

NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement
Southeast Division

FISCAL YEAR 2025, QUARTER 2 FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL REPORT

JANUARY 1, 2025 – MARCH 31, 2025



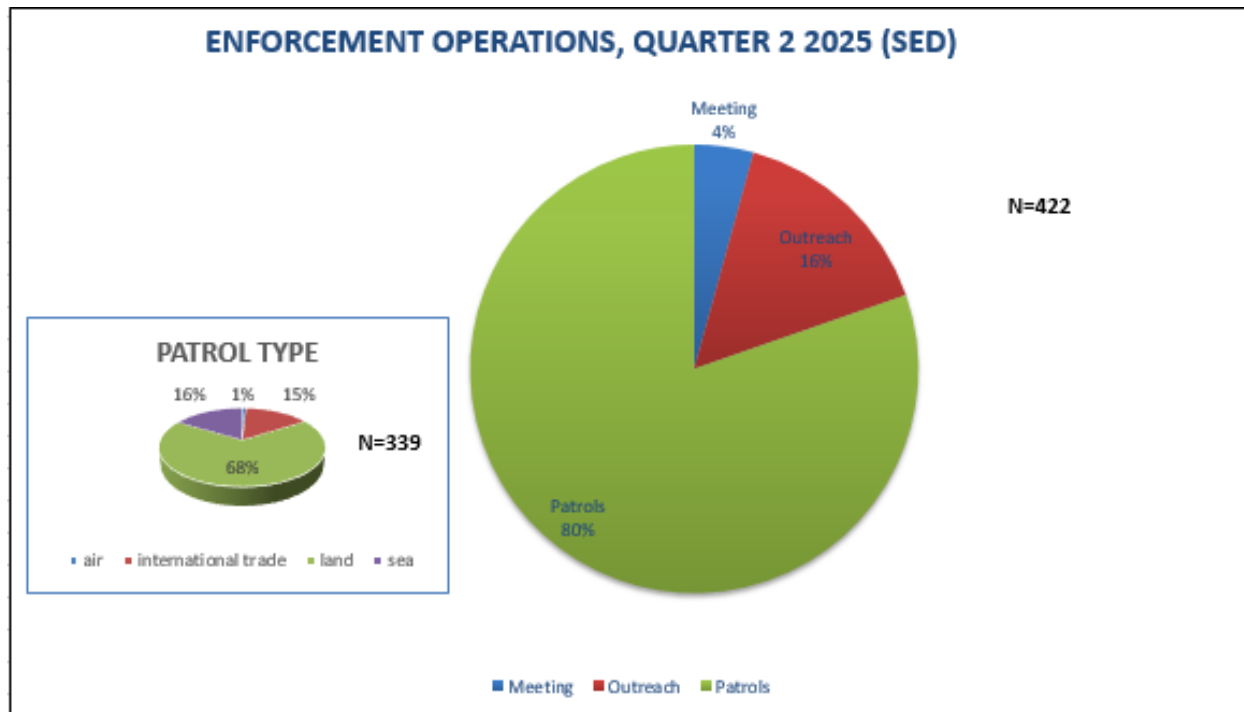
Contents

Enforcement and Compliance.....	2
Incident Information	3
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Summary	4
Gulf Fishery Management Council Summary.....	5
Caribbean Fishery Management Council Summary	6
Summary of Cases by Joint Enforcement Agreement and United States Coast Guard Partners.....	7
Caseload Snapshot.....	9
Enforcement Highlights.....	10
Overview of Summary Settlements	18
Investigative Support Program	21
Observer Program Highlights	22
Cases Referred For Prosecution	23
NOAA General Counsel Enforcement Section Charging Information	24

Enforcement and Compliance

Data represent National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Office of Law Enforcement, Southeast Division’s (OLE-SED) enforcement efforts conducted throughout FY Quarter 2, 2025, **January 1, 2025- March 31, 2025**. When appropriate, information is separated by council, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC), Gulf Fishery Management Council (GFMC) and Caribbean Fishery Management Council (CFMC).

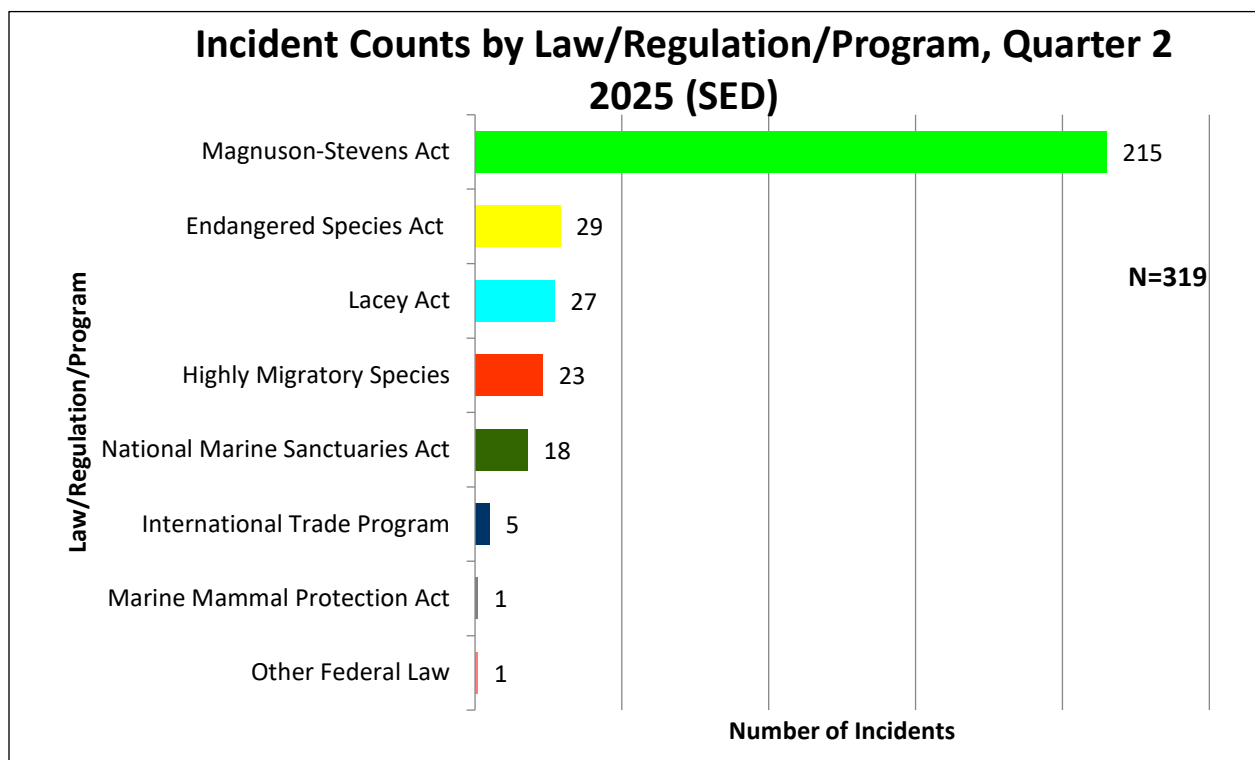
Patrols, outreach and education, compliance assistance, and investigations are the primary activities of OLE’s mission to protect marine wildlife and habitat by enforcing domestic laws and supporting international treaty requirements designed to ensure global resources are available for future generations. In addition to our regular patrols, four operations were conducted throughout the division. Enforcement efforts are routinely conducted with multiple federal, state and local partners throughout the division. OLE regularly conducts seafood container inspections coming into the U.S. in order to protect commerce and ensure legal fish species are imported. Three IUU/seafood monitoring operations were conducted with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and state partners in Texas, Florida and Georgia. Another operation focused on sanctuary protection and identifying and deterring illegal charters in the upper keys of Florida. This quarter, OLE-SED conducted and documented **339** patrols, **65** specific instances of outreach and attended **18** meetings.



