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**REPORT OF THE INVESTIGATION
INTO THE SINKING OF THE
“MFV IÚDA NAOFA”
OFF THE BUTT OF LEWIS,
ON
20th JANUARY 2015**

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**REPORT NO. MCIB/243
(No.11 OF 2015)**



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1. SUMMARY

On the 17th January 2015, the Irish fishing vessel “*MFV Iúda Naofa*” departed with five crew from Rossaveal in the company of another vessel “*MFV Star of Hope*”. On the night of the 19th January 2015 the vessels were 50 miles North of the Hebrides. On the morning of the 20th January 2015 with full holds the vessels were proceeding towards the Minches with the intention of returning to Lough Foyle. At approximately 09.00 hrs to 09.30 hrs on 20th January 2015, at position 59°16’N 009°34’W, the forepeak bilge alarm sounded on the “*MFV Iúda Naofa*” and water was observed in the bilge. The pumps were started but could not stem the flow of water. At 10.33 hrs the vessel called the Irish Coast Guard for a pump to be delivered. Shortly afterwards, the water reached the generators located in the forepeak and the generator power was lost. At 11.53 hrs a HM Coast Guard helicopter landed a pump on deck, but the crew were unable to start the pump. The vessel began to list to port and the helicopter lowered the winchman to begin the rescue of the crew. During the process the vessel further rolled to port and the crew climbed on the starboard quarter. As the winchman lifted the first man off, the remaining crew were washed into the water and the vessel went down by the head and sank rapidly. Two of the crew were lifted from the water by the helicopter and the other two crew swam to the life raft which had inflated and were subsequently rescued by the “*MFV Star of Hope*”. All crew were saved and were safely brought ashore.

2. FACTUAL INFORMATION

2.1 General particulars of vessel

Name of Vessel:	“MFV IÚDA NAOFA”.
Vessel Type:	Trawler.
Fishing Method(s):	Pelagic, demersal & tuna.
Port of Registry:	Sligo.
Registration Letters:	SO 679.
Length OA:	24.99 metres (m).
Length BP:	23.11 m.
Beam:	7.24 m, over planking.
Depth:	4.605 m, top of deck from base line.
Hull Material:	Timber.
Official Number:	401770.
Gross Tonnage:	198.
When Built:	1978.
Where Built:	Meevagh, Co Donegal, Ireland.
Engine:	Cummings Diesel/492.43 Kw (installed 1998).
Minimum Freeboard:	676 mm in deepest foreseeable loading condition.
Displacement:	316.1 tonnes foreseeable loading condition.
Draught Midships:	3.93 m to base line in deepest foreseeable loading condition.

2.2 General description of the vessel

The vessel was a wooden fishing vessel with aluminium wheelhouse aft and aluminium shelter deck. It was rigged for pelagic fishing at the time of the incident.

The catch was pumped from the net through a side door in the shelter deck to eight ports in the main deck (See Appendix 7.1 for photograph and Appendix 7.2 for General Arrangement of Vessel). It is noted that water was separated from the fish before it was stored in the hold.

2.3 Vessel history

The vessel had undergone a number of modifications throughout as follows:

1. Re - engining
2. Fitting of split winch
3. Addition of aluminium shelter deck
4. Fitting of a gantry
5. Additional insulation in holds

2.4 Survey record

The vessel was surveyed by the Marine Survey Office (MSO) in September 2014. A number of hull fastenings were drawn and found to be in very good condition. The second plank above the bilge strake on the aft starboard side was replaced. A section of the planking was also replaced on the port side in way of the gearbox oil cooler in the main engine where there was localised rot in way of the skin fitting. On the aft port side there were early signs of small worm holes in the third plank above the bilge strakes. The depth was assessed by the attending shipwright and this was heat treated. No caulking was extracted and the attending shipwright renewed caulking in some identified areas where there were signs of water egress from the hull.

This was particularly noted on the port aft quarter where skin fittings were removed and visually inspected. No other defects were recorded by the MSO. A radio survey was carried out in December 2014.

On 31st December 2014 the vessel was issued with an Interim Fishing Vessel Safety Certificate of Compliance under the 15 to 24 m fishing vessels regulations, valid until 31st January 2015.

An interim certificate was issued as the Stability Book had not been finally approved at that time and a revision was also required as the original stability book had incorrectly described the forecastle space as an enclosed structure.

2.5 Crew Qualifications

Skipper: Owner of the vessel for 25 years
2nd Hand Skippers Certificate,
ROC & Safety Certificates
Irish National

Crew No. 2: Served on the vessel 3 years
Yachtmaster Offshore Certificate
ROC & Safety Certificates
Irish National

Crew No. 3: Served on the vessel 3½ years,
BIM Safety Certificate,
Had been owner/skipper on a fishing vessel in Black Sea
Romanian National

Crew No. 4: Served on the vessel 3 years,
BIM Safety Certificate
Irish National

Crew No. 5: Served on the vessel 2½ years
BIM Safety Certificate
Irish National

All crew had service on other fishing vessels

2.6 Voyage particulars

The “*MFV Iúda Naofa*” departed Rossaveal Co. Galway on the morning of 17th January 2015 in the company of the “*MFV Star of Hope*”.

The vessel was returning to Lough Foyle laden with fish on the morning of 20th January 2015.

2.7 Marine Incident Information

Type: Serious Incident.

Date: 20th January 2015.

Time: 12.14 UTC.

Position: Lat 59° 16’N - Long 009° 34’W.
(See Appendix 7.3 Location of incident and place named in the Report)

Weather: Wind SSW 6 to 7.
Cloudy with showers.
Visibility, mostly good.
Sea state rough with SW swell.
(See Appendix 7.4 Met Éireann Weather Report).

Ship Operation: Fishing.

Vessel factors: Water ingress leading to flooding and sinking.

Consequences: Loss of vessel.

2.8 Shore Authority Involvement and emergency response

- Request for pump to Malin Head Coast Guard on MF 2182
- Response from Stornaway Coast Guard on MF 2182
- Dispatch of pump by helicopter from Stornaway
- Rescue of 3 crew from water by helicopter

3. NARRATIVE

3.1 Events before the Incident

The “*MFV Iúda Naofa*” and the “*MFV Star of Hope*” completed trawling early on the morning of 20th January 2015. The decision was made to head for Lough Foyle via the Hebrides to unload the catch. Two crewmembers were kept on deck tending to the pumps for the cargo hold in order to pump out excess water from the melting ice.

Between 09.00 hrs and 09.30 hrs the bilge alarm in the forepeak sounded and water was observed in the bilge but its source could not be identified as it was deep below sole boards (See shaded compartment on Appendix 7.2 General Arrangement Plan).

The bilge pump was started and then the cargo pump and a portable electric pump. The crew had donned the survival suits, but those tending the pumps found them difficult to work in and one crewmember had unzipped the top and rolled it down to his waist.

At 10.33 hrs the Skipper called Malin Head Coastguard radio to request delivery of a pump as the water was gaining on the vessels pumps. The vessel was slightly trimmed by the bow but was rising to the seas. Shortly after this call was made the water reached the generators and power was lost.

3.2 The incident

At 11.47 hrs the HM Coastguard helicopter arrived with a portable pump. The water in the forepeak was about 1 m below the hatch combing. The vessel was still upright and rising to the sea with no water lodging on deck.

At 11.53 hrs the pump was landed on the after deck. Crewmember No. 2 had been instructed in the high line protocol as part of his yacht masters course. There was some difficulty in operating the release clip, the pump was in a protective box which tipped on to its side when landing on deck. The crew were unable to start the pump.

Whilst the pump was being brought to the foredeck to be rigged, water began to lodge on the foredeck and the vessel started to list to port.

Upon hearing of the failure of the helicopter pump, the Skipper instructed the crew to assemble on the aft deck, as per the helicopter’s command and the winchman was lowered to start lifting the crew off the vessel. The two crewmembers that dealt with the helicopter pump, Crewmembers 2 and 5 were not wearing lifejackets. They did not have time to don them after arriving on the deck to be airlifted. The other three crewmembers were wearing lifejackets.

