

# Coast Guard Patrols North Pacific in Support of International Fisheries



A boarding team aboard an over-the-horizon cutter boat from U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Mellon (WHEC-717) navigates toward a fishing vessel to conduct an at-sea boarding in the North Pacific Ocean on Aug. 13. U.S. Coast Guard

JUNEAU, Alaska – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Mellon (WHEC-717) continues their North Pacific patrol in support of Operation North

Pacific Guard (NPG) 2019, protecting living marine resources, enforcing

international fisheries agreements and conducting global security missions, the

Coast Guard 17th District said in a statement.

Since June, Mellon's crew has conducted 40 boardings and issued 61 violations. A total of 25 were serious violations because of their

potential to severely impact fisheries and/or blatant disregard for

conservation and management measures. Their most frequent violations were

improper vessel marking (9), illegal shark finning (4) and improper use of or

intentional tampering with the vessel monitoring system (2).

"These fisheries patrols are vital to demonstrating the U.S. commitment to our regional partnerships while strengthening regional

maritime governance and promoting sustainability of living marine resources,"

said Capt. Jonathan Musman, commanding officer of Mellon.

"I'm extremely proud of the work we've done this patrol, and it's a direct result of the hard work of this crew as well as the continued support of our international partners. Together, we've put in a lot of hours and a lot of work, and we've seen impressive results because of it."

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Mellon's deployment is in support of U.S. goals for the conservation and management of high seas fisheries resources to eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activity from the North Pacific.

NPG 2019 showcases a multimission effort between the Coast Guard, NOAA, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, five Pacific Rim countries and three regional fisheries management organizations. Unlike previous years' operations, Mellon has conducted high-seas boardings and inspections on the North Pacific Fisheries Commission fishing vessels, while continuing to conduct Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission boardings.

"We've seen a 344% increase in boardings and 867% increase in violations compared to last year's operation," said Lt. Cdr. Kristen

Caldwell, living marine resource program manager for the Pacific Area. "This increase highlights the significance of employing differing authorities, all aimed at mitigation of IUU fishing, capitalizing on a highly capable resource to maximize time on scene and the targeting of IUU vessels."

NPG 2019 was designed to conduct law-enforcement operations in support of RFMO in the North Pacific Ocean. Through the North Pacific Coast Guard Forum and North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission's enforcement coordination process, each partner nation contributes to this at-sea enforcement effort by providing surface patrols and/or air surveillance.

This operation is in direct support of the National Security Strategy as it aligns with the tenant of "achieving better outcomes in multilateral forums" as well as by addressing the risks to sovereignty of developing nations by China identified in the Indo-Pacific Region. The 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS) also has identified China as a "strategic competitor using predatory economics to intimidate its neighbors while militarizing features in the South China Sea." A goal of the NDS is to "support U.S. interagency approaches and work by, with, and through our allies and partners to secure U.S. interests and counteract this coercion."

Due to the increasing threat, complexity and diversity of tactics in IUU fishing, it is critical to ensure oversight and

enforcement in regions in which the United States has jurisdiction and authority to mitigate the rapidly developing influence of specified fleets known to engage in IUU fishing. Efforts to increase the ability of the United States to check the threat of IUU fishing in the Pacific Ocean have been continuous, with the recent success of the adoption of high-seas boarding inspections (HSBI) for the Northern Pacific Fisheries Commission and continued efforts in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission's Convention Areas.

During NPG 2019, Mellon embarked two Canadian shipriders from the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans as well as two aircrews from Coast Guard Air Station North Bend.

Mellon, a 378-foot high-endurance cutter with a crew of 150, is homeported in Seattle and routinely deploys in support of counter-drug and alien migrant interdiction, living marine resources and search-and-rescue missions.