

NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement
Southeast Division

FISCAL YEAR 2025, QUARTER 4
FISHERY MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL REPORT

JULY 1, 2025 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2025



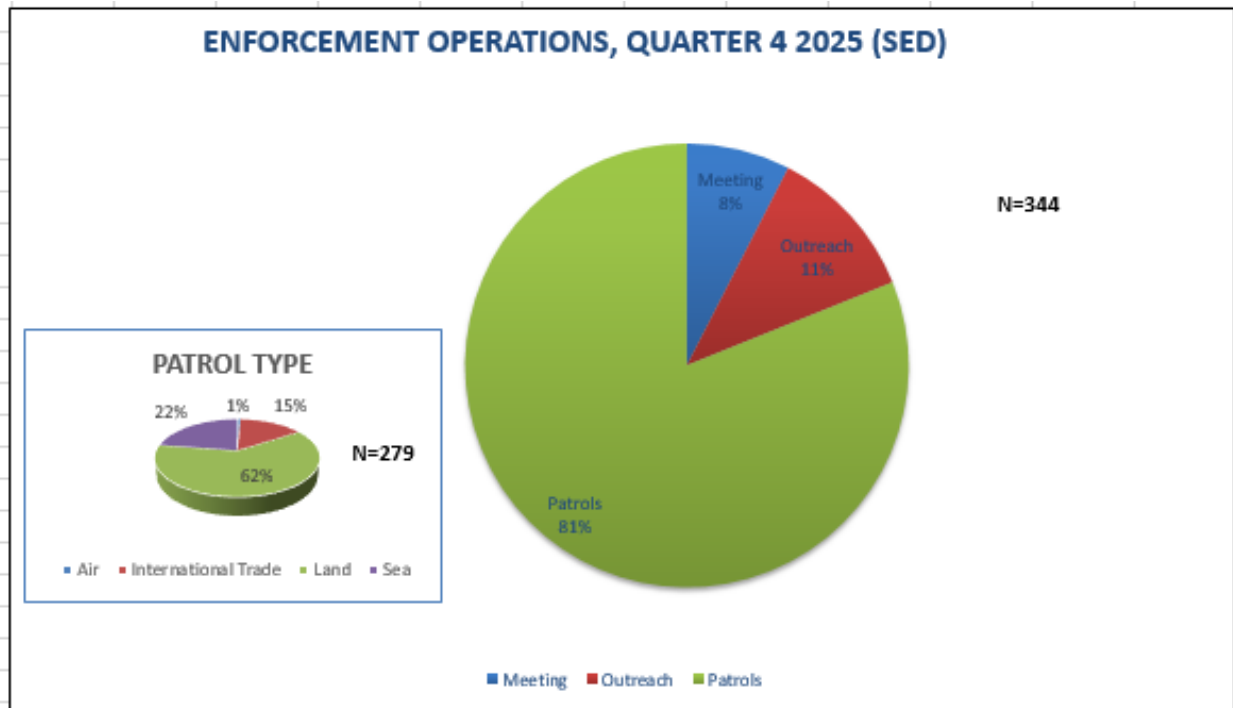
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Enforcement and Compliance

Data represent National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Office of Law Enforcement, Southeast Division’s (OLE-SED) enforcement efforts conducted throughout FY Quarter 4, 2025, **July 1, 2025- September 30, 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).

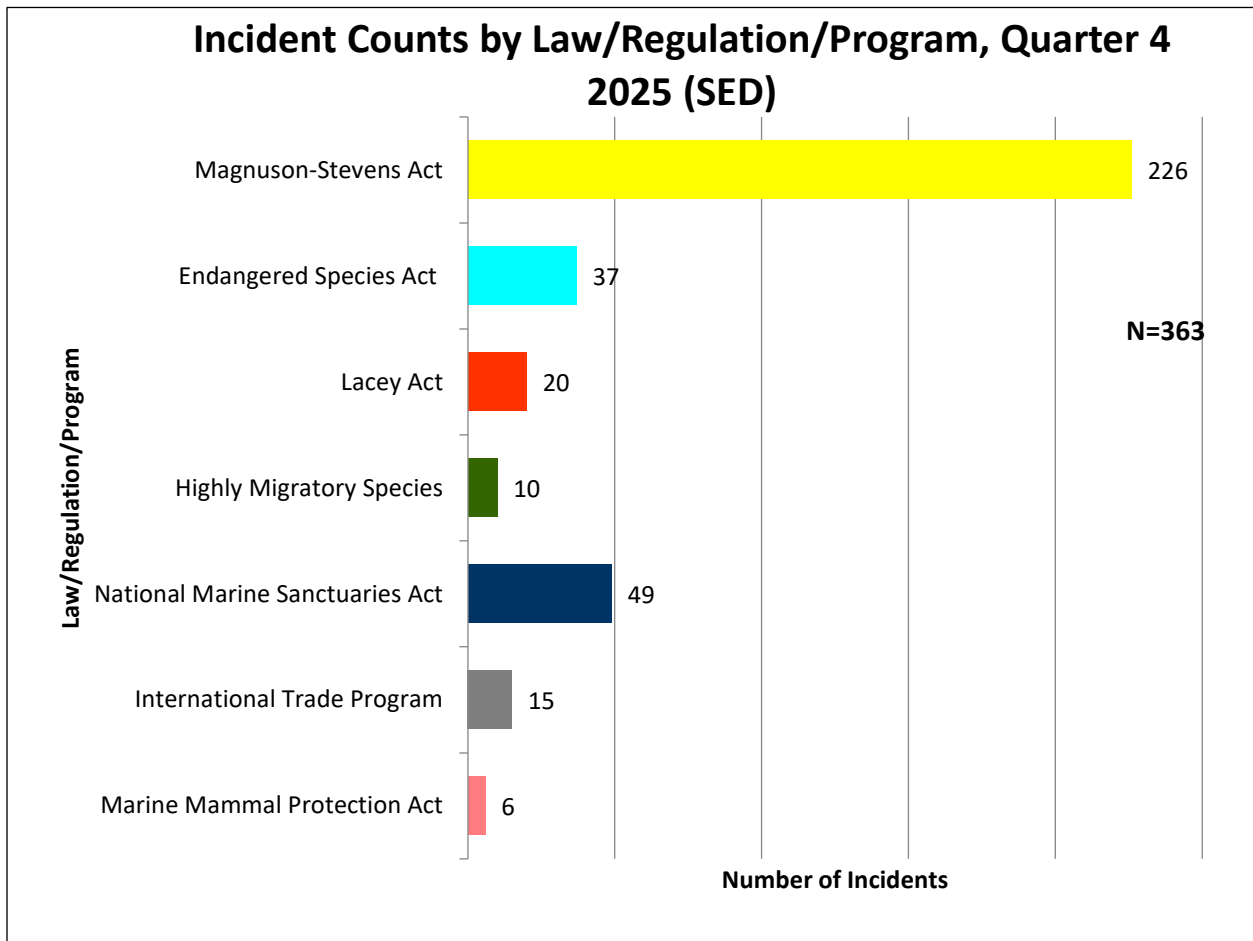
Patrols, outreach and education, compliance assistance, and investigations are the primary activities of OLE’s mission to protect marine wildlife and habitat by enforcing domestic laws and supporting international treaty requirements designed to ensure global resources are available for future generations. 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. An IUU/seafood monitoring operation was conducted with multiple federal partners, including U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Federal Drug Administration in Texas. Another IUU operation conducted with U.S. Coast Guard and Florida state officers focused on seafood and fishing activity returning to U.S. waters from the Bahamas. Additionally, two operations were conducted off southwest Florida, one with a focus on identifying and deterring illegal charters and the other involved endangered species protection by ensuring fishing gear compliance onboard commercial shrimp vessels. This quarter, OLE-SED conducted and documented **279** patrols, **39** specific instances of outreach and attended **26** meetings.