The vessel rolled on to port side and three of the crew, climbed over the starboard rail. The Skipper was holding onto the rail, assisted by one crewmember.

A wave washed four crewmembers, including the Skipper, off the vessel. Crewmember No. 3 remained on-board until the vessel went down by the head and he then jumped off the transom into the water.

The time from mustering on the aft deck to the vessel sinking was about 35 to 40 seconds.

Crewmember No. 2 was not wearing a lifejacket and was lifted from the water first as his immersion suit was flooding. The Skipper and Crewmember No. 5 were lifted onto helicopter. Crewmembers No. 3 and 4 swam to the liferaft which had floated to the surface. It had inflated upside down. They righted it and climbed in and were picked up shortly afterwards by the “*MFV Star of Hope*” which had been standing by.

3.3 Events after the incident

Three crewmembers were taken by helicopter to hospital in Stornaway. They did not require medical attention and were repatriated to Ireland two days later.

The other two crewmembers were taken on-board the “*MFV Star of Hope*” to Lough Foyle. They did not require any medical attention.

The “*MFV Star of Hope*” was unable to recover the liferaft or EPIRB.

The second liferaft did not inflate or reach the surface.

At 13.20 hrs on 20th January 2015 the Falmouth CG reported a hit from an Irish registered EPIRB.

4. ANALYSIS

4.1 Communications

The initial mayday was broadcast on MF2182 to Malin Head Coastguard as the Skipper felt that they could be out of range for VHF and that he was familiar with Malin Head Coastguard.

All the communications with the helicopter were on VHF Channel 16 until they had to abandon the wheelhouse. The emergency handheld VHF set was not taken as they needed both hands to hold onto the rapidly listing vessel.

4.2 Watertight integrity

All hatches and fish loading doors were shut, however, there was water in the hold caused by melting ice. The starboard fish door was closed as this is only opened when loading fish from the net into the hold.

The vessel was surveyed in September 2014 when two planks were replaced. Fastenings were drawn and found to be in good condition. Marine sealant was applied to all seams. The caulking was inspected and some renewed. Heat treatment for small worm holes was also applied.

The vessel was 37 years old and was subject to regular surveys and maintenance, however, the possibility of hidden weaknesses cannot be ruled out.

4.3 Source of water ingress & containment

The initial source of water ingress was through the hull below the sole of the forepeak.

Up to this there had been no evidence of water ingress through the sole.

Neither the Skipper nor crew had any recollection of any impact at the bow area. Speed does not appear to be a factor as the Skipper does not push the boat at full speed into the heavy seas and stated that at the time of the incident the vessel was only travelling at 4 to 5 knots.

The bilge alarm sounded and the three automatic bilge pumps began pumping immediately but could not keep pace with the volume of water ingress. When the level of the water reached the generators all power was lost and the compartment flooded rapidly.

4.4 Stability

The Stability Book, supplied by the owner, noted that at the time of the incident the vessel's metacentric height was 0.768 m with a draft of 3.85 m and a

corresponding freeboard of 755 mm. The minimum of worst condition of loading was 676 mm indicating that the vessel was not fully loaded.

The catch was well contained in the hold which uses planked enclosures, the top of which are bolted. All fish are below the height of the planks.

The effect of the flooding of the forepeak resulted in the loss of freeboard and trimming by the head. The crew stated that the vessel maintained stability until the water lodged on the foredeck entered through the freeing ports and flowed forward. The free surface of this water, along with the water in the hold would have significantly contributed to the capsizing.

4.5 Emergency Pump

The emergency pump dropped by the helicopter landed on the deck on its side. The crew stated that they had difficulty in releasing the pump from the wire as they were unfamiliar with the clip. The crew also stated that they could not start the pump as there were no instructions on how to start and operate the pump. In any event it is very unlikely that the pump had the capacity to deal with the volume of water aboard.

