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Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



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MAR 22 2016

Dorothy Lowman
Chair, Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Dear Ms. Lowman:

Please find attached the U.S. Coast Guard's 2015 Annual Report to the Pacific Fishery Management Council, presented on behalf of Coast Guard District Thirteen and my counterpart in Coast Guard District Eleven, Rear Admiral Servidio.

The report provides an overview of Coast Guard enforcement efforts from 2015 in support of PFMC managed fisheries along the entire U.S. West Coast, which includes the respective programs in Coast Guard District Eleven (California) and Coast Guard District Thirteen (Washington and Oregon).

The Coast Guard appreciates our strong working relationship with the PFMC and our various associated partnerships. We feel that our participation in the Council process by senior Coast Guard leadership is imperative to ensure the success of our fisheries enforcement program, as well as the overall management of the fisheries.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the extensive contributions of Dr. Don McIsaac during his sixteen years of dedicated service as the Council's Executive Director. On behalf of the Thirteenth and Eleventh Coast Guard Districts, I applaud his efforts to incorporate safety and enforceability considerations into PFMC decisions and wish him fair winds and following seas in retirement. Although his talents will be sorely missed, his accomplishments in support of the Council Family are sure to be remembered for years to come.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact me or my PFMC designees.

Sincerely,

R. T. GROMLICH
Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard
Commander, Thirteenth Coast Guard District

Copy: Commander, Eleventh Coast Guard District (d)
Commander, Coast Guard Pacific Area (PAC-3)

**U. S. COAST GUARD
District Eleven & District Thirteen
2015 Report**



**To The
Pacific Fishery Management Council**

April 2016

Prepared By:

*Eleventh U.S. Coast Guard District (dre) &
Thirteenth U.S. Coast Guard District (dre)*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) is represented on the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) by the Commander of the Thirteenth Coast Guard District, Rear Admiral Richard T. Gromlich. Rear Admiral Gromlich's designees on the Council are LCDR Gregg Casad and Mr. Brian Corrigan. The USCG is also represented in the PFMC process by LCDR Joe Giammanco and LT Shannon Anthony from USCG District Eleven, who represent USCG interests in California on the PFMC's Enforcement Consultants Committee.

This report provides an overview of USCG enforcement efforts from 2015 in support of PFMC managed fisheries along the entire U.S. West Coast, which includes the respective programs in USCG District Eleven (D11 – California) and District Thirteen (D13 – Washington and Oregon).

The USCG places the safety of the nation's fisheries among its highest priorities. In addition, the USCG recognizes that at-sea enforcement is an essential component for the success of the fisheries management plans the PFMC governs so diligently. The USCG appreciates the PFMC incorporating important safety and enforcement issues into its fisheries management considerations.

This report will provide an overview of the following topics:

USCG's involvement in the fishery management process, both with the PFMC and with other management entities.

Update on USCG resources used to accomplish the living marine resources protection mission and impacts from competing responsibilities.

Summary of USCG fisheries enforcement activity over the past year and engagement with partnering agencies.

Review of commercial and recreational fishing vessel safety statistics from 2015, including efforts associated with observer safety and an update on regulatory changes associated with fishing vessel safety.

II. *OCEAN GUARDIAN* FISHERIES ENFORCEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

The USCG's fisheries enforcement and living marine resources protection mission is guided by the Commandant's *OCEAN GUARDIAN* strategic plan. The strategy of the USCG is to provide effective and professional at-sea enforcement to advance national goals for fisheries management and conservation and management of living marine resources and their environments.

The *OCEAN GUARDIAN* strategic plan completed a comprehensive revalidation during 2014, in order to ensure the strategy has adapted to reflect current domestic and international living marine resource management needs.

Although the regulations the USCG enforces often change and the strategies employed to enforce them must adapt, the objectives of the *OCEAN GUARDIAN* strategic plan remain the same:

Prevent encroachment of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and internal waters by foreign fishing vessels,

Ensure compliance with domestic living marine resource laws and regulations,

Ensure compliance with international agreements for the management of living marine resources.

III. INVOLVEMENT IN THE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROCESS

As indicated in the framework for the USCG's *OCEAN GUARDIAN* strategic plan, productive partnerships are one of the plan's key concepts. Some of the USCG's most productive partnerships are through interactions associated with this Council. USCG D11 and D13 highly value the relationship with the PFMC and involvement in the fisheries management process. The USCG strives to remain involved in all fisheries management issues that have a potential impact on fisheries enforcement and fishing vessel safety considerations.

In addition to attending all PFMC meetings and pertinent PFMC sub-committee meetings, representatives from USCG D11 and D13 also attend portions of North Pacific Fishery Management Council meetings when they are held locally. USCG representatives also have an affiliation with many other associated organizations, such as the International Pacific Halibut Commission, where the Coast Guard also provides an annual report, National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Councils and Enforcement Working Groups, and the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission. D11 and D13 also partner with NOAA in the Marine Mammal Stranding Network and provide representation to the U.S. Government delegation in the U.S./Canada Albacore Tuna Treaty deliberation process.

Through affiliations with these various management and regulatory organizations, the USCG has been able to develop a rapport with various organizations and individual members of the fishing industry. These relationships are extremely beneficial, allowing more seamless sharing of information and understanding of respective challenges and concerns, in order to foster constructive partnerships.

IV. FISHERIES ENFORCEMENT RESOURCES

For the purposes of this report, USCG District Eleven's (D11) area of responsibility includes all waters off the coast of California out to 200 nautical miles. USCG District Thirteen's (D13) area of responsibility includes all waters off the coasts of Washington and Oregon out to 200 nautical miles, as well as Washington internal waters. Resources in both districts used for fisheries enforcement include cutters, aircraft, and boats from coastal stations.

Cutters:

Patrol Boats: The primary surface fisheries law enforcement patrol resources are the 87' Coastal Patrol Boats and 110' Patrol Boats. Due to sea keeping and endurance limitations, patrol boats typically patrol within 50 nautical miles of shore. D11 patrol boats include thirteen 87' Coastal Patrol Boats located at coastal ports throughout the state and one 110' patrol boat in San Diego. D13 patrol boats include nine 87' Coastal Patrol Boats located in Puget Sound and Strait of Juan de Fuca ports, as well as one 110' Patrol Boat home-ported in Port Angeles, Washington, and one in Coos Bay, Oregon.

Buoy Tenders: Buoy tenders conduct periodic law enforcement, including fisheries enforcement, in conjunction with their primary mission of maintaining aids to navigation. D11 buoy tenders include one 225' Seagoing Buoy Tender home-ported in San Francisco and one 175' Coastal Buoy Tender in San Pedro. D13 uses one 225' Seagoing Buoy Tender, home-ported in Astoria, Oregon, for offshore fisheries enforcement.

