



Safety First - In 10 Easy Steps

by VINCENT T. PICA, II

District Captain, Sector Long Island Sound/South, D1SR • United States Coast Guard Auxiliary



The United States Coast Guard characterizes their Auxiliary corps as a "force multiplier", enabling the active-duty and reserves corps to do more with the budgeted dollars allocated by the US Congress. USCG Auxiliarists donate 100% of their time to the tasks authorized by the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard. And no task is more important than promulgating and expanding the safety of life at sea. This column is about that.

The Ten Commandments

Well, that might be a bit of an over-statement (these are hardly divinely inspired) and an understatement (there are a lot more than ten things you can do to enhance safety for you and your crew.) However, the numbers associated with these ten steps that any skipper can do, or insist is done, are compelling.

#1 - Thou Shalt Wear a Lifejacket - If 16 mariners go into the water without a life-jacket - only one comes out. Conversely, if they fall overboard with a life-jacket, 15 come out. Which cadre do you want to be in? Always have an adequate supply of personal flotation devices aboard. Make sure that children are wearing life-jackets that fit correctly. Federal and State law requires that they have one on. Only you, the skipper, can ensure that it fits them properly. (see SSP, "Do I Really Need To Wear a Life-jacket?", 9/24/08, and "Life-jackets Save Lives - Maybe Yours!", 2/11/09.)

#2 - Never Shalt Thou Drink and Drive - Whether a car or a boat, it is just plain crazy - and illegal - to drink and drive (see SSP, "Scotch & (Sea)Water - A Deadly Cocktail", 6/30/10.) Individual years vary, but I have never seen alcohol account for less than 25% of boating accidents in a given year.

#3 - Taketh a Boating Safety Course - Yes, something as simple as an 8-hour boating safety class can make all the difference. 70% of boating accidents involve skippers who have never taken a boating safety course. If you haven't, start here <http://www.cgaux.org/boatinged/> or email me below and we'll get you squared away.

#4 - Safety Begins With Thou - Adults between the ages of 40 and 49 account for the highest rate of boating fatalities. You set the tone for safety for the entire crew and her passengers. Come on, Bunky, get that life-jacket on.

#5 - Thou Shalt Know the Rules of Navigation - Can you imagine giving the keys to the family car to one of your children - and they have never opened the book of driving regulations, much less taken a course (see #3 above, Bunky.) You can get them online at the US Coast Guard's Navigation Center (<http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/>) You can also get them from prior columns here. (see SSP, "What Side of the Buoys Do I Go On?", 10/22/08, for a starter.)

#6 - Thou Shalt Keep A Good Look-Out, While Driving Safely - You are required by law to always maintain a look-out. (see SSP, "Rule 5 - Proper Look-Out", 7/18/07.) You are also required to use all available means to do so. Have radar? Turn it on, Skipper. Speed is a another matter because, like driving a car, speed should always be reduced if visibility and/or weather demands it. (see SSP, "Rule 6 - Safe Speed", 10/10/07.)

#7 - Knoweth Thy Weather - Clearly, if you've ever left the dock under beautiful skies and then came home under heavy weather, you know how important is to know - before you go - what to

expect during the course of your journey. Particularly for skippers of open boats, this can be all the difference, even between life and death. (see SSP, "Drill, Baby, Drill - Weather Analysis", 8/04/10.)

#8 - Haveth Thy Boat Meet Federal Standards - Can there be any an easier way to ensure that your boat meets USCG requirements than getting a FREE vessel safety check? This is not a regulatory event - if the boat is missing some requirement, the examiner is very likely to give you his or her cell phone number and the advice to, "fix this and then give me a call - I'll come right down, complete the safety check and affix the safety sticker to your windshield." (see SSP, "No Fuss - No Muss - Free Vessel Exams!", 4/23/08 for details or just go to <http://safety-seal.net/GetVSC/>, put in your zip code and a vessel examiner will contact you directly.)

#9 - Useth a Carbon Monoxide Detector - If you have an enclosed cabin, equip it with a Carbon Monoxide Detector. Nothing else will protect you from the odorless, tasteless gas that can kill you and yours. (see SSP, "Flu Symptoms But No Sniffles? Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Is a Killer - an update", 9/1/10.)