Stornaway Coastguard confirmed there was a full set of instructions with the pump, including instructions on how to clear fuel flooding. They also confirmed that the release clip from the hi - line was of a standard type and that the crew shouldn't have had any difficulty opening it.

4.6 Evacuation of vessel

The Skipper realised, in sufficient time, that the vessel was in imminent danger of sinking, so he instructed all crew to don immersion suits and lifejackets. However as the crew worked to save the vessel, some lifejackets were removed and one immersion suit unzipped.

The final deterioration was sudden with the vessel sinking in less than a minute. One crewmember had not rezippered his immersion suit and two crewmembers had not put their lifejackets back on. The evacuation was completed without any panic and with the crew looking after each other.

The vessel had two liferafts with hydrostatic releases. The starboard one surfaced, the port one appears to have become trapped under the vessel.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 It is not possible to determine the cause of water ingress without physical evidence from the vessel.
- 5.2 The vessel had adequate stability for normal working conditions and remained stable with the forward compartment flooded. The loss of stability occurred with the lodging of water on the fore deck which led to a capsize and eventual sinking of the vessel.
- 5.3 The crew made every effort to save the vessel, but the location of the pumps and generators in the flooding compartment meant power was lost and flooding could not be contained.
- 5.4 Only one crewmember had knowledge of the Hi-line Protocols for helicopter operations, and there was difficulty in releasing the clip from the line when the pump was being landed. The portable pump that was landed was unlikely to have sufficient capacity to contain the flooding at that stage.
- 5.5 Preparations to abandon the vessel were made in good time, but the suddenness of the final capsize and sinking left two crewmembers without lifejackets and one with immersion suit unzipped. These crewmembers had been working to keep the vessel afloat.
- 5.6 It was fortunate that the “*MFV Star of Hope*” was in the area and was able to assist the rescue.

6. SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Portable pumps have clear instructions for starting and operating attached to them. This should be communicated by way of Safety Notice to inform the fishing industry that the instructions are present with each pump and should be followed.
- 6.2 The MCIB recommends that the Minister updates Marine Notice No. 34 of 2000 regarding helicopter SAR Hi-line Protocols with specific reference to the fishing industry.
- 6.3 Hi-line Protocols should be included in safety training for fishing vessels.

