

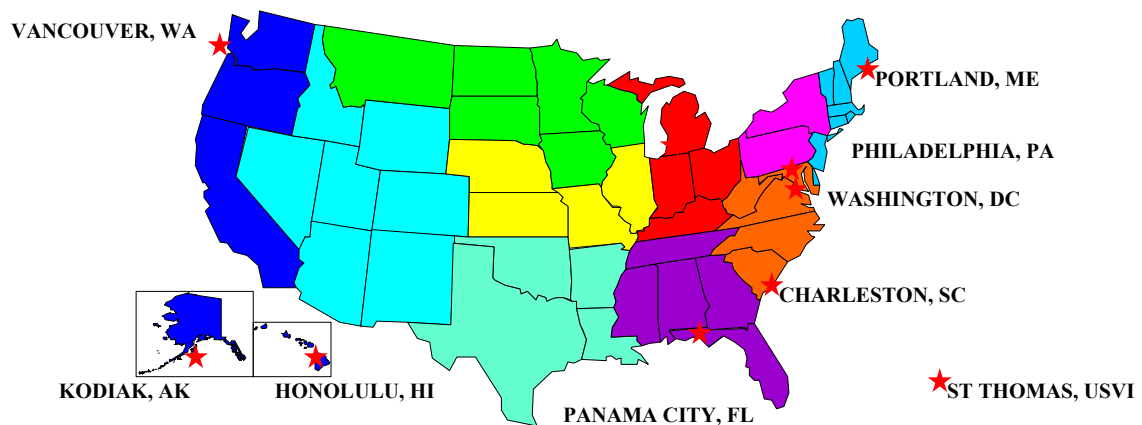


APPENDIX A – Results of Regional Listening Sessions

INTRODUCTION

Between March and November 2003, the Coast Guard conducted nine regional listening sessions - gathering information from over 200 fishing industry (commercial and recreational), academia, non-governmental organizations, federal and state enforcement partners, and fisheries managers on their perceptions of the present state of fisheries enforcement and how to improve the performance of fisheries enforcement. Additionally, Coast Guard members attended each meeting as observers. This appendix summarizes the findings of the listening sessions. Specific recommendations from these listening sessions have been incorporated in Appendix B, the OCEAN GUARDIAN Task List.

Locations of the regional listening sessions:



Facilitators guided the participants through a process that helped answer the following eight critical questions:

- (1) What are the greatest threats to fisheries and fishers in your region that the Coast Guard can do something about?
- (2) Are the Coast Guard's fisheries enforcement priorities on target?
- (3) How can the Coast Guard improve the level of compliance with management plans in your region?
- (4) How can the Coast Guard improve its boarding process?
- (5) How might the Coast Guard better communicate with the fishing community? With the fishing industry? With organizations?
- (6) How can the Coast Guard build a better relationship with: fishers, managers, non-governmental organizations, environmental/scientific communities, governance, and enforcement partners?
- (7) What should be the Coast Guard's fisheries enforcement priorities for the next five years?
- (8) What major industry changes do you foresee in the next five years?



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Summary:

The first listening session was held in conjunction with the Caribbean Fisheries Management Council meeting in St Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands on 26 March 2003. A total of five attendees provided comments.

Key Regional Issues:

- The Coast Guard should increase its presence, and home porting a cutter in the USVI was recommended.
- Enforcement of closed areas needs to be improved to ensure management plans remain viable.
- USCG boarding teams require better training on Caribbean species and regulations.
- Joint operations with local law enforcement agencies should be increased.
- Outreach and public education should be improved. Recommendations included hosting workshops and cutter open houses, improved website communications, and visits to local fisheries markets.
- There is a perceived reduction in Coast Guard fisheries law enforcement presence due to a shift of assets to other missions.
- Bilingual communications (English & Spanish) in both printed and spoken media is necessary.

Future Regional Trends:

- The Coast Guard will need to re-define its fisheries enforcement role in the Department of Homeland Security.
- Due to the large recreational fleet in the area, recreational fishers can potentially harm the resource as much as the commercial industry. Equitable enforcement will be necessary.



VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON

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A complete list of participants and affiliations was unavailable for this session. A partial list is provided:

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Summary:

The second listening session was held in conjunction with the Pacific Fisheries Management Council meeting in Vancouver, WA on 6 April 2003. A total of 17 attendees provided comments.

Key Regional Issues:

- Fishermen have difficulty complying with frequently changing regulations.
- Industry desires more opportunities to meet and interact with Coast Guard personnel on a one-on-one basis.
- Coast Guard presence at-sea needs to be increased to deter violators.
- There is inconsistent interpretation and enforcement of fisheries regulations by different law enforcement agencies.
- Internet communications should be improved to “push” notices of new regulations, enforcement procedures, or upcoming events.
- Fisheries enforcement training programs should promote the use of local experts and resources.
- Longer tour lengths for personnel assigned to fisheries duties are necessary.
- Standards for when to conduct at-sea boardings based on weather, vessel’s appearance and activity, and boarding history is needed.

Future Regional Trends:

- Aquaculture will continue to grow and impact markets.
- Lawsuits will continue to influence changes to fisheries management plans.
- Market factors will push international fishers to poach in U.S. waters.
- Added emphasis on homeland security mission will allow Coast Guard to procure needed new equipment and increase presence.



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Summary:

The third listening session was held in conjunction with the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting in Honolulu, HI on 5 May 2003. A total of 24 attendees provided comments. In addition to Hawaii, the attendees represented Guam, Saipan, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Central Marianas Islands.

Key Regional Issues:

- American Samoa and Guam need more Coast Guard resources for both safety and fisheries enforcement missions.
- Increased presence on the docks, particularly to check safety equipment, are necessary so at-sea boardings can focus on fisheries regulations.
- USCG knowledge of local fisheries and regulations needs improvement.
- Reduce the length of time necessary for fisheries boardings.
- The ability to converse in the many various languages in the area (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, etc) is needed. Educational materials need to be translated to those languages.
- The perception exists that the Coast Guard has a poor opinion of the fishers and does not desire interaction with them.

Future Regional Trends:

- Expansion of the foreign fishing fleet will be a significant threat to fish stock sustainability.
- The Western Pacific is not viewed by large U.S. businesses as an area to target for expansion.
- Aquaculture will continue to grow in Hawaii.
- An experimental swordfish operation will open in Hawaii.
- Illegal, Unregulated, and Unreported fishing will increase.
- Catch prices will not increase with the cost of fishing operations.



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PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA

Summary:

The fourth listening session was held in conjunction with the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council meeting in Panama City, FL on 13 May 2003. A total of 16 attendees provided comments.

Key Regional Issues:

- Longer tour lengths for personnel assigned to fisheries duties are necessary.
- The Vietnamese fishing community needs assistance by translating regulations and educational materials to Vietnamese.
- Industry desires more opportunities to meet and interact with Coast Guard personnel on a one-on-one basis.
- Internet communications should be improved to “push” notices of new regulations, enforcement procedures, or upcoming events.
- USCG boarding teams need to improve fish identification skills.
- There is the perception that fisheries enforcement is less of a priority for the Coast Guard, and it needs to be elevated in relation to other Coast Guard duties.
- Coast Guard presence at-sea needs to be increased to deter violators.

Future Regional Trends:

- Recreational fishers will fish further offshore in faster boats.
- Tracking devices on fishing vessels will become more prevalent due to their affordability.
- The number of fishers will ultimately decline because of the impact of imports (particularly shrimp).



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Summary:

The fifth listening session was held in conjunction with the North Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting in Kodiak, AK on 14 June 2003. A total of 22 attendees provided comments.

Key Regional Issues:

- The Coast Guard is doing a good job at protecting the Maritime Boundary Line and supporting the NPFMC.
- The perception exists that new Homeland Security missions will be to the detriment of USCG fisheries enforcement and will negatively impact sustainable fisheries in the North Pacific.
- The Coast Guard needs to carefully check who is the actual master of a vessel to ensure the vessel is not in violation of the Jones Act.
- Effective communication strategies need to be established to educate the fishers.
- Methods of approaching and boarding fishing vessels need to be improved so as not to cause damage.

