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**REPORT OF THE INVESTIGATION
INTO THE SINKING OF
“MFV MOLLY’S QUEST”
ROSSLARE, CO. WEXFORD
ON
15th JULY 2014**

**REPORT NO. MCIB/239
(No.7 OF 2015)**



Report MCIB/239 published by The Marine Casualty Investigation Board.
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1. SUMMARY

On the morning of the 15th of July 2014 “*MFV Molly’s Quest*” departed Rosslare Harbour with three crewmembers on-board to go razor fishing north of the harbour. The weather conditions were good with light winds and a slight sea state. After eight hours of fishing the vessel experienced minor mechanical issues. Shortly after the mechanical issues were temporarily rectified, the vessel began to heel excessively to port and sank. The crew abandoned ship and were picked up a short time later by two other razor-fishing vessels operating in the area. All hands were saved.

2. FACTUAL INFORMATION

2.1. Vessel details

Type:	Half Decked Razor Fishing Vessel.
Length:	9.18 metres (m).
Beam:	3.04 (m).
Depth:	1.15 (m).
Hull Material:	Steel.
Motor:	44KW Ford D120.
Fuel Type:	Diesel.
Licence Type:	Bi-Valve.
Code of Practice Issue Date:	24th June 2013.
Code of Practice Expiry Date:	24th June 2017.
Year of Build:	1985.

2.2. Vessel description

- 2.2.1 The vessel is of steel construction with a forward wheelhouse and a raised fore deck.
- 2.2.2 The main deck is protected by low bulwarks with solid guardrails all around and three freeing ports per side.
- 2.2.3 The main pump engines are accessed by two steel hatches on the centre line of the main deck.
- 2.2.4 The wheelhouse is accessed from the main deck via a non-watertight door on the starboard side just off centre line.
- 2.2.5 The fishing gear comprises a hydraulic winch situated just aft of the wheelhouse that controls a gantry for lifting the razor dredging cage and a large pump driven by an engine housed under the deck just aft of the main engine.

2.3. Safety Equipment

The vessel was fully compliant with the safety requirements of the Code of Practice for the Design, Construction and Equipment of Small Fishing Vessels of less than 15 m Length overall.

2.4. Razor Fishing Operation (See Appendix 7.1).

3. NARRATIVE

- 3.1 At approximately 06.25 hrs, 15th of July 2014, the Skipper of the “*MFV Molly’s Quest*” and his two crew arrived at the vessel. Following pre-trip preparations, the vessel departed for the fishing grounds at 06.35 hrs where it commenced fishing.
- 3.2 At approximately 16.30 hrs, whilst travelling in a northerly direction, the main engine gear cable broke. The Skipper opened the engine cover and took the vessel out of gear.
- 3.3 The Skipper returned to his post at the gantry winch, where the dredging cage had been wound in, when the vessel turned sharply to port, heeled heavily and began to take on water.
- 3.4 The Skipper ordered his two crew to abandon ship and the vessel sank almost instantly.
- 3.5 At about 16.35 hrs, two other razor boats arrived on scene and picked up the three men from the water. The three men were taken to shore with no apparent signs of injury and did not seek medical attention.

