

Cutter Completes Multi-Country Patrol for Illegal Fishing in the South Pacific



The crews of the Coast Guard Cutter Kimball (WMSL 756) and an Air Station Barbers Point HC-130 Hercules airplane conduct joint operations in the Pacific August 14, 2020. The crews were participating in the multi-country maritime Operation Nasse designed to prevent Illegal, unregulated or unreported (IUU) fishing in Oceania. U.S. Coast Guard

HONOLULU – The Coast Guard Cutter Kimball (WMSL 756) returned to Honolulu Sunday following its nearly two-month patrol supporting the multi-country maritime Operation Nasse throughout Oceania, the Coast Guard 14th District said in a Sept. 15 release.

Operation Nasse is an annual Pacific Quadrilateral Defense Coordination Group operation consisting of assets from the United States, Australia, France, New Zealand, and Pacific Island Forum Fisheries Agency which completed Aug. 23.

“This is the first time the Coast Guard has sent a surface asset to participate during the Pacific Quadrilateral Defense Coordination Group’s operation,” said Lt. j.g. Joseph Fox, an assistant combat systems officer aboard the Kimball. “Service members from the Coast Guard Cutter Kimball and an Air Station Barbers Point HC-130 aircrew conducted joint missions with their multi-national counterparts to achieve the common goal of preventing illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing in the Pacific.”

The purpose of this year’s operation was to investigate the effect COVID-19 had on fishing activities on the high seas and to identify fishing vessels not complying with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) conditions.

Illegal, unregulated or unreported (IUU) fishing undermines a nation's sovereignty, threatens its economic security, and weakens global rules-based order.

Each participating country provided assets to support the operation including flights by RNZAF P-3K Orions based out of Auckland, Australian Maritime Border Command Dash 8s based out of Brisbane, and French Guardians from Noumea.

The partner's cooperation provided a significant reach in surveillance which allowed the French patrol boat "La Glorieuse" and the Kimball to home in on specific vessels identified as possibly being of interest to confirm their activities were within regulations.

Air and sea surveillance, and maritime intelligence sharing provided an opportunity for the participants to work collaboratively to detect, deter, suppress, and report potential IUU fishing activity.

In addition to Operation Nasse, the crew of the Kimball also conducted a high seas patrol off American Samoa and Fiji.

Working closely with their Fijian counterparts, the crew supported U.S.-Fiji bilateral agreements and enforced partner nations respective Exclusive Economic Zones while promoting legal, sustainable fisheries.

In the Pacific, the annual tuna catch is estimated at over \$5 billion and provides a significant percentage of the income of many of the South Pacific Nations. Ensuring that vessels operating on the high seas are complying with WCPFC regulations to protect fish stocks and other marine life resulting in these valuable resources remaining sustainable for future generations.

All asset crews were working to national rules regarding COVID-19, implemented to keep all personnel as safe as possible while still being able to achieve many of the

operational goals.