

U.S. Coast Guard Completes Operation Island Chief in Pacific Region



U.S. Coast Guard personnel from District Fourteen and Air Station Barbers Point pose for a photo with a member of the Royal New Zealand Air Force and Forum Fisheries Agency at the Regional Fisheries Surveillance Centre (RFSC) in Honiara, Solomon Islands, Aug. 13, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard courtesy photo)

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HONOLULU – The U.S. Coast Guard completed Island Chief, a 13-day operation to safeguard the invaluable marine resources of Pacific Island nations and the Western Central Pacific Ocean.

From Aug. 5-16, an HC-130 Hercules airplane crew from Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point patrolled the South Pacific High Seas in and around the exclusive economic zones of Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Nauru, Republic of Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu to detect, investigate and report any illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activity.

The Hercules crew worked with the Regional Fisheries Surveillance Centre, a part of the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) in Honiara, Solomon Islands, to reinforce the conservation work of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission.

Coast Guard participation in Operation Island Chief is part of Operation Blue Pacific, an overarching multi-mission Coast Guard endeavor promoting security, safety, sovereignty and economic prosperity in the Pacific while strengthening

relationships between partner nations.

The Coast Guard conducted Operation Island Chief alongside the Pacific Quadrilateral Defense Coordinating Group (Pacific QUAD), in support of the Pacific Islands FFA and its members.

FFA Director General Dr. Manu Tupou-Roosen highlighted the significance of the FFA-led Operation Island Chief 2024, coordinating surveillance efforts for participating Members.

“Operation Island Chief reinforces FFA’s commitment to sustainable fisheries management and maritime security in the Pacific,” said Dr. Tupou-Roosen. “This operation exemplifies the spirit of regional collaboration and determination among Pacific Island nations. The compliance checks of vessels and operators through a robust regional surveillance operation ensures effective management regime and preserving our marine resources, as well as securing the livelihoods and food security of our people.”

“Given the vastness of the Pacific region, close collaboration between U.S. Coast Guard personnel, patrol assets and regional partners is integral to sustained success in combatting IUU fishing across the region,” said Marc Stegman, IUU fishing strategic advisor, Coast Guard District Fourteen.

Joint efforts for Operation Nasse covered over 7 million square miles, with the Coast Guard contributing:

Over 37 hours of flight time

Over 10,500 miles flown

Over 232,100 square miles searched

Three missions flown from Vanuatu and four missions flown from Solomon Islands

70 vessels sighted and analyzed

Located in Honolulu, U.S. Coast Guard District Fourteen covers more than 14 million square miles of land and sea, conducting operations over the Hawaiian Islands, American Samoa, Saipan, Guam, Singapore and Japan.