

SYNOPSIS

In telexes to MAIB timed at 1231 UTC and 1537 UTC on 30 July 1998, Aberdeen Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC) reported that fv *Constancy*, BCK 371, had foundered with the loss of a crewman. An investigation began the same day.

Constancy, BCK 371, was a prawn trawler of wooden construction and 9.8m registered length, operated out of Buckie by a skipper and crewman.

At 0600 on 30 July 1998, the vessel was fishing 10 miles north of Buckie, in the Moray Firth, when it capsized while turning. Skipper and crewman escaped from the vessel.

The vessel's liferaft floated free and was inflated by the skipper who then boarded it. However, the liferaft drifted from the crewman and he was unable to board. Efforts by the skipper to alert other vessels in the area, using flares, were unsuccessful.

By 1100 *Constancy* was overdue in Buckie and MRCC Aberdeen were alerted at 1118. Buckie lifeboat was launched and safely recovered *Constancy*'s skipper from the liferaft. The body of the crewman was recovered later by another fishing vessel, *Alec Watt*.

No inspection of the vessel's wreck has been made. Thus, no certain cause for her loss has been established. However, the most probable cause of the capsize is considered to be snagging of the fishing gear during the vessel's turn.

Constancy was not required to carry a liferaft and any liferaft carried was not required to be equipped to MCA standards. That on board *Constancy* was not equipped to MCA standards and its level of equipment was not apparent until inflated and boarded by the skipper. Finding less equipment than expected the skipper became anxious and elements of distress and confusion crept into his actions.

One recommendation is made and is directed at MCA. It concerns the provision of liferaft equipment lists to purchasers and hirers of liferafts, equipped to non-MCA standards, and which are intended to be carried on fishing vessels.