# Coast Guard Cutter Mellon Returns after 80-Day Patrol of Pacific Ocean



A boarding team aboard an over-the-horizon cutter boat from Coast Guard Cutter Mellon approaches a fishing vessel to conduct an at-sea boarding in the North Pacific Ocean on Aug. 13. U.S. Coast Guard

SEATTLE –

The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Mellon (WHEC 717), including two Canadian fishery officers, returned to their homeport of Seattle on Sept. 2 after an 80-day patrol detecting and deterring illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activity in the Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a release.

IUU fishing deprives the international economy of billions of dollars and undermines the livelihoods of legitimate fish harvesters around the world. It impacts food security, affecting millions of people, including many vulnerable coastal communities. Combatting global IUU fishing through international partnerships is a priority for Canada and the United States.

“IUU fishing is one of the greatest threats to the ocean’s fish stocks,” said Capt. Jonathan Musman, Mellon’s commanding officer. “It was an honor to be on the

front lines of enforcement efforts of the distant waters fishing fleets.”

The fisheries patrol was performed under the auspices of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and the North Pacific Fisheries Commission. During the patrol, Coast Guard and Canadian fishery officers boarded 45 vessels flagged in Japan, Russia, South Korea, China, Chinese Taipei and Panama, and they encountered violations ranging from improper gear to intentionally fishing for sharks without a license. Boarding officers also found evidence of illegal shark finning. Altogether, boarding teams detected 68 potential violations.

“Canada is serious about ending illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing,” said Jonathan Wilkinson, minister of fisheries, oceans and the Canadian coast guard. “We are working with our U.S. partners to achieve this goal. By preventing fish and seafood products derived from IUU fishing from entering our ports, we will not only help level the playing field for Canadian harvesters and Canadian businesses involved in the fish and seafood trade: we are also sending a very strong message that Canada’s ports have zero tolerance for illegally caught fish.”

This is the second joint operation between the U.S. Coast Guard and

Fisheries and Oceans, Canada's Conservation and Protection program, this year. Along with the two fishery officers aboard the Mellon, Canada also provided fishery officers aboard a Dash-8 maritime surveillance aircraft, operated by PAL Aerospace. The aircrew performed multiple missions over the North Pacific and Bering Sea using state-of-the-art radars and maritime surveillance tools. Canada shared the data from these flights with U.S. Coast Guard counterparts to support the Mellon's patrol mission.

The ship also embarked two different helicopter crews from U.S. Coast Guard Air Station North Bend, who provided 63 flight hours that directly assisted with enforcement efforts.

Mellon's crew members had several port calls in Yokosuka, Japan, near Tokyo, during the almost three-month long patrol, which covered nearly 19,000 nautical miles.

The USCG Mellon is a 378-foot high endurance cutter, one of two homeported in Seattle. The ship was built in 1966 and was designed to perform each of the Coast Guard's missions, including search and rescue, national defense, law enforcement, and environmental protection.