Incident Information

During the second quarter, OLE-SED opened **319** incidents, which included **136** counts in the SAFMC area, **211** counts in the GFMC area and **4** counts in the CFMC area¹. These incidents originate from both NOAA personnel and our enforcement partners.

Summary of Incidents by Primary Law/Regulation/Program; Quarter 2, 2025



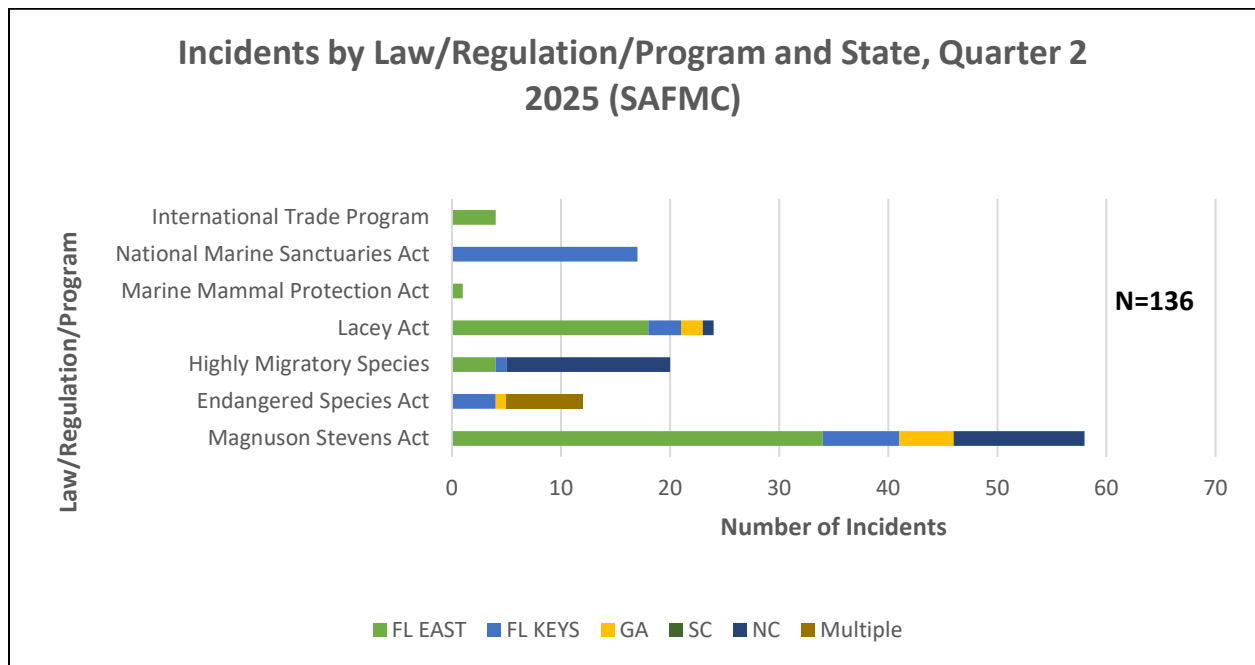
¹ Incidents occurring in the Florida Keys area are included in both SAFMC and GFMC counts; total individual counts are greater than opened incidents due to multiple counts charged for separate incidents

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Summary

**Total number of incidents listed below includes effort by OLE and enforcement partners, by location

Number of Incidents by Primary Law/Regulation/Program and Location; Quarter 2, 2025 (SAFMC)

Law/Regulation/Program	FL EAST	FL KEYS	GA	SC	NC	Multiple	Total
Magnuson Stevens Act	34	7	5		12		58
Endangered Species Act		4	1			7	12
Highly Migratory Species	4	1			15		20
Lacey Act	18	3	2		1		24
Marine Mammal Protection Act	1						1
National Marine Sanctuaries Act		17					17
International Trade Program	4						4
TOTAL	61	32	8	0	28	7	136

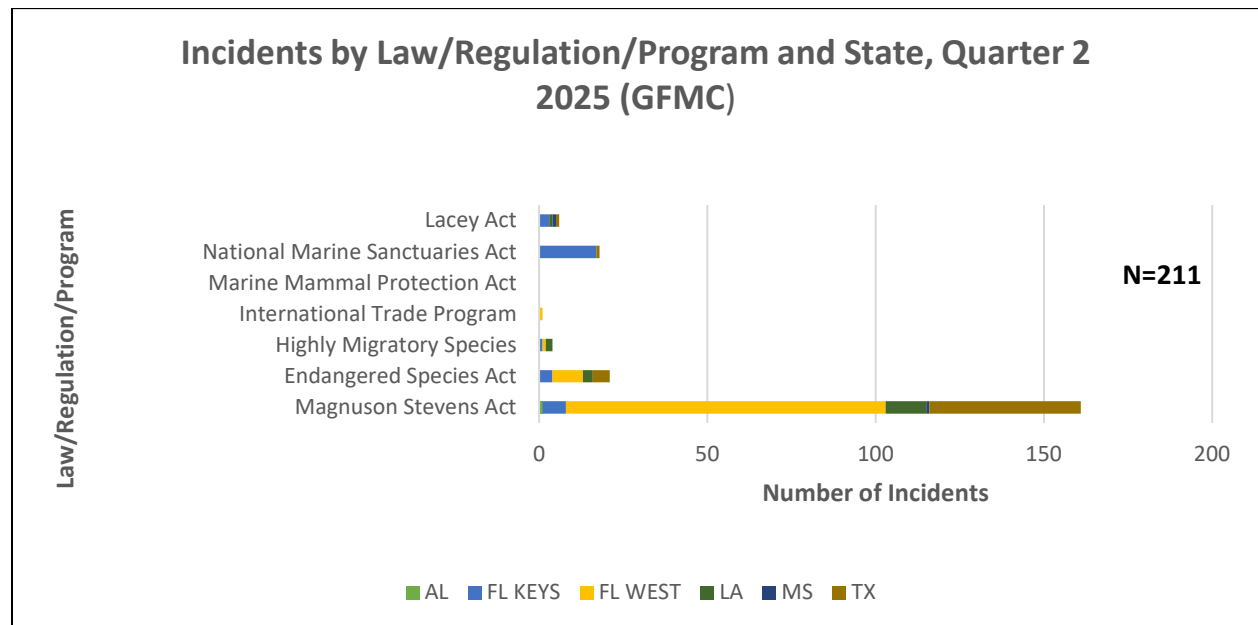


Gulf Fishery Management Council Summary

**Total number of incidents listed below includes effort by OLE and enforcement partners, by location

Number of Incidents by Primary Law/Regulation/Program and Location; Quarter 2, 2025 (GFMC)

Law/Regulation/Program	AL	FL KEYS	FL WEST	LA	MS	TX	Total
Magnuson Stevens Act	1	7	95	12	1	45	161
Endangered Species Act		4	9	3		5	21
Highly Migratory Species		1	1	2			4
International Trade Program			1				1
Marine Mammal Protection Act							0
National Marine Sanctuaries Act		17				1	18
Lacey Act		3		1	1	1	6
TOTAL	1	32	106	18	2	52	211

