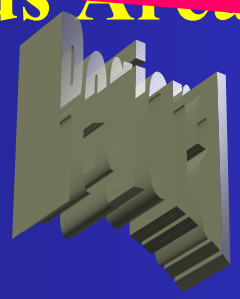
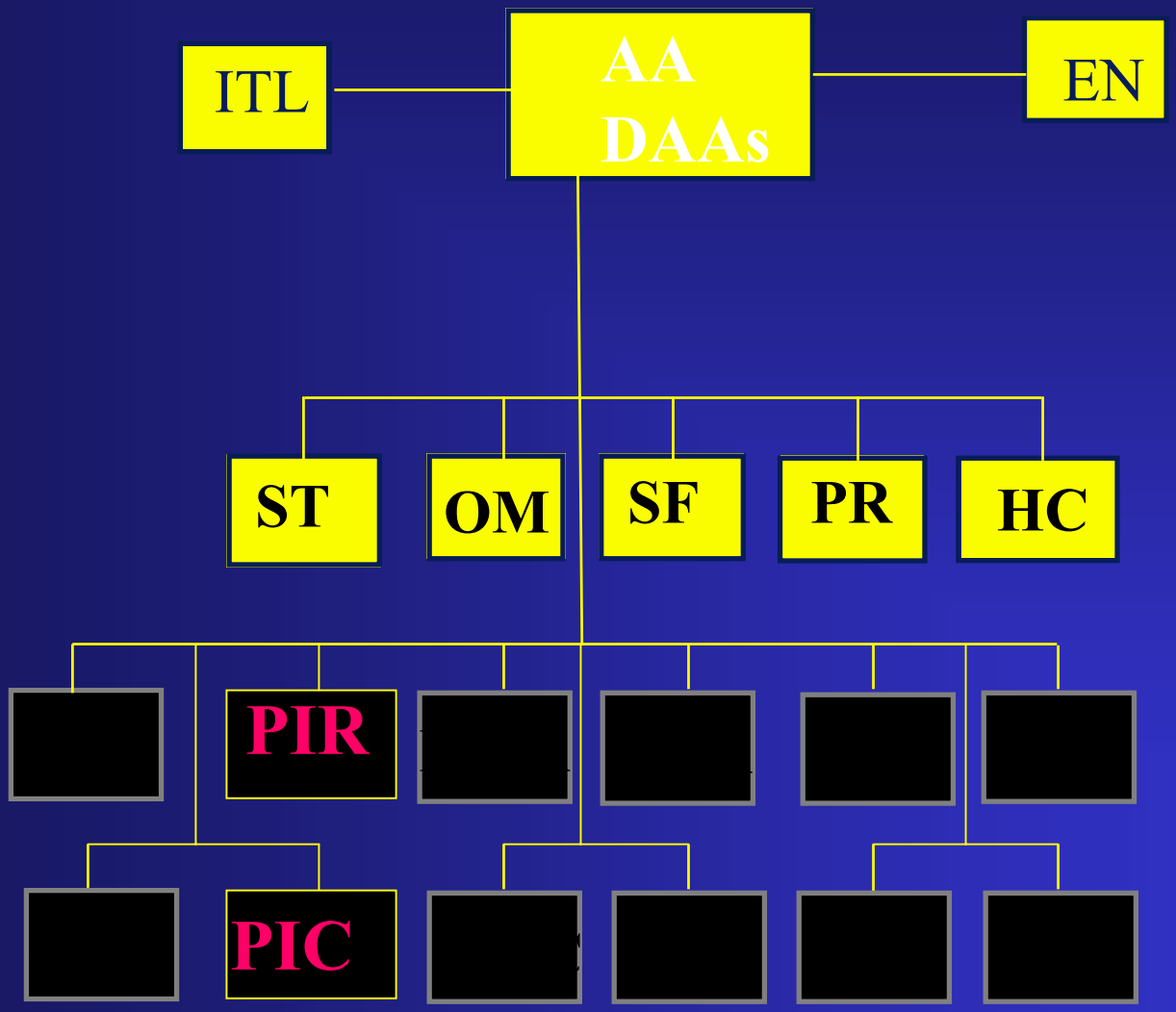
Overview of Programs

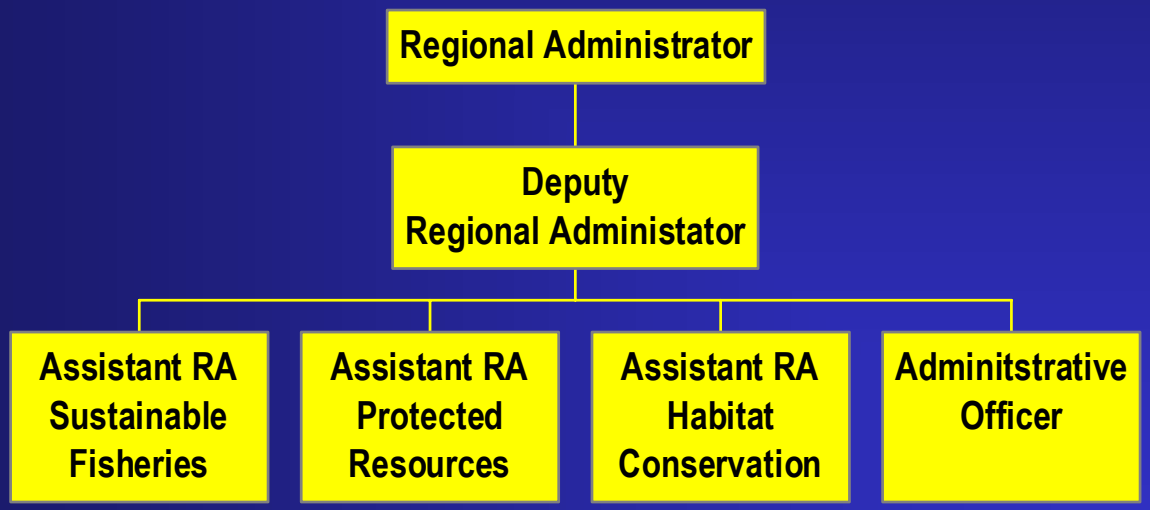
Pacific Islands ~~Area~~ Office



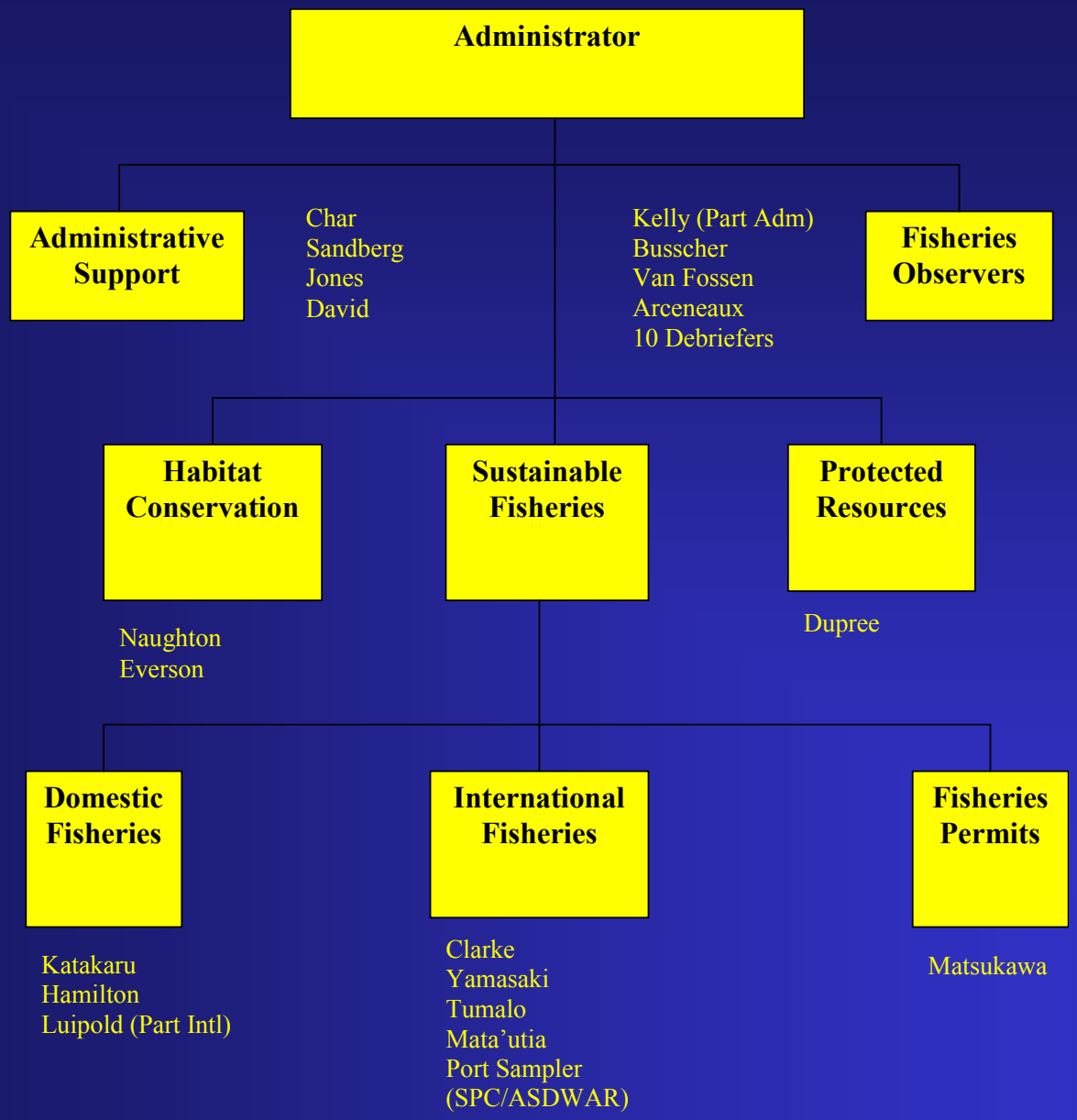
NMFS Structure

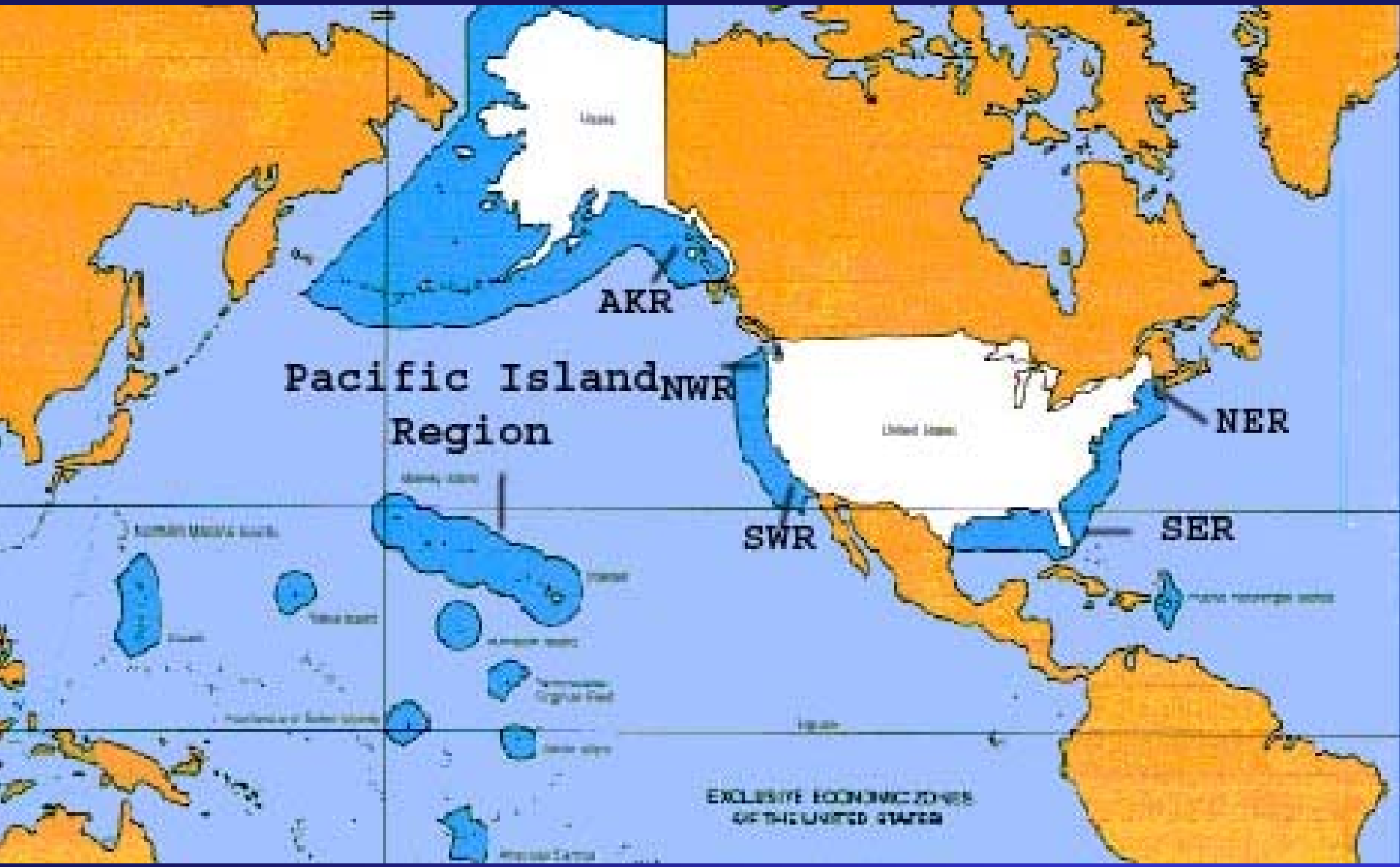


Pacific Islands Region

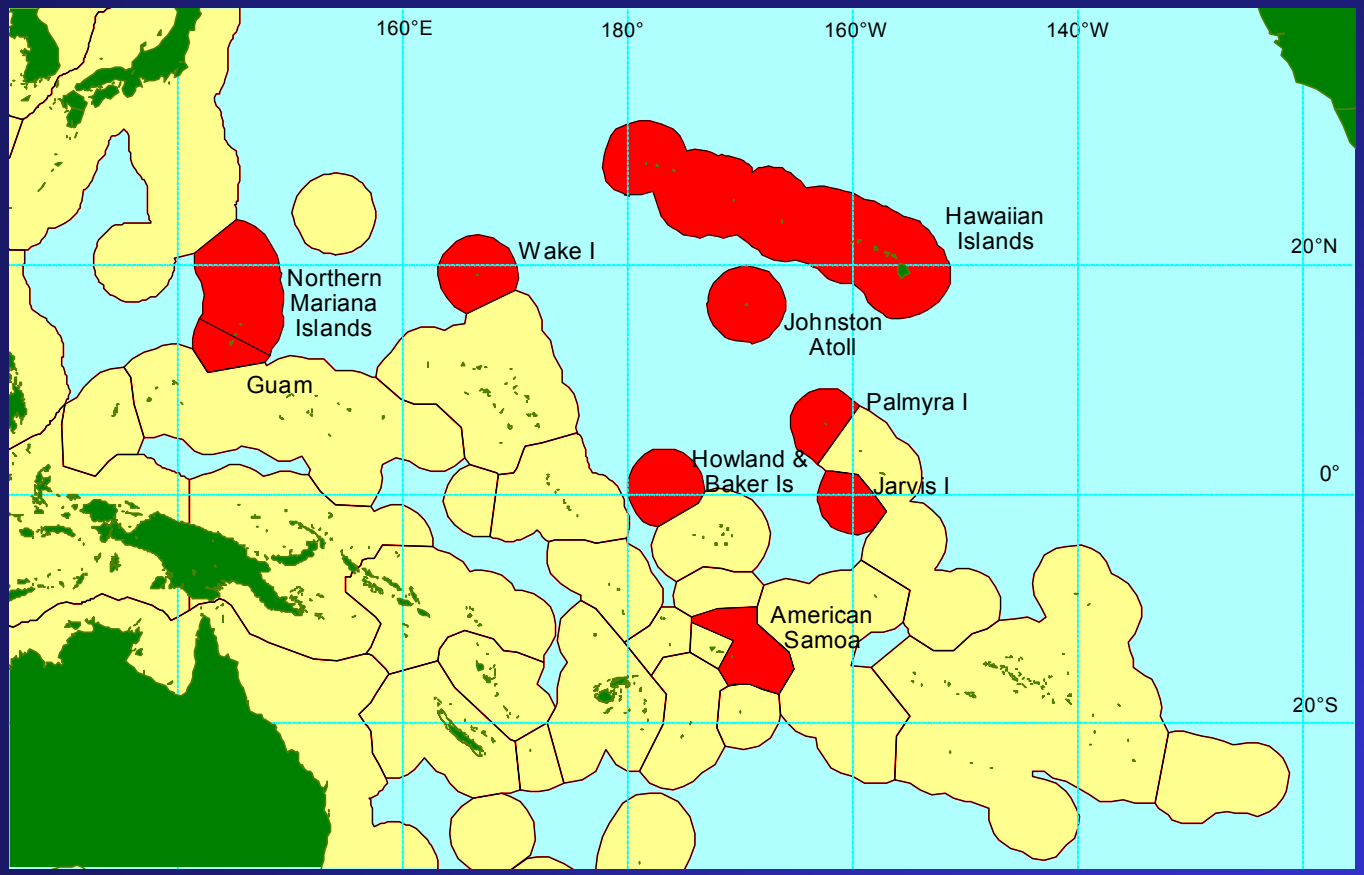


Pacific Islands Area Office
Structure




AKR
Pacific Island
Region
NWR
NER
SWR
SER

Pacific Islands Area



Pacific Islands Region

- **Pacific Islands Regional Office**
- **Pacific Islands Fishery Science Center**
- **Office of Enforcement**
- **Western Pacific Fishery Management Council**

Pacific Islands Regional Office Functions

- **Manage and administer living marine resources programs**
- **Represent NOAA Fisheries in WCPO**
- **Provide advice and guidance to AA**

PIRO Responsibilities

- **Build Sustainable Fisheries**
- **Recover Protected Species**
- **Sustain Healthy Coasts**
- **Operations, management, and information**
  - **Administration and Budget**
  - **Planning and Development**
  - **Information Management**

Pacific Islands Regional Office Personnel

- **Honolulu**
  - **17 Staff**
  - **8 Debriefers (observer program)**
  - **5 JIMAR**
  - **Build Capacity for PIRO??**
- **American Samoa**
  - **3 staff**
  - **1 SPC, ASDMWR, PIAO**

Sustainable Fisheries

- **International Obligations**
- **Domestic Responsibilities**

Sustainable Fisheries International

- **South Pacific Multilateral Tuna Treaty**
- **Support DOS in Pacific Island Issues**
  - **implementing the Pacific-wide fisheries management organization (MHLC)**
- **Pacific Island Insular Fishing Agreements**
- **Compact Obligations**
- **Permits - High Seas, Tuna Treaty**

Sustainable Fisheries Domestic

- **Support WPFMC**
- **Implement fishery management plans**
  - **Pelagics**
  - **Crustaceans**
  - **Bottom fish**
  - **Precious Coral**
  - **Coral Reef Ecosystem (in development)**
