NOAA’s Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO)

Aircraft Flights and Mission Info Summary

May 2018
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Aircraft Operations

OMAO’S AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS CENTER (AOC) – Lakeland, Florida
Commanding Officer: CAPT Timothy Gallagher

NOAA’s fleet of nine manned aircraft is operated, managed and maintained by NOAA’s Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO) and the NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps (NOAA Corps) – one of the nation’s seven Uniformed Services - based at OMAO’s Aircraft Operations Center (AOC). Located at Lakeland Linder Regional Airport in Lakeland, Florida, the officers, crew, and scientists from AOC provide capable, mission-ready aircraft and professional crews to the scientific community – see photo below. AOC is committed to the safe, efficient and economical use of NOAA aircraft and has more than four decades of experience developing, coordinating and successfully and safely conducting airborne environmental data gathering missions.
May Mission Summary

Whether studying severe weather, assessing marine mammal populations, surveying coastal erosion, investigating oil spills, flight checking aeronautical charts, or improving hurricane prediction models, the AOC flight crews, scientists, and partners, operate all across the United States and beyond, including in some of the world's most demanding flight regimes.

OMAO’s aircraft fleet includes the following platforms and the web links provide additional photos, information on each aircraft, and the missions they serve:

- Lockheed WP-3D Orion (P3) “Hurricane Hunter” [Tail ID# N42RF]
- Lockheed WP-3D Orion (P3) “Hurricane Hunter” [Tail ID# N43RF]
- Gulfstream IV-SP (G-IV) “Hurricane Hunter” [Tail ID# N49RF]
- Gulfstream Turbo (Jet Prop) Commander AC-695A (Jet Prop Commander) [Tail ID# N45RF]
- Beechcraft King Air 350CER (King Air) [Tail ID# N68RF]
- De Havilland DHC-6-300 Twin Otter (Twin Otter) [Tail ID# N46RF]
- De Havilland DHC-6-300 Twin Otter (Twin Otter) [Tail ID# N48RF]
- De Havilland DHC-6-300 Twin Otter (Twin Otter) [Tail ID# N49RF]
- De Havilland DHC-6-300 Twin Otter (Twin Otter) [Tail ID# N56RF]
- De Havilland DHC-6-300 Twin Otter (Twin Otter) [Tail ID# N57RF]

In addition to the fleet of nine, manned aircraft, AOC provides oversight and guidance for all of NOAA’s Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) operations. Please visit AOC’s UAS Section for additional information.

The following Mission Summary provides an overview of the status or location(s) and mission(s) for each aircraft for the month. Please note all mission bases, projected flight locations, and mission parameters and requirements may shift based on changing needs and circumstances. For the latest news, please visit the AOC on Facebook and Twitter.

**P3 “Hurricane Hunter” [Tail ID# N42RF]**

Aircraft is scheduled for maintenance and science equipment testing during the month of May.
**P3 “Hurricane Hunter” [Tail ID# N43RF]**

Currently down for re-winging in Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Florida. The aircraft is due out of maintenance in October, 2018; instrumentation and outfitting at AOC will follow. The aircraft will be mission ready in May 2019.

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**G-IV “Hurricane Hunter” [Tail ID# N49RF]**

The Atlantic hurricane season begins June 1 and NOAA’s hurricane experts will tour five U.S. Gulf coastal cities (McAllen, Texas; Beaumont, Texas; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Montgomery, Alabama; Lakeland, Florida) to raise awareness about the importance of preparing for the upcoming hurricane season. The tour will feature the NOAA Gulfstream IV and a U.S. Air Force Reserve WC-130J, both of which are used in hurricane forecasting, and at each stop, the public and media can view the aircraft.

**Public tour schedule (2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. local time):**

**Monday, May 7:** McAllen Miller Intl. Airport, McAllen, Texas  
**Tuesday, May 8:** Jack Brooks Regional Airport, Beaumont, Texas  
**Wednesday, May 9:** Baton Rouge Metro Airport, Ryan Field, Baton Rouge, Louisiana  
**Thursday, May 10:** Montgomery Regional Airport, Montgomery, Alabama  
**Friday, May 11:** Lakeland Linder Regional Airport, Lakeland, Florida

Science calibration flights will occur May 11-17 followed by pilot training for the remainder of the month.
**King Air [Tail ID# N68RF]**

**Who:** Officers and crew of OMAO/NOAA Corps along with scientists from NOAA’s National Ocean Service, National Geodetic Survey’s Coastal Mapping Program.