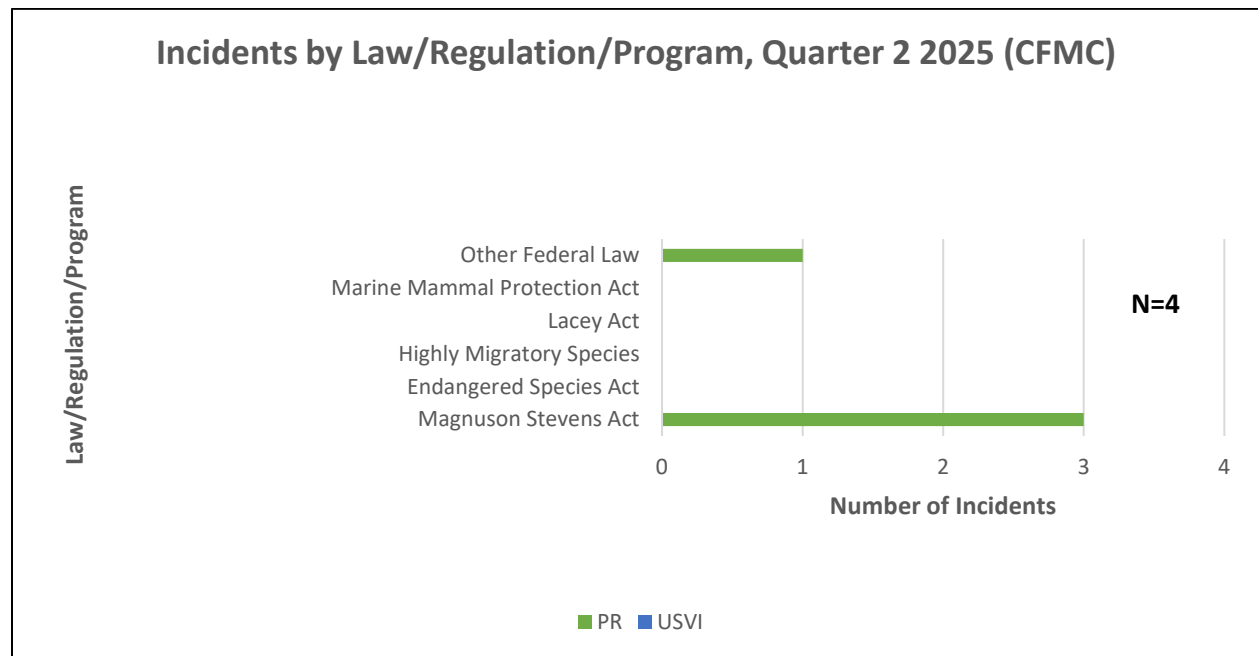


Caribbean Fishery Management Council Summary

**Total number of incidents listed below includes effort by OLE and enforcement partners, by location

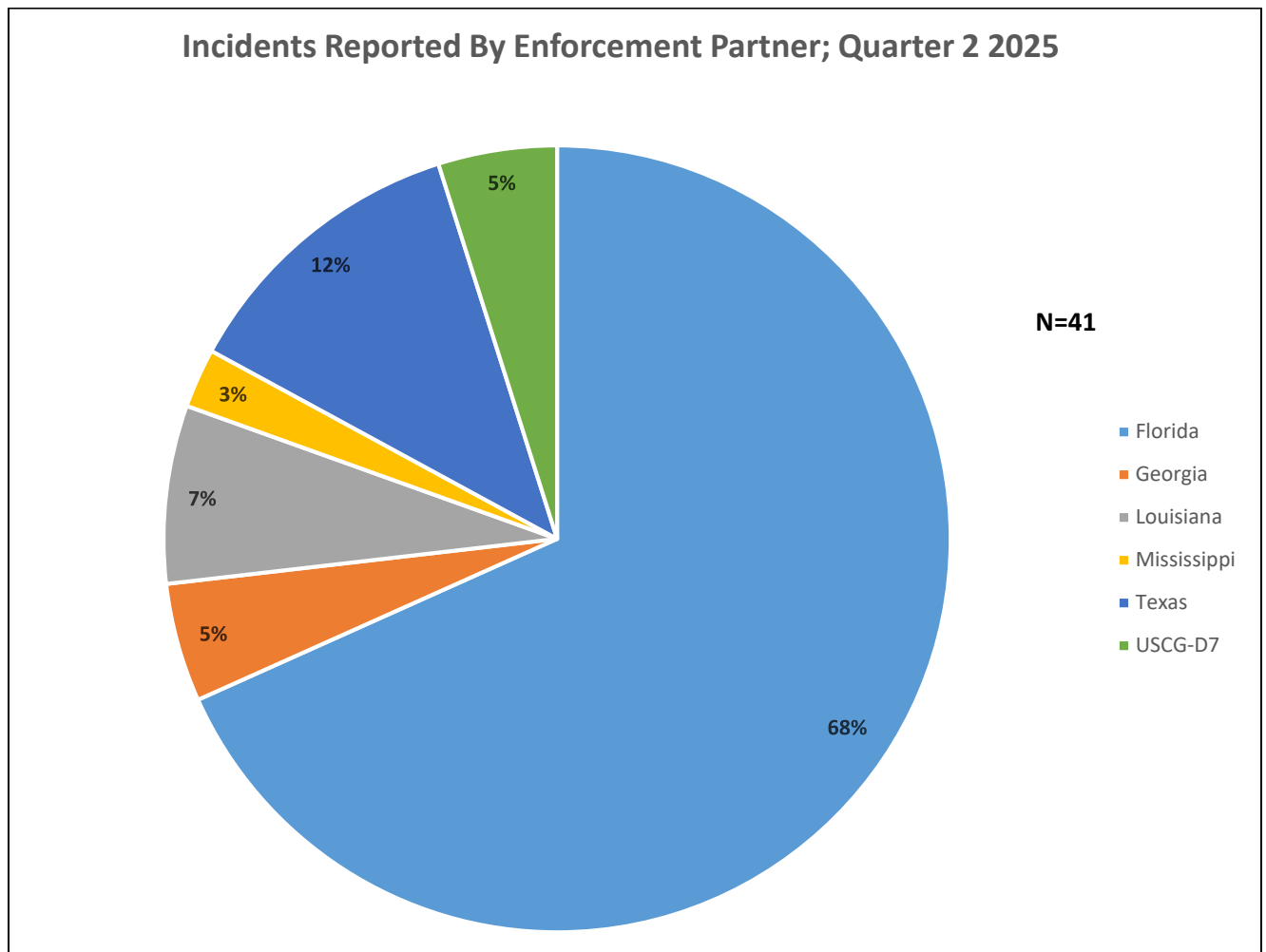
Number of Incidents by Primary Law/Regulation/Program and Location; Quarter 2, 2025 (CFMC)

Law/Regulation/Program	PR	USVI	Total
Magnuson Stevens Act	3		3
Endangered Species Act			0
Highly Migratory Species			0
Lacey Act			0
Marine Mammal Protection Act			0
Other Federal Law	1		1
TOTAL	4	0	4