- **Monitor fisheries**

Sustainable Fisheries Domestic

- **Observers and data collectors**
- **Grants and cooperative agreements**
- **Issue permits**

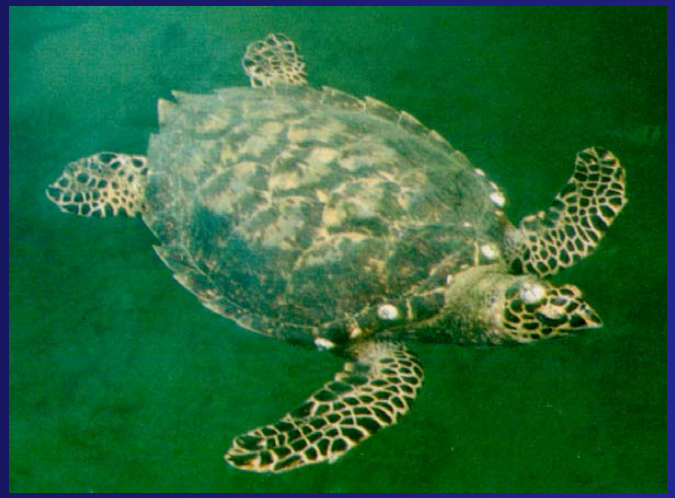
Protected Resources

- **Endangered Species**
- **Marine Mammals**

Protected Resources

- **ESA consultations**
- **Recovery plan implementation**
- **ESA/MMPA/CITES permits**
- **DOD coordination**
- **Stranding network**
- **Research coordination**
- **Marine sanctuary**
- **Oceania Regional Response Team**

Habitat Conservation



- **Permit Reviews**
- **WPFMC support**
- **Oceania Regional Response Team**
- **DOD Partnering**
- **Compact Obligations**
- **Essential Fish Habitat**

The End

Sustainable Fisheries Program
MISSION:
<u>Rebuild & maintain sustainable fisheries</u>

I. Work with Council to develop Fishery Management Plans (FMPs)

II. Review draft FMPs; coordinate review with NMFS HQ & GC

III. Prepare FMP package for approval by Sec. of Commerce and publication in *Federal Register*

IV. Implement FMP regulations approved by Sec. of Commerce

Sustainable Fisheries Division
Other Duties

- Consult with protected resources program on proposed actions that may affect species listed under the Endangered Species Act.
- Conduct annual protected species workshop for longline vessel captains and owners.
- Administer NOAA cooperative agreements for WPacFIN & Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act grants for HI, AS, Gu, CNMI.
- Prepare draft annual reports to Congress on Council membership and status of stocks managed under Council's FMPs.
- Serve as NMFS' lead on implementing seabird National Plan of Action in western Pacific region.
- Review and advise NMFS leadership on fishery management policy.
- Respond to inquiries from fishermen and public on W. Pacific federal fisheries.