4. ANALYSIS

- 4.1 The vessel was recovered on 19th of August 2014 by a local salvage firm approximately 1.1 N.M. from the coast in approximately 4 m of water (See Appendix 7.2 Chart of incident area) and placed on the hard on the west pier of Rosslare Harbour (See Appendix 7.3 Photograph No. 1).
- 4.2 The hull was found to be generally in good condition, with no large impact marks or obvious signs of cracks in welds. The steel coatings inside and outside were in good condition (See Appendix 7.3 Photograph No. 2).
- 4.3 The rudder and propeller were both damaged, however the salvage company confirmed that this was done during the recovery processes (See Appendix 7.3 Photograph No. 3).
- 4.4 The dredging cage was not aboard the vessel, however the salvage company reported that another dive team had removed it in a previous attempt to recover the vessel.
- 4.5 The vessel's two deck hatches were found to have good seals and good securing arrangements. However these securing arrangements were found to be undone on both hatch covers (See Appendix 7.3 Photograph No. 4).
- 4.6 The wheelhouse door was no longer on the vessel, most probably lost during the period that the vessel remained on the seabed or during salvage.
- 4.7 The wheelhouse itself was found to be structurally sound, however, the equipment and console had all shifted, with much of it on the floor and in the forward compartment. The portside wheelhouse window was found in the wheelhouse space. The glass was unbroken, suggesting that it probably came out as a result of hydrostatic pressure rather than impact from waves (See Appendix 7.3 Photograph No. 5).
- 4.8 The main engine controls were found to be non-functional. While the throttle was working, the lever could not select gear. Upon inspection, the gear cable was found to be very stiff, probably broken mid line, making it very difficult to change the gear selector position at the gearbox. After removing the gear cable from the gearbox, the gear selector on the gearbox was found to travel easily between gears. The functionality of the gearbox could not be tested, as the gearbox is hydraulic and required oil pressure to function.
- 4.9 The engine seacocks and pump piping were found to be watertight with no sign of damage (See Appendix 7.3 Photograph No. 6).
- 4.10 The dredge gantry appeared to be at least three to four years old as there were several layers of paint on it (See Appendix 7.3 Photograph No. 7).

- 4.11 The lifting cables for the dredging cage were found wound up on the winch reels and the lifting cable had been disconnected from the cage (See Appendix 7.3 Photograph No. 8).
- 4.12 A study of the historic weather data showed that on the day of the incident the weather was good with moderate to light winds, westerly to southwest in direction, between Force three and four. This wind direction was offshore for the vessel's area of operation resulting in slight seas (See Appendix 7.4 Met Éireann Weather Report).
- 4.13 On the 8th of November 2014 the vessel was re-floated for a roll test. The vessel was rolled in a lightships condition with the dredging cage re-attached. During the test no water ingress was noted (See Appendix 7.5 Roll Test).
- 4.14 The Skipper and crew members were interviewed during the investigation and stated that the vessel was travelling in a northerly direction on normal fishing operations and in the process of lifting the dredging cage when the main engine gear control cable broke. Shortly after the vessel was taken out of gear, the vessel turned sharply to the west and began to heel heavily before it sank.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The vessel had completed an inspection for the Code of Practice for the Design, Construction and Equipment of Small Fishing Vessels of less than 15 m Length overall on the 23rd of June 2013, approximately 13 months before the incident (See Appendix 7.6 Code of Practice, Declaration of Compliance).
- 5.2 The vessel had been operated as a razor-dredging vessel for at least four years before the incident and had remained largely unmodified over that period. This is supported by the fact that the gantry had several seasons of paint applied to it, and that there were no signs of fresh welding other than a minor repair on the gantry cross beam.
- 5.3 Using the roll test information, it was established that in lightships condition, the vessel passed the Code of Practice requirements with a freeboard value of 230 mm.
- 5.4 The roll test also demonstrated that the vessel's hull was watertight, ruling out the possibility that flooding led to a large free surface causing a sudden reduction in stability.
- 5.5 The dredging cage lifting cables were found rolled up on the winch, indicating that the dredging cage was above the surface at the time of the incident and therefore it could not have become fast on the seabed.
- 5.6 Examination of the recovered vessel gave no evidence as to why the vessel capsized. Interviews with the Skipper and crew could shed no further light to the cause of capsizing. The actual cause is therefore undetermined.

6. SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 This report does not support any Safety Recommendations made in relation to this incident. However, the MCIB notes the importance of complying with the Safety Requirements in the Code of Practice.

7. APPENDICES

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Appendix 7.1 Razor Fishing Operation.