7. APPENDICES

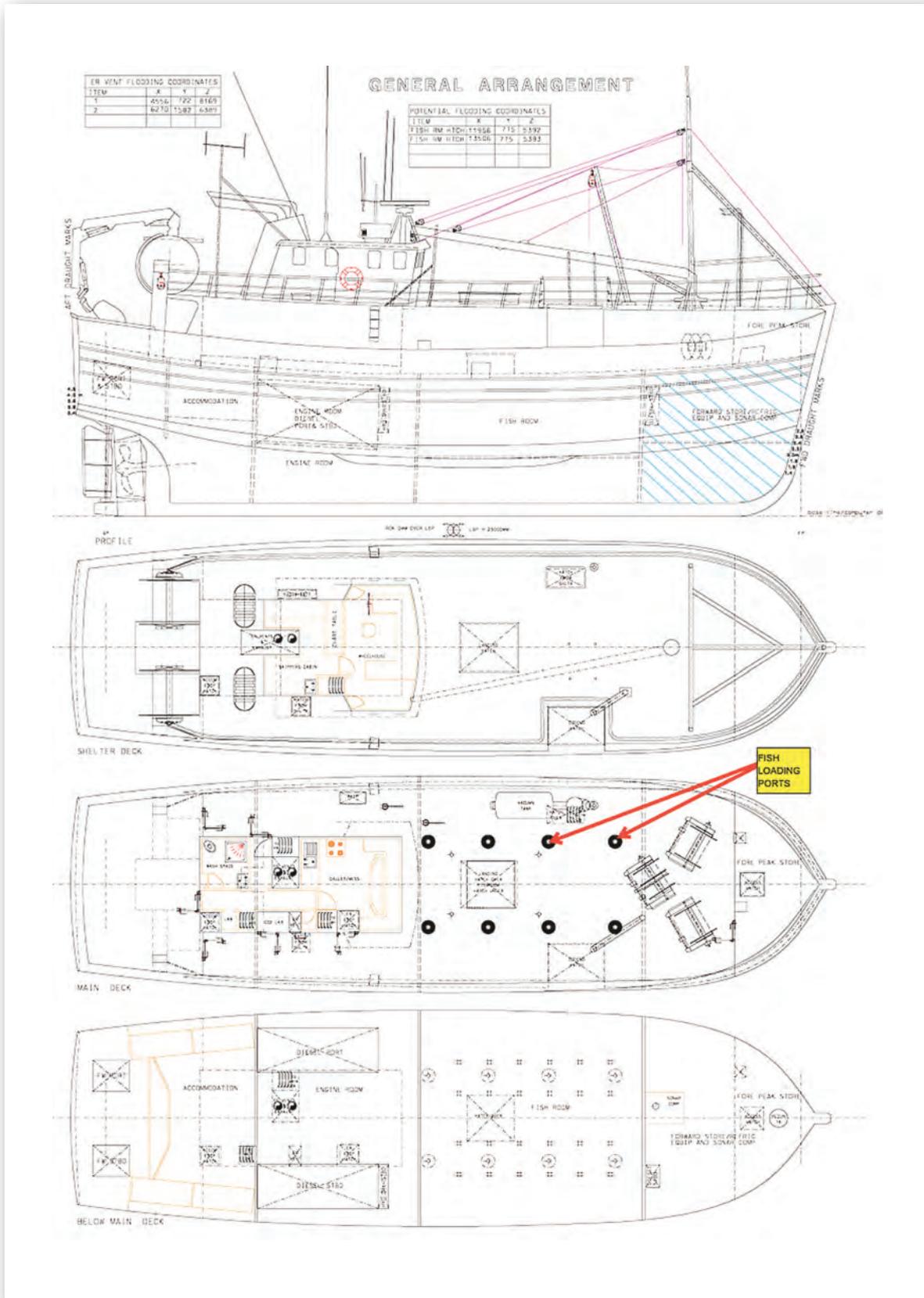
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Appendix 7.1 Photograph of “MFV *Iúda Naofa*”.



APPENDIX 7.2

Appendix 7.2 General Arrangement of Vessel.



Appendix 7.3 Location of incident and place named in Report.



Appendix 7.4 Met Éireann Weather Report.



Appendix 7.4 Met Éireann Weather Report.



MET ÉIREANN
The Irish Meteorological Service

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22/1/2015

Our Ref. WS 3018/2_15750
Your Ref. MCIB/12/243

Estimate of weather conditions in the sea area around 59°16'N and 6°34'W off Butt of Lewis, on the 20th January 2015, between 6 hours and 18 hours.

General Situation
A deep Low pressure area west of Iceland extended down over Scotland and Ireland. Associated frontal troughs moved eastwards across this sea area during the day, bringing an increase in winds and waves for a time.

Details:
06 hours to 12 hours
Winds: Steadily increasing winds were strong to near Gale Force, Force 6 to Force 7 from a south-south-westerly direction.
Weather: Rather cloudy with spells of rain and drizzle
Sea state: Very Rough increased to High (a combination of a Rough southerly Sea and a Very Rough westerly Swell)

12 hours to 18 hours
Winds: Near Gale Force 7 eased a little to Force 5 to Force 6 from a southerly direction.
Weather: cloudy, some rain in the area.
Sea state: High (a combination of a Rough southerly Sea and a Very Rough westerly Swell)

Temperatures throughout: Air were 5°C to 7° C and sea were 9°C to 10° C





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	0.6 (1)
3	Gentle breeze	7-10	12-19	Large wavelets, crests begin to break	0.2 (0.3)
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 (< 1 km)

Note:

