

# Coast Guard, Canadian Forces, Partners Wrap Up Operation North Pacific Guard 2024



A foreign fishing vessel discarding a finless shark carcass while conducting shark finning operations in the North Pacific, May 12, 2024. Regional Fisheries Management Organizations regulate the process of shark finning through Conservation and Management Measures. These measures require fully utilizing retained catches of sharks and limits on amounts of fins onboard in relation to those sharks. (U.S. Coast Guard courtesy photo)

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JUNEAU, Alaska – The U.S. Coast Guard, Canadian forces, and international partners wrap-up Northern Pacific counter Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing patrol, Operation North Pacific Guard 2024.

Operation North Pacific Guard is an annual multi-mission effort between international partners that provides surface and air patrols and shares intelligence that guides patrol assets to detect and intercept illicit fishing activity.

The joint mission included U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Midgett, U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak, U.S. Coast Guard District Seventeen, the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard Ship (CCGS) Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Japan Coast Guard, Fisheries Agency of Japan, and Korea Coast Guard.

As a result of the high seas patrols, air surveillance, and electronic monitoring, the joint crews identified potential instances of illegal harvesting of shark fins and dark vessels, a term for vessels that intentionally turn off their monitoring systems.

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Midgett patrolled the North Pacific for 65 days and conducted 21 high-seas boardings and inspections which detected four potential violations of conservation and management measures under the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC).

U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak HC-130J Super Hercules airplane crewmembers conducted five 12-day deployments near Yokota Air Base and Misawa, Japan and observed 411 vessels. The crews observed potential shark finning violations and improper fishing vessel markings on multiple vessels.

“IUU fishing is a complex and global problem that calls for an international unified response,” said Capt. Ryan Waters, chief of enforcement for the Coast Guard’s Seventeenth District. “North Pacific Guard is a prime example of a strong, sustained multi-lateral partnership to maximize the impact of collective counter-IUU fishing enforcement efforts and promote the rule of law at sea.”

IUU fishing is detrimental to long-term, stable national security, international relations, and global economics. Up to 27 million tons of fish are caught illegally each year worldwide. The U.S Coast Guard leads U.S. Government efforts in multinational campaigns like North Pacific Guard that counter IUU fishing at-sea, uphold global rules-based order, and promote economic prosperity.

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