

SYNOPSIS

(All times UTC)

At about 0548 on 4 November 2005, the UK registered fishing vessel *Harvester* was engaged in pair trawling with the UK registered *Ocean Harvest* when she was in collision with the Norwegian registered supply and standby vessel *Strilmøy*. Before *Harvester* sank, all her crew were transferred to *Ocean Harvest*. *Strilmøy* was holed above the waterline in the forepeak tank, and suffered some denting to her starboard side. She was able to continue her voyage.

Harvester and *Ocean Harvest* were owned by their skippers, who were brothers. Each owned a half share of both vessels. They had been pair trawling together for the last 12 years, and regularly fished the area to the north-east of Peterhead. Both fishing vessels had two radars on board, and when fishing, one was used for lookout and the other for maintaining the correct distance from the other vessel of the pair.

Strilmøy was a new vessel, handed over to her owners on 26 August 2005. She was on a regular run, between Stavanger and Peterhead, calling at four oil rigs in the North Sea to deliver stores and pick up returns. She was fitted with a Voyage Data Recorder, and had two radars operating, as well as seven VHF radio sets available on the bridge.

At the time of the collision, the visibility had reduced to about 0.5 mile in fog. The pair trawlers had detected *Strilmøy* by radar at about 5 miles, and the radar plotting aid on *Ocean Harvest* showed that it would pass close ahead of the vessel but very close to *Harvester*. The radar plotting aid on *Harvester* showed that *Strilmøy* was on a collision course. The skipper of *Ocean Harvest* tried to call *Strilmøy* on the VHF radio, shortly before the collision, but received no response. The watchkeeper on *Harvester* started to alter course when *Strilmøy* was about 0.2 mile away, but could not take sufficient action in time to avoid the collision.

The impact woke *Harvester's* crew who, after checking the damage to the vessel, decided to abandon ship. Both of the liferafts were launched and the crew boarded the starboard liferaft, before being picked up by *Ocean Harvest*. On board *Strilmøy*, the engines were stopped and she remained in the vicinity, contacting the fishing vessels to exchange identities and offer assistance. The FRC from *Strilmøy* was launched, initially to check for damage to her own hull, and later, at the coastguard's request, to pick up any flotsam from the wreck, which included the EPIRB.

Harvester sank at 0720, and *Ocean Harvest* returned to Peterhead, where she berthed at about 2300 that evening. The master of *Strilmøy*, after assessing the damage to his vessel, decided that because the hole in the forepeak was above the waterline, and the ingress of water could be controlled with the vessel's pumps, he could safely continue the voyage to Stavanger.

A recommendation has been made to the International Chamber of Shipping and the International Support Vessel Operators' Association to encourage companies to reassess their written instructions with respect to lookout and radar use, and to ensure that the instructions are complied with at sea.