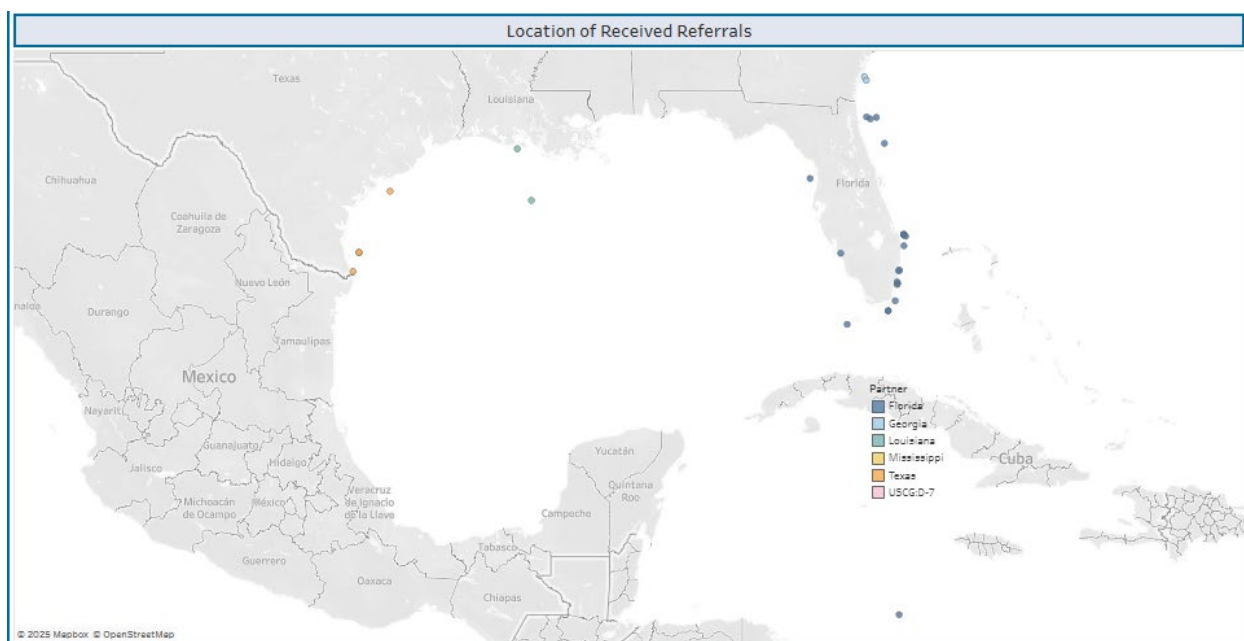


Summary of Cases by Joint Enforcement Agreement and United States Coast Guard Partners

Throughout Quarter 2, 2025, there were **41** cases referred to OLE-SED through Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA) and United States Coast Guard (USCG) partners. Below is a summary showing the overall distribution of cases initiated by partner, and a breakdown of case counts by primary law/regulation/program per enforcement partner¹. Effort consisted of dockside vessel boardings, offshore vessel boardings and interaction with the general public and industry members.



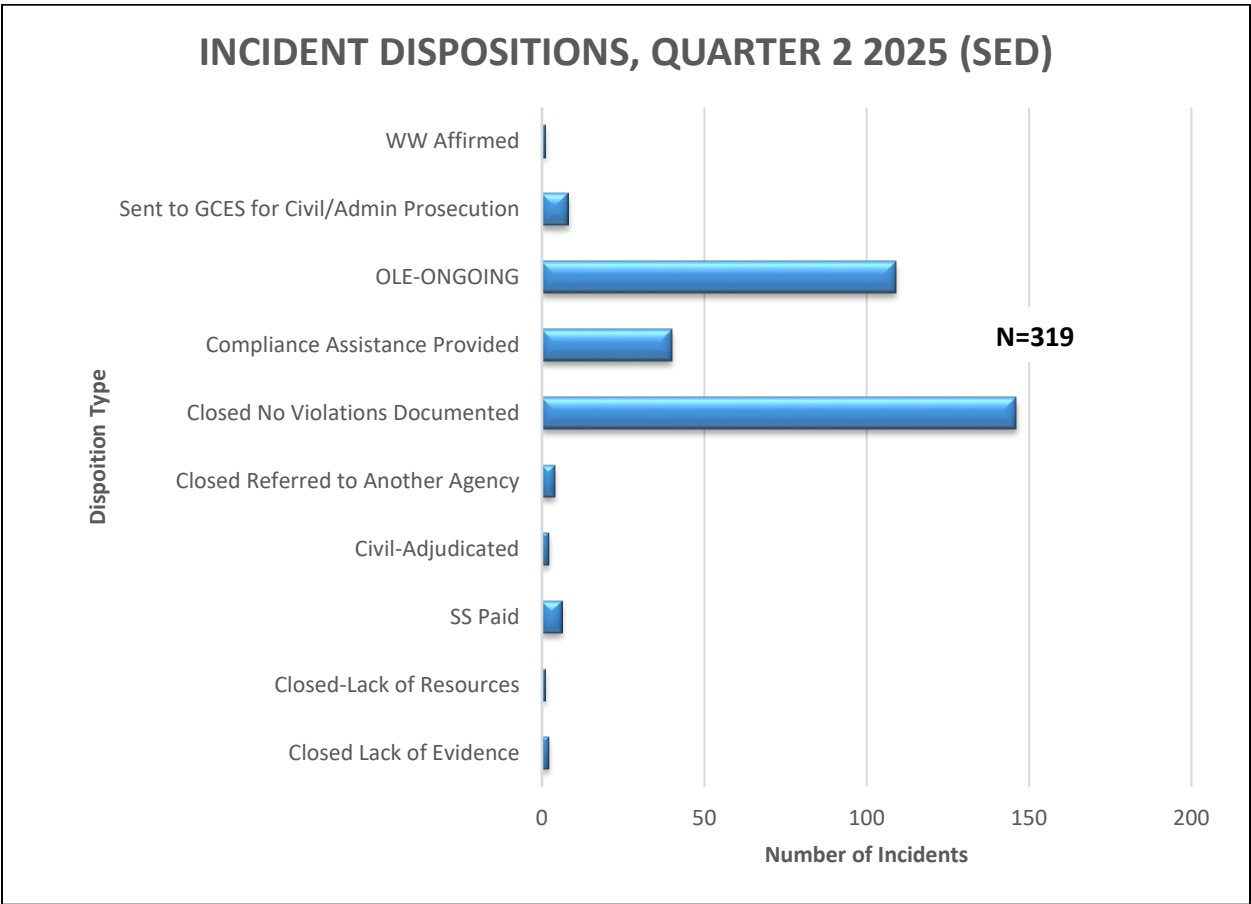
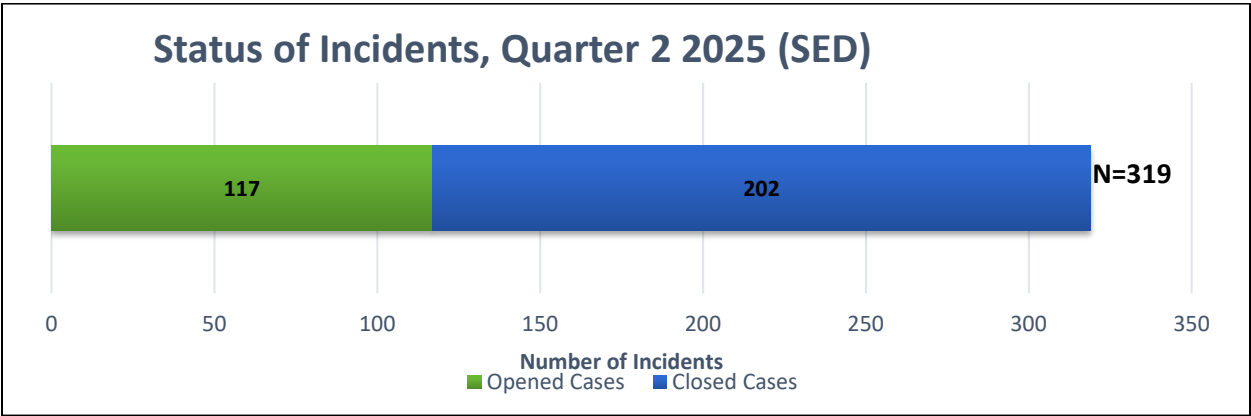
Law/Regulation/Program	FL	GA	TX	LA	MS	USCG-D7	TOTALS
Magnuson Stevens Act (MSFCMA)	19	1		3	1	2	26
Endangered Species Act (ESA)	2	1	4				7
Lacey Act	3		1				4
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	4						4
TOTALS	28	2	5	3	1	2	41



¹ total individual counts may be greater than opened cases due to multiple counts charged for separate cases

Caseload Snapshot

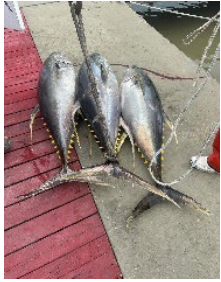
Below is a breakdown of the initiated incidents (**319**) throughout the quarter, by status and disposition. The total also includes cases referred to OLE-SED by our enforcement partners. Throughout the quarter, enforcement personnel were able to complete investigations and close **63%** of the incoming workload.