Medium Endurance Cutters: Two 210' Medium Endurance Cutters, referred to as major cutters, located in Astoria, Oregon, and one in Port Angeles are also occasionally assigned to dedicated patrols in D11's and D13's waters or to monitor fisheries activity during transits to other operating areas. Competing mission demands and patrol requirements in other regions have significantly decreased West Coast fisheries enforcement patrols by major cutters during the past several years.

Larger cutters, similarly referred to as major cutters, located on the West Coast include two 378' High Endurance Cutters in Seattle. The High Endurance Cutters belong to the Pacific Area Theater command and are assigned to patrol throughout the Pacific Area Theater. In addition, three out of four of the Coast Guard's newest class of ship, the 418' National Security Cutter, are home-ported in Alameda. Although their primary operational obligations are elsewhere, these larger cutters have occasionally conducted brief fisheries patrols, in conjunction with other patrol tasking, in D13's and D11's areas of responsibility during the past several years, including a fisheries patrol off Washington and Oregon by CGC MIDGETT summarized in Section VII of this report.

Aircraft:

Rotary-wing: The primary aviation fisheries law enforcement resources on the West Coast are H-60 Jayhawk and H-65 Dolphin helicopters. Due to endurance and safety limitations, offshore patrols are typically conducted as far as 50-75 nautical miles offshore. D11's four helicopter air stations are located in San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Humboldt Bay. D13's three helicopter air stations are located in Port Angeles, Washington, and Astoria and North Bend, Oregon.

Fixed-wing: Air Station Sacramento provides fixed-wing aircraft to conduct surveillance flights along the entire West Coast and throughout the Eastern Pacific, deploying in support of missions as far north as Alaska and as far south as Central America. Beginning in 2016, Air Station Sacramento is transitioning from C-130 aircraft to a new platform, HC-27J aircraft, to conduct medium range flight patrols. Varying fixed-wing missions will continue to compete for time with local fisheries enforcement patrols. Competing mission demands and limited resource hours have eliminated scheduled fixed-wing flight hours dedicated to fisheries enforcement on the West Coast in recent years.

Boat Stations:

Small boats from coastal stations have the primary mission of search and rescue. However, personnel are also trained in the fisheries law enforcement mission and conduct patrols to enforce fisheries and safety regulations, typically within 20 nautical miles of shore. D11 has fourteen small boat stations located along the California coast, with one boat station manned entirely by the Coast Guard Auxiliary, an all volunteer component of the service, in Crescent City. D13 has eleven coastal small boat stations along the Washington and Oregon coasts, as well as three stations in Washington internal waters and one on the Willamette River (Portland). Two additional seasonal stations are also operated in Central and Southern Oregon during summer months with higher boating activity. Typical boat types at West Coast stations include the 47' motor life boat, the 45' response boat, the 29' response boat (RBS II), and 25' response boat. In addition, several D13 boat stations are equipped with 52' motor lifeboats, which, similar to the 47' motor life boats, are specifically designed and manned for operations in heavy surf conditions, as well as having the capability to respond as far as 150 nautical miles offshore.

V. U. S. COAST GUARD MISSIONS

LMR protection and enforcement is just one of several important missions the USCG is required to accomplish. The USCG is tasked with eleven statutory missions, which encompass protecting the maritime economy and environment, defending maritime borders, and assisting those in distress. A comprehensive list of USCG missions includes:

- Aids to Navigation: The USCG sets and maintains aids to mark the waters of the United States and its territories to assist boaters in navigation and alert them to obstructions and hazards.
- Defense Readiness: In support of the National Military Strategy and Department of Defense operations, USCG assets are capable and equipped to deploy and conduct joint operations in support of critical needs of combatant commanders.
- Drug Interdiction: The USCG is the lead federal agency for maritime drug interdiction and shares lead responsibility for air interdiction with the U.S. Customs Service.
- Ice Operations: The USCG conducts icebreaking services to assist vessels and communities in emergency situations and facilitate essential commercial maritime activities in the Great Lakes and Northeast regions.
- Living Marine Resources: The USCG enforces fisheries laws at sea, as tasked by the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act. The USCG also shares marine protected species responsibilities and authority based on legislation under the Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and the Sanctuaries Act.
- Marine Environmental Protection: The USCG develops and enforces regulations to avert the introduction of invasive species into the maritime environment, stop unauthorized ocean dumping, and prevent oil and chemical spills.
- Marine Safety: The USCG inspects commercial vessels, responds to pollution, investigates marine casualties and merchant mariners, manages waterways, and licenses merchant mariners.
- Migrant Interdiction: The USCG enforces immigration law at sea by conducting patrols and coordinating with other federal agencies and foreign countries to interdict undocumented migrants at sea.
- Other Law Enforcement: Preventing illegal foreign fishing vessel encroachment in the U.S. EEZ is a primary USCG role vital to protecting the integrity of the nation's maritime borders and ensuring the health of U.S. fisheries.
- Ports, Waterways, and Coastal Security: The USCG is responsible for protection of the U.S. Maritime Domain and Marine Transportation System.
- Search and Rescue (SAR): Minimizing the loss of life, injury, property damage or loss by rendering aid to persons in distress and property in the maritime environment is the USCG's highest priority mission.

Although certain USCG units primarily focus on specific missions, such as small boat stations conducting SAR and buoy tenders maintaining aids to navigation, almost all USCG units participate in multiple missions, often simultaneously, requiring extensive training and operational expertise to remain proficient.

VI. LIVING MARINE RESOURCES TRAINING

Due to the multi-mission nature of the Coast Guard and the dynamic and complex fisheries regulations, all operational USCG units involved in the LMR enforcement mission receive training at least every 18 months. Training is provided by the Pacific Regional Fisheries Training Center (PRFTC) located on Coast Guard Island in Alameda, California – which provides training to units in Washington, Oregon, California, Hawaii and Guam.

PRFTC is one of five Coast Guard Regional Fisheries Training Centers solely dedicated to living marine resources training, focused on the preservation and protection of living marine resources. In addition to its state-of-the-art training room, PRFTC has completed the construction of a commercial fishing vessel and a recreational fishing vessel training platform specifically designed to facilitate performance based training and evaluations for student boarding officers. PRFTC hosts seven resident courses per year - three sessions for California LMR Boarding Officers and four for Oregon/Washington LMR Boarding Officers.