FEDERAL REGISTER

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson Act)

956 Federal Register / Vol. 67, No. 5 / Tuesday, January 8, 2002 / Rules and Regulations

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 011218304–1304–01; I.D. 121701A]

RIN 0648–AP69

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Steller Sea Lion Protection Measures for the Groundfish Fisheries Off Alaska; Final 2002 Harvest Specifications and Associated Management Measures for the Groundfish Fisheries Off Alaska

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Emergency interim rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS issues an emergency interim rule to implement Steller sea lion protection measures to avoid the likelihood that the groundfish fisheries off Alaska will jeopardize the continued existence of the western population of Steller sea lions or adversely modify their critical habitat. These management measures will disperse fishing effort over time and area to provide protection from potential competition for important Steller sea lion prey species in waters adjacent to rookeries and important haulouts. This action also announces final 2002 harvest specifications and associated management measures for the groundfish fisheries of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI) and the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). The intended effect of this emergency interim rule is to protect the endangered western population of Steller sea lions, as required under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and to conserve and manage the groundfish resources in the BSAI and the GOA in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act).

DATES: Effective January 1, 2002, except for the addition of § 679.7(a)(18), the suspension of § 679.7(c)(3), and the addition of § 679.28(f)(3)(viii) which will be effective 1200 hours A.l.t. on June 10, 2002, through July 8, 2002, and § 679.7(k), § 679.50(c)(4)(vi) and (c)(6) which will be effective January 15, 2002, through July 8, 2002. Comments must be received by February 7, 2002.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be sent to Sue Salveson, Assistant Regional Administrator, Sustainable Fisheries Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK, 99802, Attn: Lori Gravel, or delivered to room 401 of the Federal Building, 709 West 9th Street, Juneau, AK. Comments will not be accepted if submitted via e-mail or Internet. Copies of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on Steller Sea Lion Protection Measures in the Federal groundfish fisheries off Alaska (SEIS), including the 2001 biological opinion, and the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Total Allowable Catch for the Year 2002 Alaska Groundfish Fisheries may be obtained from the same address. The SEIS and EA are also available on the NMFS Alaska Region homepage at *http://www.fakr.noaa.gov*. Send comments on collection-of-information requirements to the same address and to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA), Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Washington, DC 20503 (Attn: NOAA Desk Officer).

Copies of the Final 2002 Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) reports, dated November 2001, are available from the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, West 4th Avenue, Suite 306, Anchorage, AK 99510 or from its homepage at *http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc*.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Melanie Brown, Sustainable Fisheries Division, Alaska Region, 907–586–7228 or e-mail at *melanie.brown@noaa.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

NMFS manages the groundfish fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) off Alaska under the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Groundfish Fishery of the BSAI and the FMP for Groundfish of the GOA. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) prepared the FMPs under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, 16 U.S.C. 1801, *et seq.* Regulations governing U.S. fisheries and implementing the FMPs appear at 50 CFR parts 600 and 679. NMFS also has management responsibility for certain threatened and endangered species, including Steller sea lions, under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), 16 U.S.C. 1531, *et seq.*, and the authority to promulgate regulations to enforce provisions of the ESA to protect such species.

Introduction

The preamble to this emergency rule contains two parts. Part I explains the background surrounding actions taken to protect the endangered western population of Steller sea lions, including information on the development of protection measures for 2002. Part II describes the harvest specifications for the 2002 groundfish fisheries of the BSAI and GOA. These specifications are consistent with the 2002 Steller sea lion protection measures.

Part I. Steller Sea Lion Protection Measures

Steller Sea Lion Endangered Species Status

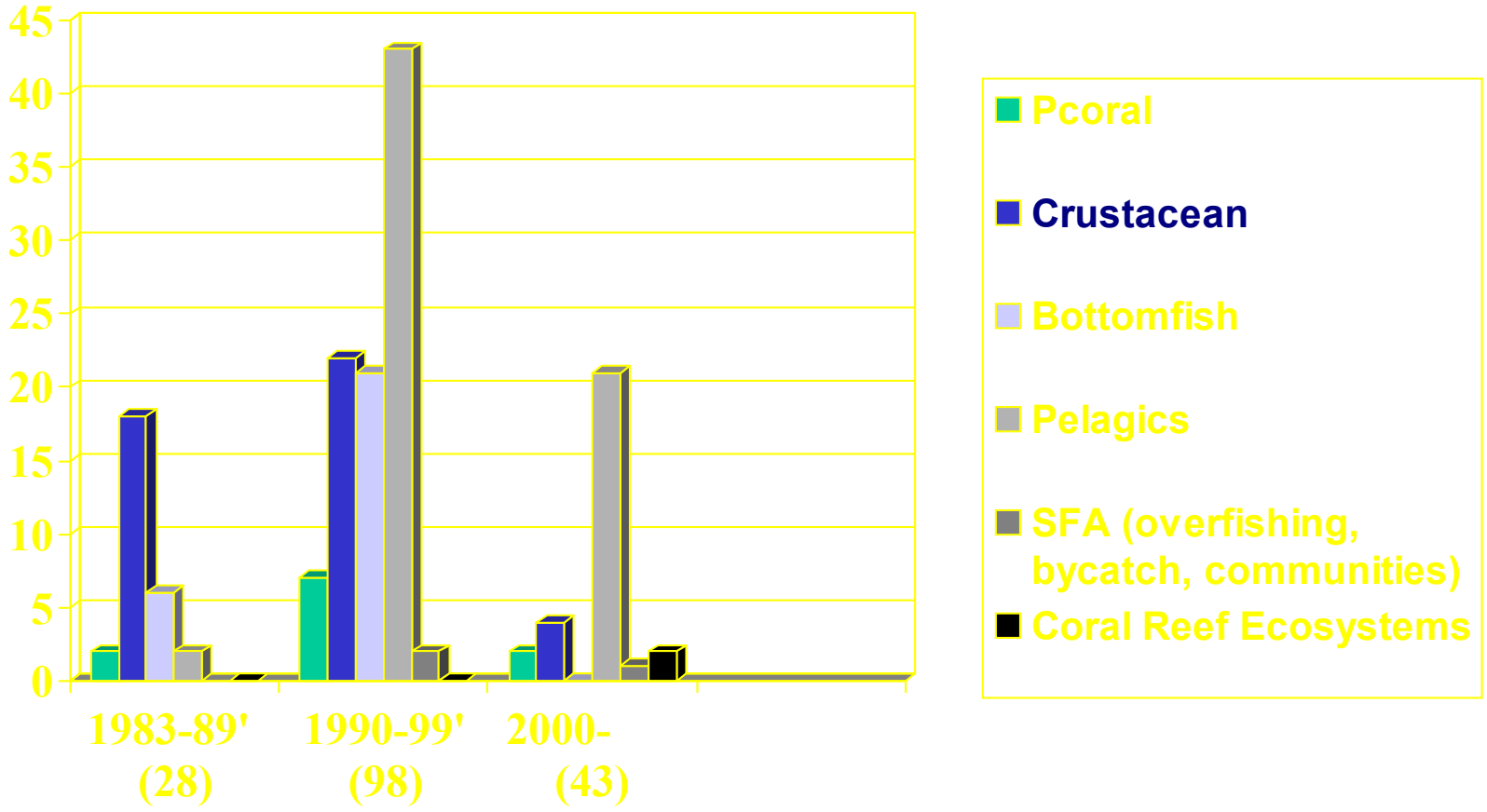
In 1990, NMFS designated the Steller sea lion as a threatened species under the ESA. The designation followed severe declines throughout much of the GOA and Aleutian Islands region. In 1993, NMFS designated critical habitat for the species to include (among other areas) the marine areas within 20 nautical miles (nm) of major rookeries and haulouts of the species west of 144° W longitude (long.). In 1997, NMFS recognized two separate populations and reclassified the western population (west of 144° W long.) as endangered.

NMFS first began collecting information on the abundance of Steller sea lions during the 1950s and 1960s. However, the first counts based on reliable data were not available until the late 1970s; these counts reported approximately 109,800 animals. During the 1980s, a precipitous decline of Steller sea lions was observed. By 1996, the population had declined by 80 percent from the late 1970s. Counts of adult and juvenile Steller sea lions have continued to decline over the last decade, but at a much lower rate.