Enforcement Highlights

Highly Migratory Species

A North Carolina Enforcement Officer (EO) and units from United States Coast Guard (USCG) Sector NC conducted an operation targeting Bluefin tuna through the winter 2025 season. Through December 31, 2024, 22 HMS boardings, resulting in seven USCG violations and one written warning, were completed along with 111 patrol hours and two C-130 overflights.



A Houma, LA EO conducted a dockside patrol in Venice, LA to monitor for offshore vessels landing HMS species. During the patrol the EO observed a vessel land and offload three yellowfin tuna. During the inspection the EO found the captain/owner did not have a valid HMS Angling Permit. The violation was documented and cited.



A Key Largo EO conducted a Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Milestone patrol with USCG Islamorada. While on patrol the team witnessed a sportfishing vessel returning from South Atlantic federal waters. The team boarded the vessel and found a sailfish that was retained without an HMS charter/headboat permit.



A North Carolina EO conducted a patrol in Cape Hatteras, NC. During the patrol a second undersized bluefin tuna was found on a vessel, exceeding the one fish per day vessel limit. A summary settlement offer (SSO) assessed at \$1000.00.

A North Carolina EO held an impromptu compliance assistance call with several charter captains to debunk hearsay and answer questions about HMS retention limits on Charter/Headboats with a commercial endorsement to sell.

A Houma, LA EO conducted an underway patrol with Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR). The patrol ran to the tuna grounds due to the amount of HMS being caught in the area. The crew conducted boardings and inspections on an IFQ vessel and two HMS charter vessels. No violations were found.

Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) Fishing

A Savannah EO and U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) inspected a container with 98,000 lbs. of breaded shrimp. After a Seafood Import Monitoring Program (SIMP) document review, it was shown that the importer incorrectly filed a SIMP declaration. The importer was directed to correct the shipment data before the shipment could be released.



A Savannah EO conducted a joint inspection with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on a shipping container that had non manifested products. During the container inspection, a small, non-manifested shipment of 500 shortfin mako shark teeth, valued at \$2327, was discovered.

A San Juan Special agent (SA) conducted an inspection in the port of entry with CBP to inspect the cargo ferry coming from the Dominican Republic. Approximately 10 trucks were inspected, no violations detected.



A Harlingen, TX EO alongside USCG Station South Padre Island and CBP conducted an underway IUU patrol in the Gulf. During the patrol, three Mexican fishing vessels, known as lanchas, were observed in the EEZ attempting to fish. All three vessels were intercepted and returned to Mexico waters. The vessels were equipped for fishing, and a total of 11 Mexican nationals were onboard the lanchas.

A Cape Canaveral EO planned and coordinated an inter-agency meeting and patrol at the Orlando International Airport with CBP Trade, USFWS, and Florida Fish and Wildlife (FWC). Air cargo containing a shipment of grouper from Brazil was inspected as well as assisting USFWS with CITES inspections.

Seafood Import Monitoring Program (SIMP) and Port State Measures Act (PSMA)

A Savannah EO conducted a targeted inspection and SIMP review of two containers that contained approximately 850,000 lbs. of seafood. A SIMP audit found that the shipment was inadmissible due to incomplete importer documents. The documents were verified by the State Department and referred to CBP for denial of entry.

A Miami SA received notification that a Miami-based importer paid a \$13,500 Notice of Violation and Assessment (NOVA) issued to the company for importing 7,560 lbs of shark filets into the U.S. without satisfying the chain of custody and data reporting requirements of the Seafood Import Monitoring Program.

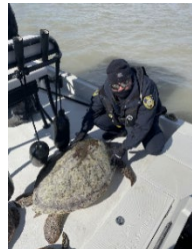


During a patrol at the Port of West Palm Beach, Cape Canaveral and Miami EOs conducted a SIMP inspection ensuring compliance with regulations.

A Harlingen, TX EO alongside CBP, conducted an IUU/SIMP operation, which focused on Ports of Entry from Laredo, TX to Brownsville, TX. During the operation, seven SIMP inspections containing approximately 4,024kg of red snapper, 17,185.55kg of tilapia and 860kg of barracuda were completed. No violations were documented and all products were released into commerce.

A Savannah EO conducted a joint SIMP data inspection with Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and CBP on a shipment of 45,000lbs of shrimp. A SIMP data sheet review found no violations. A similar joint inspection with USFWS, GA DNR and CBP was conducted on an Indonesian shipment manifested to contain CITES species shark teeth. No violations were found.

Endangered Species Act

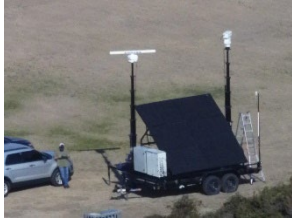


Harlingen, TX EOs assisted Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and South Padre Island, TX, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Turtle Inc. in the recovery and release of over

750 ESA protected Sea Turtles, after they were affected by cold-stun events that occurred after multiple cold fronts hit the Texas gulf coast.



North Carolina, Georgia, and Miami EOs made underway patrols in support of Operation Whale Watcher. Several Magnuson boardings were also completed.



SED and NED agents completed an operation in NC using both the M3 radar trailer and OLE owned unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) to locate, identify, and monitor vessels.

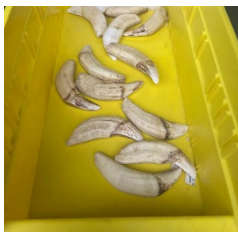


A St. Petersburg, FL EO completed an at-sea patrol in the Gulf EEZ out to 50 NM aboard a USCG station vessel. The patrol targeted commercial fishing vessels. The team boarded two shrimp vessels and documented minor TED violations which fishing crews corrected on scene.



A St. Petersburg EO and SA assisted the USCG with a commercial shrimping vessel returning to shore in Tampa. OLE conducted an investigation and found violations relating to TEDs. The violations were fixed on the spot and the captain was issued a fix-it notice.

Marine Mammal Protection Act



A Cape Canaveral EO responded to a complaint of twelve possible pilot whale's teeth in the possession of a vendor that would be at the Space Coast Shell Festival. The EO made contact with the vendor before the show could take place and the twelve teeth were voluntarily abandoned to the EO.

Agents received multiple notifications of NOVAs charged to vessels for exceeding the North Atlantic Right Whale Speed Rule. NOVAs ranged from \$15,000-\$30,000.

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act

A League City, TX SA was notified that a permit holder settled two NOVAs totaling \$36,000 for failing to take an observer as required.