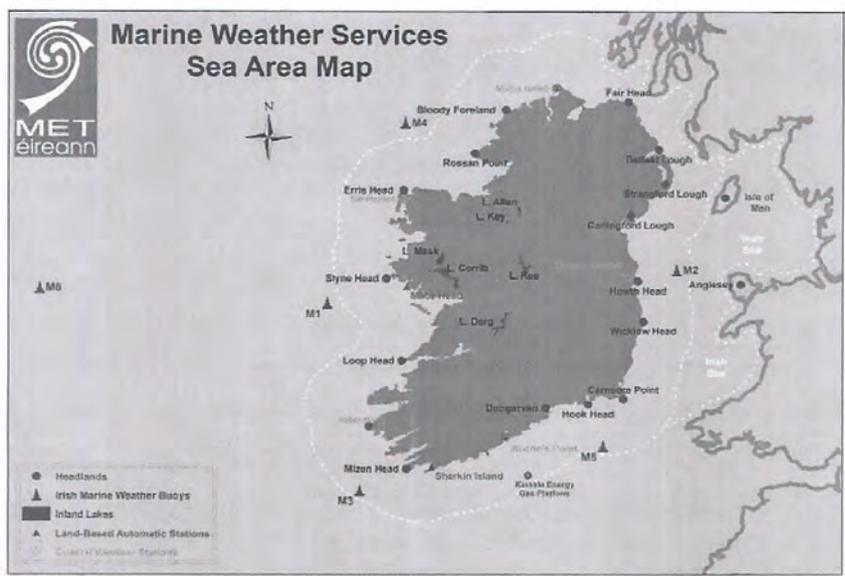
If there are no measurements or observations available for an exact location, these estimated conditions are based on all available meteorological measurements and observations which have been correlated on the routine charts prepared by Met Éireann

Appendix 7.4 Met Éireann Weather Report.



MET ÉIREANN
The Irish Meteorological Service

Glasnevin Hill, Dublin 9, Ireland.	Cnoc Ghlas Naíon Baile Átha Cliath 9, Éire. www.met.ie	Tel: +353-1-806 4200 Fax: +353-1-806 4247 E-mail: met.eireann@met.ie
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8. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