Based on the best available scientific information, NMFS attributes the continued decline to multiple factors. Considerable evidence indicates that the lack of available prey is a substantial factor. Diet studies confirm that Steller sea lions depend on pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel as major prey resources, and that they may be particularly sensitive to reduced availability of prey during the winter. The occurrence of pollock, Pacific cod, and Atka mackerel in the diet of sea lions may have increased since the 1970s due to shifts in the Bering Sea ecosystem related to atmospheric and oceanographic changes. More information on the environmental changes and potential effects on Steller sea lions is detailed in section 4.4.1 of the October 19, 2001, Biological Opinion on the BSAI and GOA groundfish fisheries and the effects on Steller sea lions (see ADDRESSES).

- **NMFS is the 4th largest producer of regulations behind EPA, FAA, and FCC, in terms of number of rules/notices published in the *Federal Register*.**
- **Since 1983, 169 notices published on Western Pacific fisheries.**

Number of W. Pacific FMP Federal Register Notices 1983 to Present (n=169)



PIAO HABITAT CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Program Summary, April 2003

Staff: John Naughton, Alan Everson, Steve Kolinski

EXISTING TASKS:

I. PERMIT AND PROJECT REVIEWS:

1) **NEPA.**

2) **FWCA.**

3) **EFH.**

4) **Major Changes in Program.**

II. PARTNERING INITIATIVES:

1) **Oceania Regional Response Team.**

2) **US Army Kwajalein Atoll.**

3) **Palau Compact Road Project.**

4) **Department of Defense (DOD) Target Island Assessments.**

5) **Installation Restoration Program.**

6) **DOD Base Closure Program.**

7) **DOD Integrated Resource Management Program.**

8) **Disaster Preparedness Mitigation Assessment Program.**

III. COORDINATION WITH WESTERN PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL:

1) **Coral Reef Ecosystem Fishery Management Plan.**

2) **FMP Amendments, Council EIS and EA Reviews.**

3) **Ecosystem and Habitat Standing Committee.**

IV. OTHER TASKS:

1) Coastal America, Pacific Islands Regional Implementation Team.
2) Marine and Coastal Zone Management Advisory Workgroup.
3) National Marine Protected Area Workgroup.
4) Hawaii State Shark Task Force.
5) US Coral Reef Initiative.

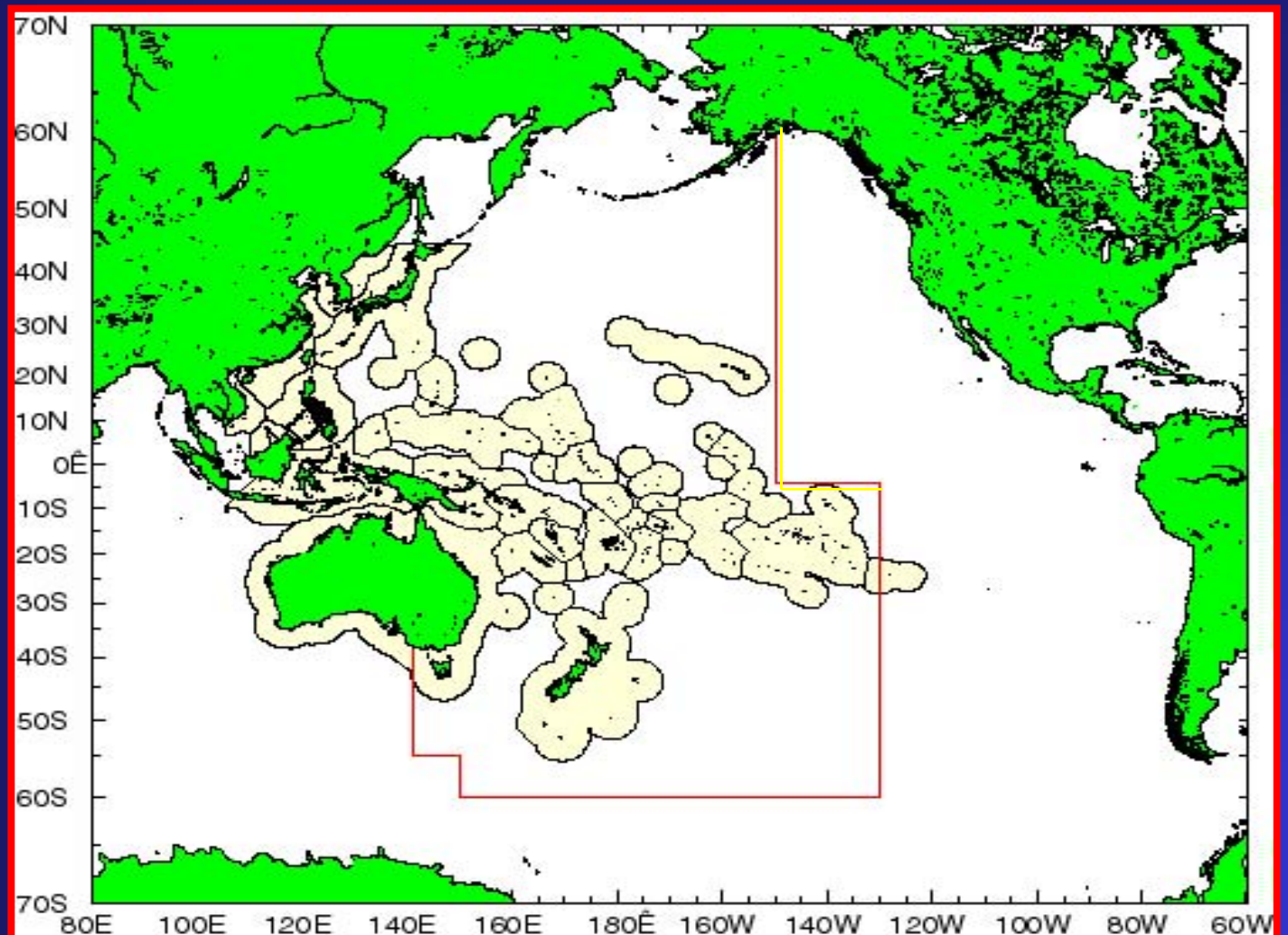
International Programs

Pacific Islands Regional Office

PIRO International Program

- Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention
- South Pacific Tuna Treaty
- Western and Central Pacific Turtle Conservation and Recovery
- Pacific Insular Fishing Agreement, Compact responsibilities and other issues

Western and Central Pacific HMS Convention (WCPFC) Area



Western and Central Pacific HMS Convention

- Largest Convention area on the globe.
- Involves approx. 40 nations and territories
- Largest tuna resource in the world -- 1 mmt.
- NOAA Fisheries role will be prominent in Commission activities
- Currently Prepcon Phase
- Entry into force expect in coming year
- Significant work prior to entry into force
- Significant impact on resources users and owners, NOAA Fisheries