Partner agency involvement has been vital to the success of all resident courses. NOAA Office of Law Enforcement has had representation at nearly all California and Northwest courses since their inception. Also, in conjunction with the April 2015 PFMC meeting in Sonoma, California, NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) and state enforcement representatives were able to attend a portion of the Washington/Oregon training and address the students. Furthermore, PRFTC recently completed the final preparations to provide an onsite office at the schoolhouse for NOAA OLE to further foster the partnership between NOAA and the Coast Guard. The USCG looks forward to continued collaboration during future courses to ensure the success of the training program.

During 2015, after the implementation of performance based training, PRFTC converted the California and Oregon/Washington courses to solely residential training in Alameda. PRFTC is responsible for training 53 Washington, Oregon, and California units, from which 152 personnel completed the LMR BO courses during 11 four-day sessions during 2015.

In addition to formal LMR training, District staffs also participate in impromptu LMR training at local units, often specifically in preparation for upcoming fishing season or enforcement emphasis operations. These training sessions also frequently rely on partner agency participation to enhance the learning environment and to ensure the consistency of our shared enforcement responsibilities throughout the coast.

VII. FISHERIES ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS

2015 U.S. West Coast Living Marine Resources Enforcement Resource Hours

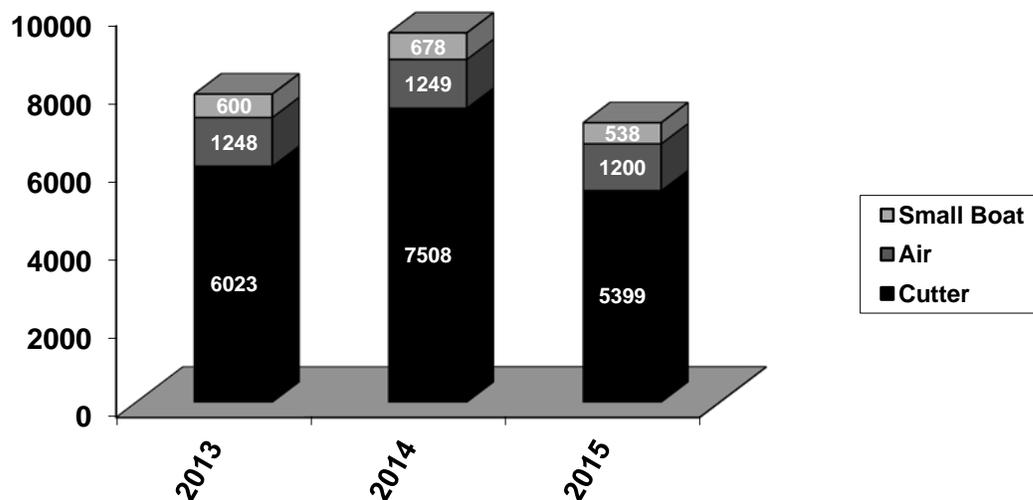


Figure 1 depicts the total resource hours dedicated to the Living Marine Resources mission for the West Coast during the last three years. Further details are below:

- As mentioned in Section IV, the 378' high endurance cutter, CGC MIDGETT, completed the first dedicated fisheries patrol by a major cutter on the West Coast in over two years during a two week patrol in October 2015. However, the majority of West Coast offshore fisheries enforcement efforts continue to be conducted by D11's and D13's 110' and 87' patrol boats (WPBs). D11 and D13 WPBs conducted 33 dedicated fisheries enforcement patrols during 2015, more than doubling the 16 WPB patrols completed in 2014. The 2015 total of 7,137 living marine resource hours expended by D11 and D13 cutters, boats, and aircraft is consistent with efforts over the past 10-years.
- Since most WPBs spend the majority of the year conducting missions other than offshore fisheries, riders from other units and agencies with fisheries enforcement experience are often arranged to augment WPB boarding teams to maximize their effectiveness. To supplement WPB efforts, CGC FIR (D13) also conducted 4 offshore fisheries patrols during 2015, often in conjunction with satisfying their aids to navigation responsibilities, successfully demonstrating their multi-mission capabilities.
- In addition to offshore fisheries patrols, USCG units enforced federal safety regulations and monitored tribal and non-tribal fisheries activity in Washington internal waters, as well as Columbia River Buoy 10 recreational salmon fisheries during the summer. Operations were also conducted in internal waters to monitor high volumes of vessel traffic associated with certain fisheries openers.

2015 Fisheries Boardings and Fisheries Violations

1028 Boardings 43 Fisheries Violations

- Of the 1028 fisheries boardings, approximately 75% of the overall total involved enforcement of regulations associated with federal fisheries managed by the PFMC, while the remainder of the boardings was on vessels participating in fisheries administered by Treaty tribes and the States. Approximately 47% of the boardings were on commercial fishing vessels, while approximately 53% were on recreational vessels engaged in fishing.
- The 43 violations involved documentation of 22 federal fisheries violations, which were forwarded to NOAA for adjudication, as well as suspected violations of 17 state and 4 tribal regulations which were forwarded to the appropriate agencies for disposition. Many of the violations were documented during joint operations with federal, state, and tribal enforcement partners, as summarized in section VIII of this report.

VIII. JOINT ENFORCEMENT INITIATIVES

Some of the USCG's most effective efforts are the result of working collaboratively with partners from NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (OLE), Treaty Tribes, and California, Oregon, and Washington state fisheries enforcement personnel. An open flow of communication throughout the year is vital to evaluating trends observed by respective agencies and planning operations to support PFMC managed fisheries and other important enforcement concerns throughout the West Coast region, ensuring shared success.

Not only does collaboration occur at the management level, but operational units also work closely with their federal, tribal, and state counterparts in the field. For the past several years, USCG Station Grays Harbor has hosted detachments of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and NOAA OLE personnel, as well as providing dock space for WDFW's enforcement vessel CORLISS. In October 2015, a newly assigned NOAA enforcement officer was also co-located at USCG Station Coos Bay and at the start of 2016 a newly assigned NOAA supervisory enforcement officer was co-located on Coast Guard Island in Alameda, California. Co-location of partnering agency personnel has greatly enhanced collective efforts and additional future opportunities will continue to be pursued.