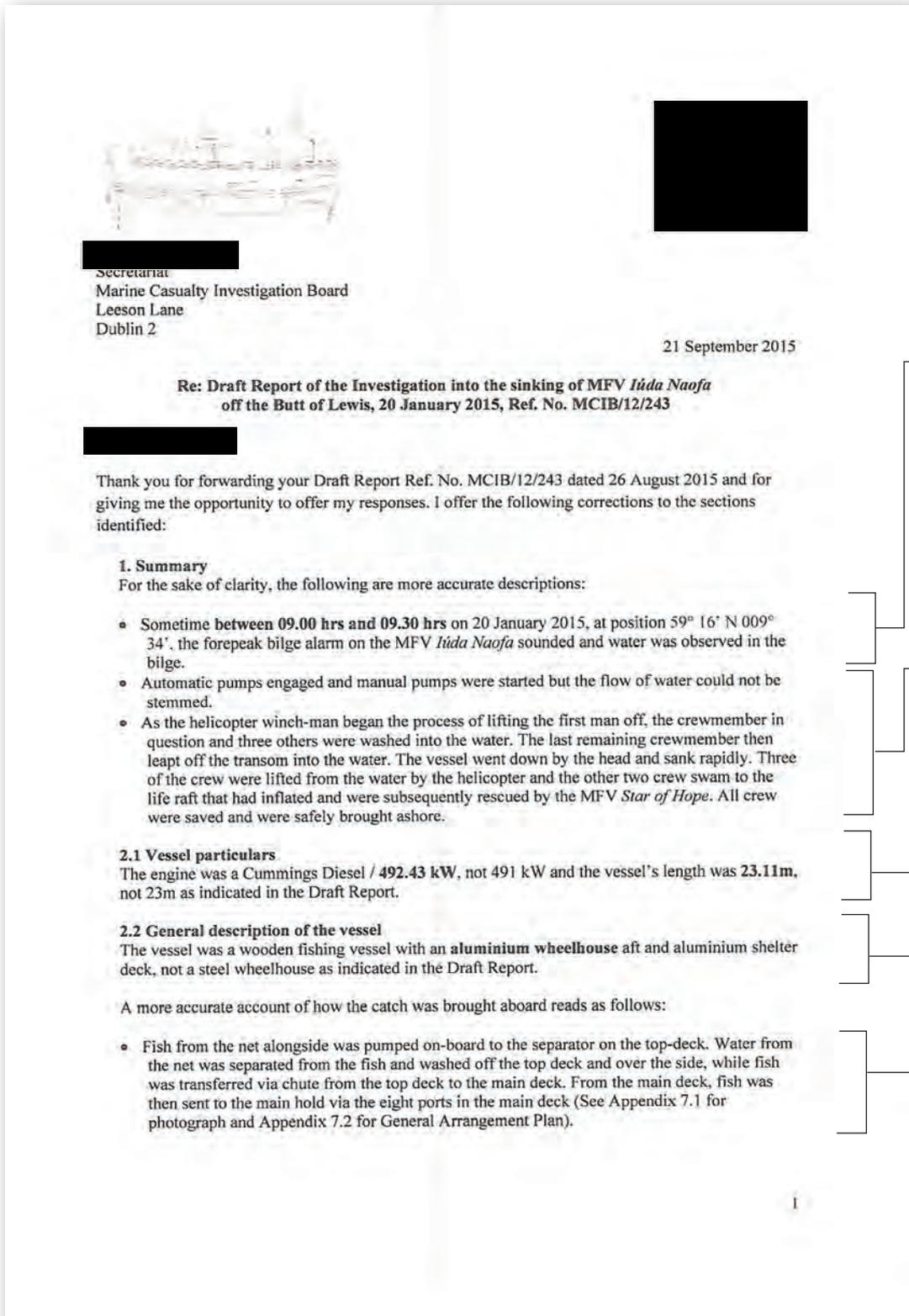
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8.1 Correspondence from Skipper of “*MFV Iúda Naofa*”
and MCIB response

23

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

Correspondence 8.1 Skipper of “MFV *Iúda Naofa*” and MCIB response.



MCIB RESPONSE:
The MCIB notes this point and has made the necessary amendment.

MCIB RESPONSE:
The MCIB notes these points but considers that no amendments are necessary.

MCIB RESPONSE:
The MCIB notes this point and has made the necessary amendment.

MCIB RESPONSE:
The MCIB notes this point and has made the necessary amendment.

MCIB RESPONSE:
The MCIB notes this point and has made the necessary amendment.

Correspondence 8.1 Skipper of “MFV *Iúda Naofa*” and MCIB response.

3.1 Events before the Incident

For the sake of clarity, the following are more accurate descriptions:

- Sometime between 09.00 hrs and 09.30 hrs, the bilge alarm in the forepeak sounded...
- The submersible electric bilge pump with non-return valves was on a float-switch and engaged automatically. Shortly after, upon inspection, the manual pump was started. A third spare portable submersible electric pump was brought from the wheelhouse and employed in the forepeak.
- The crew had donned the immersion suits but they found them difficult to work in, with only one crewmember unzipping the top and rolling it down to his waist.

3.2 The Incident

The account of the incident given at this point in the Draft Report fails to indicate what is acknowledged elsewhere in the document in Section 4.5 i.e. that the portable pump lowered by the helicopter to the vessel failed to start.

