

Coast Guard Interdicts 33 Haitian Migrants Near Tortuga



A migrant vessel is shown in the Caribbean after an interdiction, April 2019. The Coast Guard Cutter Spencer (WMEC-905) crew transferred 33 Haitian nationals back to their home of origin, April 12, 2019 after interdicting their 25-foot motor vessel April 10, 2019. (Coast Guard Photo)

MIAMI – The Coast Guard interdicted 33 migrants April 8 about 35 miles northeast of Tortuga, Haiti, attempting to illegally enter the United States, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

At about 7:30 a.m. April 8, the Coast Guard Cutter Spencer (WMEC-905) crew detected an overloaded 25-foot motor vessel and launched an over-the-horizon small boat crew.

While en route, the small boat crew recovered six softball-sized packages of marijuana floating about 100 yards from the vessel. The small boat crew then boarded the vessel and discovered 27 adult Haitian males, six adult Haitian females, three additional packages of marijuana and a package that tested positive for amphetamines.

The Spencer crew safely embarked the 33 migrants, transferred the interdicted drugs aboard the cutter and destroyed the vessel as a hazard to navigation.

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all migrants receive food, water, shelter and basic medical attention.

The Spencer crew transferred the 33 Haitian nationals back to their home of origin April 12 for possible prosecution.

“The Coast Guard diligently patrols the Florida Straits and Caribbean Sea to ensure the safety of life at sea and the security of the United States,” said Lt. Cmdr. James Hodges,

7th District response officer. "Neither illegal migration nor drug smuggling will be tolerated, and the Coast Guard will continue to enforce federal laws while maintaining a strong presence out on the water."

The Coast Guard Cutter Spencer is a 270-foot medium endurance cutter homeported in Boston.