Incident Information

During the fourth quarter, OLE-SED opened **363** incidents, which included **176** counts in the SAFMC area, **249** counts in the GFMC area and **2** counts in the CFMC area¹. These incidents originate from both NOAA personnel and our enforcement partners.

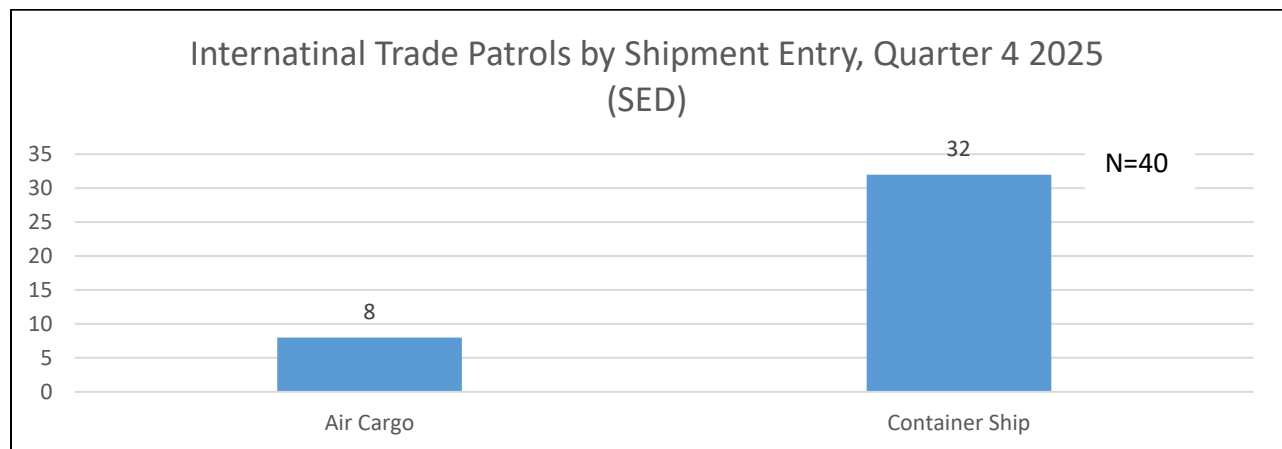
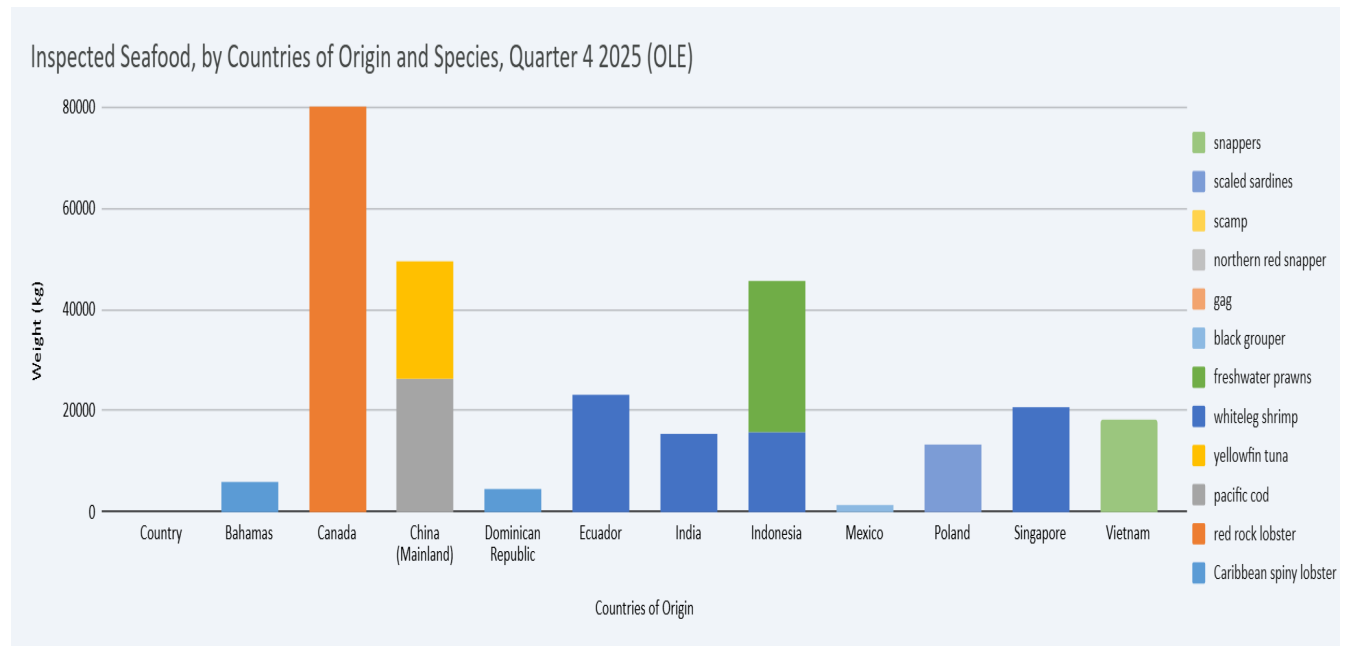
Summary of Incidents by Primary Law/Regulation/Program; Quarter 4, 2025



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

International Trade Patrols

OLE regularly conducts seafood container inspections coming into the U.S. in order to protect commerce and ensure legal fish species are imported. Officers and agents inform other agencies at these ports of entries of potential seafood fraud and provide training in inspecting and verifying seafood is imported properly into the U.S. Throughout the quarter, NOAA enforcement divisions nationwide inspected **277,737** kg of imported seafood from **11** countries. OLE-SED officers conducted **40** international trade specific patrols. Efforts were focused on a variety of airports and shipping ports.

