian and U.S. partners discussed patrol coordination along transboundary rivers.
5/14/2025	An EO represented the agency at a charter captains meeting to review updated International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) regulations and Guided Angler Fish (GAF) guidance.
6/4/2025	An EO and SEO, on a patrol of Southeast Alaska, met with Hoonah Cold storage personnel for coordination and outreach, and engaged with community members of Elfin Cove to discuss fisheries-related concerns.
6/4/2025	At the June North Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting, an SA and a CAL participated in an industry-led trawl gear demonstration at the international dock in Newport, Oregon. Various gear types were displayed, with experts providing vessel-based and dockside demonstrations for Council members, agency staff, and the public.
6/7/2025	An EO supported the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Forest Service during the 2025 Swan Lake Junior Fishing Derby. Over seventy children participated, many catching their first fish. Prizes, including fishing gear, were awarded, promoting youth engagement in outdoor activities and conservation.

6/24/2025	An EO met with law enforcement in Nome, Alaska, to advise on OLE operations in the area, exchange contact information, discuss community issues, and offer any necessary assistance.
7/31/2025	An EO and SEO attended the Southeast Alaska State Fair in Haines, Alaska, in conjunction with the Haines border operation with a USFW Inspector. While staffing the booth, questions about federal fisheries and Marine Mammals were answered. Informational handouts and activity books were distributed.
8/27/2025	An SEO, SA, and CAL attended a Trawl Industry meeting. They fielded questions related to logging trawl deployments and requirements for deploying nonpelagic trawls when directed fishing for pollock outside the Trawl Electronic Monitoring program.
9/13/2025	OLE CAL and a Protected Resources Hollings Scholar staffed a booth at Belugas Count! outreach event at Point Woronzof. They handed out beluga-specific educational materials and OLE materials.

4. Incident and Summary Settlement Information

From October 1, 2024, to September 30, 2025, NOAA officers and agents opened 2256 incidents, including 1556 Magnuson Stevens Act, 397 Northern Pacific Halibut Act, 104 Endangered Species Act, 105 Marine Mammal Protection Act, and 94 regarding other statutes and regulations (Lacey Act, Port State Measures Act, Pacific Salmon Fishing Act, High Seas Fishing Compliance Act, WCP Fisheries Convention Implementation Act, Referred to State and other Federal Agencies., etc.). (Figure 4.1)

Most incidents were closed or completed: of 1995 closed incidents, 802 recorded no violation and required no enforcement action. 261 incidents remain “open” or under investigation. (Figures 4.2 and 4.3).

Figure 4.1 – Incidents by Percent from October 1, 2024, to September 30, 2025, categorized by primary law.