- Razor fish are a bi-valve species that live on sand seabeds. To remove them from their habitat, commercial fishing operators pull a dredging cage arrangement over sandy seabeds, usually in shallow water and close to land.
- To increase the efficiency of the dredging cage, large amounts of seawater are pumped into the sand just ahead of the dredging cage by means of large pump and manifold arrangement on the forward end of the dredging cage.
- During fishing operations, the dredging cage is lowered to the seabed from a gantry, positioned on the stern on the vessel and usually towed from a towing point on the transom of the boat using a towing line.
- Typically, the dredging operation lasts between six to eight minutes at which time the dredging cage is lifted using the gantry and winch. The contents of the cage are unloaded onto the deck for sorting. During this procedure the dredging cage towing line is taken aboard the vessel to remove the possibility of it becoming snagged on the sea bed.

Appendix 7.2 Chart of incident area.



APPENDIX 7.3

Appendix 7.3 Photographs.



Photograph No. 1 - Vessel after recovery



Photograph No. 2 - Vessel after recovery

Appendix 7.3 Photographs.



Photograph No. 3 - Showing damage to rudder and propeller



Photograph No. 4 - Showing hatch cover

Appendix 7.3 Photographs.



Photograph No. 5 - Showing wheelhouse with missing window



Photograph No. 6 - Showing Dredging cage water pump

Appendix 7.3 Photographs.