Some specific examples of joint operational efforts and interactions during 2015 include:

- Providing information from boardings and surface and aerial observations in support of federal and state marine resources investigations, including:
 - A boarding conducted in conjunction with Makah Tribal Police resulted in a crewmember being taken into custody for an active warrant issued by a local county.
 - During a routine, non-law enforcement related patrol, USCG Maritime Force Protection Unit Bangor, Washington, documented suspicious activity on a Hood Canal Beach. WDFW was notified and enhanced surveillance in the area in response to potential illegal geoduck harvesting operations.
 - In direct response to a NOAA and Oregon State Police (OSP) request to monitor a short-notice, in-season closure of a Central Oregon salmon management area, due to quota attainment, an Air Station Astoria helicopter documented a vessel engaged in commercial fishing for salmon in the closed area.
- Embarking riders in support of investigations and to monitor fisheries activity:
 - Air Station Astoria and Air Station North Bend embarked OSP and WDFW fisheries enforcement riders to monitor two commercial halibut derbies.
 - A WDFW sergeant and a USCG fisheries enforcement instructor were embarked during CGC MIDGETT's D13 fisheries enforcement patrol.
 - CGC BLUE SHARK conducted joint fisheries enforcement training and operations with WDFW in the Puget Sound several times throughout the summer. Embarked WDFW officers issued multiple citations for violations of state fisheries regulations.

- Air Station San Diego embarked a USCG subject matter expert on two flights and CGC PETREL embarked a California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) ship rider for a four day patrol, both targeting the highly migratory species fleet (Operation Tropic Tuna), resulting in documentation of two federal fishery violations that were turned over to NOAA for prosecution.
- Conducting dedicated joint operations to enforce general fisheries regulations, as well as monitoring activity of particular concern:
 - Air Stations Port Angeles and Astoria supported WDFW enforcement efforts to monitor the start of the state commercial offshore Dungeness crab season. Station Grays Harbor personnel also assisted WDFW officers with responding to a report of non-tribal crab gear illegally set within the Quinault Tribal Special Management Area, reserved exclusively for tribal Dungeness crab harvest. State officers seized 40 illegally set crab pots and issued a citation to the owner.
 - Sector Puget Sound units conducted a joint enforcement emphasis with WDFW consisting of nighttime patrols off NW Washington in response to an ongoing CG investigation regarding allegations of numerous commercial fishing vessels in the area not maintaining proper lookouts in accordance with Rule 5 of the Rules of the Road.
 - Sector Puget Sound worked with WDFW to coordinate operations in the vicinity of Boundary Bay, Washington, in response to WDFW's interdiction of illegal Canadian crabbing activity in U.S. waters.
 - Operation Nearshore: Sector Los Angeles/Long Beach, Station Morro Bay, and CDFW conducted a joint enforcement operation in conjunction with the opening of rockfish and salmon seasons. The operation resulted in documentation of one violation for a prohibited species and multiple safety violations.
 - Operation Groundfish Guardian: Sector San Francisco and CDFW conducted a joint enforcement operation targeting the commercial and recreational Groundfish fleets. The operation resulted in 12 safety violations and an illegal drug-related violation.

Finally, similar to the benefits gained from working with enforcement partners, an open flow of communications between the USCG and fishing industry stakeholders is also vitally important to successful mission execution. Industry reports of potential enforcement concerns, whether they are in coastal waters or several hundred miles offshore, are extremely valuable to enhancing the USCG's maritime domain awareness. Reports from stakeholders are most effective when they are as timely, as accurate, and as detailed as possible. Even if an immediate response isn't possible, these reports often assist in making the case that more assets need to be devoted to a particular area of concern.

IX. MARINE PROTECTED SPECIES

In addition to fisheries enforcement, the Coast Guard has an active Marine Protected Species protection program, with a strategic plan titled *OCEAN STEWARD*. Patrolling surface units and aircraft are directed to provide information on ESA species, migratory birds, marine mammal sightings and interactions, as well as working closely with agency partners and other stakeholders through stranding networks and the National Marine Sanctuaries.

NOAA recently achieved a major milestone on March 12, 2015, when it published its Final Rule expanding both the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (GFNMS) and the Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary (CBNMS). Specifically, the GFNMS was expanded from 968 square nautical miles to 2,488 square nautical miles and the CBNMS expanded from 529 square miles to 1,286 square miles. The Coast Guard uses its coastal patrol boats to enforce the regulations in both the CBNMS and the GFNMS. However, because the expansion of both these NMS was so vast, to include some of the expanded NMS areas extending 50-60 nautical miles offshore vice 12 miles or less in the original NMS areas, certain prohibited NMS activities, such as the prohibition against sewage discharge within the NMS, are impacting the ability of the Coast Guard's coastal patrol vessels to patrol these expanded NMS areas. In the past, Coast Guard patrol vessels were able to transit seaward of the NMS 12 nautical mile boundary to discharge sewage, however, with the boundaries now extended 50-60 miles offshore, this is no longer practicable. Similarly, Coast Guard Search and Rescue training using pyrotechnics is also considered a prohibited NMS activity, as well as Coast Guard live fire training for Homeland Security and National Defense missions. NOAA is working with the Coast Guard to develop a Rulemaking to permanently exempt Coast Guard activities from the NMS prohibitions. In the interim, NOAA's March 12, 2015 Final Rule contained a 6-month temporary exemption for Coast Guard activities in the expanded areas (effective June 2015), and NOAA has extended this exemption for an additional 6-months, and plans to continue the extensions in 6-month increments until development of the Final Rule, to include environmental and biological analysis, is completed.

D11's enforcement efforts are included in the highlights below.

Highlights from 2015 include:

- USCG D11 and D13 participated in 22 marine protected species response operations:
 - 16 of the responses involved stranded/entangled/injured/dead whales, dolphins, sea lions, and sea turtles.
 - One of the responses involved assistance to an ESA listed double-crested cormorant by a Sector Columbia River boarding team patrolling with a Clatsop County marine unit.
 - Two of the cases involved vessels sinking within the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary.
 - One of the cases involved a fisherman in the Columbia River firing a shotgun in the vicinity of sea lions nearby a moored Coast Guard cutter.

- One of the cases involved assistance to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to transport an Olive Ridley Sea Turtle by C-130 from Newport, Oregon, to San Diego for final rehabilitation at Sea World.
- One of the responses involved an unknown chemical substance in the water affecting hundreds of birds in San Francisco.
- One of the responses involved the spill of over 105,000 gallons of oil near Refugio state beach in Santa Barbara. The spill resulted in 91 dead marine mammals, 185 dead birds, and the closure of the local fishery for 6 weeks.
- Additional USCG efforts associated with marine protected species during 2015 included:
 - Sector Puget Sound personnel participated in patrols with NOAA in the San Juan Islands during the summer to monitor whale watching activity and to enforce regulations associated with Puget Sound Southern Resident Killer Whale ESA vessel regulations.
 - Sector Columbia River units, including CGC FIR and other units with primary missions associated with maintenance of aids to navigation, attended NOAA training regarding documentation and evidence collection related to potential ESA and MMPA violations. The training was convened by NOAA due to an increase in the number of observed sea lion deaths in the Columbia River region, which NOAA believes are from injuries inflicted by humans, often when the animals haul out on aids to navigation.
 - D13 and Sector Puget Sound staff attended public hearings in Seattle and Port Angeles relative to release of a NOAA draft environmental impact statement for an MMPA waiver to allow Makah Tribal gray whale harvest.
 - Sector San Francisco conducted Operation Whale Warden in support of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and NOAA OLE to deter harassment of whales under the MMPA.
 - Air Station San Francisco embarked a NOAA National Marine Sanctuary officer on a flight to monitor and map areas of whale and crab gear co-location in support of the California Whale Entanglement Working Group.
 - Sector Los Angeles/Long Beach conducted a joint operation with CDFW to protect National Marine Sanctuary resources and Marine Protected Areas inside of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary.

