

Notice to Mariners

Request for information on the use of large-scale driftnets on the high seas:

The United States Coast Guard (USCG) requests mariners be on the lookout for and report any observed driftnets or vessels engaged in driftnet fishing on the high seas (more than 200NM from shore). Sighting information may be made to any of the following Coast Guard offices:

Offices	Phone	Fax	Telex	Email
USCG Pacific Area Alameda, CA	1-800-246-7236 1-510-437-3701	1-510-437-3017	230172343	OD11/Pacarea@d11.uscg.mil
USCG 14th District Honolulu, HI	1-800-331-6176 1-808-541-2500	1-808-541-2123		D14ccduyofficer@D14.uscg.mil
USCG 17th District Juneau, AK	1-800-478-5555 1-907-463-2000	1-907-463-2023	49615066	D17-cc@cgalaska.uscg.mil

Illegal high seas driftnet (HSDN) fishing has historically been conducted in the Northwest Pacific Ocean. Mariners following great circle routes between North America and Asia are most likely to encounter this activity. Fishing activity normally takes place between April 1st and August 31st. However, illegal activity may occur in other areas and at other times of the year.

Information desired include date, time, position, description of gear/vessel, and observed activity. Video or photographs are highly desired.

HSDN Fishing Vessel Characteristics:

HSDN fishing vessels typically range from 120 to 200 feet in length and are usually in fair to poor condition. Distinguishing characteristics include:

- Net tube: A large, usually white tube, which extends from the working deck to the net bin located aft. This tube is about two feet in diameter, runs along the port or starboard side of the superstructure, and is clearly visible from both the surface and air.
- Net bin: A structure normally located on an aft deck in which the nets are stored.
- Net spreader: A triangular or roller net spreading device, which prevents the net from becoming entangled as it enters the water. While only visible from the stern, this is one characteristic, which clearly distinguishes a HSDN fishing vessel from a longline or other fishing vessel.
- Transponders: The radio transponders are approximately 4-6 feet tall, are used to mark the end of a net and are normally stored in racks on the weather decks.

When the net is in the water, it is normally suspended using cylindrical floats spaced every few feet, similar to swimming pool lane markers, with the ends of the nets marked with radio transponders. Other types of floats may be used, including larger spherical floats about 2-3 feet in diameter. The driftnets may vary from a couple hundred yards to several nautical miles in length.

Your assistance is greatly appreciated,

United States Coast Guard