

# The Global Drifter Program

## Satellite-tracked Surface Drifting Buoys

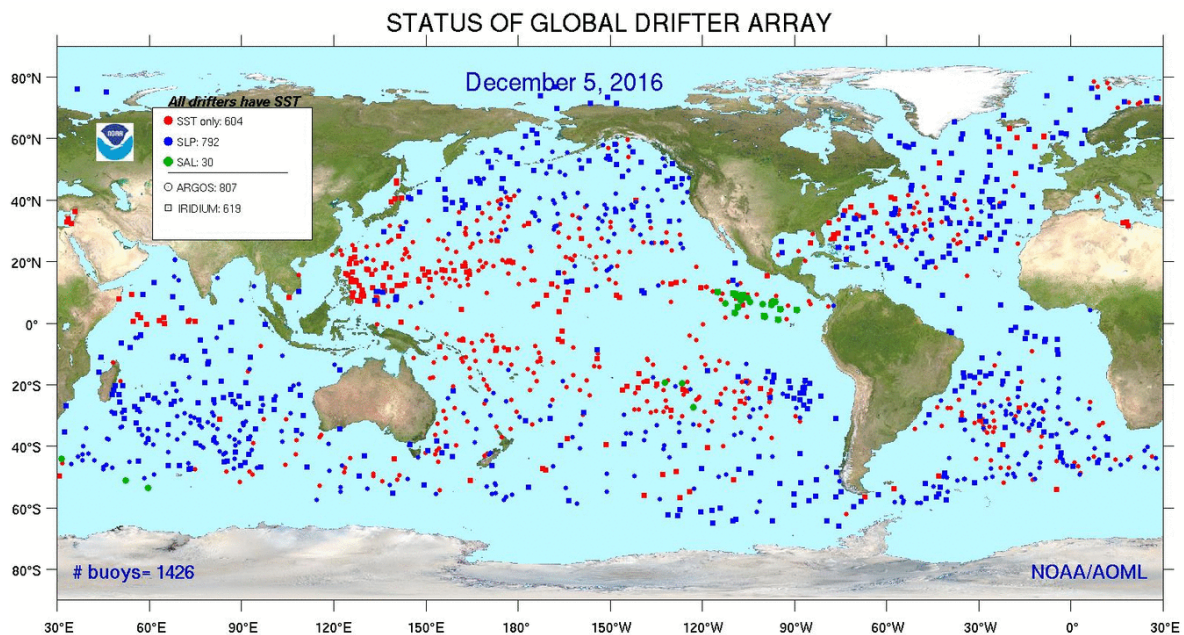
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NOAA's Global Drifter Program (GDP) is the principal component of the Global Surface Drifting Buoy Array, a branch of NOAA's Global Ocean Observing System and a scientific project of the Data Buoy Cooperation Panel. Its objectives are to:

1. Maintain a global  $5^{\circ} \times 5^{\circ}$  array of  $\sim 1300$  satellite-tracked surface drifting buoys to meet the need for an accurate and globally dense set of *in-situ* observations of mixed layer currents, sea surface temperature, atmospheric pressure, winds and salinity, and
2. Provide a data processing system for scientific use of these data.

These data support short-term (seasonal to interannual) climate predictions as well as climate research and monitoring. These surface drifters are also used to collect barometric pressure observations for improved weather forecasting.

NOAA's Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory houses two vital components of the Global Drifter Program: the drifter Data Assembly Center and the Drifter Operations Center. These components of the GDP coordinate deployments, process the drifter data, archive the data, maintain metadata files describing each drifter deployed, develop and distribute data-based products, and maintain the GDP website at: <http://www.aoml.noaa.gov/phod/dac>.



*Recent status of the global drifter array. The instantaneous size of the array varies according to regional deployments and fluctuations in death rate, while the annual average is maintained at close to  $\sim 1300$  drifters.*