X. FOREIGN FISHERIES: ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED, AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHERIES / INTEGRITY OF THE U.S. EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE (EEZ)

Foreign fisheries enforcement, involving illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fisheries, as well as ensuring the integrity of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), fall under the USCG's Other Law Enforcement mission, per Section V of this report. 2015 efforts associated with specific components of the mission are summarized below.

IUU Fisheries:

USCG high seas drift net (HSDN) fisheries enforcement efforts are typically conducted out of USCG District 17 (D17-Alaska) and District 14 (D14-Hawaii). Although direct involvement with specific HSDN activities have historically been relatively low on the West Coast, as summarized below, D11 and D13 remain alert to potential issues involving portions of respective areas of responsibility or activity that may impact fisheries or stakeholder representatives related to the PFMC.

USCG IUU enforcement efforts in the Pacific during 2015 did not result in the detection of any fishing vessels suspected of employing large-scale HSDN. The majority of IUU efforts associated with potential HSDN activity were associated with the USCG's annual fisheries enforcement operation, known as Operation North Pacific Guard, conducted out of USCG D17 from April 13th to July 22nd, 2015. The focus of this Operation is to detect, deter, and eliminate IUU fishing activity on the high seas of the North Pacific Ocean and includes identifying large-scale HSDN fishing activity and any high seas capture of anadromous species. Operation North Pacific Guard 2015 was planned and executed by the Commander of USCG D17 in coordination with the multilateral enforcement focus of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission's (NPAFC) Enforcement Coordination Committee. In addition, Operation North Pacific Guard implemented the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the People's Republic of China [China] on Effective Cooperation and Implementation of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/215 of December 20, 1991.

Two deployments by a USCG C-130 maritime surveillance aircraft from Air Station Kodiak were staged out of Misawa Air Base, Japan, from May 1st to 15th and out of Yokota Air Base Japan from May 16th to June 2nd. The USCG conducted a total of nine maritime air sorties in the North Pacific Ocean amounting to a total of 119 patrol hours. CGC MELLON patrolled the NPAFC Convention Area from April through July 2015, for a total of 82 days. Operation North Pacific Guard 2015 was supported by deployments of Canadian CP-140 patrol aircraft from Hakodate, Japan, from June 8th to 24th, 2015, under the tactical control of D17 in Juneau, Alaska. Two Canadian Department of National Defense officers and one Department of Fisheries and Oceans officer were assigned to D17 to help coordinate the CP-140 aircraft missions staged out of Hakodate, Japan.

Three pairs of China Coast Guard (CCG) shipriders from the CCG Fisheries Law Enforcement Division were hosted onboard CGC MELLON during Operation North Pacific Guard. These officials were instrumental in facilitating communications between the USCG and the CCG and effectively expanded the jurisdictional reach of both enforcement agencies.

CGC MELLON conducted five boardings pursuant to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission's (WCPFC) Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) 2006-08 - High Seas Boarding and Inspection (HSB&I) Procedures. All but one of the vessels were found to be in compliance with WCPFC CMMs, including the WCPFC prohibition against the use of large-scale high seas driftnets.

The one vessel found to not be in compliance was F/V LIAN HER FA, boarded by CGC MELLON on June 24th on the high seas of the North Pacific Ocean. F/V LIAN HER FA was a Taiwan registered long liner targeting highly migratory tuna stocks inside the WCPFC Convention Area. CGC MELLON's boarding team observed the master was not using required seabird mitigation devices with their long line gear. The boarding team also noted there were no bird curtains and the longlines were not being weighted properly to keep them sufficiently below the surface where birds could dive on the bait. CGC MELLON's boarding team suspected the vessel was in violation of WCPFC CMM 2012-07, designed to mitigate the impact of fishing for highly migratory species on seabirds. The boarding team documented the WCPFC CMM violation and educated the master on the proper protocol. D17 reported the boarding and results to both the WCPFC Secretariat and flag of registry (Taiwan) in accordance with standard WCPFC reporting procedures. On August 18th, the Fisheries Agency of Taiwan reported to D17 the fishing license of F/V LIAN HER FA had been suspended for one month due to the violation detected by CGC MELLON.

The WCPFC HSB&I regime, developed in part with USCG involvement, has proven to be a critical tool for patrolling USCG cutters to employ in the pursuit of addressing IUU fishing activity on the high seas; including enforcement against the practice of large-scale HSDN fisheries. In cases where a species regulated by the WCPFC could be found on a vessel in the North Pacific, the WCPFC HSB&I regime provides USCG patrol assets with a mechanism for establishing jurisdiction to board foreign fishing vessels on the high seas of the North Pacific Ocean. Boardings conducted pursuant to these procedures ensure compliance with the provisions of the Convention and the CMMs adopted by the Commission (including a prohibition against large-scale HSDN fishing). The WCPFC HSB&I regime facilitates reporting to flag state authorities and requires transparency on flag state actions taken pursuant to reports of suspected violations of WCPFC regulations.

While this year's operations did not result in the detection of any fishing vessels suspected of employing large-scale HSDN, the coordinated multilateral enforcement efforts covered a significant portion of the high seas of the North Pacific Ocean and visually identified 830 vessels determined to be operating in compliance with international standards.

Integrity of the U.S. EEZ:

Efforts specific to the West Coast were primarily associated with fisheries pursuant to the U.S./Canada Tuna Treaty. During the suspension of reciprocal access under the Tuna Treaty in 2012, USCG air and surface surveillance along the U.S./Canada EEZ boundary was increased significantly during summer and fall months and the increased presence continued when reciprocal access resumed in 2013 through 2015, due to concerns associated with resuming reciprocal access at a level more restrictive than the historical average. USCG efforts such as these, which are in support of ensuring the integrity of the U.S. EEZ, fall under D13's Operation Olympic Shield, a comprehensive and multi-agency enforcement plan to deter illegal incursions into the U.S. EEZ. In addition to scheduled cutter and aircraft patrols, including four C-130 patrols in support of the operation, other larger cutters transiting through the area, en route other operating areas, were also assigned to monitor activity adjacent to the EEZ boundary as their other obligations allowed.

