

Fisheries enforcers cited

The National Marine Fisheries Service Law Enforcement Division of the Alaska Region has received a Unit Citation Award from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the Department of Commerce for consistent high level performance and professional excellence.

Responsibilities of the regional enforcement division, headed by Ronald C. Naab of Juneau, include high seas foreign fishery surveillance and enforcement, protection of marine mammals and endangered species, and participation in international fisheries negotiations and conferences.

The division's enforcement responsibilities cover over 33,000 miles of rugged coastline and 550,000 square miles of continental shelf off Alaska.

Special agents of the National Marine Fisheries Service work closely with the U.S. Coast Guard in fulfilling co-responsibilities enforcing U.S. fishery laws and regulations, policing international fishery agreements and surveillance of

foreign fishing activity on the high seas.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 and the regulations implementing the Marine Mammal Act of 1972 added to the regional enforcement responsibilities.

The enactment of the Fishery Management and Conservation Act this year will greatly extend and intensify high seas fishery enforcement activity within the newly created 200-mile fishery conservation zone.

During 1975, in performance of their duties related to fisheries enforcement, agents logged 127,518 miles on Coast Guard surface patrol ships, and 362,916 miles on Coast Guard aerial patrols.

Approximately 149 foreign fishing vessels were boarded during the patrols. In the past several years, more than \$5.3 million in fines, settlements, and forfeitures have been levied against foreign fishing violators apprehended jointly by the National Marine Fisheries agents and the U.S. Coast Guard in waters off Alaska.