

Icebreaker Polar Star to Make Unusual Arctic Deployment



The Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB-10) is in the fast Ice Jan. 2, 2020, approximately 20 miles north of McMurdo Station, Antarctica. The 399-foot icebreaker is the only ship in U.S. service capable of clearing a path through the Antarctic ice to escort three refuel and resupply ships to McMurdo Station during Operation Deep Freeze. U.S. Coast Guard / Senior Chief Petty Officer NyxoLyno Cangemi

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB-10) will deploy to the Arctic this winter to help protect the nation's maritime sovereignty and security in the region, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in an Oct. 29 release.

Typically, the Polar Star travels to Antarctica each year in support of Operation Deep Freeze, the annual military mission to resupply the United States' Antarctic stations, in support of the National Science Foundation.

This year's maritime resupply at McMurdo Station was canceled due to COVID safety precautions, and a limited resupply will be conducted via aircraft. However, Operation Deep Freeze is an enduring mission that requires a heavy icebreaker for a full resupply, and the Coast Guard anticipates resuming this critical deployment next year.

The United States is an Arctic nation, and the Coast Guard has served as the lead federal agency for homeland security, safety, and environmental stewardship in the Arctic region for more than 150 years. As the nation's primary maritime presence in the polar regions, the Coast Guard advances U.S. national interests through a unique blend of polar operational capability, regulatory authority, and international leadership across the full spectrum of maritime governance.

In April 2019, the Coast Guard released the [Arctic Strategic Outlook](#), which reaffirms the service's commitment to American leadership in the region through partnership, unity of effort, and continuous innovation.

"The Arctic is no longer an emerging frontier, but is instead a region of growing national importance," said Vice Adm. Linda Fagan, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area. "The Coast Guard is committed to protecting U.S. sovereignty and working with our partners to uphold a safe, secure, and rules-based Arctic."