

## “Marine Protector” class Patrol Boats for the Hellenic Navy

The Hellenic Navy is advancing its plans to acquire three *Marine Protector* patrol boats from the U.S. defense stockpile under the EDA (Excess Defense Articles) program. Each vessel's operationalization is estimated at €5 million, with a total cost of €15 million. This acquisition highlights the Navy's commitment to enhancing its surveillance capabilities in the Eastern Aegean, a region critical to Greece's maritime security.

The Marine Protector-class patrol boat is a type of coastal patrol boat of the United States Coast Guard. The 87-foot-long (27 m) vessels are based on the Stan 2600 design by Damen Group and were built by Bollinger Shipyards of Lockport, Louisiana. Almost all of these boats have been delivered to the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard placed its original order in 1999 for 50 boats, which were delivered by mid-2002. Several additional orders brought the class to a total of 77 ships. Seventy-five were delivered under the original Coast Guard contract with Bollinger, with the last, USCGC Sea Fox, being completed in October 2009. Two of these were delivered to the Maritime Squadron of Malta. A separate Coast Guard contract built two additional patrol boats for the Yemen Coast Guard.

The Marine Protector class replaced the 82-foot Point class, which had smaller accommodations and had to stop to deploy its pursuit inflatable boat via crane. The last Point-class cutter was decommissioned in 2003.

In 2020, the Department of Homeland Security began to decommission the fleet, with eight Marine Protector cutters replaced by newer Sentinel class cutters. In May 2021, the United States announced that it would send three decommissioned ships to the Lebanese Navy.

In 2022, three decommissioned ships, Albacore, Cochito, and Gannet were donated to the Uruguayan Navy under the Excess Defense Articles program. As part of the transfer deal, Uruguay spent \$4.99 million to refurbish the ships, on spare parts, and to train their crews. In 2023, the United States delivered two former Coast Guard Marine Protector-class ships to the Ghanaian Navy. They were commissioned as GNS Aflao and GNS Half Assini. In May 2023, the United States government pledged to provide the Philippines at least two Marine Protector.

Missions include combating drug smuggling, illegal immigration, marine fisheries enforcement and search and rescue support. Since the September 11, 2001, attacks, many have had a homeland security mission in the form of ports, waterways and coastal security (PWCS) patrols. Boarding parties can be launched while the vessel is underway through the cutter's stern launching ramp. The attached rigid hull inflatable boat (RHIB) has been upgraded in an effort to increase speed and sea state sustainability for boarding parties and rescue and assistance teams. The stern launching system requires only a single crew member to remain on deck to launch or retrieve the boarding party. The vessels consume approximately 165 gallons of diesel per hour at their maximum speed of 26 knots. Like all new U.S. Coast Guard vessels, the Marine Protector class is designed to accommodate crews of mixed gender with five separate small berthing spaces accommodating standard crews of ten with maximum berthing for 12.



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