**What:** Coastal mapping, and pilot training

**When:** May 4 – July 25

**Where:** Locations TBD

**Why:** Coastal mapping flights provide critical baseline data to help accurately map the U.S. shoreline. The data is important for national security, maritime shipping, and navigation. Pilot training will occur throughout the month between mission blocks.

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**Jet Prop Commander [Tail ID# N45RF]**

Currently down for maintenance repairs in Indianapolis, Indiana. The aircraft is due out of maintenance on May 4. Snow Survey equipment testing and pilot training to follow until May 15.

**Who:** Officers and crew of OMAO/NOAA Corps along with scientists from NOAA’s National Ocean Service, National Geodetic Survey Grav-D Program.

**What:** Gravity for the Redefinition of the American Vertical Datum (GRAV-D) Program Flights

**When:** May 18 – June 20

**Where:** Based at Palm Springs, California. The aircraft will conduct flights over southern Nevada and California.

**Why:** Grid pattern flight lines will be flown at 20,000 feet over the Southwest United States while collecting GPS and inertial data to update the U.S. vertical datum. A vertical datum is a base measurement point (or set of points) from which all elevations are determined.
**Twin Otter [Tail ID# N46RF]**

**Who:** Officers and crew of OMAO/NOAA Corps along with scientists from NOAA’s National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC).

**What:** Atlantic Harbor Seals

**When:** May 17-26

**Where:** Based out of Rockland, Massachusetts. Surveys offshore of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine.

**Why:** The purpose of this project is to survey Harbor Seal breeding sites to aid in the prediction of Harbor Seals population and productivity using digital photography.

**Twin Otter [Tail ID# N48RF]**

**Who:** Officers and crew of OMAO/NOAA Corps along with scientists from NOAA’s National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC)

**What:** North Atlantic Right Whale Survey

**When:** Present - July 31

**Where:** Based out of Falmouth, Massachusetts. The survey area will cover coastal waters off Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine.

**Why:** The objectives of this project are to provide real time sighting information to commercial shipping interests in an effort to reduce collisions between ships and North Atlantic Right Whales, to better understand the distribution and abundance of the North Atlantic Right Whale, and to collect photographic images of individual right whales for mark-recapture analysis to monitor the population. With as few as 400 remaining, surveillance flights to track their migration patterns are important for conservation and recovery efforts.
**Project 1:**
**Who:** Officers and crew of OMAO/NOAA Corps along with scientists from NOAA’s Office of Atmospheric Research (OAR).
**What:** Capturing of the East Coast Outflow (ECO) of Greenhouse Gases
**When:** Present - May 15
**Where:** Based out of Stafford Regional Airport (KRMN) in Stafford, Virginia. Secondary operations will occur from Laurence G. Hanscom Field Airport (KBED) in Bedford, Massachusetts. Survey area includes Washington, DC; New York, New York; and Boston, Massachusetts metro areas.
**Why:** The objective of the ECO survey is to collect accurate measurements of total emissions of greenhouse gases and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Measurements will be determined from transects between Virginia Beach, Virginia, and Portland, Maine, and from focused urban outflow areas such as Baltimore, Maryland, and Boston, Massachusetts.

**Project 2:**
**Who:** Officers and crew of OMAO/NOAA Corps along with scientists from NOAA’s Office of Atmospheric Research (OAR) and Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory (PMEL).
**What:** Arctic Heat
**When:** May 21 – June 3
**Where:** Based out of Kotzebue, Alaska. Survey area includes the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas.
**Why:** The purpose of this project is to perform near-surface data collection that will lead to improvements in weather and sea-ice forecasting in the Pacific Arctic.

**Twin Otter [Tail ID# N57RF]**
**Who:** Officers and crew of OMAO/NOAA Corps along with scientists from NOAA’s National Ocean Service, National Geodetic Survey’s Coastal Mapping Program.
**What:** Coastal mapping flights
**When:** Present - Sept 30
**Where:** Newport News, Virginia
**Why:** These flights provide critical baseline data to help accurately map the U.S. shoreline. The data is important for national security, maritime shipping, and navigation.