

## What is NOAA?

*"NOAA's work touches the daily lives of every person in the United States and in much of the world. From weather forecasts in the Midwest to fisheries management on the East Coast, from safe navigation to coastal services in the Gulf, from remote sensing to climate research and ocean exploration, NOAA's products and services contribute to the foundation of a healthy economy and affect approximately one-third of the nation's gross domestic product."*

- **Dr. Jane Lubchenco**  
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere  
and NOAA Administrator

### NOAA's Mission

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is a science-based federal agency within the Department of Commerce with regulatory, operational, and information service responsibilities with a presence in every state and our territories. Through its long-standing mission of science, service, and stewardship, NOAA generates tremendous value for the Nation — and the world — by advancing our understanding of and ability to anticipate changes in the Earth's environment, by improving society's ability to make scientifically informed decisions, and by conserving and managing ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes' resources.

**Science** at NOAA is the systematic study of the structure and behavior of the ocean, atmosphere, and related ecosystems; integration of research and analysis; observations and monitoring; and environmental modeling. Science provides the foundation and future promise of the service and stewardship elements of NOAA's mission. **Service** is the communication of NOAA's research, data, information, and knowledge for use by the Nation's businesses, communities, and people's daily lives. **Stewardship** is NOAA's direct use of its knowledge to protect people and the environment, as the agency exercises its authority to regulate and sustain marine fisheries and their ecosystems, protect endangered marine and anadromous species, protect and restore habitats and ecosystems, conserve marine sanctuaries and other protected places, respond to environmental emergencies, and aid in disaster recovery. To this end, NOAA will focus on four long-term outcomes within its primary mission domains:

- **Climate:** An informed society anticipating and responding to climate and its impacts.
- **Weather-Ready Nation:** Society is prepared for and responds to weather-related events.
- **Healthy Oceans:** Marine fisheries, habitats, and biodiversity are sustained within healthy and productive ecosystems.
- **Resilient Coastal Communities and Economies:** Coastal and Great Lakes communities are environmentally and economically sustainable.

To learn more about NOAA's mission, programs, and activities, please visit <http://www.noaa.gov>.

### NOAA Offices

#### The National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service

NOAA's National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS) observes our Earth, the sun, our oceans, and our atmosphere. These observations benefit many sectors of society and are critical to the United States' contribution to a global environmental observation strategy. NESDIS develops and operates our nation's environmental satellites, composed of the Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellites for short-range warning and forecasting, and the Polar-orbiting Operational Environmental Satellites for longer term forecasting. Additionally, NESDIS operates National Data Centers that house the world's largest archive of climatic, oceanographic, and geophysical data. NESDIS provides data and information to a broad spectrum of users including weather forecasters who issue storm warnings, national and international researchers who study the environment, and the public. For more information, please visit <http://www.nesdis.noaa.gov/>.

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### **The National Marine Fisheries Service**

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is responsible for the stewardship of the world's largest exclusive economic zone. NMFS protects and preserves the nation's living marine resources and their habitats through scientific research, fisheries management, law enforcement, and habitat conservation. NMFS has both domestic and international responsibilities, and is a leading voice for the economic benefits that can be derived from sustainable use and conservation of living marine resources. For more information, please visit <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/>.

### **The National Ocean Service**

NOAA's National Ocean Service (NOS) delivers science-based tools and services to understand, predict, and protect America's coasts, Great Lakes, and ocean waters and sustain healthy and resilient economies, communities, and ecosystems. The coast is home to over half the nation's population, providing food, jobs, commerce, recreation, and energy. It is also facing unprecedented pressure from threats such as coastal storms, sea level rise, marine debris, habitat loss, harmful algal blooms, coastal development, and port congestion. In response, NOS provides science and services such as creating and updating nautical charts and inundation maps (including the underlying geospatial framework), monitoring sea-level trends and collecting other ocean observations, responding to oil spills, managing national marine sanctuaries, protecting corals and other critical habitat, and funding state and regional management efforts. For more information, please visit <http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/>.

### **The National Weather Service**

NOAA's National Weather Service (NWS) provides weather, water, and climate forecasts and warnings for the United States, its territories, adjacent waters, and ocean areas. In performing this critical mission, NWS provides for the protection of life and property and the enhancement of the national economy. NWS collects environmental information and provides services for other governmental agencies, the private sector, the public, and the global community. NWS has 122 weather forecast offices, 13 river forecast centers, and dozens of other specialty prediction centers throughout the country. For more information, please visit <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/>.

### **The Office of Marine and Aviation Operations**

NOAA's Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO) manages, operates, and maintains the nation's largest civil fleet of research and survey ships and aircraft, as well as NOAA's Dive Program and the NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps, the nation's seventh uniformed service. NOAA's ships are specially equipped and designed to support the agency's programs, and have capabilities not found in the commercial fleet. NOAA aircraft are specially modified to carry instrument packages appropriate for NOAA's missions providing a wide range of research and survey capabilities, from weather research, hurricane surveillance, to snow pack surveys for flood prediction and water resource management, to coastline mapping for erosion studies, to marine mammal surveys. For more information, please visit <http://www.oma.noaa.gov/>.

### **The Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research**

NOAA's Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) strengthens the science that is the foundation of all NOAA products and services. Whether improving warning lead times for tornadoes and hurricanes or understanding the response of ecosystems in a rapidly changing environment, OAR's preeminent research saves lives, improves management of natural resources, builds understanding of the Earth-system, and strengthens the economy. OAR is NOAA's long-term research hub: innovating, incubating, and integrating research along with our partners inside and outside of NOAA. For example, NOAA's climate science enterprise started in OAR as part of its atmospheric science program and has matured to the point where it is ready to inform an operational climate service. OAR hosts a network of research laboratories, grant programs, and cooperative institutes with academia. For more information, please visit <http://www.research.noaa.gov/>.

### **The Office of Program Planning and Integration**

NOAA's Office of Program Planning and Integration (PPI) ensures Agency investments and actions are guided by a Strategic Plan and sound social and economic analysis, articulates strategic and annual investment priorities, improves alignment of programs to planning, and advances stakeholder involvement. For more information, please visit <http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/>.

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