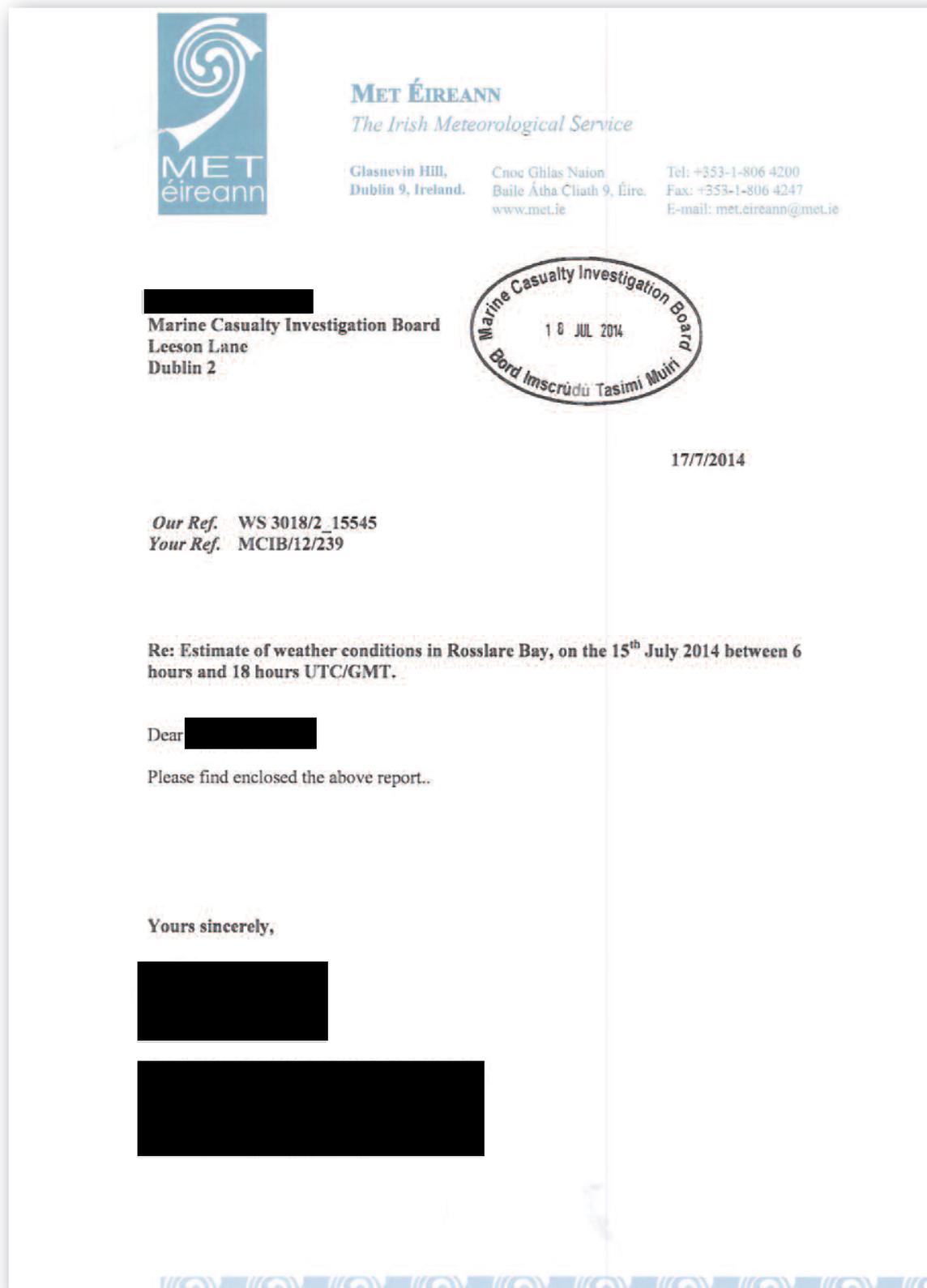


Photograph No. 7 - Showing Gantry



Photograph No. 8 - Showing the Dredging cage lifting winch with lifting line wound up

Appendix 7.4 Met Éireann Weather Report.



Appendix 7.4 Met Éireann Weather Report.



MET ÉIREANN
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Our Ref. WS 3018/2_15545
Your Ref. MCIB/12/239

17/7/2014

**Estimate of weather conditions in Rosslare Bay, on the 15th July 2014
between 6 hours and 18 hours UTC.**

General Situation A weak ridge of High Pressure moved eastwards across the area ahead of a warm front approaching from the west

Details:

06 hours to 12 hours
Winds: Light, Force 2 to 3, from a westerly direction, between south-west and north-west
Weather: dry and rather cloudy
Visibility: good
Seastate: Slight

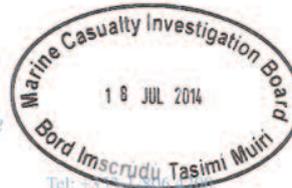
12 hours to 18 hours
Winds: Light to Moderate, Force 3 to 4 from a south to south-west direction
Weather: dry and rather cloudy, though a little sunshine at times
Visibility: good
Seastate: Slight

Appendix 7.4 Met Éireann Weather Report.



MET ÉIREANN
The Irish Meteorological Service

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Beaufort Scale of Wind					
Force	Description	Speed*		Specification -sea	Wave height** (metres)
		knots	km/hr		
0	Calm	<1	<1	Sea like mirror	
1	Light air	1-3	1-5	Ripples	0.1 (0.1)
2	Light breeze	4-6	6-11	Small wavelets	0.2 (0.3)
3	Gentle breeze	7-10	12-19	Large wavelets, crests begin to break	0.6 (1)
4	Moderate breeze	11-16	20-28	Small waves becoming longer, frequent white horses	1 (1.5)
5	Fresh breeze	17-21	29-38	Moderate waves, many white horses, chance of spray	2 (2.5)
6	Strong breeze	22-27	39-49	Large waves, white foam crests, probably some spray	3 (4)
7	Near gale	28-33	50-61	Sea heaps up, streaks of white foam	4 (5.5)
8	Gale	34-40	62-74	Moderately high waves of greater length	5.5 (7.5)
9	Strong gale	41-47	75-88	High waves, dense streaks of foam, spray may reduce visibility	7 (10)
10	Storm	48-55	89-102	Very high waves, long overhanging crests, visibility affected	9 (12.5)
11	Violent storm	56-63	103-117	Exceptionally high waves, long white foam patches cover sea	11.5 (16)
12	Hurricane	64+	117 & over	Air filled with foam and spray, sea completely white	14 (+)

*Speed = mean speed at a standard height of 10 metres.
**Wave height is only intended as a guide to what may be expected in the open sea.
Bracketed figures indicate the probable maximum wave height.