One Canadian tuna troller was boarded while fishing in the U.S. EEZ during 2015. Several others were observed by USCG patrol aircraft, including two C-130 patrols conducted to specifically monitor the closure of the reciprocal access season. All Canadian vessels observed were determined to be authorized to fish in the U.S. EEZ under the Treaty and in compliance with all applicable Treaty provisions.

To ensure the integrity of the EEZ, the USCG works closely with various agency partners, including NOAA OLE and General Counsel, state enforcement, and the U.S. Attorney's Office to ensure collaborative preparation for potential attempts by un-authorized (i.e non-permitted) Canadian tuna trollers to fish in the U.S. EEZ. For the past three seasons, the USCG has also provided the U.S. albacore fleet with 24x7 contact information and a list of information to report if they observe suspected illegal foreign fishing in the EEZ. No illegal activity has been detected or reported since reciprocal access was resumed under the Tuna Treaty from 2013 to 2015. The USCG will remain engaged in upcoming discussions regarding the future of reciprocal access under the Treaty and enforcement strategies will be developed and patrol assets will be deployed as available to ensure compliance.

XI. COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FISHING VESSEL SAFETY

One of the USCG's primary objectives during the PFMC process is to attempt to identify ways to improve the safety of all fishing activity, whether it is related to commercial or recreational trips; whether the fisheries are administered by the federal government, the states, or the tribes; and whether it takes place in the ocean or within navigable internal waters. In addition to USCG representation at the main Council table, multiple USCG personnel attend Council meetings in order to engage with stakeholders to answer questions, especially with regard to safety. USCG representatives are also available at similar venues throughout the year to collect information, provide advice, and pursue opportunities to enhance safety among the maritime community.

Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety:

**Commercial Fishing Vessel Lives Lost
U.S. West Coast**

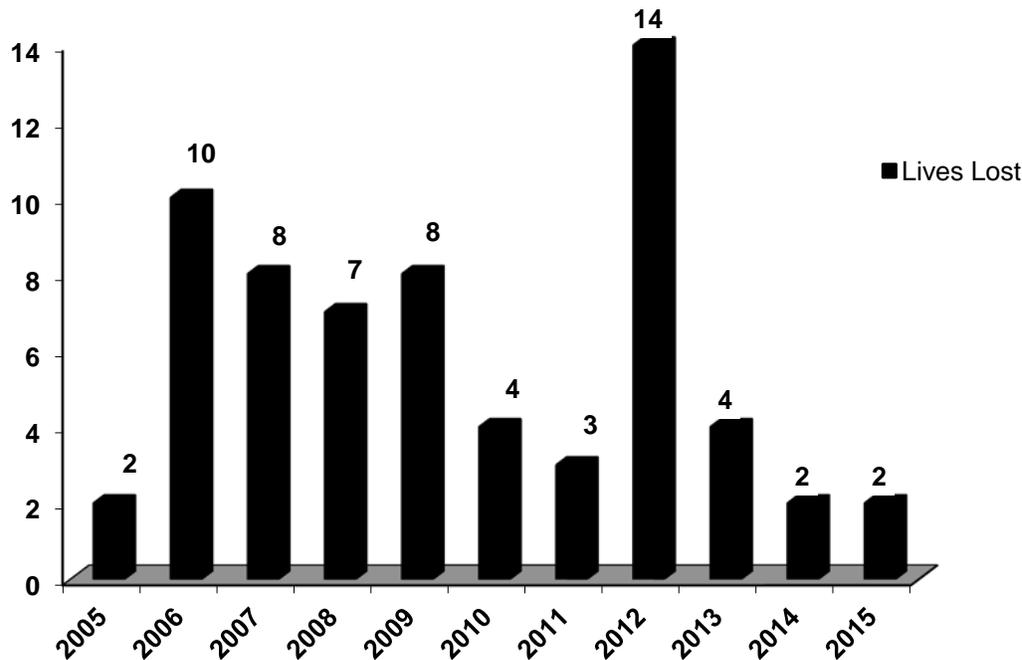


Figure 2 depicts a comparison of lives lost from West Coast commercial fishing vessels since 2005. Further details are below:

Two lives were lost in West Coast commercial fisheries during 2015. Although the number of lives lost is well below the average from the preceding ten year period (6.2), the USCG remains diligent in efforts to determine contributing factors to past losses and steps are being taken to mitigate and reduce potential future losses.

One fatality occurred in April 2015 when the 33' F/V BRONZE BANK ran aground on a breakwall in Los Angeles Harbor. The operator of the vessel was deceased when the USCG unit arrived on scene.

The second fatality occurred in May 2015 when the 52' F/V SEA BEAST with four crewmembers on board sank after taking on water approximately 15 miles northwest of La Push, Washington. Following the initial mayday call, a USCG helicopter, 87' cutter, and 47' motor lifeboat were launched to assist. The fishing vessel capsized prior to the arrival of the USCG assets and three of the crewmembers were able to put on survival suits and embark the vessel's liferaft. The three crewmembers were recovered by the motor lifeboat, but the subsequent search for the vessel's operator was unsuccessful.

In addition to the losses of life, further examples of significant safety incidents on commercial fishing vessels are summarized below:

Significant Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Incidents

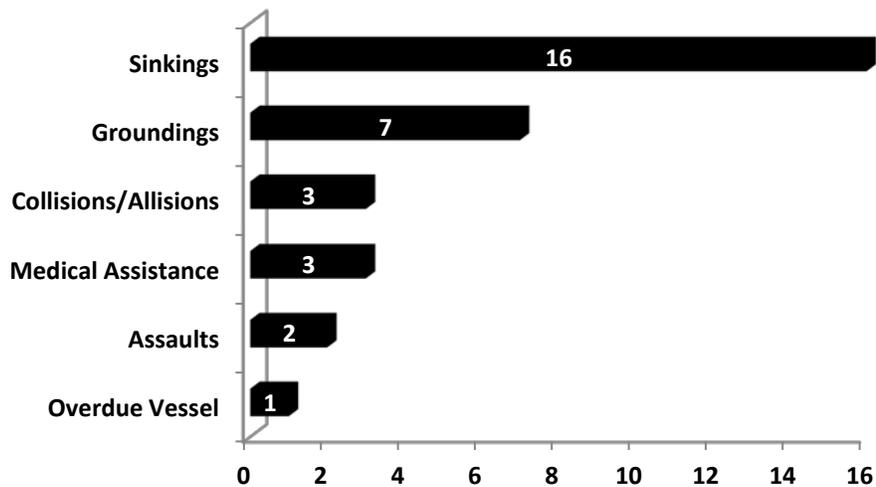


Figure 3 depicts a summary of other types of significant safety incidents occurring on commercial fishing vessels during 2015. Further details are below:

- **Sinkings:** USCG D11 and D13 units responded to eleven vessels sinking at sea, including three off Washington, four off Oregon, and four off California. Twenty-eight fishing vessel survivors were recovered, while one was lost in the sinking of the F/V SEA BEAST, described above. USCG units responded to or received reports of five additional vessels sinking at piers in port, none involving personnel injuries.
- **Groundings:** USCG D11 and D13 units responded to seven vessel groundings, including one in Washington internal waters, one off southwest Washington, one off Oregon, and four off California. Seven fishing vessel survivors were recovered, while one was deceased in the grounding of the F/V BRONZE BACK, described above.