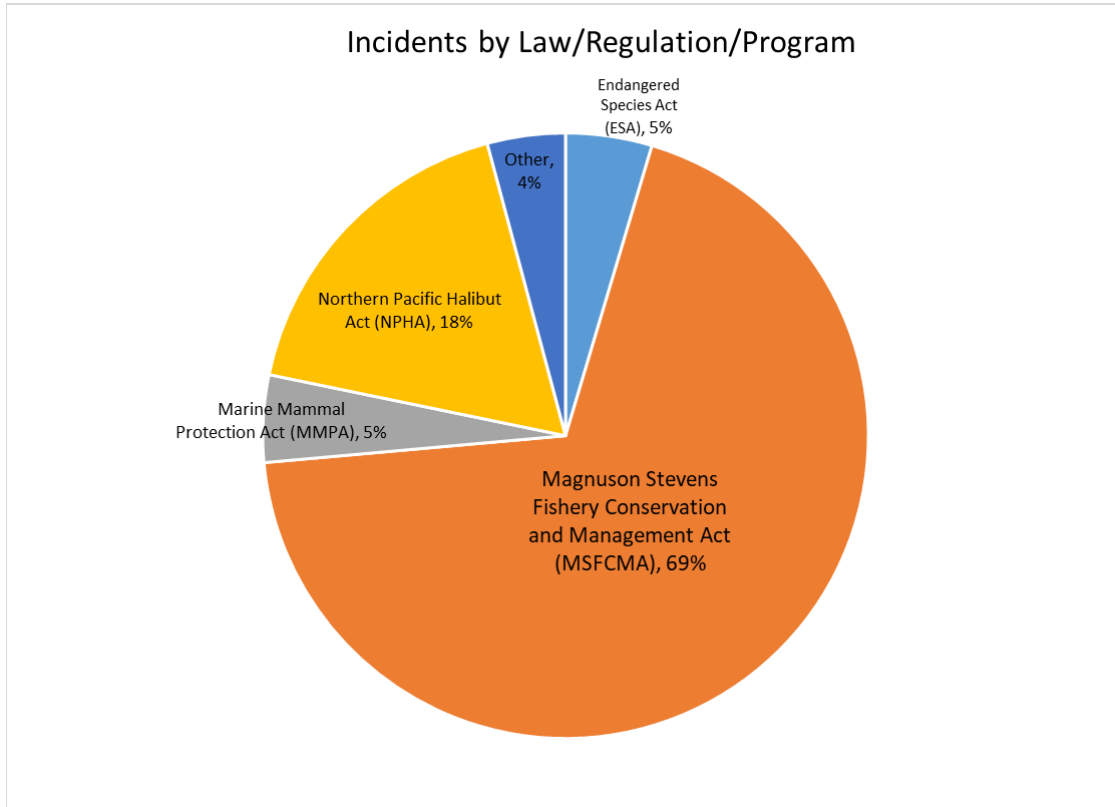


Figure 4.2 – Incident dispositions for incidents created from Oct 1, 2024, to Sep 30, 2025.

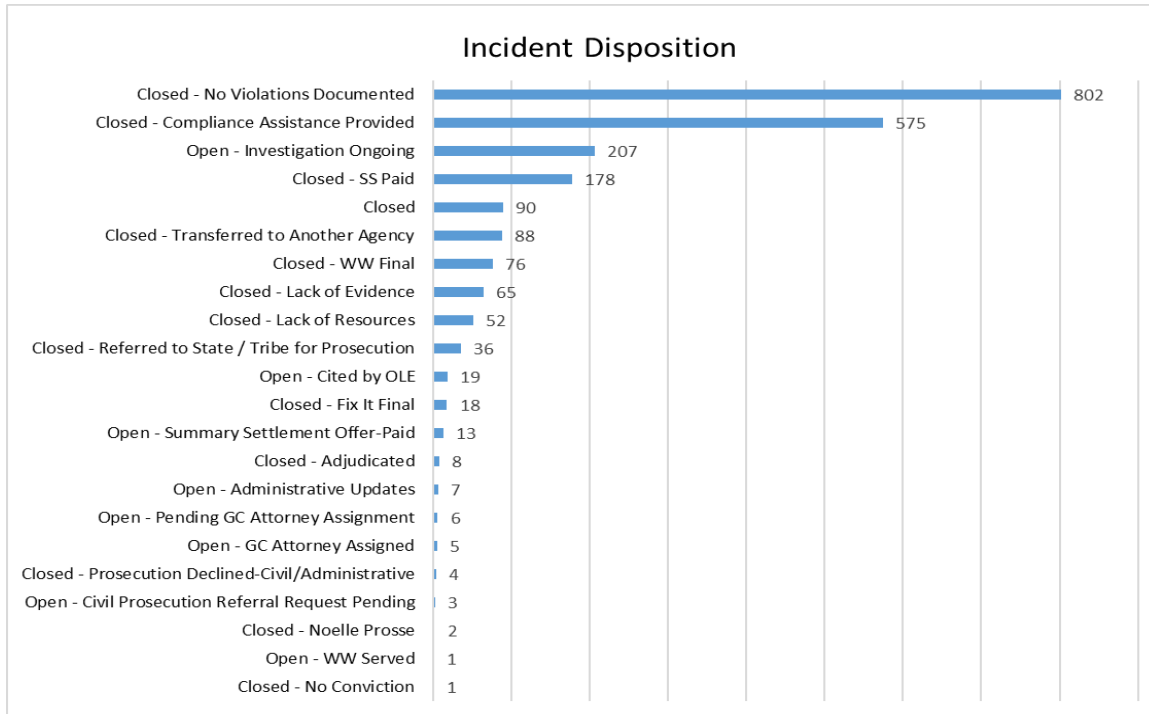
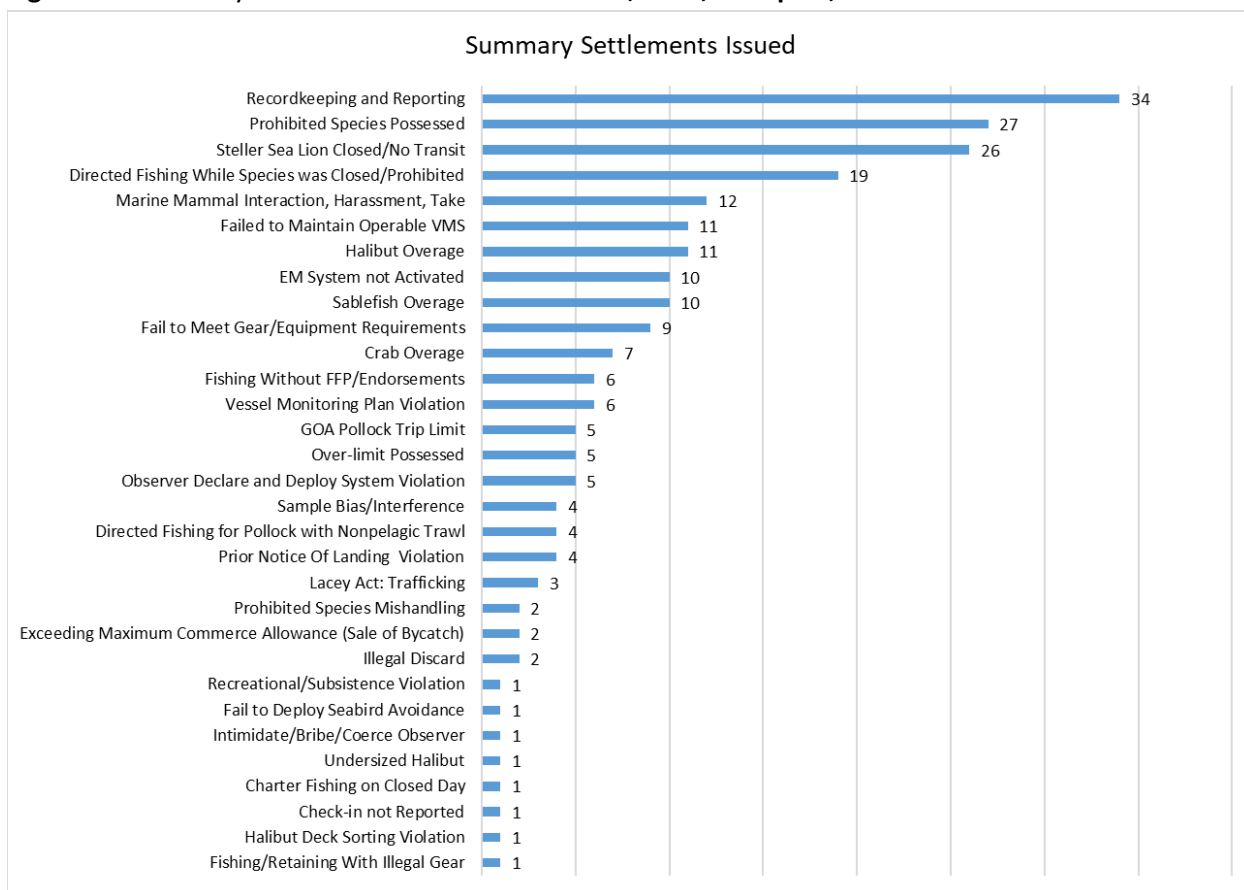