Wave Heights / State of Sea
The wave height is the vertical distance between the crest and the preceding or following trough. The table below gives a description of the wave system associated with a range of significant wave heights. The Significant wave height is defined as the average height of the highest one-third of the waves. (It is very close to the value of wave height given when making visual observations of wave height.)

Sea State (Descriptive)	Significant Wave height in meters
Calm	0 – 0.1
Smooth (Wavelets)	0.1 – 0.5
Slight	0.5 – 1.25
Moderate	1.25 – 2.5
Rough	2.5 – 4
Very rough	4 – 6
High	6 – 9
Very high	9 – 14
Phenomenal	Over 14

Individual waves in the wave train will have heights in excess of the significant height. The highest wave of all will have a height about twice the significant height

Visibility Descriptions of visibility mean the following:

Visibility (Descriptive)	Visibility in nautical miles (kilometres)
Good	More than 5 nm (> 9 km)
Moderate	2 – 5 nm (4 – 9 km)
Poor	0.5 – 2 nm (1 – 4 km)
Fog	Less than 0.5 nm (< 1km)

Note:

If there are no measurements or observations available for an exact location, these estimated conditions are based on all available meteorological measurements and observations which have been correlated on the routine charts prepared by Met Éireann.

Appendix 7.4 Met Éireann Weather Report.

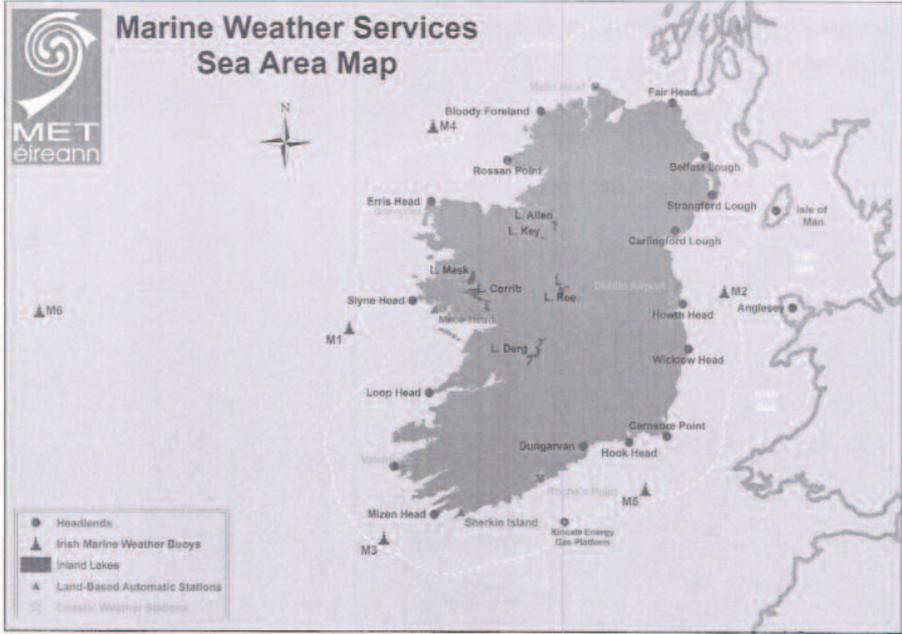


MET ÉIREANN
The Irish Meteorological Service

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Marine Weather Services Sea Area Map



http://www.met.ie/marine/marine_map.asp

Legend:

- Headlands
- ▲ Irish Marine Weather Buoys
- Inland Lakes
- ▲ Land-Based Automatic Stations
- Coastal Weather Stations

APPENDIX 7.5

Appendix 7.5 Roll Test Report.

