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Vessel Beset by Bad Weather Assisted by U.S. Coast Guard Off Puerto Rico Coast

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The Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Doyle cutter boat approaches to assist two U.S. boaters aboard the sailing vessel Watoosh Dec. 7, 2022, after the 40-foot sailing vessel was beset by weather in the Caribbean Sea, 150 nautical miles south of Ponce, PR. By. U.S. COAST GUARD

The U.S. Coast Guard has announced that the Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Doyle assisted two U.S. boaters aboard the sailing vessel Watoosh in the Caribbean Sea and completed a two-day tow of the sailing vessel to Salinas, Puerto Rico Thursday afternoon.

According to the release, the boaters — a man and a woman — reportedly departed Curacao aboard the 40-foot vessel Watoosh on a voyage to Puerto Rico, and were two days overdue

because of bad weather and constant high north winds that prevented the Watoosh from making way and caused the vessel to run out of fuel.

“I’m thankful for the skill and professionalism of this crew, they performed superbly locating and taking the disabled vessel in tow,” said Lt. Cmdr. Charles Wilson, Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Doyle commanding officer. “We are also appreciative of the good Samaritan who relayed the call for assistance to the Coast Guard as vessel Watoosh fell victim to an unusual weather pattern for this area. It is critical that mariners plan voyages with respect to the forecasted weather, their navigation equipment, and their capabilities, especially their ability to communicate a distress.”

According to the release, Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan received a call from the Panamanian-flagged cargo ship Sider Colombia Tuesday night reporting that the ship had received a VHF Channel-16 communication request for assistance from the sailing vessel Watoosh, approximately 150 nautical miles south of Ponce, Puerto Rico. The sea state conditions on scene prevented the ship from providing fuel to the vessel Watoosh, however the ship continued to relay communications until the Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Doyle arrived on scene.

Once on scene, the crew of the cutter Joseph Doyle launched the cutter’s Over-the-Horizon small boat to go onboard the vessel Watoosh and help transfer 92 gallons of diesel fuel. Despite refueling efforts and providing troubleshooting assistance, the vessel’s engines did not restart. Facing deteriorating weather conditions in the form of eight to ten foot seas, the Joseph Doyle crew established a tow of the vessel Watoosh and the cutter began its transit to Puerto Rico.

Once within five miles from Salinas, Puerto Rico, the cutter Joseph Doyle rendezvoused and transferred the tow of the Watoosh to a friend of the boaters. The friend was assisted by his brother, a Coast Guard Auxiliary member, who used his 29-foot Glacier Bay named Coy de Mar to complete the tow of the Watoosh to safe harbor in Salinas

Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Doyle is a 154-foot fast response cutter that is homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico.