

Coast Guard Seizes 1,395 Pounds of Cocaine From Smuggling Vessel



The Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf (WMSL-750) and a go-fast vessel interdicted in the Eastern Pacific Ocean off the Coast of Central America in late-July 2020. The Bertholf's crew boarded the boat and interdicted approximately 1,395 pounds of cocaine and three suspected smugglers. This photo has been edited for law enforcement purposes. U.S. COAST GUARD

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The Coast Guard seized approximately 1,395 pounds of cocaine in late-July with an estimated value of \$24 million from a go-fast vessel in international waters of the Pacific Ocean off Central America, the Coast Guard 11th District said in an Aug. 5 release.

A maritime patrol aircraft spotted a suspected smuggling vessel and diverted the crew aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf (WMSL-750) to the go-fast vessel's position.

Once on scene, Bertholf's crew launched a small unmanned aerial system to locate the suspected smugglers. After the suspected smugglers complied with orders to stop their boat, the Coast Guard crew boarded the vessel and discovered approximately 1,395 pounds of cocaine. Three suspected smugglers aboard the vessel were detained.

On April 1, U.S. Southern Command began enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere to disrupt the flow of drugs in support of Presidential National Security Objectives. Numerous U.S. agencies from the Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperated in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, Navy, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Immigration and Customs

Enforcement, along with allied and international partner agencies, play a role in counter-drug operations.

The fight against drug cartels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean requires unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring and interdictions, to criminal prosecutions by international partners and U.S. Attorneys' Offices in districts across the nation. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean is conducted under the authority of the 11th Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf, homeported in Alameda, was commissioned in 2008.