Roll Test				
Date:	8th of November 2014			
Weather condition:	Wind 15 to 18 knots, rain, visability poor, no swell			
Vessel Condition:	Lightships, no fuel, no water			
Vessel Information				
		Units	Comments	
Length Overall	9.18	M		
Beam Overall	3.04	M		
Length Waterline	8.30	M	Estimated by subtracting over hangs from LOA	
Ls	3.50	M	Take as length of rased foredeck	
Freeboard	0.23	M	Minimum found at aft quarter port side	
B'WL	2.90	M	Estimated by subtracting over hangs from BOA	
Depth	1.15	M	Taken from registration	
Vessel Ratios				
			Limits of Rati	Comments
Freeboard Vs Beam	0.08		.02 to .2	With in range
Ls Vs Length	0.38		less then .6	With in range
Beam Vs Depth	2.64		1.75 to 2.15	Out of range
Vessel Requirements				
		Units	Comments	
GM Minimum	0.54	M		
GM Minimum + 10%	0.60	M		
Experiment results				
		No of tests	<input type="text" value="5"/>	
Test Number	Time	Number of rol	Roll Peroid	Comments
1	9.5	3	3.17	
2	9.4	3	3.13	
3	12.1	4	3.03	
4	12.3	4	3.08	
5	9.3	3	3.10	
Average Roll Peroid =			3.10	
Vessel Results				
		Units	Comments	
Roll Factor	0.8			
GM Actual	0.62	M		
Comments	Vessel meets GM requirements			

Appendix 7.6 Code of Practice, Declaration of Compliance.



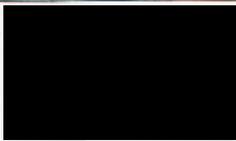
**Design, Construction and Equipment of
 Small Fishing Vessels of less than 15 m Length overall**

**Code of Practice
 Declaration of Compliance**

To be completed by an Authorised Person

Declarations on page v to be signed by the Authorised Person and Owner

Name of Vessel	Fishing Letters & Number	Official Number	Port of Registry
Molly's Quest	DA94	Callsign EIGN9	Drogheda
Overall Length (less than 15 metres)	Breadth	Depth	Date keel laid
9.18m	3.04m	1.15m	1985
Engine Make & Model			Engine Power (kW)
Ford D120			44kW

Name & Address of Owner	
-------------------------	--

Description of vessel
Steel, single screw, half-decked vessel. With gantry and pump engine aft for razor fishing.

Description of operational area
Wexford Harbour to Kilmore Quay, 3-5 miles offshore.

Appendix 7.6 Code of Practice, Declaration of Compliance.

Chapter 2 Construction, Structural Strength and Weathertight Integrity

*2.1	Is hull suitable for the intended fishing method and sea areas?			Yes/No	
*2.2	Construction Materials	Hull	Steel	Superstructure	Steel
*2.3	Is structure sound, watertight & free from significant damage & corrosion?			Yes/No	
*2.4	Do decks comply?			Yes/No	
2.5	Number of bulkheads	Non-watertight	1	Watertight	0
*2.6	Do bulkhead doors comply with Annex 7 (2.3.4)? N/A No bulkhead doors			Yes / No	
*2.7	Doors	Coaming height		320mm	
		Are doors of sound construction and weathertight?			Yes/ No
2.8	Hatchway coaming height			200mm	
*2.9	Can hatches be secured weathertight?			Yes/ No	
*2.10	Do flush hatches comply?			Yes/ No	
*2.11	Do skylights comply? N/A No skylights			Yes / No	
*2.12	Do side scuttles & portlights comply? N/A No portlights			Yes / No	
*2.13	Do windows comply?			Yes/ No	
*2.14	Do ventilators comply?			Yes/ No	
2.15	Is exhaust system acceptable			Yes/ No	
*2.16	Do air pipes comply?			Yes/ No	
*2.17.2	Do sea inlets and discharges comply?			Yes/ No	
*2.18.3	Do valves, piping & hoses comply?			Yes/ No	
*2.19	Do freeing ports comply?			Yes/ No	