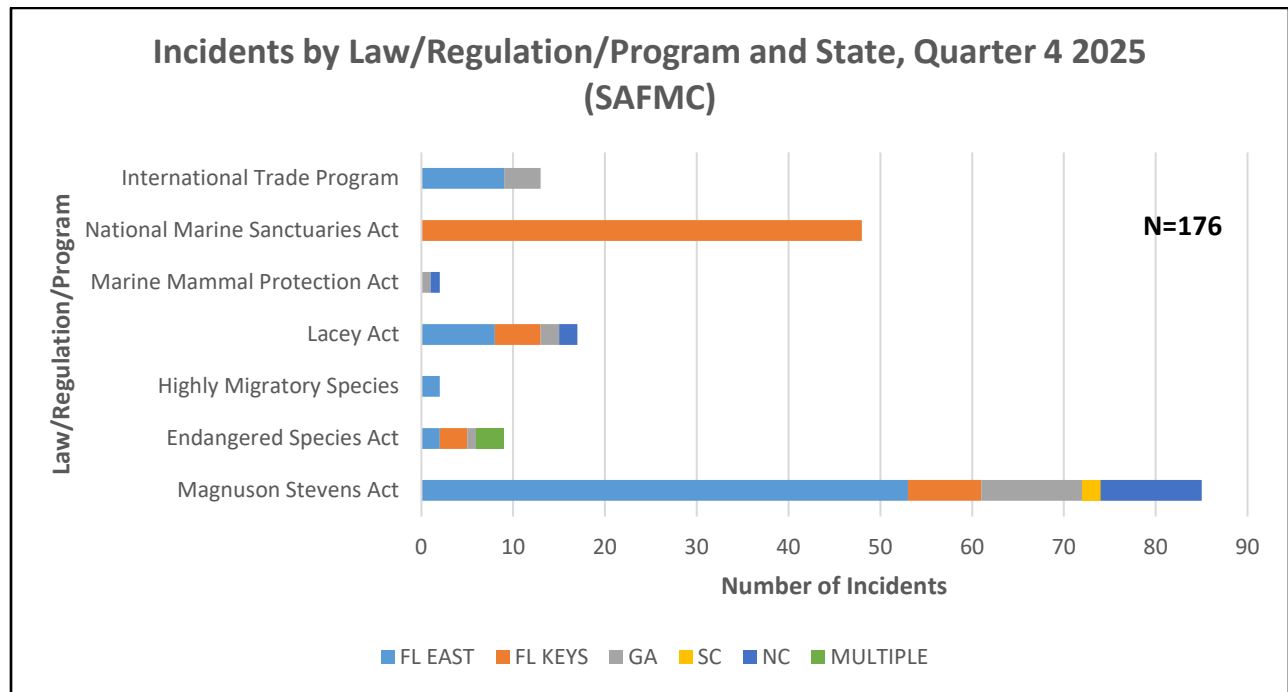


South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Summary

**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 4, 2025 (SAFMC)

Law/Regulation/Program	FL EAST	FL KEYS	GA	SC	NC	MULTIPLE	Total
Magnuson Stevens Act	53	8	11	2	11		85
Endangered Species Act	2	3	1			3	9
Highly Migratory Species	2						2
Lacey Act	8	5	2		2		17
Marine Mammal Protection Act			1		1		2
National Marine Sanctuaries Act		48					48
International Trade Program	9		4				13
TOTAL	74	64	19	2	14	3	176

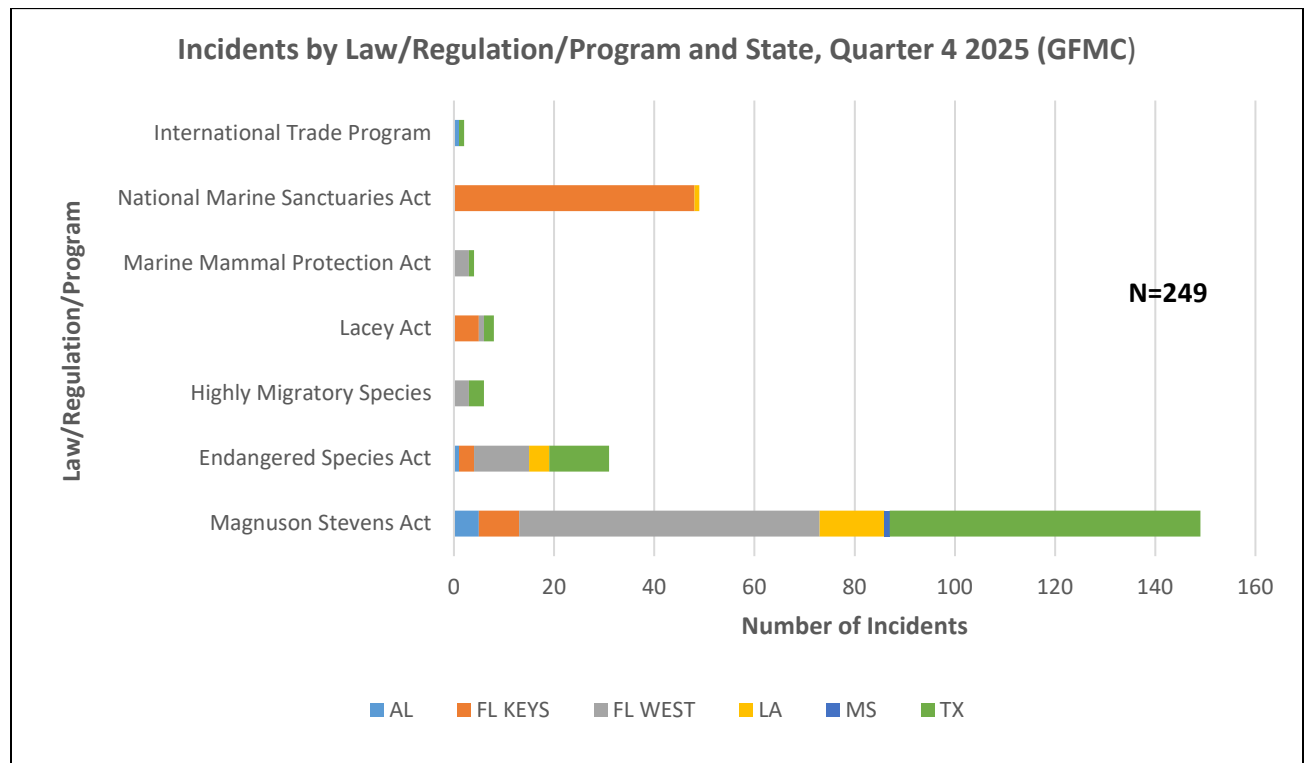


Gulf Fishery Management Council Summary

**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 4, 2025 (GFMC)

Law/Regulation/Program	AL	FL KEYS	FL WEST	LA	MS	TX	Total
Magnuson Stevens Act	5	8	60	13	1	62	149
Endangered Species Act	1	3	11	4		12	31
Highly Migratory Species			3			3	6
Lacey Act		5	1			2	8
Marine Mammal Protection Act			3			1	4
National Marine Sanctuaries Act		48		1			49
International Trade Program	1					1	2
TOTAL	7	64	78	18	1	81	249

