



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NOAA Office of Enforcement
Pacific Islands Enforcement Division
Daniel Inouye Regional Center
1845 Wasp Blvd., Building 176
Honolulu, Hawaii 96818

6.D.2(1)
161 CM

September 29, 2014

TO: Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council (WPFMC)

FROM: William Pickering - Special Agent in Charge, Pacific Islands Division

SUBJECT: NOAA OLE Report for the 161st WPFMC Meeting

Enforcement Activities

During this period, 44 incidents were reported to the Pacific Islands Division (PID). The 44 incidents were categorized as: 15-Protected Resources; and 29-Fisheries Management.

INVESTIGATIONS

A military contractor was sentenced in U.S. Federal District Court - District of Hawaii to two (2) years probation and a \$10,000 criminal fine for violating the Endangered Species Act (Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora [CITES]). This case involved the alleged removal of numerous corals and giant clam species from the Republic of Marshall Island's waters and illegally importing the items into Hawaii. All the species were listed in Appendix II of CITES. NOAA's Pacific Islands Regional Office - Habitat Conservation Division provided assistance in identifying the aforementioned items. This case was investigated by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, NOAA-OLE, Homeland Security Investigations, and Customs Border Protection.

A second investigation involved a U.S. purse seine vessel that allegedly conducted a fishing set on whales and possible observer inference, via an alleged assault. The observer was located and interviewed in the Republic of Palau but unfortunately passed away just after the interviews were concluded. Information provided by the observer and other evidence developed, necessitated travel by OLE Special Agents to the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Upon the arrival of the subject purse seine vessel at the port of Majuro, the OLE Special Agents interviewed the crew including the vessel's captain regarding the aforementioned allegations. Due to the death of the observer and insufficient corroborating evidence, the investigation was closed.

A third investigation was completed by an OLE Special Agent regarding a complainant who claimed an unknown individual from the National Marine Fisheries Service (purportedly from the mainland) called her in Hawaii and attempted to illicit private information. When the



unknown individual was questioned as to the necessity of such information by the complainant during the telephone call, they disconnected the line. No additional information was developed and the case was closed.

PATROLS / MONITORING / INSPECTIONS

A PID Special Agent conducted a week long bottomfish outreach operation on Saipan. During the outreach it was discovered that few small commercial bottomfishing vessels had current permits and that record keeping needed improvement. The Special Agent also conducted vessel patrols on Saipan with OLE's JEA partners and provided additional outreach regarding MMPA, and turtle take regulations in all of CNMI.

PID personnel conducted a week long fishery and protected species patrol in the waters of Kauai alongside DOCARE and USCG personnel onboard OLE's patrol vessel.

VMS

In partnership with the Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council, Science Center, Observer Program and Hawaii Longline Association, initial steps were completed regarding the "Hawaii Longline Electronic Reporting Project." Although this project, installing 140 new VMS units on all Hawaii Longline vessels and switching out primary hardware and software vendors, will entail significant new work for PID's VMS staff; as well as our colleagues in the Observer Program and Science Center, we are confident in our ability to manage the workload within existing resources.

PID's VMS Program Manager and IT Specialist participated in an unprecedented regional MCS Working Group at the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Secretariat in Pohnpei, FSM on June 11-18, 2014. WCPFC's Executive Director requested specific assistance and collaboration on GIS information management, processes and software development that OLE was able to provide. This cooperative effort not only aided WCPFC in improving their enforcement capacity and compliance monitoring but also enhanced its ability to support U.S. fisheries enforcement needs and priorities as well.