

# Coast Guard seizes 40,000 pounds of cocaine through Operation Pacific Viper, averages over 1,600 pounds interdicted per day



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton (WMSL 753) boarding team interdicting two go-fast vessels suspected of drug smuggling approximately 115 miles southeast of the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador, June 26, 2025. The vessels were initially detected by a maritime patrol aircraft, and Hamilton's embarked Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON) aircrew provided airborne tactical support, resulting in the seizure of more than 4,475 pounds of cocaine. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)  
From U.S Coast Guard Southeast District, Sept. 4, 2025

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Coast Guard announced Thursday it has seized more than 40,000 pounds of cocaine in the Eastern Pacific Ocean since launching Operation Pacific Viper in early August, averaging over 1,600 pounds interdicted daily.

These drug seizures, and the apprehension of 36 suspected drug smugglers, were the result of 14 interdictions since Aug. 8.

Through Operation Pacific Viper, the Coast Guard is accelerating counter-drug operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, where significant transport of illicit narcotics continues from South America. In coordination with international and interagency partners, the Coast Guard is surging additional assets—cutters, aircraft and tactical teams—to interdict, seize and disrupt transshipments of cocaine and other bulk illicit drugs. These operations continue the Coast Guard's efforts to protect the Homeland, project maritime law enforcement presence and disrupt transnational criminal organizations and cartels seeking to produce and traffic illicit drugs into the United States.

“The U.S. Coast Guard brings unique authorities and unmatched capabilities as the world's leader in maritime counter-drug operations,” said Rear Adm. Douglas Schofield, acting deputy commandant for operations. “Our maritime fighting force is accelerating counter-drug operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. We are leveraging our full range of capabilities to disrupt transnational criminal organizations and cartels and prevent the scourge of illicit drugs from reaching our communities. The men and women of the Coast Guard will not relent in our efforts to control, secure and defend U.S. borders and maritime approaches—where defense of America begins.”

Reflecting the early success of Operation Pacific Viper, Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton recently offloaded 76,140 pounds of illicit drugs, including 61,740 of cocaine and 14,400 of marijuana, in Port Everglades, Florida. This historic

milestone was the largest offload in Coast Guard history, resulting from 19 interdictions in international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea.

Detecting and interdicting drug traffickers on the high seas involves significant interagency and international coordination. U.S. Southern Command's Joint Interagency Task Force-South, based in Key West, Florida, detects and monitors both aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. Once interdiction becomes imminent, the law enforcement phase of the operation begins, and control of the operation shifts to the U.S. Coast Guard throughout the interdiction and apprehension. Interdictions in the Eastern Pacific Ocean are performed by members of the U.S. Coast Guard under the authority and control of the Coast Guard's Southwest District, headquartered in Alameda, California.

The Coast Guard is the United States' lead federal agency for maritime drug interdiction. We are part of the Department of Homeland Security team protecting our nation and are at all times a military service and part of the joint force defending it.

For more information about the Coast Guard, visit [www.uscg.mil](http://www.uscg.mil).

Watch Coast Guard drug interdiction in action here: [How the Coast Guard Seizes 45,000 lbs of Cocaine at Sea – YouTube](#)