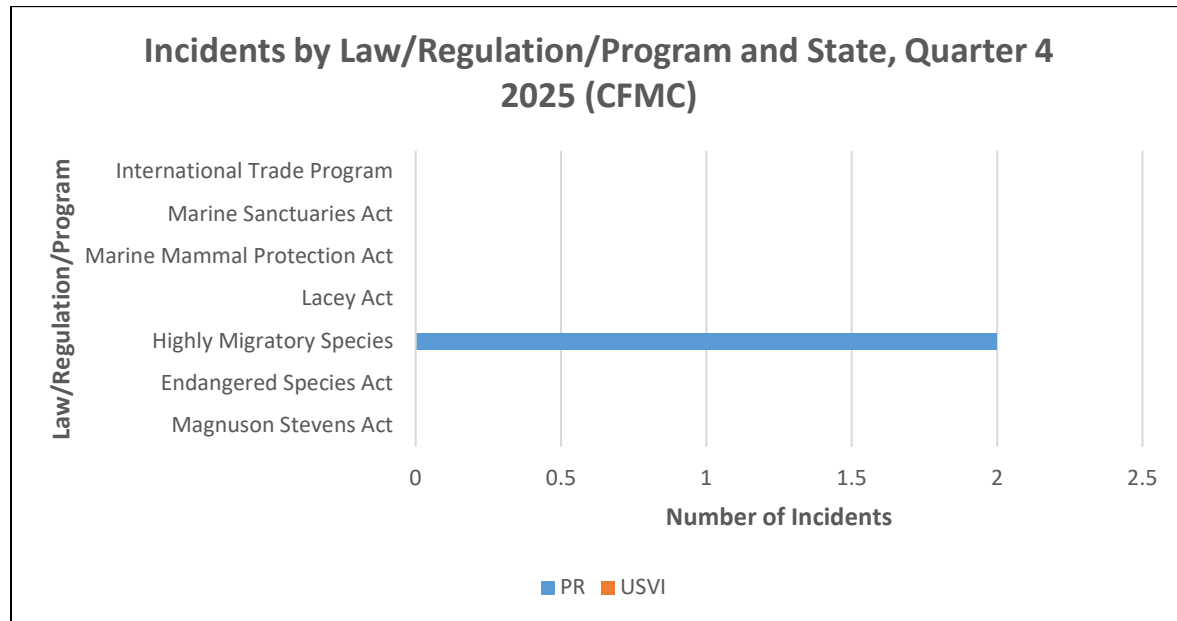


Caribbean Fishery Management Council Summary

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

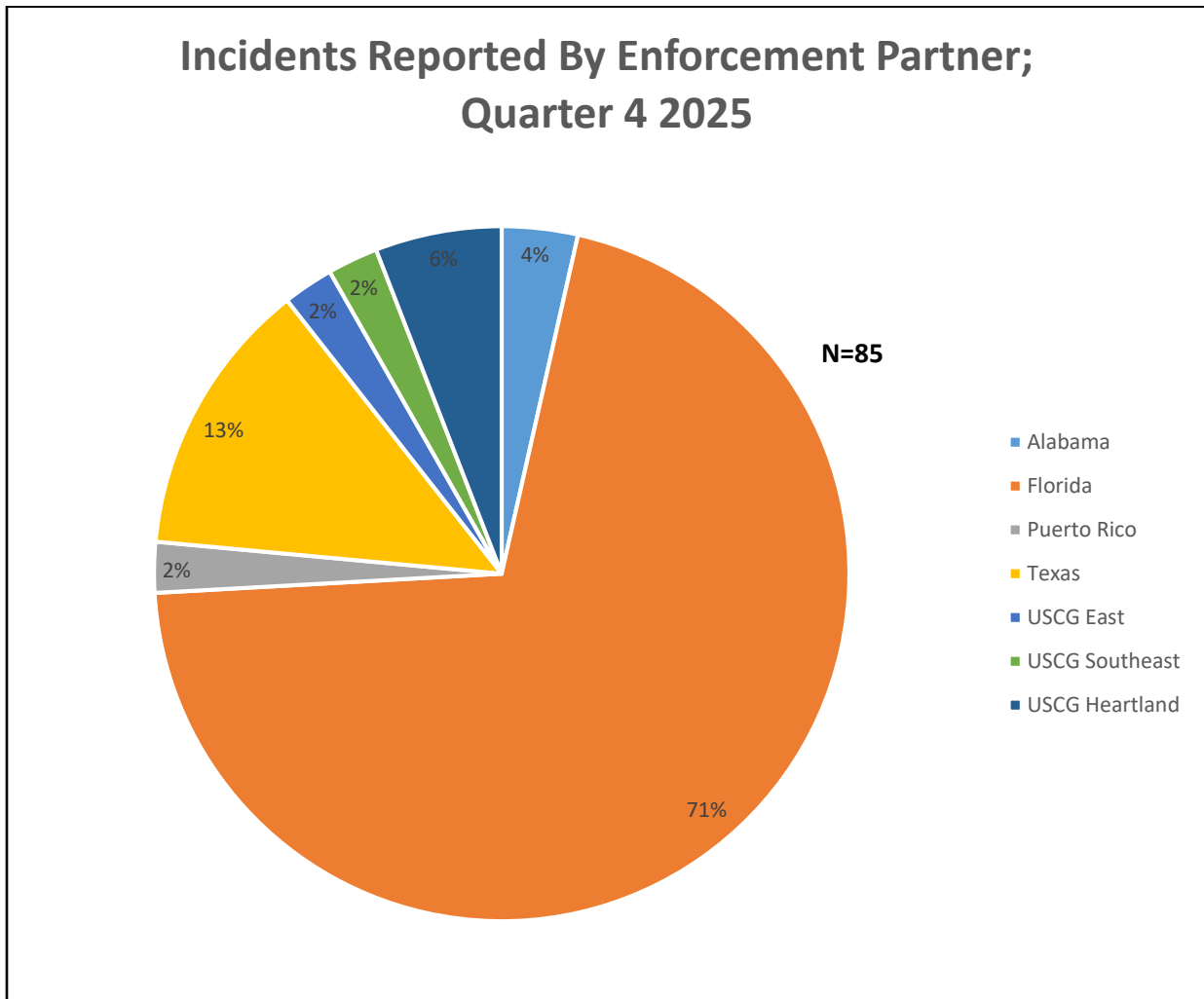
Number of Incidents by Primary Law/Regulation/Program and Location; Quarter 4, 2025 (CFMC)

Law/Regulation/Program	PR	USVI	Total
Magnuson Stevens Act			0
Endangered Species Act			0
Highly Migratory Species	2		2
Lacey Act			0
Marine Mammal Protection Act			0
Marine Sanctuaries Act			0
International Trade Program			0
TOTAL	2	0	2

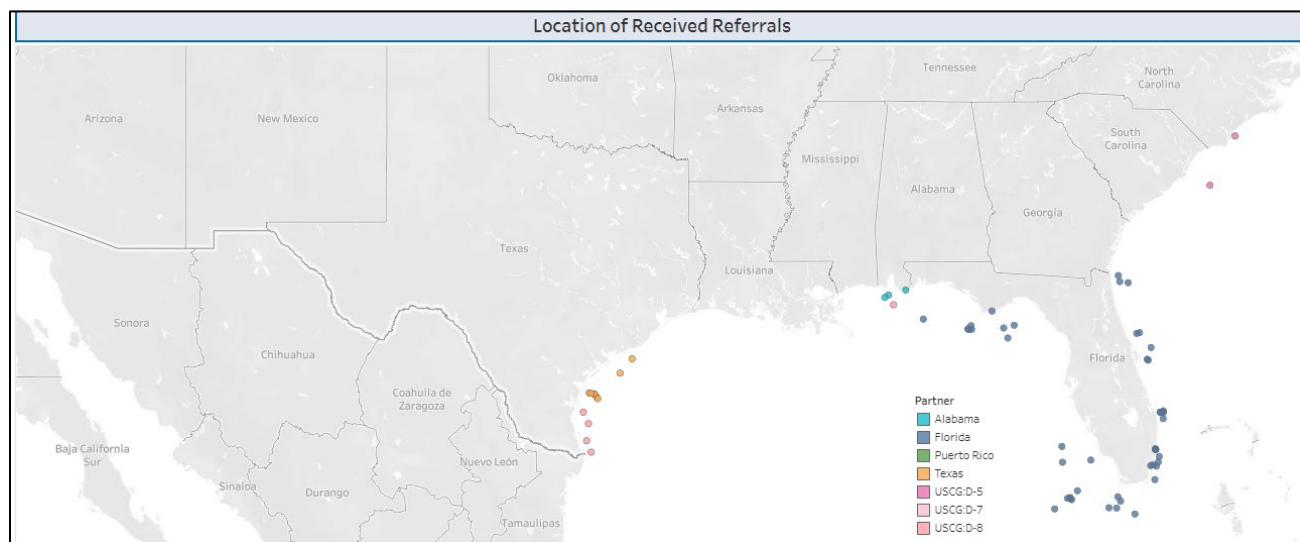


Summary of Cases by Joint Enforcement Agreement and United States Coast Guard Partners

Throughout Quarter 4, 2025, there were **85** 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.