#10 - Thy Shalt File a Float Plan - The US Coast Guard recommends that you always tell a friend or family member where you plan to go and when you'll be back. Make it a habit before leaving on any boat trip. (see SSP, "Float Plans - Nothing but Upside", 10/04/06.)

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at JoinUSCGAux2010@aol.com or go direct to John Blevins, who is in charge of new members matters, at FSO-PS@emcg.us and we will help you "get in this thing..."



FISHING WITH TONY

by TONY SALERNO

RFA SUBMITS COMMENTS IN OPPOSITION TO ESA LISTING

The Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA) went on record last week with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in opposing efforts to list Atlantic bluefin tuna as a threatened or endangered species.

In response to a request by the Center for Biological Diversity, NMFS announced that it had started an official review for possibly listing Atlantic bluefin under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). ESA listing would summarily eliminate the recreational catch and release fishery for Atlantic bluefin tuna, and could also impact other coastal fisheries where bluefin might be harassed, captured or harmed as a by catch fishery.

"There are some American conservationists who truly believe that a total catch and release bluefin fishery is not only acceptable within our recreational fishing community, but that it's actually attainable," said RFA Executive Director, Jim Donofrio. "If bluefin is awarded an ESA distinction, there will be no allowable fishing for bluefin within the United States, not for harvest and not for targeted sport fishing either," Donofrio said.

In his official comments submitted to NMFS Assistant Regional Administrator for the Northeast Region on behalf of RFA national members, Donofrio said while international management of Atlantic bluefin tuna has proven mostly a failure, the stock is not being adversely affected by the actions of U.S. fishermen. "Gross over fishing and noncompliance with quotas set by the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) in the east have reduced levels of Atlantic Bluefin in the eastern Atlantic/Mediterranean and western Atlantic," Donofrio said, adding "however, poor performance in relation to ICCAT objectives cannot be used to determine that the stock is headed for extinction."

RFA also made the point that the latest Report from ICCAT indicates that the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean spawning stock biomass showed slight increases over the past few years, while showing for the western Atlantic bluefin stock "the strong 2003 year class continues to contribute to stock productivity such that biomass has been increasing in recent years."

In 2002, RFA petitioned the U.S. government for trade sanctions against the European Union (EU) for "irresponsible and illegal fishing practices" impacting both marlin and bluefin. By petitioning the U.S. Secretary of Commerce to certify the EU under the Pelly Amendment to the Fishermen's Protective Act of 1967 for irresponsible fishing practices, RFA gained assurances from the Bush Administration that actions would be taken to protect both U.S. fishing interests and the stock of Atlantic bluefin.

LOSQUADRO SUPPORTS PROJECT TO HELP RETURNING VETERANS

Legislator Daniel P. Losquadro (R-Shoreham) is spreading the word about a project which will provide homes to selected Veterans in Suffolk County at a price they can afford. In 2009, Legislator Losquadro voted for the bill that enabled this process to move forward. "Many courageous men and women from Suffolk County have put their country before themselves while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan," Legislator Losquadro said. "I am honored to assist in the process of helping some of them purchase a home upon their return."

The project is sponsored by Long Island Home Builders Care (LIHBC). LIHBC has announced plans to build four homes in Suffolk County for Veterans returning home from Iraq and/or Afghanistan. The homes will be available at an affordable rate through the donation of land and reduced charges for materials and labor.

Legislator Losquadro recently attended the dedication of the first property, located at 9 Medford Road in Sound Beach, along with members of VFW Post 6249 in Rocky Point. The home to be built will be constructed on land generously donated by LIHBC member Mark Baisch of Landmark Properties.

"I would like to thank Mark Baisch and the Long Island Home Builders Care organization for their generosity and thinking of the veterans," said Joe Cognitore, commander of the Rocky Point VFW. "It's great to see people in the community appreciate what our veterans have done and to make sure they see that appreciation once they get home."

Returning Veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan who are interested in applying for the first home in Sound Beach are encouraged to contact Lois Fricke at 631-232-2345.