Chapter 3 Stability

*3.1	Is stability information supplied?			Yes/No
	Are requirements of Annex 7 applied?			Yes/No
*Annex 7 (para.4)	Stability standard applied		Roll Test	T = 2.95s
	Freeboard	0.29	Roll coefficient	0.8
Annex 2	Are guidance notes on board?			Yes/ No

Chapter 4 Machinery and Electrical Installations

4.1	Machinery			
*4.1.1.1	General Requirements - comply?			Yes/ No
*4.1.2	Propulsion Machinery and Stern Gear - comply?			Yes/ No
*4.1.4	Controls and Instruments - comply?			Yes/ No
*4.1.5	Steering System - comply?			Yes/ No
4.2	Electrical Installations			
*4.2.1	General - comply?			Yes/ No
*4.2.2	D.C. Systems Up To 24 volts - comply?			Yes/ No
*4.2.3	A.C. Systems - comply?			Yes/ No
4.3	Pumping & Piping			
*4.3.1	Fuel Oil Installations - comply?			Yes/ No
*4.3.2	Cooling Water Systems - comply?			Yes/ No
*4.3.3	Bilge Pumping Systems - comply?			Yes/ No
*4.3.4	Bilge Pumps - comply?			Yes/ No
4.4	Anchors & Cables			
*4.4.1	General - comply?			Yes/ No
*4.4.4	Towline - comply?			Yes/ No
4.5	Fishing & Handling Equipment			
*4.5.1	Winches, tackles and lifting gear - comply?			Yes/ No
*4.5.2	Running gear - comply?			Yes/ No

Appendix 7.6 Code of Practice, Declaration of Compliance.

Chapter 5 Fire Protection, Detection & Extinction

5.1	Fire Safety				
#5.1.1	Machinery space capable of being closed down?				Yes/ No
*5.1.2	Fire Prevention - comply?				Yes/ No
*5.1.3	Cleanliness and Pollution Prevention - comply?				Yes/ No
*5.1.4	Open-Flame Gas Appliances - comply? <i>N/A No Gas</i>				Yes / No
*5.1.5	Gas Detection - comply? <i>N/A No Gas</i>				Yes / No
5.2	Fire Fighting Appliances				
#5.2.1	Are extinguishers of an approved type				Yes/ No
#5.2.2	Portable Extinguishers			Serviced Date	02/2012
		Engine room	Type <i>Foam</i>	Rating <i>27A/183B</i>	N ^o <i>2</i>
		Other spaces	Type <i>Powder</i>	Rating <i>13A/55B</i>	N ^o <i>2</i>
#5.2.5	Fire buckets			N ^o <i>1</i>	
#5.2.6	Remote controls for fuel tank valves	Yes/ No	Number	<i>2</i>	
			Location	<i>Wheelhouse</i>	
#5.2.6	Are means of closing skylights, doorways etc to machinery and cargo spaces adequate?				Yes/ No

Chapter 6 Protection of Crew

6.1	Protection of Personnel				
*6.1.2	Bulwarks, Guard Rails and Handrails - comply?				Yes/ No
*6.1.4	Surface of Working Decks - comply?				Yes/ No
*6.1.5	Personal Protective Equipment - comply?				Yes/ No
#6.2	Medical Stores - comply?				Yes/ No
*6.3	Securing of Heavy Items or Equipment and Fishing Gear etc - comply?				Yes/ No

Chapter 7 Life-Saving Appliances

#7.1	Are all items of LSA of an approved type				Yes/ No
#7.2	Have relevant items of LSA been serviced				Yes/ No
#7.3	1 Lifejacket for every person on board		Yes/ No	N ^o :	<i>2</i>
*7.4	Liferafts sufficient for 100% persons		Yes/ No	N ^o	Last Serviced <i>11/2012</i>
	Hydrostatic Release Unit (HRU)		Yes/ No	N ^o	Last Serviced <i>11/2012</i>
#7.5	Lifebuoys		Total N ^o of Lifebuoys		<i>2</i>
			N ^o with 18m line		<i>1</i>
			N ^o with combined light & smoke signal		<i>0</i>
#7.6	1 Personal Floatation Devices (PFD) for every person on board		Yes/ No	N ^o :	<i>2</i>
#7.8	Distress signals	6 red star	Yes/ No	12 parachute rockets	Yes / No
*7.9	Means for Recovering Persons from the Water				Yes/ No

