



## **NEWS FROM NOAA**

**NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **ALASKA FISHERMEN TO PAY \$254,500 PENALTY FOR FISHERIES VIOLATIONS**

NOAA Fisheries Service has assessed a \$254,500 civil penalty and permit sanctions against the owner, manager and three captains of the FV *Alaska Juris*, a catcher/processor fishing boat operating in Alaskan waters.

NOAA Fisheries Service is charging that from October 2001 through March 2004, Alaska Juris Inc. and the Fishing Company of Alaska, through its agents, committed numerous violations, including: tampering with or destroying observer's samples and equipment; failing to provide observers a safe work area; failing to notify observers prior to bringing fish aboard to allow sampling of the catch; failing to provide reasonable assistance to observers; and interfering with or biasing sampling procedure employed by observers.

The vessel owner, Alaska Juris Inc., and the vessel manager, the Fishing Company of Alaska, were assessed a \$254,500 civil penalty for violations of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Three of the vessel's captains – Christian Thome Jr., Brian Madruga and Leon Duval – have each been assessed a portion of the \$254,500 civil penalty.

The Notice of Violation and Assessment was issued Oct. 19 by NOAA's Office of General Counsel for Enforcement and Litigation. Officials also assessed a 30-day permit sanction against the vessel, to begin March 15. The charges are a result of a multiple-year investigation conducted by special agents in the Alaska division of NOAA Fisheries Service's Office for Law Enforcement.

"The investigation focused on identifying patterns of significant interference and efforts by vessel captains and crew to hinder or bias the observer's samples and procedures," said NOAA Special Agent Michael Killary.

The investigation also documented other types of alleged violations, including inaccurate information on required reports; failure to discard prohibited species; failure to report incidental mortality or injury to marine mammals; and conducting fishing contrary to seasonal closures. The vessel operators, Alaska Juris Inc. and The Fishing Company of Alaska have 30 days to request a hearing in this action.

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Management programs allocate fish resources among areas, seasons, gear and vessel types, cooperatives and even individual fishers. Observer data collected from the fleet are integral to the sound management of fisheries resources. The data are used by NOAA, the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council, Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the International Pacific Halibut Commission.

In 2007 the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, celebrates 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

To report illegal fishing activities contact the NOAA Fisheries Service's Enforcement Hot Line at 800-853-1964.

On the Web:

NOAA Fisheries Service: [www.nmfs.noaa.gov](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov)

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