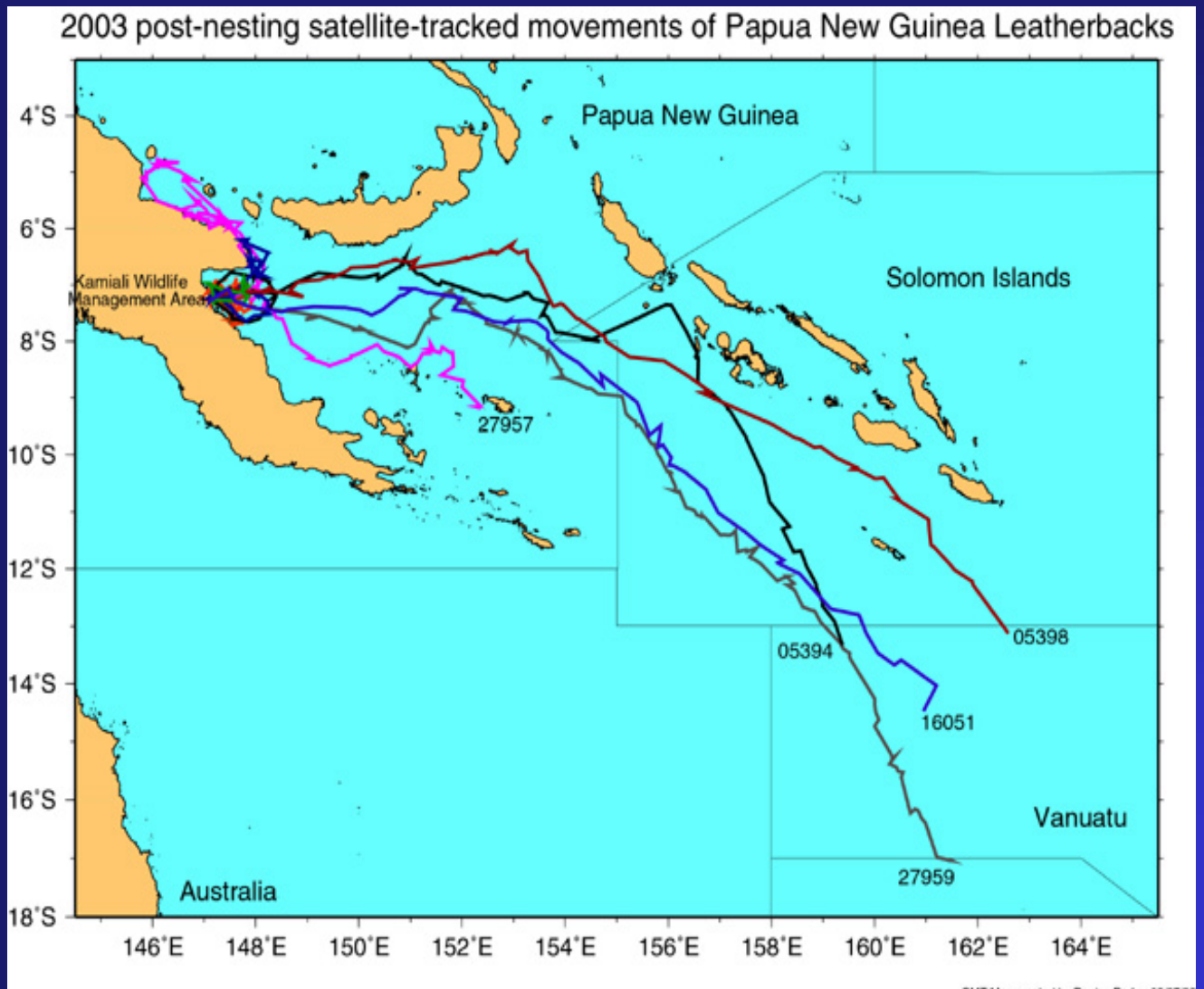
South Pacific Purse Seine Fishery

“International” Turtle Recovery, Management and Institutional / Capacity Building

- Joint NMFS/Council Effort
- Focus on all US Flag and Compact Areas
- As well as project in the Melanesian Arch.
- Support for NMFS SWFSC researchers
- Grants and Contracts to local MRDs, ENGOs etc.
- At least 2 FY’s of funds -- approx. 7-800 k/yr.

Leatherback Tracking in PNG Preliminary Results

Source: SWFSC



Other International Activities

- Compact Responsibilites
- PIAFAs

PIRO NEPA Coordinator Position

- Marilyn Luipold
- Short History
  - Part of NOAA Fisheries Regulatory Streamlining Initiative
  - Structure is one coordinator per region and one at HQ
  - Regional Coordinators report to RA or Deputy RA
  - PIRO Position since October 2002

NEPA Coordinator Role and Function

- Environmental Policy Coordination
- Technical oversight and quality assurance for NEPA
- Environmental Policy Contact/NEPA liaison
- Constituent Service and Outreach, facilitate teamwork
- Program, Planning, and Monitoring

Environmental Policy Coordination

- Assist RA in promoting environmental policy coordination and ensuring regional actions comply with NEPA and related environmental legislation.
- In coordination with HQ NEPA Coordinator and NOAA NEPA Coordinator and General Counsel, recommend approval of regional NEPA documents.

Technical Oversight and Quality Assurance for NEPA

- Provide oversight, advice, and counsel on NEPA compliance to region, science center, and fishery management council staffs.
- In consultation with General Counsel, ensure that regional procedures and documents comport with applicable standards.
- In coordination with HQ NEPA Coordinator, provide NEPA training.
- Develop and maintain a system for tracking NEPA compliance.

Environmental Policy Contact /NEPA Liaison

- Serve as environmental policy primary point of contact at regional level to NMFS, Fishery Management Council, other Federal, State, and local agencies, applicants, and the public.
- Liaison with other NEPA Coordinators (Regions, HQ, and NOAA).

Constituent Service and Outreach/Program Planning and Monitoring

- Foster teamwork, cooperation and enhanced communication.
- Improve efficiency and effectiveness of programs to contribute to NOAA goals.
- Provide support in program planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Hawaii Longline Observer Program

Since February, 1994

Program Staff

- Kevin Busscher — Operations Coordinator
- Lewis VanFossen — Assistant Operations Coordinator
- Joe Arceneaux — Training Coordinator

Program Staff (Continued)

- John Buchanan Debriefer
- Jeremy Willson Debriefer
- Dawn Golden Debriefer
- Eric Forney Debriefer
- Tom Swenarton Debriefer
- Jeremy Bisson Debriefer
- Dan Namur Debriefer
- 25 Observers

