

Yap Seizes Japanese Fishing Boat

SAIPAN (MNS) - Another foreign fishing vessel has been seized in Yap district, the second to be seized for illegal fishing in that district in the past month, according to word received from Yap last week.

The first vessel was a Taiwan-based fishing boat seized at Lamotrek atoll and brought to Yap district center last month for court action.

The Japanese fishing boat seized in Yap later last month was identified as the Sheiki Maru No. 8. The ship's captain, Yoshiki Mayaeaki, has been charged with illegal fishing within the three-mile limit on Yap district and with violating the Trust Territory immigration laws.

According to a report from Yap, the fishing boat was first seen hovering outside Tomil harbor some 2.4 miles away from the reef, apparently waiting to pick up yellowfin tuna later in the day from long lines estimated to have been stretched at least fifteen miles into the open ocean.

The fishing line was made more visible by flag markers that could be seen from the ship. An estimated 50 to 70 meters of line between each float was reported by government officials who seized the ship.

In Capt. Yoshiki Mayaeaki's case, authorities in Yap have indicated they are willing to compromise with a guilty plea to the charge of illegal fishing and a suspended jail sentence, upon condition that \$10,000 fine be paid by the ship's owner plus forfeiture of part of the nine tons of tuna.