

Coast Guard Cutter Diligence Completes Last Patrol Before Homeport Change

WILMINGTON, N.C. – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Diligence and crew returned to Wilmington on March 13 following a 39-day patrol in the North Atlantic that included living marine resources enforcement and a three-week training and evaluation period, the Coast Guard 5th District said in a release.

The Diligence, a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter, will change homeports to Pensacola, Florida, this summer.

This patrol began in Mayport, Florida, where the crew took part in the biennial operational readiness and training assessment called Tailored Ship's Training Availability. The crew conducted a total of 109 drills and exercises. The training focused on evaluating the crew's ability to repair shipboard casualties, respond to medical emergencies and proficiency in navigation and seamanship.

They shifted roles from training to enforcement of offshore fishery and vessel safety regulations aboard commercial fishing vessels off the coast of the Carolinas. In this role, the Diligence crew ensured compliance with fisheries management measures, promoted a level playing field for commercial fishermen, helped preserve seafood stock sustainability for future generations and protected the safety of life at sea.

While patrolling off Little River Inlet on the North Carolina coast, Diligence encountered two Northern Atlantic right whales. Right whales are endangered, and there are estimated to be less than 400 remaining. Because of their endangered status, right whale conservation zones with speed

restrictions have been established along the eastern seaboard, and all mariners are required to maintain a distance of at least 500 feet from any such whale.

“It was a great honor to witness such a majestic creature in its natural habitat, especially considering its status as an endangered species,” said Petty Officer 1st Class Daniel Smith, a boatswain’s mate aboard the cutter. “It was also an excellent training opportunity for the crew, as we are always on the lookout for this species. However, few have had the opportunity to see one in person.”

“Diligence performed exceptionally during our biennial operational readiness assessment, which was a testament to the crew’s outstanding preparations, steadfast commitment, and exceptional proficiency,” said Cmdr. Luke Slivinski, the cutter’s commanding officer.

“We closed out our deployment by patrolling off the Coast of North Carolina, following in the footsteps of our namesake, Revenue Cutter Diligence, that patrolled the same waters back in the early to mid-1790s. This patrol marked a fitting end to Diligence’s last patrol while homeported in Wilmington, North Carolina, as we depart later this summer for our new homeport of Pensacola, Florida.”