Observer Coverage

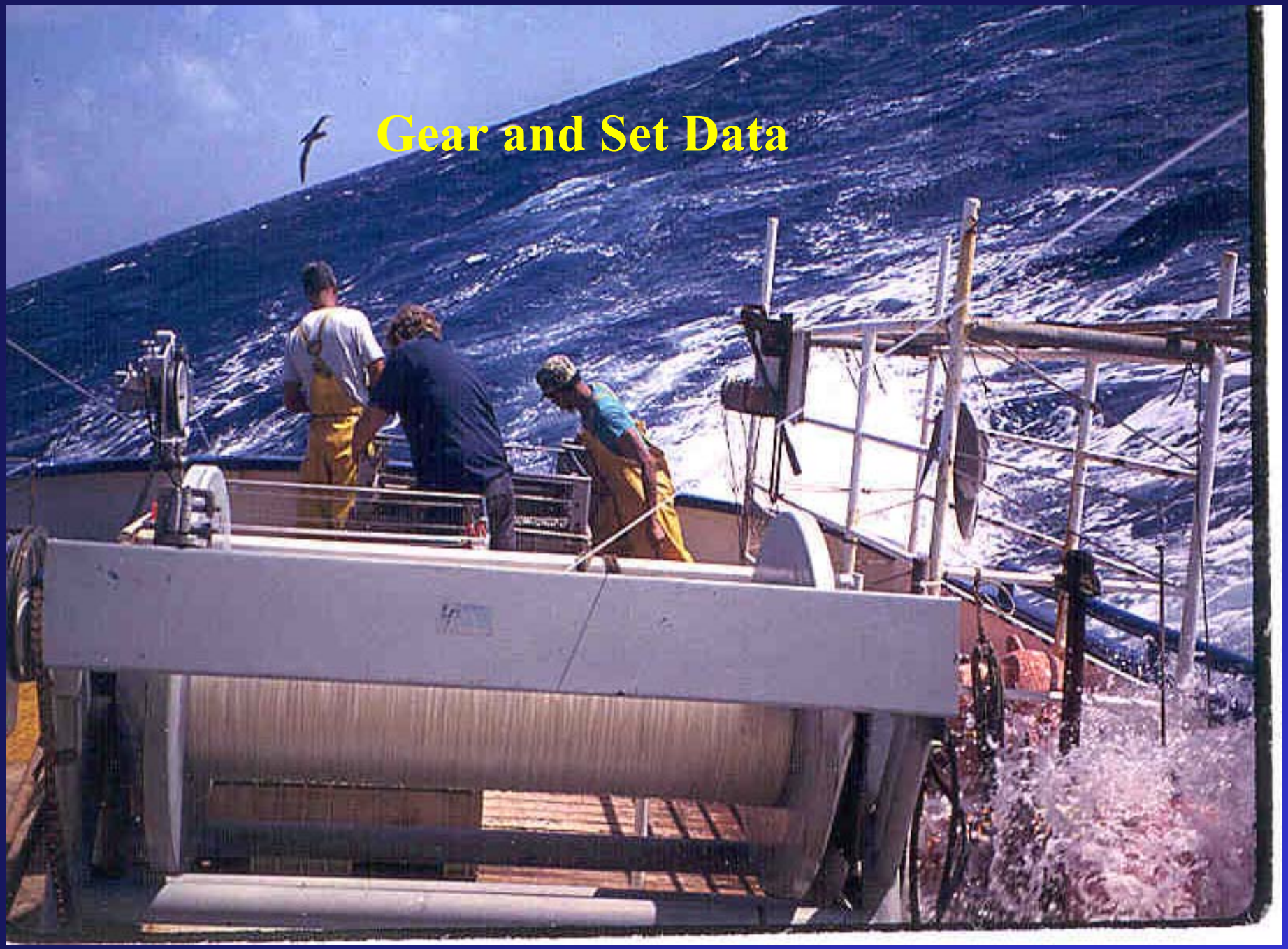
- 1994 to 1999: 4.3%
- August 2000: 10% Minimum
- November 2000: 20% Minimum
- 2000: 10.4%
- 2001: 22.5%
- 2002: 24.6%

Number of Observed Trips

- 1994 to 1999: 46 Trips/year
- 1999: 38 Trips/year
- 2000: 118 Trips
- 2000 Fiscal year 234 Trips
- 2001: 233 Trips
- 2002: 278 Trips

Observer Data and Sample Collection

Gear and Set Data



Protected Species Data
ARCENEAUX

Sample Collection and Research

Fish Life history Data

Catch Composition

Program Development

- NWHI Bottomfish Program
- American Samoa Longline Program
- CNMI and Guam
- Assisting S. Korean Observer Program Development

Observer of the Month

Pacific Islands Regional Office
Sustainable Fisheries Division

******MISSION******

Rebuild & maintain sustainable fisheries in the U.S. EEZ of the Western Pacific Region

I. Work with Council in developing fishery management plans (fmps)

II. Review draft fmps; coordinate review with NMFS HQ & GC

III. Prepare fmp (incld regulation) package for approval by Sec. Commerce

IV. Implement fmp regulations approved by Sec. of Commerce

PIRO Sustainable Fisheries Div.
Other Duties

- Consult with protected resources program on species listed under the Endangered Species Act.
- Conduct annual protected species workshop for longline vessel captains and owners.
- Administer NOAA cooperative agreements for WPacFIN & Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act grants for HI, AS, Gu, CNMI.
- Prepare draft annual reports to Congress on W. Pacific fmp management unit species and Council membership.
- Serve as NMFS' lead implementer for seabird National Plan of Action in western Pacific region.
- Review and advise NMFS leadership on fishery management policy.
- Respond to inquiries from fishermen and public on W. Pacific federal fisheries

FMP Actions
Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson Act)

956 Federal Register / Vol. 67, No. 5 / Tuesday, January 8, 2002 / Rules and Regulations

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 011218304–1304–01; I.D. 121701A]

RIN 0648–AP69

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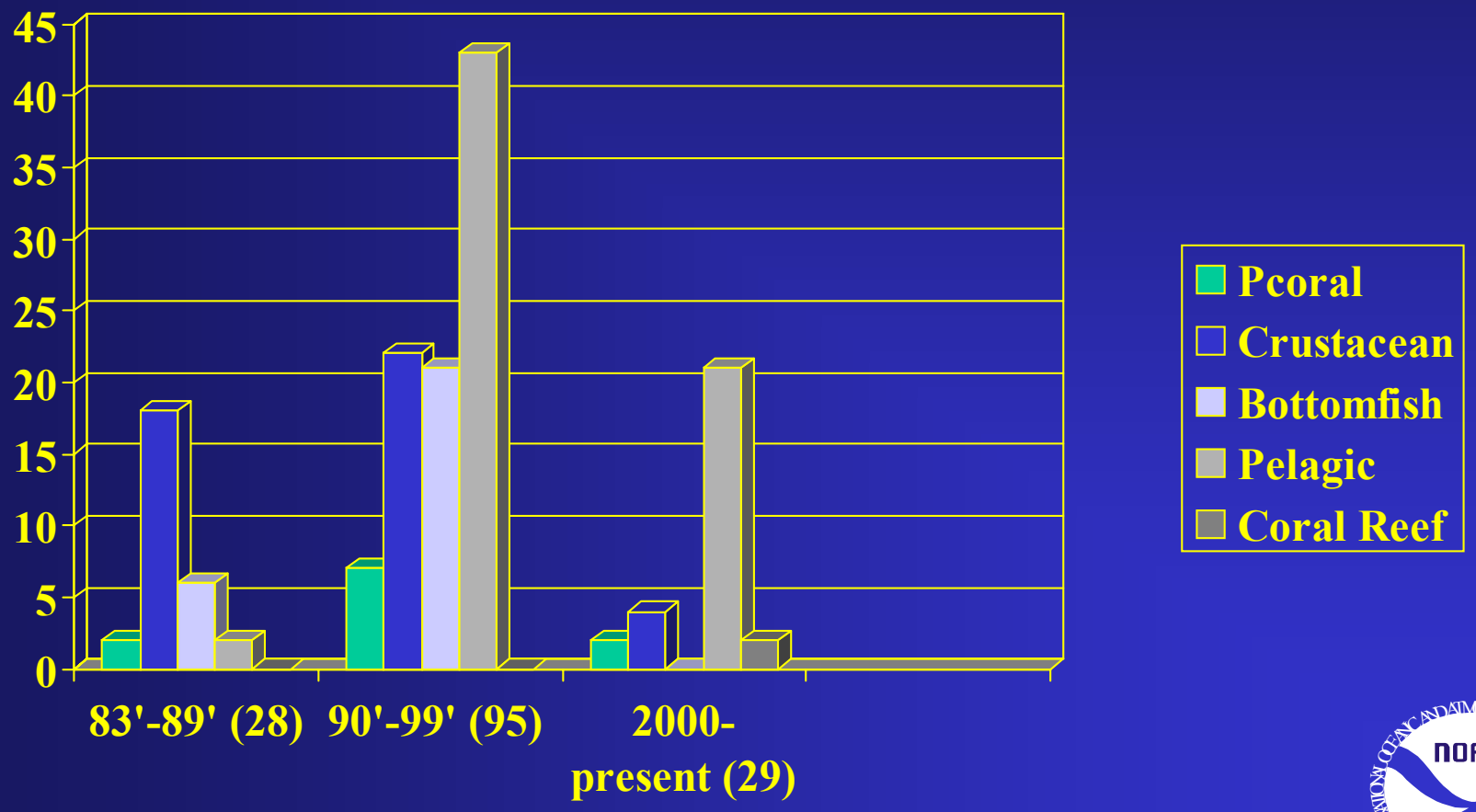
- **NMFS is 4th largest producer of regulations, behind EPA, FAA, and the FCC, in terms of number of rules/notices published in the *Federal Register*.**
- **Since 1983, over 150 W. Pacific fmp actions processed and published.**