- Collisions/Allisions: USCG D13 units responded to one collision involving two vessels and six crewmembers in Washington internal waters and one involving two vessels and five crewmembers off northwest Washington. USCG D11 units responded to one allision involving a vessel sustaining significant damage when hitting a pier in Ventura Harbor.
- Medical Assistance: USCG D11 and D13 units responded to three separate incidents involving significant injuries to fishing vessel crewmembers requiring medical assistance. Two involved crewmembers being struck by snapping lines and one involved a crewmember being injured by an exploding seal bomb.
- Assaults: USCG D13 units responded to two separate incidents involving assaults between fishing vessel crewmembers. Neither incident resulted in significant injury and suspects were turned over to local law enforcement authorities for disposition.
- Overdue Vessel: USCG D13 coordinated one notable search for a commercial fishing vessel reported as overdue. A 59' fishing vessel with only a single person on board during a week-long trip was reported by a family member when it failed to return to Westport, Washington, when expected. The multiple-day search involved a 210' and 87' cutter, a Navy P-3 aircraft, and a Canadian surveillance aircraft. The vessel was eventually located and found to not be in distress and the operator was in good condition. The vessel returned to port without further incident.

These incidents from 2015, as well as past incidents involving vessel losses and losses of life in commercial fisheries, make clear that the hazards in the fishing industry are not isolated to a particular fishery or gear type or a specific geographic area or time of year. The USCG is constantly working to identify trends and take preventive actions in fisheries where incidents occur more frequently; as well as taking steps to attempt to improve the overall safety of the industry.

2015 boarding statistics indicate approximately 30% of commercial fishing vessels boarded had some type of discrepancy involving safety gear carriage requirements or other federal safety regulations. The rate of vessels with fishing vessel safety discrepancies increased to approximately 50% during boardings conducted subsequent to search and rescue cases, per standard USCG protocol.

The rate of terminations of commercial fishing vessel voyages for extremely hazardous conditions during 2015 was approximately 9%. Voyage terminations are for extremely hazardous conditions, which are defined in section 46 of the Code of Federal Regulations and can include conditions such as the lack of adequate immersion suits, expired or inoperable life rafts or EPIRBs, inoperable bilge pumping systems, lack of adequate firefighting equipment, and other conditions having the possibility of presenting an immediate threat to a vessel and its crew. The USCG very carefully considers all circumstances related to the potential termination of a vessel's voyage and the final decision will only be made by the District Commander or a senior officer to whom the authority has been delegated. Following the termination of a vessel's voyage, the operator must correct the discrepancies and receive permission from the USCG Captain of the Port prior to getting underway again.

Some USCG initiatives to enhance the overall safety of commercial fisheries are described below:

Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act rulemaking: Starting on October 15, 2015, mandatory dockside safety examinations became required for certain commercial fishing vessels, including: vessels operating outside 3 nautical miles from the baseline, vessels carrying more than 16 individuals on board regardless of where the vessel is operating, and vessels engaged in the Aleutian Trade. As previously reported to the PFMC and its constituents, this requirement was mandated by the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 and the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2012. Since the announcement of this rulemaking and leading up to its implementation, USCG D11 and D13 have been working with the commercial fishing industry to ensure compliance. As of the end of 2015, 1,193 West Coast commercial fishing vessels had successfully completed a USCG commercial fishing vessel safety examination, which under the new requirement are to be completed at least once every 5 years. Having a current safety examination may reduce the extent and time boarding officers will examine safety and survival equipment, which have been determined to be in compliance at the time of the dockside examination. However, successful completion of an exam will not limit boardings for fisheries enforcement purposes. Updates on the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act rulemaking, as well as other important commercial fishing vessel safety information, are available at:

www.fishsafewest.info

Navigational Safety: In addition to verifying the status of safety gear during at-sea boardings, USCG units also place a significant emphasis on ensuring compliance with Rule 5 of the International Rules of the Road, which requires all vessels to maintain an appropriate bridge watch or lookout. During September 2015, USCG Sector Puget Sound units conducted a joint enforcement emphasis with WDFW consisting of nighttime patrols off northwest Washington to monitor compliance with Rule 5. Two boardings were conducted, including one on a vessel which had its voyage terminated for inoperable navigation lights. The vessel's crew was also not maintaining a watch when initially contacted. The second boarding was on a Canadian tuna troller which was at anchor in an unsafe area. The boarding team educated the vessel operator regarding safer anchorage and the boarding was completed with no further enforcement action. Maintaining a continuous and alert bridge watch while at sea is not only a legal requirement of the rules of the road, but it is also an essential aspect of prudent seamanship. Not maintaining a bridge watch has been identified as a contributing factor to several vessel accidents at sea.

Observer Safety: USCG fishing vessel safety personnel also work closely with the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program to identify safety concerns on vessels carrying observers. USCG personnel are involved in drill conductor classes and other outreach opportunities to promote at-sea safety, as has been the case for over a decade. USCG fisheries enforcement and commercial fishing vessel safety staff have also worked with NOAA to develop a standard protocol for observers to report to enforcement personnel regarding vessel safety concerns. The USCG also has a close working relationship with NOAA OLE, which shares information regarding observer debriefings after fishing vessel rides, which result in observations of suspected safety or MARPOL violations requiring potential follow up by the USCG.