Future Regional Trends:

- The use of quotas (i.e. IFQ's) as a management tool will expand.
- Litigation, which adds to the high degree of uncertainty under which fishers operate, will increase.
- Foreign fishing fleets will expand, requiring more EEZ enforcement.



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Summary:

The sixth listening session was held in conjunction with the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council meeting in Philadelphia, PA on 25 June 2003. A total of 12 attendees provided comments.

Key Regional Issues:

- Coordination between the Coast Guard and MAFMC needs to be improved to build safety into viable, flexible enforcement plans.
- The Coast Guard should act more as an advocate for the fishers, especially when interacting with Fisheries Management Councils as regulations are developed.
- Outreach and working relationships with industry need to be improved.
- More efficient ways of targeting violators is needed. Fish stock growth and regulatory revisions will require alternative enforcement strategies.
- Boarding procedures need to be improved, particularly in the areas of species identification, interference with fishing operations, and intimidating "military appearance". Overall, the boarding process has improved, particularly in the areas of attitude, willingness to cooperate with the fishers, accommodation of fishing operations, and training.

Future Regional Trends:

- Fish stock will continue to recover.
- There will be more emphasis on the development of eco-system management plans.
- The number of specialized fishing vessels will increase.
- There will be buy-outs of less successful participants, reducing fleet capacity.
- Regulations will become more complex.
- Management plans will focus on reducing wasteful by-catch.
- There will be an expansion of Limited Entry Access programs.



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Summary:

The seventh listening session was held in conjunction with the New England Fisheries Management Council meeting in Portland, ME on 16 July 2003. A total of eight attendees provided comment.

Key Regional Issues:

- The perception exists that new Homeland Security missions will be to the detriment of fisheries enforcement and the sustainable fisheries in New England.
- USCG boarding teams need to improve fish identification skills.
- Longer tour lengths for personnel assigned to fisheries duties are necessary.
- Coast Guard presence at-sea needs to be increased to deter violators.
- The USCG should improve communications with industry, through presence on the docks.
- Increased enforcement on recreational and charter vessels that illegally market their catches is necessary.

Future Regional Trends:

- The fishing industry will continue to shrink because of fewer days at sea, less income, and ultimately less fishers.
- The shore-side processing infrastructure will shrink along with the fishing industry.
- Fishers will spend less money on safety equipment as profit margins shrink.



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Summary:

The eighth listening session was held in conjunction with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission meeting in Arlington, VA on 25 August 2003. This listening session was geared towards receiving input from state law enforcement agencies. A total of four attendees provided comments.

Key Regional Issues:

- Good communications by the USCG exist via representatives to the councils and Regional Fisheries Training Centers. Communications can be improved by the development of interagency marine resource centers that co-locate personnel from agencies performing related work.
- The USCG is the only agency with resources to conduct at-sea patrols, and must realize many regulations can only be enforced at-sea.
- The USCG is good at assessing and documenting threats, and developing a plan to counter threats, but needs to put more emphasis in ensuring enough resources exist to counter emerging threats.
- The USCG should develop the capability to haul and inspect fishing gear.
- Tour lengths for law enforcement personnel should be lengthened.
- Boarding teams are professional, efficient, but still have significant problems in fish identification.
- The USCG should continue or expand event demonstrations and open houses of USCG units.

Future Regional Trends:

- Use of net liners will continue and the USCG will need to place additional emphasis on detecting this practice as it can only be enforced at-sea.
- Managers will increasingly use closed areas, necessitating USCG at-sea enforcement.
- Increased regulation of fisheries will result in fishermen taking greater safety risks.
- Regulatory discards will increase in prominence as a management issue and will require enforcement.



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Summary:

The ninth and final listening session was held in Charleston, SC on 13 November 2003. Two attendees provided comments. The original session was scheduled in conjunction with the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council meeting, but was re-scheduled due to a hurricane which resulted in the low industry participation.

Key Regional Issues:

- Lengthen the tour lengths for law enforcement personnel.
- Increase enforcement on recreational and charter vessels that illegally market their catches.
- Boarding teams are not professional and have significant problems in fish identification.

Future Regional Trends:

- Aquaculture will continue to expand.