

# sUAS FOR NSC



## Acquisition Directorate



Imagery from the unmanned aircraft system (UAS) deployed on Coast Guard Cutter Stratton. U.S. Coast Guard photo.



ScanEagle UAS deployed on Coast Guard Cutter Stratton. The ScanEagle UAS has a flight time of 18+ hours with a maximum speed of 96 miles per hour. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Mark Barney.



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Deploying UAS capability for the NSC provides persistent, tactical airborne intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, increasing maritime domain awareness and the effectiveness of NSCs.
- The current UAS capability has a flight time of 18+ hours with a maximum speed of 96 miles per hour.
- Since the first installation, the UAS capability has completed more than 4,000 flight hours on 30 NSC patrols.
- In six years, UAS platforms have assisted in the seizure of 177 tons of illicit narcotics worth over \$4 billion.
- The UAS capability on NSCs has also been used to:
  - Support humanitarian relief efforts by providing real-time damage assessments following Hurricane Dorian.
  - Aid in a medical evacuation.
  - Aid in a person-in-the-water search and rescue case.
  - Identify 35+ illegal fishing vessels in a fishing fleet.

For updates on sUAS for NSC, visit the program's website at <http://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Acquisitions-CG-9/Programs/Air-Programs/UAS/>

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Coast Guard is procuring unmanned aircraft system (UAS) capability as a cost-effective approach to meeting the national security cutters' (NSCs) operational need for a persistent airborne surveillance capability. A UAS consists of an unmanned aircraft, its mission payloads, launch and recovery equipment, ground support equipment and data and control links. The Coast Guard requires a UAS that can remain on station for extended periods, expand maritime domain awareness and disseminate actionable intelligence on maritime hazards and threats. The service has focused its UAS acquisition efforts on technologically mature systems and commonality with Homeland Security and Defense department programs, while incorporating other agencies' UAS experience. To minimize acquisition risk, the Coast Guard small UAS for NSC program initially obtained an interim capability on one NSC – Coast Guard Cutter Stratton – via a pre-existing multiple award contract executed by the Naval Air Systems Command. The patrol data was used to refine the concept of operations and requirements for installing and integrating across the NSC class. The Coast Guard awarded a

contract June 6, 2018, to Insitu for the procurement of UAS capability on three NSCs and options to outfit the rest of the NSC fleet in future years. In 2019, the commandant of the Coast Guard challenged the program to accelerate the pace of bringing UAS capabilities to the NSC fleet and the program was able to double its installation rates through the end of calendar year 2020. Coast Guard cutters Stratton, James, Munro, Kimball, Waesche, Bertholf, Hamilton and Midgett are now fully outfitted with UAS capability.

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Mission execution begins *here*.