Recreational Fishing Vessel Safety:

Significant Recreational Fishing Vessel Safety Incidents

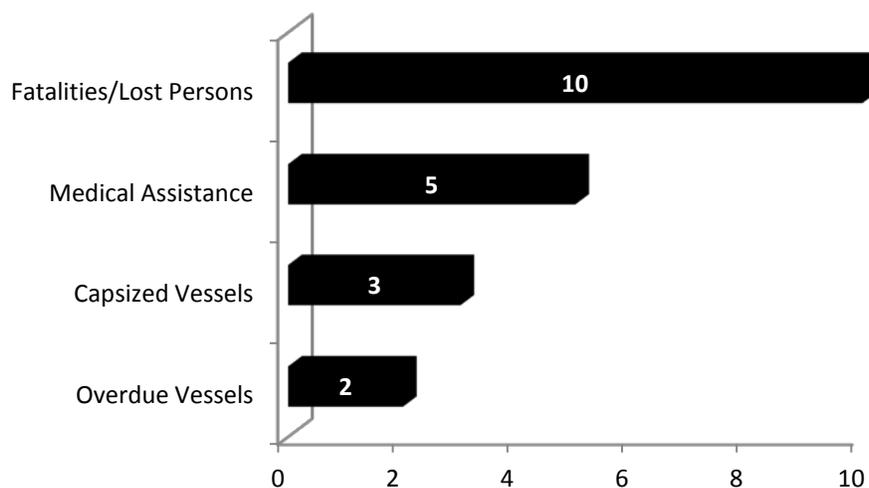


Figure 4 depicts a summary of significant recreational fishing vessel safety incidents, including five confirmed fatalities and five persons unable to be located.

Recreational boaters fishing in ocean waters off the West Coast face the same dangers inherent in operating within the coastal environment as their commercial vessel counterparts. The incidents illustrated in the chart above and further described below involve private pleasure vessels, as well as charter vessels required to be inspected by the USCG and licensed by the states. Similar to efforts being made to improve the safety of commercial fisheries, every Coast Guard District has a Recreational Boating Safety program focused on enhancing the safety of recreational boaters, including those engaged in fishing.

- Fatalities/Lost Persons: Five deceased individuals were recovered from vessels engaged in recreational fishing, while five additional persons were reported lost and unable to be located:
 - On April 17th, USCG Sector San Francisco received a report of an overdue 21' recreational vessel out of Bodega Bay and coordinated a response. The reporting source confirmed the vessel owner and three passengers had gotten underway to go salmon fishing. During the second day of the search for the vessel, the deceased boat owner was located in a debris field in the surf line. A second passenger was also recovered from shore. The two other passengers were unable to be located during an extensive search, involving USCG helicopters, an 87' cutter, and 47' motor lifeboats, as well as the National Park Service, and local water rescue personnel.
 - On April 22nd, USCG Sector North Bend, Oregon received a report of a capsized 16' recreational vessel in vicinity of the Rogue River North Jetty and coordinated a response. A local sheriff's boat recovered two individuals, one who was hypothermic and a second who was unresponsive. Both were transported to a local hospital where one was pronounced deceased.
 - On June 25th, USCG Sector North Bend received a report of a 65 year old male not breathing and with no pulse on a 27' recreational fishing vessel 25 miles southwest of Yaquina Bay, OR. A USCG Station Yaquina Bay motor lifeboat transported a local emergency medical technician to the scene while a helicopter from USCG Air Facility

Newport also launched. The patient was pronounced deceased upon arrival at the pier in Newport.

- On September 11th, a 20' Boston Whaler and debris washed up on the Grays Harbor North Jetty. A motor lifeboat from USCG Station Grays Harbor and an Air Station Astoria helicopter responded and were unable to locate any survivors. An inquiry based on the vessel's registration revealed two individuals had been on board the vessel. Multiple helicopter and motor lifeboat sorties, joined by a cutter search, resulted in no survivors being located.
- On October 1st, a vessel under 20' was reported capsized off Tillamook, OR. A motor lifeboat from USCG Station Tillamook Bay and an Air Station Astoria helicopter responded and recovered one deceased individual. A second person reported to be on board was unable to be located during several motor lifeboat and helicopter sorties.
- Capsized Vessels: USCG D13 units responded to three capsized recreational fishing vessels, all of which were described in the 'Fatalities/Lost Persons' section above. In total, two deceased crewmembers and one survivor were recovered and three lost persons were unable to be recovered.
- Medical Assistance:
 - On May 14th, a motor lifeboat from USCG Station Quillayute River in La Push, WA, was on scene with several recreational fishing vessels off Northwest Washington prior to the start of a recreational halibut opener. While responding to a disabled vessel with seven people on board, the motor lifeboat collided with the vessel in distress, causing damage to the vessel and injuries to two crewmembers. The injuries were treated while the vessel was towed to La Push. During the tow, the motor lifeboat suffered an engineering casualty and had to shut down its engines. A WDFW vessel also on scene for the fisheries opener took over the tow and the recreational vessel was safely moored in La Push, Washington.
 - On July 20th, a USCG Station Grays Harbor motor lifeboat responded to a male passenger on a charter vessel suffering from severe seasickness, causing him to go in and out of consciousness. The passenger was transferred to local emergency medical services for treatment.
 - On August 3rd, a USCGC Station Golden Gate motor lifeboat responded to a 40' recreational fishing vessel with six people on board which struck a rock. One crewmember sustaining a head injury was treated on scene for a laceration above his eye. A second crewmember suffering from symptoms associated with seasickness. The injured crewmembers were transferred to a local fireboat for transport to emergency medical services on shore.

- Overdue Vessels:

- On April 17th, USCG D11 units responded to an overdue vessel in an incident described in the 'Fatalities/Lost Persons' section above.
- On August 13th, USCG D13 coordinated a notable search for a recreational fishing vessel reported as overdue. A 25' recreational fishing vessel with four people on board was reported by a family member of one of the passengers as being overdue in returning to Coos Bay, Oregon. Helicopters from USCG Air Station Astoria and Air Facility Newport and a C-130 from Sacramento were launched to search, while a 110' patrol board was diverted from southwest Washington to assist. The Newport helicopter located the vessel 34 miles west of the Umpqua River and confirmed the passengers were fatigued and dehydrated, but in otherwise fair condition. A motor lifeboat from USCG Station Umpqua River was launched to tow the vessel to Winchester bay where all crewmembers arrived safely.

These incidents from 2015, as well as past incidents involving vessel losses and losses of life in recreational fisheries are clear indications vigilance is equally as important to recreational boaters as it is to professional mariners. D11 and D13 units place a particular emphasis on being present to monitor activity associated with fisheries openers and other timeframes anticipated to result in significant offshore vessel participation. Operation Safe Hawk III, conducted jointly with WDFW during Memorial Day weekend 2015, specifically focused on recreational boating safety and preventive search and rescue outreach. This and other similar operations are examples of efforts being undertaken by the Coast Guard to mitigate the risks associated with engaging in recreational fisheries at sea.