A Houma, LA EO worked with USCG pilots and crew from Mobile, AL to conduct two aerial patrols of the Madison Swanson and Edges Marine Protected Areas (MPA)s and the Flower Garden National Marine Sanctuary. The patrols focused on monitoring for any illegal activity within the MPAs or NMS as well as monitoring fishing vessels in the area. The EO identified three Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) vessels that did not have the proper vessel ID on the weatherdeck. In addition, one of the vessels was found to not be transmitting a VMS signal while underway and fishing. The information was passed to EO's local to the vessels home ports and followed up accordingly.

A SC and Jacksonville, FL agent, along with their ASAC, attended a jury trial in Charleston, SC. The trial involved a subject who was charged with providing false information and falsifying documents related to commercial overages and the transfer of those overages to another vessel. The SC and Jacksonville agents took the stand to testify for over an hour. The trial was completed on 03/20/2025 and the jury returned guilty verdicts on all three felony counts (two counts of 18 U.S.C. 1001 and one count of 18 U.S.C. 1519). A sentencing hearing is still to be scheduled.



A Cape Canaveral, FL EO provided assistance to the USCG Cutter Coho while officers were conducting an at sea boarding of a recreational vessel in possession of five red snapper out of season. The EO provided guidance on submitting a case package as well as species ID confirming the fish were indeed red snapper. A case package was submitted for the incident.

National Marine Sanctuaries



A Key Largo, FL EO conducted a Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) milestone patrol. The patrol, aboard a FWC offshore patrol vessel targeted commercial shrimp vessels illegally discharging sewage into the FKNMS and Turtle Excluder Device compliance (TED). The crew inspected the TEDs of three shrimp vessels which revealed no violations. An investigation aboard one of the shrimp vessels resulted in the captain being issued a state citation for having an open overboard discharge valve on the marine sanitation device which would allow for direct sewage discharge into the FKNMS. Officers detected multiple resource violations aboard the same vessel for four undersized spiny lobster, twelve wrung spiny lobster tails and thirty-nine cow fish.



A Fort Myers, FL EO and an upper Keys EO conducted a three day patrol operation in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. The officers conducted at-sea patrols focusing on marine protected areas such as the Key Largo Existing Management Area, and Sanctuary Preservation Areas. The crew boarded 13 vessels, contacted 56 people and documented no violations.

Cooperative Enforcement/Partnerships

A Fort Myers, FL EO reviewed a case referral from FWC in which a commercial Gulf reef fish IFQ fishing vessel failed to land at an approved landing location, failed to possess sufficient allocation of IFQ species in the vessel or linked shareholder accounts, and failed to report red snapper. The EO issued a joint and several \$2000 summary settlement offer to the operator and owner.

A Corpus Christi, TX EO reviewed a TPWD case referral and issued a \$500 summary settlement offer to the captain and owner of a shrimp trawl vessel for a TED violation.

A San Juan, PR SA conducted an underway patrol with JEA partner Puerto Rico DNER. The patrol concentrated on three closed areas located on the west coast of Puerto Rico. Three vessels were boarded during the patrol. One of the vessels was found to be in possession of five conchs, a prohibited species, in the EEZ. SSO were issued for the violations.



A St. Petersburg, FL EO participated in a multi-agency (NOAA OLE, FWC, USCG and HCSO) operation led by Hillsborough County Sheriff's office which targeted commercial fishing activities in Tampa Bay. The team conducted at-sea boardings of three federally permitted shrimp vessels. Officers documented minor Turtle Excluder Device violations which fishing crews corrected on scene. Officers also boarded a sailing vessel without proper navigational lights which resulted in the arrest of a subject who possessed methamphetamines and boarded a recreational fishing vessel which had violations that state officers handled.

A Houston, TX EO and a League City, TX EO conducted a joint ESA patrol with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Game Wardens in Galveston, TX. Officers boarded four commercial shrimp trawlers and identified several discrepancies regarding their Chauvin Deflector TED modifications. Compliance assistance was provided to the captains to include outreach material.

A San Juan, PR SA conducted an at sea patrol with JEA partner DNER as part of a multi-agency fisheries operation between USCG, NOAA OLE and DNER. As part of the operation, a USCG helicopter and a DNER airplane were assisting as air surveillance and a USCG vessel and a DNER vessel were patrolling in the water. A total of 8 vessels were boarded and inspected, 2 of the vessels were found with violations for fishing inside a closed area.

A Houma, LA EO and Niceville, FL SA and EO conducted two SIMP inspections on containers at the Port of Mobile while working with Alabama Marine Resources and Customs personnel. No violations were found.

Patrols/VMS/Catch Shares

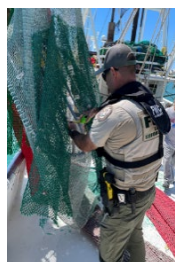
A San Juan, PR SA conducted an underway patrol with JEA partner, PR DNER. During the patrol, a commercial fisherman was boarded and found to be in possession of undersized lobster in federal waters. The SA issued a \$275 SSO to a commercial fisherman for the possession of an

undersized lobster. The commercial fisherman had previously been issued an SSO in 2021 for the illegal possession of conch in the EEZ.

The Jacksonville, FL ASAC, SA, and Key West SA conducted an inspection of a federal dealer in St. Augustine, FL. During the inspection an offload of a pelagic longline vessel was monitored. Approximately 12,000 lbs of tuna, wahoo, swordfish, mahi, and escolar were offloaded. No violations were documented.

A Niceville, FL EO conducted a land based patrol to Destin, FL to monitor the offload of Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Gulf reef fish from a commercial fishing vessel. No violations were identified. Following the boarding, the EO conducted an educational outreach event for students of the Destin High School fishing class. Topics discussed included OLE mission and priorities, the EO's background, and future career path planning.

A Houma, LA EO conducted an offshore patrol with Louisiana Department of Wildlife (LDWF) officers out of Venice, LA. The crew ran 25 miles offshore to the swordfish grounds. The EO was able to conduct boardings on 12 vessels, both recreational and charters, targeting swordfish and tuna. The EO documented several vessels without HMS permits on board as well as a recreational angler in possession of an undersized shark without an HMS angling permit.



A Key West, FL SA conducted a TED patrol with a FWC Offshore Patrol Vessel crew. Three TED boardings were completed off of Key West. Three TED violations were discovered, with compliance assistance provided.

IS personnel monitored vessel trips, identified suspected violations, referred vessels to Eos and SAs for further investigation, and contacted numerous vessel owners to provide education/outreach throughout the quarter.

Compliance Assistance/Outreach/Education/Public Affairs

A San Juan, PR SA participated in a meeting organized by Sea Grant to provide the federal and territorial regulations governing the charter fishing businesses and the commercial fishers. The SA presented and explained all the applicable federal regulations with emphasis in HMS. Also in assistance were USCG, local DNER and personnel from the Caribbean Council.



OLE attended the annual St Petersburg, FL joint Science Fest and Marine Quest open house, held over two days. The EOs accommodated

visitors aboard the 36' Metal Shark patrol vessel staged as a static display. 1,600 school children attended on the school day and visitors to the OLE booth were deputized as junior agents. Over 13,000 people attended the public day. The compliance liaison, 2 St Petersburg EOs and 2 mission support staff educated the public on our mission and how to protect marine wildlife.

The Compliance Liaison and St Petersburg, FL SEO presented at the 2025 Marine Resource Education Program (MREP) Southeast Fisheries Workshop in St Petersburg, FL. The workshop was attended by various industry stakeholders and representatives from the NMFS SERO, South Atlantic, Caribbean and Gulf Fishery Management Councils. OLE provided an overview of our program; covering international affairs (IUU, SIMP and PSMA focus) and domestic priorities, an overview of sworn positions, partnerships and case examples. A VMS workshop presentation was also held highlighting the program's capabilities and benefits to industry. Numerous questions were fielded throughout the week, fostering positive relationships with enforcement and anglers.