Chapter 8 Manning, Training & Certification

#8.2	Manning - comply?				Yes/ No
*8.8					Yes/ No
*8.3	Standards of Competence - comply?				Yes/ No
*8.5	Operation and Maintenance of Propulsion Machinery - comply?				Yes/ No
#8.6	Operation of Radio Equipment - comply?				Yes/ No
#8.7	Safety Training - comply?				Yes/ No
	Is there a copy of the Code of Practice on board?				Yes/ No

Appendix 7.6 Code of Practice, Declaration of Compliance.

Notes:

1. # indicates Statutory requirements
2. * indicates mandatory requirement for Code compliance
3. ‡ indicates statutory requirement for vessels ≥ 12m L_{oa} and mandatory requirement for Code compliance for vessels < 12m L_{oa}
4. Only Statutory and mandatory Code requirements are to be addressed when completing the Declaration.
5. If 'No' is answered to any question, please supply, in a separate statement, the reasons why the particular item is not complied with.
6. If a particular item is not applicable, please state the reason why.

Declaration by Authorised Person

Name of Vessel	Fishing Letters & Number	Official Number	Port of Registry
Molly's Quest	DA94		Drogheda

I hereby declare that on 24/6/13 at 10:00 I completed the inspection of the Fishing Vessel MOLLY'S QUEST and that:

1. the particulars given on this form are true and correct;
2. in my judgement the vessel complies with the Code of Practice and is fit for its intended fishing method and for the sea areas in which it is intended to operate.

Dated at WEXFORD
this 24TH day of JUNE 2013

Signed 

This Declaration is valid until
23RD day of JUNE 2017

Company Stamp.



Declaration by Owner

I/We  Owner(s) of the above-described vessel declare that the particulars given on this form are correct and that we have no reason to believe that vessel is not fit for its intended fishing method or for the sea areas in which it is intended to operate.

Signature(s): 

If company, state position held: _____

Date _____

8 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

PAGE

- 8.1 Correspondence from Rosslare Harbour Master and MCIB Response 28

Note: The name and contact details of the individual respondent have been obscured for privacy reasons.

Correspondence 8.1 Rosslare Harbour Master and MCIB Response.

Good afternoon

PLEASE FORWARD TO [REDACTED]

Your Ref: MCIB/12/239

Thank you for the draft report issued on 9th April 2015. I attach below some comments.

Razor clam fishing activity commenced in Rosslare Bay in 2010.

About 20-25 boats are engaged in this activity.

In July 2014 and Feb 2015 two separate incidents occurred where vessels engaged in this activity sank.

Whilst this draft report addresses the first sinking, two sinkings in seven months is of concern.

It is most disappointing that no cause of this sinking was determined [S5.6].

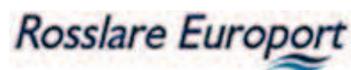
Is it within the remit of the investigation to examine probable causes and the human element when reacting to the loss of stability?

Such an examination might create greater safety awareness afloat.

I hope that the above comments are of assistance.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Operations Manager|Harbour Master|Port Security Officer
ROSSLARE EUROPORT
Co. Wexford
IRELAND.

[REDACTED]
Twitter @HMRosslare



MCIB RESPONSE:

The MCIB notes the contents of this response and makes the following comments.

It was not possible to establish the exact probable cause of the capsizing.

Section 35 (1) of the Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Casualties) Act 2000 states "The report of an investigation into a marine casualty should record all relevant findings of the investigator during the investigation."

35(2) having regard to section 25, if the investigator succeeds in establishing the cause or causes, or probable cause or causes, of the marine casualty, the report shall indicate it or them.