

National Marine Fisheries Service
Alaska Enforcement Division

ENFORCEMENT REPORT



February 7, 2001 through April 2, 2001

National Marine Fisheries Service
Office for Law Enforcement
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www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ole/Alaska



**To report fisheries violations,
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1-800-853-1964**



**ENFORCEMENT REPORT
FOR THE PERIOD 2/7/2001 THROUGH 4/2/2001**

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During the period since the last Council meeting, the Alaska Enforcement Division has opened fifty-five (55) new cases. We currently have 295 open cases.

A prioritization meeting was held on March 8 and March 22, 2001. Participants included RA Jim Balsiger, DRA Ron Berg, Mike Payne (PRMD), Sue Salveson (SF), CPT Vince O'Shea, Susan Auer and Garland Walker (NOAA GCEL in Alaska) and me (Jeff Passer, Alaska Enforcement SAC). The group agreed that the following would be the enforcement priorities for this year. We plan to meet mid-year to evaluate how we are meeting these priorities and if they need to be changed.

1. Observer Related Offenses

- Interference and harassment
- Interference with sampling
- Bribery

2. Cook Inlet Belugas

- Illegal takes (poaching)

3. Steller Sea Lion Protection Measures

4. Sea Bird Avoidance Measures

5. Recordkeeping and Reporting Violations

- Failure to maintain observer coverage
- Violations which affect the Agency's ability to carry out its management responsibilities such as wilful or grossly negligent mis-reporting.

6. IFQ Specific Violations

- Closed Areas or Closed Season Violations
- Illegal Landings - with emphasis on those with Registered Buyer participation

7. Interdiction of Maritime Boundary Line Incursions

Cases Involving Observers

Of the fifty-five (55) cases opened this period, twelve (12) were observer-related. The Anchorage Office continues to review observer affidavits and prioritize complaints for investigation.

Cook Inlet Belugas

We began patrolling the area around Cook Inlet in March by boat, plane, and vehicle. We have plans to rotate Officers from around Alaska to the Anchorage area for as long as belugas are still in Cook Inlet. Our focus will be in outreach, education, and prevention.

Stellar Sea Lions

Critical Habitat - We are investigating reports of four vessels unlawfully fishing within 3nm of a Steller sea lion haulout. These vessels are all under 60 feet and were trawling for pacific cod.

In January, Stanley Pedersen, owner of the F/V KAYLEE, was found guilty of unlawfully taking a Steller sea lion during the summer of 1999. He was also found guilty of possession of a firearm by a felon and possession of a firearm by a person convicted of a domestic violence crime. On April 5, Mr. Pedersen was sentenced to 46 months in jail for the firearms violations and one year for the taking of a sea lion. He will serve the sentences concurrently.

Recordkeeping and Reporting

We are increasing our efforts to enforce observer compliance in 30% fleet. We will do this by identifying the worst offenders from past years and by looking harder during boardings this year.

IFQ

Major Cases: To close out the Kenai Customs case, James Hill, Sr. was sentenced in March to 15 months in jail and agreed to pay a \$8,000 fine. James Hill, Jr. was sentenced to 15 months in jail and agreed to pay a \$4,000 fine.

IFQ season opened on March 15th. Things seem to be going well so far this year. One new issue we have had to address this year involves the IFQ Fee collection. As a result of some accounts being zeroed by RAM for failure to pay the fee, we have had to seize only one load of halibut that was landed under the sanctioned permit.

Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving (COPPS)

We had a booth at COMFISH in Kodiak in March. Over 500 people visited the Officers and Agents there. Many had questions about the critical habitat areas and regulations, but most wanted to learn more about who we were and what we did. Most people only see us performing specific duties, and did not realize the many roles we have and the variety of regulations we enforce.

We discovered that thirty-three (33) individuals may have fished their “D” class quota on vessels over 35 feet last year. Rather than writing tickets for all these possible offenses, our COPPS Officer mailed out letters to all these people informing them that we had information that they may have violated the regulations. They were encouraged to look into the matter. Many card holders discovered the vessel length in the IFQ data base was wrong and they were told how to correct this.