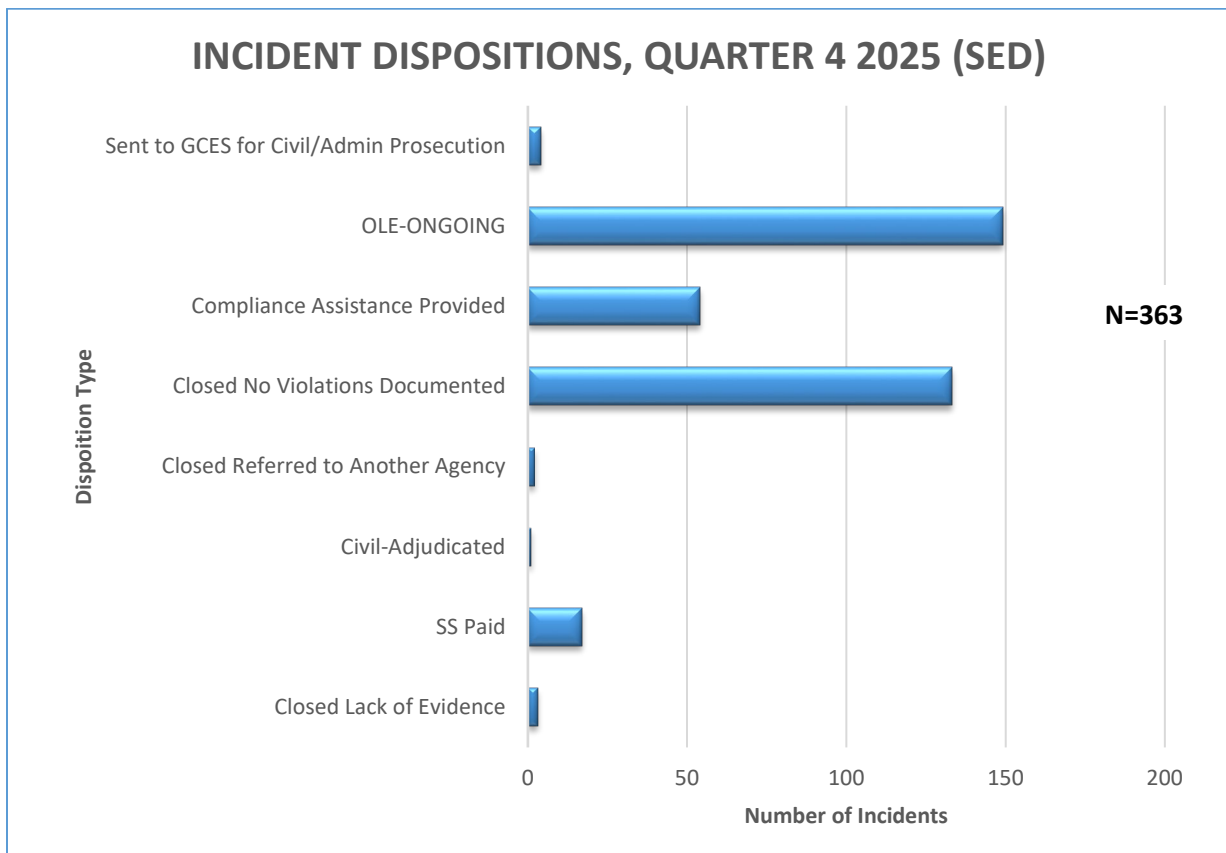
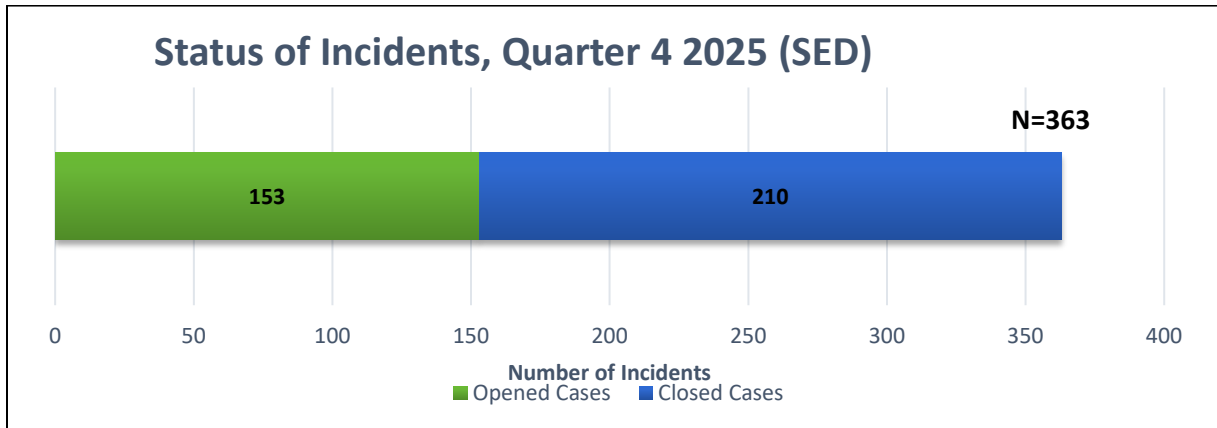
Law/Regulation/Program	FL	AL	PR	TX	USCG East	USCG Southeast	USCG Heartland	TOTALS
Magnuson Stevens Act (MSFCMA)	43	3	1	11	1	1	5	65
Endangered Species Act (ESA)	5		1		1	1		8
Highly Migratory Species Lacey Act	8							8
Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA)	1							1
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	3							3
TOTALS	60	3	2	11	2	2	5	85



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 (**363**) 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 **58%** of the incoming workload.



Enforcement Highlights

Highly Migratory Species

A Jacksonville, FL Special Agent (SA) issued two summary settlement offers (SSO) after a case referral from Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation (FWC). A \$500 SSO was issued to a captain of a vessel in possession of yellowfin tuna without a valid HMS permit. Further investigation found that the vessel was fishing in an unregistered HMS tournament. The tournament operator was issued a \$1000 SSO for failing to register the tournament.

A League City, TX SA issued a \$500 summary settlement to the owner of a swordfish charter service with federal permits for failing to report HMS landings.

Lacey Act

A Miami enforcement officer (EO) prepared multiple \$500 summary settlement offers for fishing vessels returning from the Bahamas found in possession of resources in violation of the Lacey Act.

Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) Fishing

A Jacksonville, FL SA, along with FWC Investigators, conducted an inspection of 40,000 lbs. of imported Caribbean spiny lobsters. Florida's spiny lobster season was currently closed and all shipments were held for inspection. Lobster tails were randomly inspected with no violations found.

A League City, TX SA was notified by GCES of an \$86,451 NOVA issued to a company which imported tuna products into the United States from Mexico without submitting complete and accurate information.

A St Petersburg, FL SA was notified by GCES of a \$136,450 NOVA issued to a company which imported tuna products into the United States without submitting complete and accurate information.

Two enforcement officers and one supervisory enforcement officer from Texas conducted a multi-agency operation targeting international trade. Officers executed patrols at Dallas–Fort Worth International Airport, inspecting cargo facilities operated by American Airlines, Japan Airlines, Korean Air, Qatar Airways, and Air France. As a result, 10 shipments containing various seafood products were inspected, including bluefin tuna regulated by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

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

A Miami, FL SA coordinated a container inspection at the Port of Miami with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The container includes octopus, squid, and cod imported from Spain. Based on the SIMP data, the cod was harvested by a Russian fishing vessel and then processed in Russia and Norway, where it was then exported from Spain.

A Houma, LA EO conducted a patrol at the Port of New Orleans alongside CBP officers. The EO and CBP were able to conduct inspections on four reefers containing 128,125 lbs. of shrimp from Ecuador. No violations were documented and the containers were released.

