

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Five Dominican Republic Migrants And 3 Roosters Intercepted Near Rincon, Puerto Rico

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U.S Customs and Border Patrol (C.B.P.) apprehended five illegal aliens from the Dominican Republic that were intercepted by the U.S. Coast Guard on Sunday near the coast of Rincon, CBP announced Wednesday. Three roosters were found onboard the intercepted wooden vessel.

Jose Rodolfo Morla and Jose Alberto Santana-Mejia, citizens of the Dominican Republic, will appear today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Bruce J. McGiverin, charged with a violation to Title 8, *United States Code*, Section 1326, for attempted re-entry after previous removal or deportation.

“To smuggle roosters into Puerto Rico, without the necessary precautions, poses a threat to the local poultry industry,” stated Ramiro Cerrillo, Chief Patrol Agent for Ramey Sector in Aguadilla. “Our agents remain vigilant to deter smuggling of any item that violates US laws.”

On May 26, Ramey Border Patrol agents detected a small vessel near the coast of Rincon, PR. The agents coordinated for intercept with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Command Center, and FURA marine units.

USCG Cutter Donald Horsley intercepted the vessel finding five illegal aliens on board and three roosters.

A Puerto Rico Police Department FURA marine unit, an Operation Stonegarden partner, assisted the seizure of the vessel, and two outboard motor boat engines.

Immigration processing revealed that the defendants Morla and Santana-Mejia had prior U.S. immigration and criminal histories.

Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Sean Gajewski will be in charge of the case for the U.S. Attorney’s Office in the District of Puerto Rico.

The US Department of Agriculture seized the three roosters.

If convicted, Jose Rodolfo Morla and Jose Alberto Santana-Mejia face imprisonment for not more than 10 years, and a fine of not more of \$250,000.

All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty by a court of law.