A League City, TX SA representing NOAA OLE, joined local, state, and federal partners attending the Law Enforcement Appreciation Day at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

Training/Other

Houma, LA and Niceville, FL EOs attended a USCG fisheries advisory group meeting held by Gulf Regional Fisheries Training Center (GRFTC) staff at Sector Mobile, AL. The EOs assisted GRFTC staff with TED refresher training for boarding officers and spoke with the group about fisheries trends and OLE's priorities in the Gulf of America.

A Jacksonville, FL SA provided an OLE brief to the USCG Southeast Regional Fisheries Training Center's graduating class and discussed NOAA OLE capabilities, case packages, trends, and recent cases. The SA then had discussions with the class and instructors regarding both agencies missions and NOAA OLE.



A Fort Myers, FL EO provided federal fisheries training to include IFQ, catch shares, VMS and fishery case studies to a group of 40 FWC officers from Manatee, Charlotte, and Lee counties. More in-depth training is planned in the near future.

Media

A Department of Justice press release: "Jury Finds South Carolina Fisherman Guilty of Making False Statements", related to commercial trip overages: <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sc/pr/jury-finds-south-carolina-fisherman-guilty-making-false-statements>

Overview of Summary Settlements

Listed below is a summary of the **47** Summary Settlement penalties issued during the quarter. The most frequently observed violation types cited involved retention during closure, undersize possession and/or lack of descender or turtle mitigation devices (23), Sanctuary related violations (7) and Fishing in a Closed Area (7). **18** violations were cited throughout the Gulf region, **19** violations were cited throughout the South Atlantic region, **9** violations in the Keys area and **1** occurred in the Caribbean region.

LAW/REG/PROGRAM	VIOLATION	AMOUNT	STATE
Endangered Species Act	TED/BRD Requirements	\$600	TX
Endangered Species Act	TED/BRD Requirements	\$300	TX
Highly Migratory Species	Unpermitted HMS Fishing Activity	\$1,250	NC
Highly Migratory Species	Catch Limits Exceeded	\$1,000	NC
Highly Migratory Species	Unpermitted HMS Fishing Activity	\$500	TX
Highly Migratory Species	Unpermitted HMS Fishing Activity	\$500	FL EAST
International Trade Program	SIMP Requirements	\$2,000	FL WEST
Lacey Act	Possession Requirements	\$500	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure	\$650	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure	\$600	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure; Discard of Fish Upon Approach by Law Enforcement	\$1,600	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure	\$650	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure	\$600	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Fishing in Closed Area; Lack of Descender Device	\$1,125	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure	\$250	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure	\$750	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Fishing in Closed Area	\$600	FL EAST

Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure	\$350	TX
Magnuson Stevens Act	Undersize Possession	\$275	PR
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure	\$700	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	IFQ Program Requirements	\$2,000	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Undersize Possession; Lack of descender device	\$500	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	IFQ Program Requirements	\$1,000	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Bag Limit Exceeded	\$600	TX
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure	\$400	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Fishing in Closed Area	\$350	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Undersize Possession; Lack of descender device	\$900	TX
Magnuson Stevens Act	Bag Limit Exceeded; Lack of descender device	\$2,125	FL KEYS
Magnuson Stevens Act	Fishing in Closed Area	\$275	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Undersize Possession	\$1,500	TX
Magnuson Stevens Act	Commercial Trip Limit Exceeded	\$1,250	NC
Magnuson Stevens Act	Undersize Possession	\$650	TX
Magnuson Stevens Act	Fishing in Closed Area	\$1,000	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Fishing in Closed Area	\$1,325	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Fishing in Closed Area	\$1,000	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Bag Limit Exceeded; Lack of descender device	\$600	TX
Magnuson Stevens Act	Unpermitted Charter Activity-Open Access Permit	\$500	FL KEYS
Magnuson Stevens Act	Bag Limit Exceeded; Lack of descender device	\$700	TX
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure	\$700	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure	\$250	FL EAST
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Areas to be Avoided Activity	\$2,000	FL KEYS

National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Fishing within Sanctuary Preservation Area	\$600	FL KEYS
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Fishing within Sanctuary Preservation Area	\$700	FL KEYS
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Fishing within Sanctuary Preservation Area	\$600	FL KEYS
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Fishing within Sanctuary Preservation Area	\$600	FL KEYS
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Areas to be Avoided Activity	\$2,000	FL KEYS
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Fishing within Sanctuary Preservation Area	\$600	FL KEYS

Investigative Support Program

Southeast Division Active Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Population: **921**

Population Breakdown by (VMS) Fisheries and VMS Vendor

FISHERY	ADDVALUE	ATLANTICRT	FARIA	METOCEAN	NAUTIC ALERT	NI	SKYMATE	WOODSHOLE	TOTAL
HMS Pelagic Longline			13			1	14	45	73
HMS Shark			1				1	4	6
Gulf Reef Fish	1		56	80	1	41	111	264	554
Rock Shrimp			2	3		4	6	39	54
Southeast For Hire*	3	2	1	1	6		35	186	234
TOTAL	4	2	73	84	7	46	167	538	921

The Investigative Support Program staff play a vital role in ensuring compliance and provide assistance to enforcement officers and special agents. Staff received and processed **37** referrals from JEA partners. Case support to the field was provided as well, with work ranging from processing summary settlements (**37**), preparing incident reports for GCES, in support of prosecution (**12**), confirming vessel ownership and track lines, validating AIS data and creating chartlets. During the quarter, commercial and charter trips were monitored via VMS to detect potential violations. Violations, ranging from fishing in closed areas, improper gear use and failure to comply with reporting requirements (trip declarations, daily reports, and pre-landing notices) were detected by Investigative Support staff and referred to enforcement officers or special agents for follow-up. Staff technicians initiated targeted warnings and messages to **402** vessels following observation of suspected VMS or fishing violations, as well as providing targeted education and outreach to vessel owners. **8** investigations were referred for VMS violations. Additionally, staff conducted **466** calls with industry related to compliance during the quarter.

Another continued area of focus this quarter involves North Atlantic Right Whale protection, as comprehensive investigative work was completed for **12** vessels referred to GCES for violating speed restrictions.

*VMS no longer required for the for-hire fleet, but units still reporting are noted.

Observer Program Highlights

During FY Quarter 2, 2025, the Southeast Division Observer Programs deployed on **74** trips for **349** sea days. Approximately **96%** of all selected trips were completed without an observer related enforcement incident [assault/harassment (sexual and non-sexual), safety]. Observer programs reported **27** potential fishery violations to OLE-SED. The Galveston Shrimp Program deployed on **8** trips for **92** sea days, and the Galveston Reef Fish Program deployed on **25** trips for **115** sea days. The Panama City Shark Research and deepwater longline Program deployed on **7** trips for **7** sea days and the Panama City South Atlantic Reef Fish Program deployed on **26** trips for **39** sea days. The Miami Pelagic Observer Program deployed on **8** trips for **96** sea days. The summary below details the type of observer related complaints received during Quarter 1 (calendar year) of 2024, for all three programs.

COMPLAINT TYPE	Galveston Programs	Panama City Programs	Miami Observer Program	TOTALS
ASSAULT				0
HARASSMENT/INTIMIDATE/IMPEDEMENT	1			1
SAFETY	1		1	2
NON-COMPLIANT FOR OBSERVER COVERAGE	16	3		19
HANDLING			4	4
GEAR			3	3
RETENTION			1	1
SPATIAL				0
TOTALS	18	3	9	30

Cases Referred For Prosecution

Listed below is a summary of the **27** cases forwarded to NOAA Office of General Counsel Enforcement Section (GCES) and/or the United States Attorney Office/Department of Justice for this quarter. Cases varied in violation type, with 11 occurring in the South Atlantic area, 3 in the Gulf area, 12 in the Florida Keys area and 1 in the Caribbean area.