A Miami, FL EO concluded three SIMP investigations due to findings from the NMFS Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection which conducted an audit. The EO issued a \$1000 summary settlement offer to each of the three companies found in violation.

A Savannah, GA EO conducted a joint inspection with CBP and USFWS on a shipment at the Port of Savannah. Entries were isolated from the inspection area due to high levels of radiation. An inspection of the contents showed a shipment of Indonesian farm raised shrimp was contaminated with Cesium and further analysis by the FDA is pending.

A San Juan, PR SA issued a \$1,000 SSO to an importer for SIMP violations. The company imported cod and shrimp without the complete and accurate information. The SA had previously issued a written warning to the same importing company in 2022. This case is a referral from the SIMP audit team.

Endangered Species Act

A Fort Myers, FL EO coordinated a joint underway patrol with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and FWC. The crew located a shrimp trawl vessel during the patrol and conducted an at-sea vessel stop. The EO provided on-the-job TED training during the inspection to two FWC officers and two USCG boarding officers. No violations were documented during the inspection.



A Houston, TX EO and a League City, TX EO assisted the NOAA Gear Monitoring Team with Turtle Excluder Devices (TED) compliance checks out of Port Arthur, TX. The compliance checks aid commercial fishermen in becoming compliant prior to the Texas shrimping season. Four commercial vessels were checked and offered compliance assistance with minor discrepancies.

A Jacksonville, FL SA was notified of a \$7,500 NOVA issued to subjects that exceeded the North Atlantic right whale (NARW) speed rule along the east coast of the United States and another \$30,000 NOVA issued to a subject that exceeded the NARW speed rule during multiple consecutive transits along the east coast of the United States.

NARW speed rule letters were drafted and mailed out to identified owners for vessels that displayed data for potential non-compliance. A total of 498 letters were mailed domestically and internationally.

Marine Mammal Protection Act

A SC SA completed a case package and served a \$500 summary settlement offer to a commercial crabber for Atlantic large whale take reduction plan (ALWTRP) violations. The crabber had at least twenty-six pots seaward of the COLREGS line, which were seized by South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) for state violations. Upon further inspection by two SAs and SCDNR, it was determined none of the pots were compliant with ALWTRP regulations and six of the pots had no weak links installed on their buoy lines.

A St. Petersburg, FLEO received a tip about whale vertebrae for sale for \$1000 in a shop in Seminole, FL. The EO and SA from St. Petersburg investigated and interviewed the owner, where it was determined that the bone was found in Northern California approximately four years ago. The bone was seized and voluntarily abandoned at the shop by the owner.

A South Carolina SA attended a sentencing hearing in Charleston for an individual who was convicted of illegally importing and selling sperm whale teeth. The individual, aware his actions were illegal, attempted to disguise the activity by changing the description of the teeth on eBay advertisements to "Antique paper weights." He was sentenced to 30 days of home detention, three years' probation, and ordered to pay a \$15,000 fine payable to the Lacey Act Fund. This was a joint investigation led by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act

A Niceville, FL EO issued a \$300 SSO to recreational anglers who were in possession of gag grouper fillets. The case was referred to OLE by FWC.

A Niceville, FL EO issued an \$850 SSO Offer to recreational fishers who were in possession of gag grouper and greater amberjack in the closed season, and exceeding the recreational bag limit of red snapper.

A St. Petersburg, FL EO issued a \$1000 SSO to an IFQ anglers for failure to offload all fish to a dealer. The vessel was in possession of several bags of fillets of gag grouper and tilefish.

A Cape Canaveral, FL EO processed a JEA case prior to issuing a \$450 SSO for possession of snapper grouper species in the Oculina Experimental Closed Area

A SC SA served two written warnings to commercial swordfishermen who failed to turn in logbooks for approximately forty trips each. The lack of reporting was brought to the SAs attention by the SEFSC, who stated the lack of reporting could affect data and management of the fishery. After initial contact by the SA, both fishermen completed and submitted their missing reports.

A Jacksonville, FL SA received an FWC case package and issued a \$2,050 SSO. The case involved a charter captain found in possession of 11 undersized vermilion snapper, failing to possess a descending device, not possessing a South Atlantic charter permit for snapper-grouper, and not possessing a charter permit for Atlantic HMS.

A St Petersburg, FL SA issued a written warning to a vessel owner/operator who failed to take an observer on separate occasions.

A St Petersburg, FL SA was notified of a \$31,037 NOVA issued to the owner of an illegal fishing charter service who retained reef fish in the EEZ, used reef fish for bait and operated in the EEZ without federal permits.

A League City, TX SA and the Compliance Liaison coordinated an OLE response to a report from the Southeast Fisheries Observer Program, regarding an observer experiencing job impediment onboard a shrimper. The observer attempted to gain cooperation from crew, but had been unsuccessful after multiple attempts. An EO interviewed the subject and issued a written warning.

National Marine Sanctuaries



SED EOs completed a week long patrol operation in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary during the annual lobster mini-season. Three boat crews completed 18 milestone Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary patrols and 118 vessel patrol hours. Officers boarded 68 recreational vessels and documented 39 Sanctuary Act and Magnuson Act violations.

A Key West SA participated in the USCG mini season operation. Patrols were completed on both days of the two-day lobster mini season, focusing on sanctuary regulations, boating safety, and state lobster regulations.



The subject a recent criminal case pleaded guilty to multiple counts of harvesting lobster from artificial habitat, also known as casitas. A Key West SA, conducted the investigation with assistance from FL FWC and USFWS, and the State of FL prosecuted the case. The subject received four years of probation, and is prohibited from commercial fishing. Additionally, the subject is also required to remove 52 casitas that were discovered during the course of the investigation.

Cooperative Enforcement/Partnerships

A Houston, TX EO reviewed a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) case package where a recreational angler was found in possession of 12 red snapper during the federal closure. The EO issued the owner/operator a \$1,100 SSO.

A Niceville, FL SA assisted a short-staffed U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) team by providing direction on a USFWS investigation involving the destruction of a sea turtle nest on an Alabama beach. The SA provided guidance to first responders from the Alabama Marine Resources Division (AMRD) and supporting biologists until a USFWS agent was able to respond later in the day.

A North Carolina SA was notified of a \$5,000 NOVA issued to a Jacksonville, FL commercial fishing captain for retaining over 100 undersized vermillion snapper, along with other species and multiple

turtle mitigation gear violations. The investigation started as a part of a joint operation between FWC and NOAA in September 2024.

A Houma, LA EO conducted two underway patrols out of Grand Isle, LA with USCG and Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) personnel. The EO had received complaints about illegal charters and targeted the patrols to specific areas of the Gulf. No illegal charters were documented but the crews conducted boardings on numerous recreational and federal charter vessels during the patrols.

A Houma, LA EO completed the review of an AMRD case package and issued a \$1,000 summary settlement to the captain and owner of a commercial shrimp vessel. The vessel was boarded by AMRD and during the TED inspection both TEDS were found to have major violations including undersize measurements along the leading edge, opening, and forward cut.

Patrols/VMS/Catch Shares

A Houston, TX EO conducted a joint underway patrol with USCG Station Freeport. During the patrol, three boardings were completed and one vessel was found in possession of a blacktip shark without the required Highly Migratory Species Angling Permit. The EO issued the owner/operator an Enforcement Violation Report.

A Houston, TX EO and a League City, TX EO conducted an underway patrol with the USCG Station Freeport. During the patrol, two TED boardings were conducted and compliance assistance was given to a commercial shrimp trawler for their TED bar spacing exceeding four inches.

