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Buckson named NOAA Fisheries law enforcement director
Brings three decades of marine law enforcement to new role

NOAA today announced the selection of Bruce Buckson, a nationally recognized leader in natural resource conservation law enforcement, as director of the NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement (OLE). Buckson will join NOAA on September 4 from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), where he served for 29 years. A Lieutenant Colonel, he has been a deputy director of its Division of Law Enforcement since 2007. The FWC includes one of the largest fish and wildlife law enforcement agencies in the world in a state with the nation's second longest coastline.

"Bruce brings to NOAA extensive natural resource conservation leadership experience, firsthand knowledge of marine law enforcement operations and a demonstrated ability to work across diverse stakeholder groups to ensure clear, effective and enforceable policies," said Eric Schwaab, assistant NOAA administrator for NOAA Fisheries. "In his new role, Bruce will advance our mission to ensure compliance with the laws and regulations that conserve and protect our nation's marine resources. For example, he will expand our dockside presence and improve communications with fishermen with the hiring of 23 new enforcement officers and lead the search for a new Special Agent in Charge for the Northeast Region."

Buckson began his law enforcement career patrolling the waters of the upper Florida Keys and advanced to increasing levels of responsibility within the FWC. Among his career highlights, he directed marine law enforcement operations, led a statewide resource protection unit, coordinated a mutual aid agreement to enhance state and federal protection of endangered manatees, and served as the FWC's law enforcement liaison to regional Fisheries commissions and councils and to federal agencies.

"Bruce has been a very effective leader at the state level and will increase the collaboration with and effectiveness of NOAA's cooperative enforcement program nationally," said Kurt Blanchard, deputy chief of the Rhode Island Department of Environment Management's Office of Law Enforcement. "His 29 years of experience will bring a valuable perspective to federal compliance and enforcement across the nation."

"Bruce brings extensive experience with the effective enforcement of the regulations needed to manage marine resources as well as a wealth of experience with the council process," said Robert Mahood, executive director of the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council. "He will be a positive force in ensuring the sustainability of our marine fisheries."

In his new role, Buckson will direct the efforts of more than 200 OLE employees, including special agents and enforcement officers, working out of national headquarters, six divisional offices and 52 field offices throughout the United States and U.S. territories.

"I look forward to working with this highly professional team to provide fair and effective enforcement of laws and regulations that ensure sustainable marine fisheries," said Buckson.

“Over my first few months, I plan to meet with our regional staff and with our constituents and community partners to understand the important issues in their regions.”

Buckson has been recognized throughout his career with numerous citations and awards. In 2004, he received the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Annual Award in Excellence in Law Enforcement for his career contributions to fisheries conservation and his advocacy for consistency in fisheries enforcement approaches and information sharing across state and federal agencies. Other awards include the Division of Law Enforcement Award of Merit and Medal of Valor, Statewide Agency Officer of the Year and State Law Enforcement Chiefs Officer of the Year, NOAA OLE Outstanding Leadership Achievement Award, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Guy Bradley leadership and lifetime achievement award.

Buckson is a graduate of the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Va.

Over the past two years, NOAA has significantly improved its enforcement program, with new leadership, higher-level review of charging decisions, and a new penalty policy to ensure more consistent penalties nationwide. NOAA is reshaping the enforcement program to emphasize compliance through better communication with fishermen.

For a complete list of NOAA enforcement reforms instituted over the past two years, go to <http://www.noaa.gov/lawenforcementupdates/>. For a short bio and photos of Buckson, please see our link: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2011/07/buckson.html>.

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