For the sake of clarity, the following are more accurate descriptions:

- Some crewmembers were not wearing their lifejackets and one other crewmember had unzipped his immersion suit, each in order to enable him to work. Crewmembers No.2 and No.5 arrived on the aft deck without lifejackets.
- Upon hearing of the failure of the helicopter pump, the Skipper instructed the crew to muster – on the aft deck, as per the helicopter’s command – and the winchman was lowered to start lifting the crew off the vessel.
- The vessel rolled onto her port side. Three crewmembers (Nos. 2, 3 & 4) climbed over the starboard rail. The Skipper was assisted by one crewmember, not two as indicated in the Draft Report. Crewmember No.5 was holding onto the Skipper and both of them were lying on the gallast/gantry. A wave then washed four crew, including the Skipper, off the vessel. Crewmember No.3 remained on board until the vessel began to go down by the head, at which point he jumped off the transom into the water.
- Crewmember No. 2 was not wearing a lifejacket and was lifted from the water first. Crewmember No.5 and the Skipper were then lifted onto the helicopter.
- The second life-raft was not observed inflating or reaching the surface.

3.3 Events after the incident

The three crewmembers were repatriated to Ireland two days later on 22 January 2015, not ‘the next day’ as indicated in the Draft Report.

4.2 Watertight integrity

For the sake of clarity, the following are more accurate descriptions:

- The starboard fish door was closed at the time as this was only opened in the event that the fish pump was being attached to the net.
- Marine sealant was applied to all the seams.

4.5 Emergency Pump

For the sake of clarity, the following is a more accurate description:

- The crew also stated that the pump would not start. In any event, it is unlikely that the pump had the capacity to deal with the volume of water on board by that time.

2

MCIB RESPONSE:

The MCIB notes this point and has made the necessary amendment.

MCIB RESPONSE:

The MCIB notes these points.

MCIB RESPONSE:

The MCIB notes this point and has made the necessary amendment.

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The MCIB notes this point.

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The MCIB notes this point.

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The MCIB notes this point.

MCIB RESPONSE:

The MCIB notes this point and has made the necessary amendment.

MCIB RESPONSE:

The MCIB notes this point but considers that no amendment is necessary.

MCIB RESPONSE:

The MCIB notes this point and has made the necessary amendment.

MCIB RESPONSE:

The MCIB notes this point but considers no amendment is necessary.

Correspondence 8.1 Skipper of “MFV *Iúda Naofa*” and MCIB response.

4.6 Evacuation of vessel

For the sake of clarity, the following are more accurate descriptions:

- However, while the crew worked to save the vessel, some of them were not wearing lifejackets and one immersion suit was unzipped, each in order to facilitate current operations.
- One crewmember had not fully re-zipped his immersion suit but had secured his lifejacket. Two other crewmembers did not have time to don the lifejackets that they had delayed donning for operational reasons.
- The vessel had two life-rafts with hydrostatic releases. The starboard one surfaced and the port one appears to have become trapped under the vessel.

5.5 Conclusions

For the sake of clarity, the following is a more accurate description:

- ...the suddenness of the final capsize and sinking left two crew without lifejackets and another with his immersion suit not fully zipped.

6 Safety Recommendations

To the safety recommendations made in the Draft Report, I would add the following:

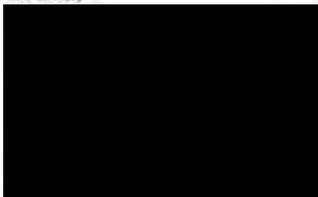
- In future, the design of the glove portion of immersion suits should strive for increased operability by enabling greater dexterity.
- The helicopter clip used in the SAR Hi-Line Protocol should be introduced into sea survival training courses.
- Demonstrations of how to start the portable pumps used by SAR teams should be introduced into sea survival training courses.

Appendix 7.3

The map indicating where MFV *Iúda Naofa* sank gives the date as 20-02-2015. It should indicate 20-01-2015.

I have no further comments or observations to make on this Report except to strongly endorse the Board’s recommendations at Section 6. I do not object to my observations appearing in the final report.

Le meas,



MCIB RESPONSE:
The MCIB notes these points and has made the necessary amendments.

MCIB RESPONSE:
The MCIB notes this point and considers no amendment is necessary.

MCIB RESPONSE:
The MCIB notes these points but considers that they are covered by Recommendation 6.3.

MCIB RESPONSE:
The MCIB notes this point and has made the necessary amendment.

MCIB RESPONSE:
The MCIB notes this comment and welcomes the support for the recommendations.