A Jacksonville, FL SA conducted an underway patrol with FWC for South Atlantic red snapper open season. No fisheries violations were documented. While on patrol, the SA and FWC officers responded to a search and rescue call for a diver in distress. The Good Samaritan vessel that transported the diver was located and found.

Numerous VMS alerts have been activated in vTrack to send automated messages to vessels entering closed areas. Messages are triggered and sent to VMS equipped vessels notifying them of the closures.

Investigative Support personnel conducted outreach to vessel owners and operators, weekly. The outreach primarily involved VMS and declaration compliance.

A St. Petersburg, FL EO conducted a joint agency land patrol with FWC targeting IFQ and charter fishing vessels. Officers documented undersized gag grouper on recreational fishing vessels and numerous undersized fish species on a federally permitted for-hire spearfishing vessel. FWC officers handled the investigations.



Florida EOs concluded a multi-day, multi-agency (OLE, FWC, USCG) operation in the South Atlantic EEZ east of Fort Pierce, FL. Boat crews boarded 11 fishing vessels to include recreational and for-hire. Officers

documented violations for possessing snapper/grouper species in the Oculina experimental closed area, missing sea-turtle mitigation gear, no descending device and undersized lobster.

Compliance Assistance/Outreach/Education/Public Affairs



The compliance liaison was recognized as the featured NOAA Ambassador for recent outreach efforts promoting OLE and our mission, in their newest issue.

A San Juan, PR SA visited a jet ski tour company that had posted a video of interactions with dolphins during one of their tours. During the visit, the SA provided compliance assistance to the owner and employees. Specifically, the agent explained Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) regulations and what constitutes harassment. The SA also answered questions from the staff.

A League City, TX SA provided compliance assistance to a vessel owner/operator who failed to take an observer.

St Petersburg, FL EOs, a Ft Myers, FL EO and the compliance liaison, alongside catch share staff, provided training to FWC officers regarding catch shares and IFQ enforcement. Program staff provided general understanding and database use. OLE explained JEA partnership history and how to identify and cite types of IFQ violations, including case examples. Twenty-five officers attended the training, held between two sessions, and were provided job-aids and contact information for future collaboration. Similar type of trainings are being planned to be held with other Gulf state JEA partners in the near future.

A Houma, LA EO conducted a dockside patrol in Empire, LA and was able to conduct TED compliance inspections on four skimmer trawl vessels for fishermen who were dockside with their vessel. The EO noted small discrepancies on three of the vessels and worked with the captains to fix the issues so they were in compliance before their next trip.

A Panama City, FL SA was recently recognized in the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies publication for his investigation with FWC partners into a charter captain who shot and poisoned dolphins.



Two St. Petersburg, FL EOs and an SEO conducted a courtesy TED inspection at the Tampa Shrimp Docks. The captain called OLE and requested the inspection. The EOs inspected the four installed TEDs noting no discrepancies and two new TEDs, which had not been installed yet, noting an improper grid angle, which the captain advised he would promptly correct.

Training/Other

A San Juan, PR SA provided training to a class of new recruits at the Puerto Rico DNER Academy. The SA gave a presentation covering federal fishery regulations, case package preparation and case studies. There were approximately 40 attendants participating in the training.

A San Juan, PR SA provided training to the USCG during their living marine resource training held in San Juan. The presentation consisted of Caribbean federal regulations, case package preparation, case studies and local trends.

At the request of the U.S. Coast Guard's Southeast Regional Fisheries Training Center (SRFTC), a San Juan, PR SA provided a virtual briefing for its instructors on the new dolphinfish and wahoo regulations in the Caribbean. The SA explained the changes and held a question-and-answer session. As a follow-up, the SRFTC submitted its boarding officer job aid kit to the SA for review and feedback to ensure the new regulations were accurately incorporated.



A Jacksonville, FL SA and four NOAA Gear Monitoring Team Specialists conducted a three day training for FWC on TEDs, gear requirements, and permitting in Mayport and Fernandina Beach, FL. During the training, hands-on demonstrations and discrepancies were identified and explained. The training concluded with underway patrols and TED boardings.



A Fort Myers EO coordinated and led a TED training/patrol operation in Fort Myers, FL. The NOAA gear management team provided classroom instruction on mock TEDs followed by dockside TED inspections aboard shrimp trawlers moored at a local fish house. Twelve FWC boarding officers and five

USCG boarding officers attended. The team conducted three SED milestone TED inspections and one dealer inspection. Several TED violations were detected and corrected on scene.

Media

The Compliance Liaison created a web story related to a SC SA's criminal case of a subject submitting false fishing records and lying to federal agents. The CL and HQ Communications Specialist coordinated a web story release highlighting the case and successful prosecution by U.S Department of Justice (DOJ). The story was also amplified on DOJ, South Carolina DNR, NOAA SERO and HQ feeds. The subject was sentenced to 12 months and 1 day of incarceration, probation and \$7,500 fine.

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/south-carolina-fisherman-convicted-falsifying-catch-records-and-lying-federal-agents>

Overview of Summary Settlements

Listed below is a summary of the **62** 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 (17), National Marine Sanctuary related violations (11), Lacy Act requirements (8), and SIMP requirements (5). **22** violations were cited throughout the Gulf region, **27** violations were cited throughout the South Atlantic region, **12** violations in the Keys area and **1** in the Caribbean region.

LAW/REG/PROGRAM	VIOLATION	AMOUNT	STATE
Endangered Species Act	TED/BRD Requirements	\$1,000.00	AL
Endangered Species Act	TED/BRD Requirements	\$500.00	FL WEST
Endangered Species Act	Marine Mammal Take	\$200.00	FL WEST
Endangered Species Act	TED/BRD Requirements	\$1,100.00	FL WEST
Endangered Species Act	Marine Mammal Take	\$100.00	FL WEST
Endangered Species Act	Gear Requirements	\$500.00	SC
Highly Migratory Species	Unpermitted HMS Fishing Activity	\$1,000.00	FL EAST
Highly Migratory Species	Unpermitted HMS Fishing Activity	\$500.00	FL EAST
Highly Migratory Species	Reporting Requirements	\$500.00	TX
Highly Migratory Species	Unpermitted HMS Fishing Activity	\$450.00	FL EAST
International Trade Program	SIMP Requirements	\$1,000.00	FL EAST
International Trade Program	SIMP Requirements	\$1,000.00	FL EAST
International Trade Program	SIMP Requirements	\$1,000.00	FL EAST
International Trade Program	SIMP Requirements	\$500.00	FL EAST
International Trade Program	SIMP Requirements	\$1,000.00	PR

Lacey Act	Possession Requirements	\$500.00	FL EAST
Lacey Act	Possession Requirements	\$500.00	FL EAST
Lacey Act	Possession Requirements	\$500.00	FL EAST
Lacey Act	Possession Requirements	\$1,500.00	FL EAST
Lacey Act	Possession Requirements	\$500.00	FL EAST
Lacey Act	Possession Requirements	\$500.00	FL EAST
Lacey Act	Possession Requirements	\$500.00	FL EAST
Lacey Act	Possession Requirements	\$500.00	FL EAST
Lacey Act	Possession Requirements	\$500.00	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure	\$550.00	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure	\$350.00	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure; Lack of descender device	\$600.00	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure; Lack of descender device	\$700.00	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Fishing in Closed Area	\$325.00	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Unpermitted Charter Activity-Open Access Permit; Lack of descender device	\$1,525.00	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure	\$350.00	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure; Lack of descender device	\$550.00	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Fishing in Closed Area	\$450	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure; Lack of descender device	\$425.00	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Discard of Fish Upon Approach by Law Enforcement; Retention During Closure; Lack of descender device	\$1,900.00	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Observer Program Requirements	\$2,500.00	FL KEYS
Magnuson Stevens Act	Undersize Possession; Reef fish as bait	\$350.00	FL WEST

