

SYNOPSIS



At about 0400 (UTC) on 3 October 2000, the United Kingdom-registered, but Spanish owned and operated, fishing vessel *Arosa* ran aground on Doonguddle rock, which is off the west coast of Ireland and about 10 miles north of the north entrance to Galway Bay. The vessel was lost, and all but one of the 13 crew members lost their lives. The Irish Department of the Marine and Natural Resources informed the MAIB of the accident at 0840 that day. Captain P Kavanagh carried out the investigation.

The fishing vessel had stopped fishing at about 1846 on 2 October 2000 and had begun a passage towards the nearest point of land on the Irish coast. The weather forecast for the area in which she was fishing, was for winds to increase up to a possible storm force 10. The patrón de pesca (skipper) apparently decided to head for shelter in Galway Bay. *Arosa* did not make a direct course to the entrance of Galway Bay but was offset to the north, which put the strong winds and rough seas further abaft the beam. This eased the motion of the vessel for the crew members, who were asleep in their cabins. Later on during the passage, the patrón de costa (mate) took over the navigational watch.

A deckhand was still awake in his bunk when he heard a loud bang, which he dismissed as a large wave hitting the side of the vessel. However, shortly afterwards he felt the vessel striking rocks and heard the patrón de costa shouting in the accommodation alleyway that the vessel was taking in water, and that everyone should go on deck. The deckhand went on deck and was joined by most of the crew. They launched the two liferafts, but the crew members were unable to board them because of the heavy seas which washed most of the crew, including the deckhand, off the vessel. However, the deckhand managed to find a handhold on a rock, and pulled himself up and out of the waves.

Arosa had broadcast a distress message giving her position, that she was taking in water and requesting a helicopter. Valentia Radio received the broadcast, and a helicopter from Shannon was dispatched. The survivor was picked up shortly after the helicopter arrived on scene, and the patrón de pesca about 20 minutes later. However, the latter was unconscious and, despite the aircrew carrying out resuscitation techniques, he later died. Four bodies were found that day and a further one the next day, leaving six men still missing.

It has not been possible to determine the direct causes of the accident as the two people with knowledge of the navigation both lost their lives.

The report has no recommendations to make.