



U.S. National Science Foundation UAS/Drone Activities – OCE/OPP

*Scientific Committee for Oceanographic Aircraft Research (SCOAR)
University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System (UNOLS)
2025 Annual SCOAR Meeting*

*Timothy McGovern
Program Director
U.S. National Science Foundation*

Office of Polar Programs U.S. Antarctic Program

FY2025 Season

- 15 different groups w/ CONOPS reviews
- 11 actually deployed
- 9 of 11 systems were of the DJI flavor/non-compliant to American Security Drone Act of 2023.
- 2 were NSF funded on non-US research vessels
- 5 were deployed through the New Zealand Antarctic Program



https://ideo-glaciology.github.io/AntPen_NSF_NERC/



Office of Polar Programs U.S. Antarctic Program

FY2026 Season

- Planning underway
- Cutoff established 1 Dec 2025 for compliance
- Allows for early deployer support
- Mandates any deployment after 1 Dec be compliant with new law



https://ideo-glaciology.github.io/AntPen_NSF_NERC/



Division of Ocean Sciences U.S. Academic Research Fleet

FY2025 Season

- October 2024, notified ARF tech managers & vessel operators of new Law
- NSF is not authorized to provide waivers
- Allow for continued use of non-compliant drones at institution discretion, up until Dec 2025
- December 21, 2025 – no authorized drones to be flown from ARF vessels or by any NSF-funded grantee
- Reporting process for drone activities in development



