



27 November 2024

Mr. William Sword, Chair
Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council
1164 Bishop Street Suite 1400
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Mr. Sword:

I am pleased to report to the Council the following summary of U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) activities in the Western and Central Pacific region for the period of 7 September 2024 through 27 November 2024.

During this period, the U.S. Coast Guard responded to 740 cases consisting of search and rescue, law enforcement, marine environmental protection/response, and ports, waterways, and coastal security missions.

One such mission was USCG support to the Forum Fisheries Agency's annual counter IUU fishing surge operation KURUKURU (OPKK24) with a C-130 aircraft from CG Air Station Barbers Point and several USCG watchstanders deployed to the Regional Fisheries Surveillance Center in Honiara, Solomon Islands. Operation KURUKURU, the largest of four regional counter IUU fishing surge operations, aims to detect and deter illegal fishing activities and non-compliance with international fishery management agreements across the exclusive economic zones of seventeen participating Pacific Island countries and the adjacent high seas areas. Over 10,000 vessel contacts were detected during Operation KURUKURU using air, surface, and satellite-based assets, with a total of 219 visual sightings and 102 boarding inspections conducted both in port and at sea. As a result of Maritime Domain Awareness analysis and inspections, eight vessels of interest (VOIs) were identified and reported to Members for further investigation, with potential infringements related to non-compliance with national and WCPFC conservation management measures.

Beyond enforcement activities, USCG D14 recently deployed a C-130 aircraft and embarked USCG delegation to Niue to participate alongside U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand, Tom Udall, in Niue's 50th Constitution Day celebrations. The C-130 visit was a huge success providing tours for Niue children's groups and government officials before and after the program. The C-130 air crew also joined the ceremonies, and their presence was well received by Niuean officials. This historic visit represented the 1st USCG aircraft visit to Niue.

During this report period, the Coast Guard rescued ailing crewmembers from two Honolulu based longline vessels via helicopter. One of these cases involved a crewmember from a commercial fishing vessel 78 miles from Maui. Coast Guard Sector Honolulu command center received a medical assistance request from personnel aboard the 70-foot fishing vessel Pacific Dragon II, who reported a crewmember in medical distress. A helicopter from Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point launched and intercepted the Pacific Dragon II about 78 miles northeast of Kahului. The helicopter crew arrived on scene, hoisted the sick crewmember aboard the helicopter, and transported the individual to Maui Memorial Medical Center in Wailuku.

For upcoming operations, a USCG C-130 aircraft will deploy to the South Pacific in December in support of Operation Blue Pacific. During the deployment, they will embark fisheries enforcement personnel from several Pacific Island nations and conduct EEZ patrols under the U.S./Pacific Island nation bilateral law enforcement agreements.

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Also in December and January, several domestic fisheries enforcement patrols are planned to support commercial fishing vessel safety and fisheries enforcement during the busy holiday fishing season.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M.D. Stegman", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

M.D. Stegman
Enforcement Branch
Fourteenth Coast Guard District