Number of W. Pacific FMP Actions
1983 to Present (n=152)



NOAA Fisheries

PROTECTED SPECIES PROGRAM

Pacific Islands Regional Office
1601 Kapiolani Blvd., Suite 1110
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

NOAA Fisheries

PROTECTED SPECIES PROGRAM

PROGRAM MISSION

PROTECTION, CONSERVATION AND/OR RECOVERY OF MARINE MAMMALS AND ENDANGERED & THREATENED SPECIES

NOAA Fisheries
PROTECTED SPECIES PROGRAM

AUTHORITIES

- MARINE MAMMAL PROTECTION ACT
- ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT
- OTHER STATUTES
- CITES & OTHER STATUTES

NOAA Fisheries

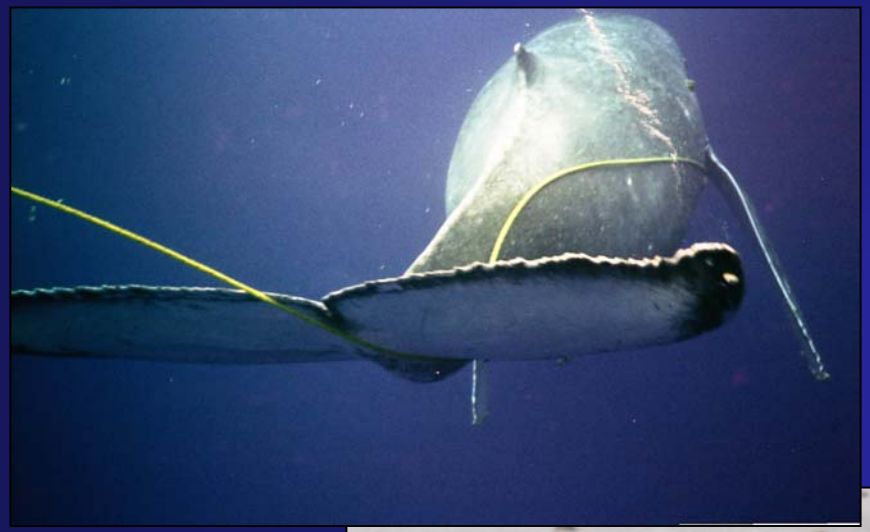
PROTECTED SPECIES PROGRAM

MARINE MAMMAL PROTECTION ACT

- DEVELOP CONSERVATION PROGRAMS
- IDENTIFY RESEARCH NEEDS
- ADMINISTER ACTIVITIES OF MMHSR

NOAA Fisheries
PROTECTED SPECIES PROGRAM

HEALTH & STRANDING RESPONSE



- UMEs
- HAZMAT / OIL SPILL RESPONSE
- STRANDINGS / ENTANGLEMENTS
- JOHN H. PRESCOTT GRANTS PROGRAM

NOAA Fisheries
PROTECTED SPECIES PROGRAM

INCIDENTAL TAKE

FISHERIES:

- MONITOR FISHERIES
- LIST OF FISHERIES (CATEGORY I, II, III)
- INCIDENTAL TAKE DURING COMMERCIAL FISHING ACTIVITIES

NON FISHERIES:

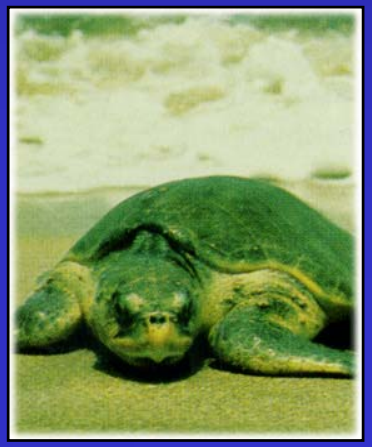
- INCIDENTAL TAKE DURING NON-FISHERY ACTIVITIES

NOAA Fisheries

PROTECTED SPECIES PROGRAM

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

- PROMOTE CONSERVATION AND RECOVERY OF ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES
- DEVELOP COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS WITH STATES
- MINIMIZE CONFLICTS WITH HUMAN ACTIVITIES



NOAA Fisheries
PROTECTED SPECIES PROGRAM

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT
Section 7 Consultations

PROJECT REVIEW TO INSURE IMPACT TO PROTECTED SPECIES IS MINIMAL

- DEPT OF DEFENSE
- ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
- FISHERY MANAGMEMENT PLANS

MAJOR CLIENTS

- NOAA FISHERIES - (FMPs AND AMMENDMENTS)

- DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE - (EIS)

NOAA Fisheries

PROTECTED SPECIES PROGRAM

RECOVERY PLAN DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

- HAWAIIAN MONK SEAL
- SEA TURTLES
- HUMPBACK WHALE

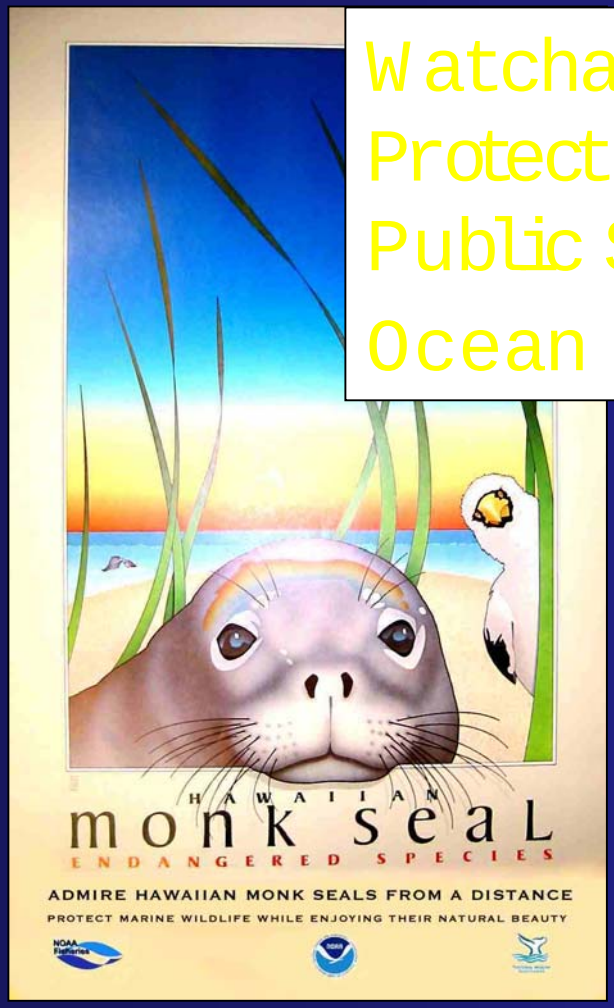
NOAA Fisheries
PROTECTED SPECIES PROGRAM

RESEARCH

- PERMITS
- EVALUATION
- COORDINATION

NOAA Fisheries

PROTECTED SPECIES PROGRAM

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

- Watchable Wildlife
- Protect Dolphins Campaign
- Public Service Announcements
- Ocean User Workshops (w/ NOS)