



Polish fishing ship Kalmar, escorted past Alcatraz by the Coast Guard Cutter Modoc

—Examiner photo by Matt Southard

# Polish ship seized -- illegal fishing

By Larry D. Hatfield

A Polish fishing ship with 70 men aboard was seized by the U.S. Coast Guard and brought to San Francisco yesterday after allegedly violating U.S. territorial waters off Monterey.

Coast Guard officials, who said they were acting on orders from Washington, described yesterday's seizure as "simply not comparable" to last week's seizure of the SS Mayaguez by the Cambodians.

Crewmen aboard the 270-foot fish factory trawler Kalmar were confined to the ship while

the U.S. Attorney's office here prepared charges against the ship's owner and captain.

The Kalmar's captain, Stanislaus Szczepara, refused to talk to reporters as he was escorted from the ship after it docked at Pier 9. He conferred with attorneys here and got in touch with the Polish Embassy in Washington, D.C.

The Polish Embassy told the Examiner it had "been informed" of the Kalmar's seizure but had no further comment.

The seizure was the first off California waters, according to the Coast Guard, and was also the first such seizure of any vessel from a Com-

monist country in Pacific Coast waters other than those off Alaska.

The incident began yesterday at 11 minutes after midnight.

Lt. Cmdr. Donald Campbell, commander of the Coast Guard Cutter Modoc which intercepted the Kalmar, gave this account:

"We made radar contact at 11 minutes after midnight . . . at 57 minutes after midnight, we had established probable cause (for seizure)."

Shortly after 3 a.m., according to Cmdr.

—Turn to Page 28, Col. 1

—From Page 1

Campbell, a small party from the Modoc boarded the Kalmar and the captain was told it would be escorted to San Francisco.

Campbell said the boarding went smoothly and Capt. Szczepara was "extremely courteous and kind."

Emil "Swede" Anderson, skipper of the pilot boat which guided the Kalmar and the Modoc through the Golden Gate, said Szczepara had no comment on the seizure "except to say he thought he would probably lose his job."

Campbell made it clear he was acting on Coast Guard orders from Washington, D.C. So did other Coast Guard spokesmen on the scene when the Kalmar docked. They were clearly concerned the Cambodian seizure of the Mayaguez would be called no different than the Kalmar's seizure.

"This was simply a violation of the U.S. contiguous fishing zone and that is recognized by the Soviets and us," said Paul Mobley, a public relations spokesman for Coast Guard 12th District headquarters here.

"It is a recognized international situation," added Lt. Gary Beck, assistant law enforcement chief of the 12th District. "The Mayaguez was just a happenstance of Cambodia. The Soviets agree to this (contiguous fishing zones) and there really is no comparison."

During last week's seizure of the Mayaguez off Cambodia, the United States said it recognized a three-mile limit. The Kalmar was charted at 10.2 miles off Monterey when it was seized.

A Coast Guard spokesman in Washington, however, said that while the U.S. does re-



**S. SZCZEPARA**  
Trawler's captain

—Examiner photos by Bob Palmer

cognize the three-mile shipping limit, it has international agreements with the Soviets and others that recognize a 12-mile "contiguous fishing zone" which is forbidden for active fishing.

Mobley said the Kalmar was fishing at the time it was seized. The Kalmar had fished off the West Coast during the 1974 fishing season and was first observed Jan. 14 this year off Half Moon Bay.

In March, she was observed conducting fishing operations in the vicinity of Coos Bay, Ore., and in April and May, Coast Guard patrols observed her off Point Reyes, Half Moon Bay and Santa Cruz.

The Kalmar is homeported in Swinouj'scie, Poland, and was due to return home in two weeks. It was fishing primarily for hake, but federal and state fisheries officials reportedly intended to board her to see if protected fish such as salmon had been taken.

Coast Guard officials said there are currently some 70 or 80 ships from Communist countries off the West Coast.

Most of them are Soviet. About eight or 10 are Polish. There are, in addition, three or four West German vessels.

American officials said

nine of the foreign fishing vessels had been "boarded or visited" within the last year but the Kalmar was the first to be caught violating the 12-mile limit.

The other boardings reportedly were to check the fish catch to make sure the foreign vessels were not taking protected fish.

Customs and Immigration officials here said the crew of the Kalmar would be kept on board for however long legal action takes. Penalties could include permanent confiscation of the ship — but officials said that would be unlikely.

In 1972, three Russian fishing vessel skippers were fined a record \$250,000 after their ships were seized for illegally fishing off the coast of Alaska.

The first time the United States seized a Soviet ship for violating American territorial waters was in March, 1967, when a trawler was caught three miles off Alaska.

A Polish vessel has never

been seized.

Soviet fishing activity off the coast has long angered American fishermen who claim foreign fishermen make illegal catches and violate American territorial waters.

The Coast Guard said it constantly patrols foreign and American fishing vessels off both coasts.