Magnuson Stevens Act	Undersize Possession	\$325.00	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure	\$300.00	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure	\$425.00	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	IFQ Program Requirements	\$2,300.00	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Undersize Possession	\$300.00	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Observer Program Requirements	\$1,250.00	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Gear Requirements	\$550.00	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure; Undersize Possession	\$1,100.00	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Fishing in Closed Area	\$1,025.00	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	IFQ Program Requirements	\$1,000.00	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	IFQ Program Requirements	\$1,000.00	LA
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure	\$1,100.00	TX
Magnuson Stevens Act	Observer Program Requirements	\$1,000.00	TX
Magnuson Stevens Act	Retention During Closure	\$275.00	TX
Magnuson Stevens Act	Observer Program Requirements	\$2,500.00	TX
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Fishing within Sanctuary Preservation Area	\$600.00	FL KEYS
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Fishing within Sanctuary Preservation Area	\$300.00	FL KEYS
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Fishing within Sanctuary Preservation Area	\$600.00	FL KEYS
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Investigative Support Program

Southeast Division Active Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Population: **917**

Population Breakdown by (VMS) Fisheries

FISHERY	VESSELS
HMS Pelagic Longline	72
HMS Shark	6
Gulf Reef Fish	552
Rock Shrimp	54
Southeast For Hire*	233
TOTAL	917

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 **75** referrals from JEA partners. Case support to the field was provided as well, with work ranging from processing summary settlements (**42**), preparing incident reports for GCES, in support of prosecution (**20**), 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 **521** vessels following observation of suspected VMS or fishing violations, including **195** automated VMS messages sent to notify vessels real-time about closed area regulations and incursions. Staff also provided targeted education and outreach to vessel owners on a daily basis. **10** investigations were referred for VMS violations. Additionally, staff conducted **307** calls with industry related to compliance during the quarter.

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

Observer Program Highlights

During FY Quarter 4, 2025, the Southeast Division Observer Programs deployed on **161** trips for **884** 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 **17** potential fishery violations to OLE-SED. The Galveston Shrimp Program deployed on **29** trips for **479** sea days, and the Galveston Reef Fish Program deployed on **21** trips for **87** sea days. The Panama City Shark Research and deepwater longline Program deployed on **13** trips for **69** sea days and the Panama City South Atlantic Reef Fish Program deployed on **79** trips for **97** sea days. The Miami Pelagic Observer Program deployed on **19** trips for **152** sea days. The summary below details the type of observer related complaints received during Quarter 3 (calendar year) of 2025, for all three programs.

COMPLAINT TYPE	Galveston Programs	Panama City Programs	Miami Observer Program	TOTALS
ASSAULT				0
HARASSMENT/INTIMIDATE/IMPEDEMENT	1	1		2
SAFETY				0
NON-COMPLIANT FOR OBSERVER COVERAGE	11	5		16
HANDLING				0
GEAR	1			1
RETENTION				0
SPATIAL				0
TOTALS	13	6	0	19

Cases Referred For Prosecution

Listed below is a summary of the 17 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 5 occurring in the South Atlantic area, 8 in the Gulf area, and 4 in the Florida Keys area.

LAW/REG/PROGRAM	VIOLATION	STATE
Endangered Species Act	TED/BRD Requirements	LA
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
Lacey Act	Possession Requirements	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Gear Requirements	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Unpermitted Charter Activity-Open Access Permit	FL EAST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Unpermitted Charter Activity-Moratorium Access	LA
Magnuson Stevens Act	IFQ Program Requirements	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Unpermitted Charter Activity-Moratorium Access	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Closed Area Incursion	FL WEST
Magnuson Stevens Act	Reporting Requirements	TX
Magnuson Stevens Act	VMS Program Requirements	FL WEST
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Fishing within Sanctuary Preservation Area	FL KEYS
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Fishing within Sanctuary Preservation Area	FL KEYS
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Fishing within Sanctuary Preservation Area	FL KEYS
National Marine Sanctuaries Act	Fishing within Sanctuary Preservation Area	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 **JUNE 2025- JULY 2025** (available information since last report). Nationwide results may also be found at the [enforcement charging information site](#)

1. Walmart Stores Inc. was charged under the Magnuson-Stevens Act with importing tuna without submitting complete and accurate information required under the Seafood Import Monitoring Program regulations. A \$136,451 NOVA was issued and the company voluntarily donated approximately 959,636 cans of tuna to a non-profit dedicated to fighting food insecurity.
2. Market 5201 was charged under the Magnuson-Stevens Act with importing tuna without submitting complete and accurate information required under the Seafood Import Monitoring Program regulations. An \$86,451 NOVA was issued and the company voluntarily donated approximately 1,555,560 cans/pouches of tuna to a non-profit dedicated to fighting food insecurity.
3. FL3705SZ – Operator Orlando Morejon Jr. and anglers Braulio Garcia Hernandez, Arturo Jose Quintero, and Francisco Javier Zicares were charged jointly and severally under the National Marine Sanctuary Act for fishing within a Sanctuary Preservation Area (SPA). A \$1,250 NOVA was issued.
4. F/V Mad Mahi – Owner Jennifer Cousins Wilson and Operators Executive Saltwater Charters LLC and Ryan Thomas Cocker were charged jointly and severally under the Magnuson-Stevens Act with operating a Gulf reef fish charter in the EEZ without a federal permit. A \$7,250 NOVA was issued.
5. F/V BEARCAT – Owner/Operator Charles Arend was charged under the Magnuson-Stevens Act with fishing for and/or possessing Lane Snapper during a season closure. A \$5,750 NOVA was issued.
6. F/V Shejara – Owner/Operator Rafael E. Rosas-Jimenez was charged under the Magnuson-Stevens Act with possessing prohibited queen conch in the EEZ around Puerto Rico. A \$2,500 NOVA was issued.
7. M/Y Moon Sand – Registered Owner Beta Yachting BV and Technical Manager Lurssen Yacht Management GmbH 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.
8. F/V Cool Runnings – Owner Gone A Sea LLC and Operators Michael William Mayers Sr. and Michael William Mayers Jr. were charged jointly and severally under the Magnuson-Stevens Act with failing to provide notifications at least three hours prior to landing IFQ red snapper and red grouper, fishing within the Tortugas South Ecological Reserve, and for failing to have sufficient IFQ allocation for red snapper and red grouper in the IFQ vessel account or linked

shareholder account equal to pounds estimated to be landed at the time of the advance notice of landing. A \$19,900 NOVA was issued.

9. M/V Bluefin – Operator Joseph Benedict Embres Jr. and Owner Fishing Vessel NorthWind Inc. 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.
10. M/V Siem Cicero – Registered Owner Auto Marine Transport Inc. and Technical Manager Siem Shipping UK Ltd. 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 \$7,500 NOVA was issued.
11. M/V Mysterious – Owner/Operator Robert Sullivan and Owner Debby Sullivan 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 \$15,000 NOVA was issued.
12. M/V Lizzy Too – Owner/Operator Richard J. Knouse Jr. was charged under the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act with violating the North Atlantic right whale speed restriction regulation. A \$30,000 NOVA was issued.
13. F/V Liquid Overkill – Owner/Operator David Keith Plants was charged under the Magnuson-Stevens Act with operating a Gulf reef fish charter in the EEZ without a federal permit. A \$6,250 NOVA was issued.