

FLYER TO THE FISHING INDUSTRY

***Kairos* (BF190): Capsize and sinking on 18 May 2015**



Photograph of *Kairos*

On 18 May 2015, the twin rig prawn trawler *Kairos* capsized in very rough seas and sank 70nm west of the Isles of Scilly. The vessel had been creeping for a lost net when the creeper snagged. The vessel was effectively anchored by the stern, which was then exposed to waves up to 9m high. As a result, the aft net drum space was swamped frequently. The vessel soon started to list significantly to port and within an hour floodwater about 1m deep was found in the cabin space below the aft main deck.

The skipper repeatedly tried to turn the vessel into wind, but he was unsuccessful. Also, although the crew used an electric submersible pump to remove the floodwater from the cabin space, the water level continued to rise. The port list also increased beyond 35°.

Eventually, the skipper recognised the seriousness of the situation and instructed the crew to don abandon ship lifejackets and to prepare the liferafts. He also informed a nearby vessel that *Kairos* was in danger. Shortly after the skipper told the crew to launch the liferafts, *Kairos* capsized. Fortunately, he and the crew were able to scramble from the water into a liferaft. They were rescued by the Irish fishing vessel *Cu Na Mara* about 90 minutes later.

As *Kairos's* skipper, who was cold and wet, climbed from the liferaft to *Cu Na Mara's* deck, he fell from the ladder into the sea. One of *Cu Na Mara's* crew donned an immersion suit and lifejacket and attached a safety line. He then jumped into the sea and secured a rope around the skipper, who was then hoisted by derrick to safety. The actions of *Cu Na Mara's* crew in manoeuvring the vessel alongside the liferaft and recovering the skipper from the water in very rough seas were commendable.

A stability assessment conducted following the accident indicated that the port list was primarily caused by the load on the creeper wire. It also indicated that the floodwater in the cabin space was probably due to downflooding through an air vent in the net drum space. Once the list reached an angle of 48°, the engine room would also have started to flood through its air vents.

Safety Lessons

- Fishing vessels engaged in creeping and the recovery of nets caught on fasteners significantly increase their exposure to the risks of excessive rolling, dangerous lists and capsize, particularly when operating in heavy swells or rough seas. The effects of powerful winches, snagged trawl wires and heavy sea conditions, when working in unison, should never be underestimated. No vessel is unsinkable. If in doubt, it is safer to release snagged gear and recover it later, when conditions are more favourable.
- All external doors, vents and portholes are potential sources of flooding. Knowing where they are located is part and parcel of vessel familiarisation. Always ensure that they are properly maintained and check they are closed during periods of heavy weather or when engaged in operations during which lists may be experienced.
- Further guidance on the hazards associated with the recovery of lost fishing gear can be found in MGN 415 (F).

This flyer and the MAIB's investigation report are posted on our website: www.maib.gov.uk

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