

NOAA Line Offices

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or “NOAA,” is an agency that enriches life through science. Its work goes from the surface of the sun to the depths of the ocean floor as its work to keep citizens informed of the changing environment around them. NOAA executes its mission through six line offices:

[National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service \(NESDIS\)](#)

Provides timely access to global environmental data from satellites and other sources to promote, protect, and enhance the nation's economy, security, environment, and quality of life. NESDIS operates a fleet of environmental satellites that provide critical observations of earth and space. NESDIS is the official archive of earth observations that enable long-term understanding of our planet and aid in environmental prediction. NESDIS's data products support NOAA's mission and drive science throughout the environmental community. NESDIS has multiple international partnerships through which NESDIS collectively improves NOAA's forecasting strength by sharing data with countries around the world. NESDIS also works with the commercial sector, building and developing satellite observation systems from spacecraft to ground segments, while simultaneously exploring innovation in the marketplace to find new ways to deliver its mission.

[National Marine Fisheries Service \(NMFS\)](#)

NOAA Fisheries, also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is responsible for the stewardship of the nation's ocean resources and their habitat. NOAA Fisheries provides vital services for the nation: productive and sustainable fisheries, safe sources of seafood, the recovery and conservation of protected resources, and healthy ecosystems—all backed by sound science and an ecosystem-based approach to management. NOAA Fisheries has five regional offices, six science centers, and more than 20 laboratories around the United States and U.S. territories. U.S. fisheries are among the world's largest and most sustainable. Seafood harvested from U.S. federally managed fisheries is inherently sustainable as a result of the U.S. fishery management process. Using the Magnuson-Stevens Act as the guide, NOAA Fisheries works in partnership with Regional Fishery Management Councils to assess and predict the status of fish stocks, set catch limits, ensure compliance with fisheries regulations, and reduce bycatch. The resilience of our marine ecosystems and coastal communities depend on healthy marine species, including protected species such as whales, sea turtles, corals, and salmon. Under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act, NOAA Fisheries works to recover protected marine species while allowing economic and recreational opportunities.

[National Ocean Service \(NOS\)](#)

NOAA's Ocean Service's (NOS) mission is to provide science-based solutions through collaborative partnerships to address evolving economic, environmental, and social pressures on our ocean and coasts. NOS provides data, tools, and services that support coastal economies and their contribution to the national economy. NOS is dedicated to advancing the following priorities: Safe and efficient transportation and commerce; Preparedness and risk reduction; and Stewardship, recreation, and tourism.

National Weather Service (NWS)

Provides weather, hydrologic, and climate forecasts and warnings for the United States, its territories, adjacent waters, and ocean areas, for the protection of life and property and the enhancement of the national economy. Building a Weather-Ready Nation and managing the nation's weather, water, and climate data, forecasts and warnings requires a diversified organization. From the National Weather Service (NWS) Headquarters in Silver Spring, MD to six Regional Headquarters: Eastern, Southern, Central, Western, Alaska, and Pacific; to local Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs), River Forecast Centers (RFCs), Center Weather Service Units (CWSUs), and National Centers nationwide, NWS employees are working to support all aspects of keeping the public safe from weather, water, and climate hazards, and meeting the NWS mission to protect lives and property, and enhance the national economy. NWS Headquarters is responsible for managing the functions of the entire NWS. Headquarters coordinates programs directly related to weather warnings and forecasting to ensure the compatibility and effectiveness of weather services and ensures climate, water, and weather warnings, forecasts, and data products are provided to government, industry, and the general public. The NWS Headquarters also ensures funding is available to support field needs, manages information technology resources, and ensures a coordinated NOAA program of weather-related activities across NOAA line offices. The six NWS regional offices manage all operational and scientific meteorological, hydrologic, and oceanographic programs of the region including observing networks, weather services, forecasting, and climatology and hydrology. They monitor these services and adjust resources to provide the most effective weather and warning services possible. The National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) delivers science-based environmental predictions. It produces reliable, timely, and accurate analyses, guidance, forecasts and warnings for the protection of lives and property and the enhancement of the national economy. NCEP is comprised of nine distinct centers including the Aviation Weather Center, Climate Prediction Center, National Hurricane Center, Storm Prediction Center, Space Weather Prediction Center, Weather Prediction Center, Ocean Prediction Center, Environmental Modeling Center, and NCEP Central Operations. NCEP is the starting point for nearly all weather forecasts in the United States. The local WFO's are responsible for issuing advisories, warnings, statements, and short term forecasts for their local county warning area including the public, media, emergency management, aviation community, and other customers 24 hours per day, 365 days per year to keep the public safe from weather hazards. More specifically, forecasters prepare graphical and digital forecasts, issue warnings, watches and advisories, aviation forecasts, and river forecasts, and warnings. They monitor weather observations, provide public service, and program/monitor broadcasts from over eleven NOAA Weather Radio-All Hazards Stations. They also collect and disseminate river and rainfall data, launch balloons to gather upper-air weather data, administer the Cooperative Weather Observer Program, and prepare local climatological data summaries and reports.

Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO)

OMAO administers the NOAA fleet of ships and aircraft and trains divers to safely facilitate Earth observation. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO) manages and operates NOAA's fleet of 16 research and survey ships and nine aircraft. Comprised of civilians and officers of the NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps, OMAO also manages the NOAA Diving Program, NOAA Small Boat Program and NOAA Aviation Safety Program. OMAO's research and survey ships comprise the largest fleet of federal research ships in the nation. Ranging from large oceanographic research vessels capable of exploring the world's deepest ocean, to smaller ships responsible for charting the shallow bays and inlets of the United States, the fleet supports a wide range of marine activities including fisheries research, nautical charting, and ocean and climate studies. OMAO's aircraft operate throughout the world providing a wide range of capabilities including hurricane reconnaissance and research, marine mammal and fisheries assessment, and coastal mapping. NOAA aircraft carry scientists and specialized instrument packages to conduct research for NOAA's missions. In addition to research and monitoring activities critical to NOAA's mission, OMAO ships and aircraft provide immediate response capabilities for unpredictable events. Following hurricanes, NOAA ships conduct emergency surveys for navigation hazards that help ports reopen quickly. Aerial images of disaster-torn areas—taken by NOAA aircraft—enabled residents and emergency workers to verify the condition of houses, bridges and roads.

Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR)

NOAA's Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR)—or "NOAA Research"—provides the research foundation for understanding the complex systems that support our planet. Working in partnership with other organizational units of NOAA, NOAA Research enables better forecasts, earlier warnings for natural disasters, and a greater understanding of the Earth. OAR provides unbiased science to better manage the environment, nationally and globally. The primary components of NOAA Research are: NOAA Research Laboratories; National Sea Grant Program; NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research; NOAA Climate Program Office; Office of Weather and Air Quality; NOAA Unmanned Aircraft Systems; NOAA Ocean Acidification Program.