Figure 4.3 Summary Settlement Counts Issued Oct 1, 2024, to Sep 30, 2025.



5. Observer Program

Due to the government shutdown, the year-over-year comparative trend analysis was not completed.

In FY 2025, OLE received 442 observer statements describing potential violations; by comparison, in FY24, OLE received 848 statements. This could demonstrate that the new system designed by OLE and Fisheries Monitoring and Analysis Observer Program analysts (i.e. the new statement database coupled with observer and debriefer training), is performing well at determining if a statement about a potential violation is needed. However, the decrease in observer program statements reported to OLE is likely *also* impacted by the probationary termination of OLE’s Investigative Support Technician, Dennis Jaszka, who served in the specialized role as Liaison to the Observer Program in Seattle. He trained observers throughout the year during briefings and three-week trainings, and acted as consultant to observers and debriefers alike.

Figure 5.1. Summary of Observer Program Statements, Fiscal Year 2025.

Statements	Incidents	Statuses of ASSIGNED
442 statements received and reviewed in FY2025; 2 of these did not document an actual violation (no incident created in Case Management System)	440 statements were assigned to agents and officers. 267 unique incidents created	115 Ongoing (211 statements)
		1 Forwarded for prosecution (1 statements)
		8 Summary Settlements issued (14 statements)
		2 Written Warnings issued (2 statements)
		40 Compliance Assistance Provided (54 statements)
		8 Closed - Referred to another Agency (14 statements)
		93 Closed - No OLE Action (144 statements)