# Coast Guard Conducted 78 Lancha Interdictions in Fiscal 2021 Along Texas Coast



A Coast Guard Sector and Air Station Corpus Christi HC-144 Ocean Sentry captures imagery of a lancha near South Padre Island, Texas, Sept. 30. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas – Coast Guard law enforcement crews interdicted 78 lanchas, seized 15,484 pounds of catch and detained 208 fishermen during fiscal year 2021 along the Texas coast, the Coast Guard 8th District said Dec. 5.

Since the first recorded lancha interdiction in the late 1980s, the Coast Guard has seen a significant uptick in the detection of the vessels, recording close to 300 lancha interdictions in the past three fiscal years combined.

A noteworthy case from this year was on Aug. 4, when Coast Guard Station South Padre Island worked with Coast Guard Sector and Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas Parks and Wildlife and the Coast Guard Cutter Pelican to interdict four

lanchas with a total of 320 pounds of red snapper and 1,160 pounds of shark in one day.

In cooperation with other law enforcement agencies, the Coast Guard uses a layered approach to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing through aircraft, small boats and cutters, as well as improved technology on those assets, resulting in the drastic increase in lancha interdictions.

“The crew at Station South Padre Island takes their role of protecting our natural resources from poaching along the Maritime Boundary Line very seriously,” said Lt. Cmdr. Daniel Ippolito, commanding officer of Coast Guard Station South Padre Island. “The last few years of record-breaking lancha interdictions speak to the steadfast commitment, professionalism, and teamwork of the Coast Guard crews and our partners at Texas Parks and Wildlife to this mission. We ask that the public continue to stay vigilant and report any instances of illegal fishing to the Coast Guard or Texas Parks and Wildlife.”

A lancha is a fishing boat used by Mexican fishermen that is approximately 20-30 feet long with a slender profile. They typically have one outboard motor and are capable of traveling at speeds exceeding 30 mph. Lanchas pose a major threat, usually entering the United States’ exclusive economic zone near the U.S.-Mexico border in the Gulf of Mexico with the intent to smuggle people, drugs, or poach natural resources.