

SYNOPSIS

On 10 April 2000, the MAIB was notified of an accident on board the 9.88m fishing vessel *Wakil II*. An investigation began that day.

The skipper/owner was operating the vessel alone, 3.5 miles south-west of St Bees Head. As he hauled in the fishing gear, he slipped and fell on to the trawl warp while it was being heaved in, and was then dragged into the winch.

Fortunately the trapped skipper provided enough resistance to stop the small diesel engine which powered the winch. He was, nonetheless trapped there for many hours before managing to free himself and raise the alarm. He was then transferred to hospital by the rescue services.

The skipper suffered facial, shoulder and rib injuries, but eventually made a full recovery.

The immediate cause of the accident was the skipper losing his footing on deck and falling on to the trawl warp while it was being heaved on to the winch.

Contributory causes were not clearing the deck of hazards before hauling, his decision to place himself in immediate danger, the absence of a dead man's handle fitted to the winch control, and the lack of a risk assessment.

The MAIB recommends that the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) advises fishermen who own and operate their vessels single-handedly, to carry out a risk assessment.

It also recommends that *Wakil II*'s skipper/owner carries out a risk assessment and fits a dead man's handle to the winch control.