

Coast Guard Cutter Tahoma returns home after 58-day patrol in Northern Atlantic



Coast Guard members from U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Tahoma conduct a tow of fishing vessel Fearless 164NM east of Nantucket, Massachusetts, December 9, 2020. U.S. Coast Guard / Petty Officer 3rd Class Owen Hillberry

BOSTON – The crew of USCGC Tahoma (WMEC 908) returned to Kittery, Maine, Jan. 26 after a 58-day fisheries patrol in the Northern Atlantic, the Coast Guard 1st District said in a release.

The crew's efforts support the Coast Guard 1st District's living marine resource priorities of ensuring the safety of life at sea and protection of fisheries resources in a region home to one of the nation's largest economies.

"The value of U.S. commercial fisheries in 2018 was \$5.8 billion," said Rear Adm. Tom Allan, U.S. Coast Guard 1st District commander. "Illegally caught or misreported fish entering the marketplace puts the livelihood of honest fishermen at risk. During this patrol, the Tahoma crew supported our 1st District fisheries effort to protect the sustainability of the region's fish stocks and maintain a level playing field for all Northeast fishermen. The U.S. Coast Guard is committed to combatting illegal fishing in New England."

Over the course of the eight-week patrol, Tahoma's crew conducted 28 at-sea law-enforcement boardings of commercial fishing vessels, resulting in the discovery of eight violations of safety and fishing regulations. The boarding team inspected each vessel to ensure they met fishing gear requirements, catch limitations and possessed required and

serviceable safety equipment. The Tahoma crew also focused on overfishing prevention in protected and closed fishing areas.

During the patrol, Tahoma's crew responded to three search and rescue cases resulting in nine lives saved. On Dec. 6, the crew received a report from the 1st District command center of the disabled fishing vessel Fearless, located 170 nautical miles east of Nantucket, Massachusetts. The Tahoma crew arrived on scene and towed Fearless 260 nautical miles over five days until relieved by a commercial tug near Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts.

They also responded to the disabled fishing vessel Angela Michelle, located 100 miles east of Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The Tahoma crew diverted to assist the fishing vessel ahead of a severe winter storm, safely bringing it into port with assistance from Coast Guard Station Gloucester on Christmas Eve.

"The search and rescue cases we've had reminded me of why I joined the Coast Guard – to save lives," said Seaman Patrick Byrne, lead seaman of Tahoma. "The beginning of the patrol seemed to be slow, but as we got called on each case, the reason for why we're out here became more evident. Us being out here makes a difference. We're able to make sure crews of the fishing vessels like the Angela Michelle and the Fearless return home safely to their families for holidays."

Tahoma is a 270-foot medium endurance cutter with a crew complement of 100. They conduct maritime enforcement and homeland security missions in support of Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.