LAW/REG/PROGRAM	VIOLATION	STATE
Endangered Species Act	North Atlantic Right Whale Speed Reduction Violations	MULTIPLE
Endangered Species Act	North Atlantic Right Whale Speed Reduction Violations	MULTIPLE
Endangered Species Act	North Atlantic Right Whale Speed Reduction Violations	MULTIPLE
Endangered Species Act	North Atlantic Right Whale Speed Reduction Violations	MULTIPLE
Endangered Species Act	North Atlantic Right Whale Speed Reduction Violations	MULTIPLE
Endangered Species Act	North Atlantic Right Whale Speed Reduction Violations	MULTIPLE
Lacey Act	Possession Requirements	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Closed Area Incursion	SC
Magnuson Stevens Act	Unpermitted Charter Activity-Moratorium Access	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Observer Harassment	SC
Magnuson Stevens Act	Closed Area Incursion	PR
Magnuson Stevens Act	Observer Harassment	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Closed Area Incursion	SC
Magnuson Stevens Act	Gear Requirements	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	IFQ Program Requirements	LA
Magnuson Stevens Act	Reporting Requirements	FL KEYS

National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Areas to be Avoided Activity	FL KEYS
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Areas to be Avoided Activity	FL KEYS
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Areas to be Avoided Activity	FL KEYS
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Areas to be Avoided Activity	FL KEYS
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Fishing within Sanctuary Preservation Area	FL KEYS
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Areas to be Avoided Activity	FL KEYS
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Fishing within Sanctuary Preservation Area	FL KEYS
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Areas to be Avoided Activity	FL KEYS
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Areas to be Avoided Activity	FL KEYS
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Areas to be Avoided Activity	FL KEYS
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Anchoring within Sanctuary	FL KEYS

*Cases sent to the United States Attorney Office/Department of Justice for criminal prosecution.

NOAA General Counsel Enforcement Section Charging Information

The following Civil Administrative Enforcement Actions are results from NOAA GCES that occurred in the Southeast Division, from **DECEMBER 2024- MARCH 2025** (available information since last report). Nationwide results may also be found at the [enforcement charging information site](#)

1. M/Y Podium – Owner Hawk Marine Ltd. and Operator Andrew J. Hutchins were charged jointly and severally under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act with operating a vessel greater than 50 meters inside the Area To Be Avoided in and around the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. A \$7,500 NOVA was issued and the case settled for \$6,750.
2. D/B EPIC Hedron – Offshore Oil Block Lessee Renaissance Offshore, LLC and Owner/Operator Helix Energy Solutions, Inc. were charged jointly and severally under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act with anchoring a vessel within the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary. A \$2,500 NOVA was issued, and the case settled for \$2,250.

3. F/V Game On – Owner Chris Morrison Fishing Ventures Inc. and Operator Christian Allen Morrison were charged jointly and severally under the Magnuson-Stevens Act with fishing inside the Edisto Marine Protected Area. A \$5,750 NOVA was issued.
4. F/V Rum Runner – Owner Venice Boat Partners 1 LLC and Operators Marshall Gray Long Jr., Go Long Charters LLC were charged jointly and severally under the Magnuson-Stevens Act with possessing Gulf reef fish in the EEZ aboard a charter vessel without a federal charter permit. A \$7,750 NOVA was issued, and the case settled for \$7,175.
5. F/V FL8273NG – Operator/Angler Omar Javier Arcia was charged under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act with fishing in the Davis Reef Sanctuary Preservation Area in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. A \$1,250 NOVA was issued.
6. F/V Liberty I – Owner Liberty I Inc. and Operator Chau Cao were charged jointly and severally under the Endangered Species Act with failing to have compliant Turtle Excluder Devices installed in shrimp nets. A \$4,000 NOVA was issued, and the case settled for \$3,600.
7. M/V WHTSNXT – Owner James Albert Opolka was charged under the Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act with violating the North Atlantic Right Whale speed restriction regulation. A \$30,000 NOVA was issued.
8. M/Y Viva – Owner Viva Holdings Ltd. and Operator Niels Ackermans were charged jointly and severally under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act with operating a vessel greater than 50 meters in the Area To Be Avoided in and around the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. A \$7,500 NOVA was issued, and the case settled for \$6,750.
9. FL1876RW – Owner/Operator Russell Taylor and anglers Kelly Bond, Mark Bass, Daniel Emerson, and Mark Thomas were charged jointly and severally under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act with fishing and possessing fish in the Tortugas Ecological Reserve of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. A \$3,750 NOVA was issued.
10. M/V Sunchaser – Owner SCR Inc. and Operator David Donald Nicol Burns were charged jointly and severally under the Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act with violating the North Atlantic Right Whale speed restriction regulation. A \$15,000 NOVA was issued, and the case settled for \$13,500.
11. M/V Silver Shadow – Owner Silversea Cruises Ltd. was charged under the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act with violating the North Atlantic Right Whale speed restriction regulation. A \$15,000 NOVA was issued.
12. M/Y Amaral – Owner Mullet II Ltd., and Operator Rodd Taylor were charged jointly and severally under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act with operating a vessel greater than 50

meters in registered length, inside an Area to be Avoided in and around the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. A \$7,500 NOVA was issued, and the case settled for \$6,750.

13. FL4139LB – Anglers Carlos Enrique Suarez, Sergio Espinosa, Yamile Barbara Munoz Guerra, and Yamile Garcia Fernandez were charged jointly and severally under the National Marine Sanctuary Act for anchoring and/or fishing within the Sombrero Key Sanctuary Preservation Area. A \$7,500 NOVA was issued.
14. M/V Evado – Owner J&G Group Investments Inc. and Operator Eduardo Andres Linares were charged jointly and severally under the Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act with violating the North Atlantic Right Whale speed restriction regulation. A \$15,000 NOVA was issued.
15. M/V Sandcrab – Owner Sandcrab LLC and Operator Jeffrey Sanderson were charged jointly and severally under the Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act with violating the North Atlantic Right Whale speed restriction regulation. A \$10,000 NOVA was issued.
16. M/Y Gene Chaser – Owner Gene Lab Ltd. and Operator Zack Green were charged jointly and severally under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act with operating a vessel greater than 50 meters in the Area To Be Avoided in and around the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. A \$7,500 NOVA was issued, and the case settled for \$6,750.
17. F/V El Cubano – Owner/Operator Manuel Mendez-Mojena was charged under the Magnuson-Stevens Act with fishing in the Hind Bank Marine Conservation District. A \$5,750 NOVA was issued.
18. M/Y Samurai – Owner HR Samurai Holdings Ltd. and Operator Gareth Harris were charged jointly and severally under the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act with violating the North Atlantic Right Whale speed restriction regulation. A \$7,500 NOVA was issued, and the case settled for \$6,750.
19. M/Y Starship – Owner Brandywine Yacht LLC and Operator Steven Craig Feldman were charged jointly and severally under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act with operating a vessel greater than 50 meters in the Area To Be Avoided in and around the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. A \$7,500 NOVA was issued, and the case settled for \$6,750.
20. M/V Happy Heart – Owner Happy Heart IV LLC and Operator John Ruberti were charged jointly and severally under the Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act with violating the North Atlantic Right Whale speed restriction regulation. A \$15,000 NOVA was issued, and the case settled for \$13,500.