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Log M-311B

National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594
Safety Recommendation

Date: May 23, 1986
In reply refer to: M-86-40

Mr. Thor Lassen
Executive Secretary
National Council on Fishing Vessel
Safety and Insurance
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About 0430 on July 23, 1984, the 70.5-foot-long U.S. fishing vessel SANTO ROSARIO, while fishing for calico scallops about 35 nautical miles east of New Smyrna Beach, Florida, capsized and sank. Three crewmembers were rescued by a fishing vessel nearby, but the fourth crewmember, sleeping below deck, went down with the vessel and drowned. The vessel's estimated value was \$250,000. 1/

The captain and two deckhands escaped and managed to climb onto the bottom of the overturned hull, but they did not have time to alert the deckhand who was sleeping below. Had he been warned in time, he also might have escaped. Just before the vessel overturned, the captain was in the wheelhouse close to the speaker amplifier system which served the after deck. Had a speaker or alarm been installed in the forward berthing space, the captain might have been able to warn the deckhand below, although in this case it might not have been necessary because of the violent rolling of the vessel. However, the Safety Board believes that the installation of a speaker or alarm in berthing spaces, operable in the wheelhouse on fishing vessels, would be effective in alerting off-duty crewmembers who are below deck of an emergency.

The SANTO ROSARIO had sufficient floatable lifesaving devices, but none was effective in aiding the survivors. The vessel overturned so quickly that no one had time to get to the life preservers, which were stowed in the cabin of the deckhouse. The life preservers, the two ring life buoys on either side of the wheelhouse, and the six-person liferaft on top were too well secured to the vessel to float free. None of the fishermen was trained in the use or stowage of lifesaving equipment. If the SANTO ROSARIO had sunk before the three survivors were rescued, they might have perished because they would have had nothing to support them in the water. The liferaft could have floated free had it been secured with spring-tensioned grips and a hydraulic release, one of several methods now required for liferaft stowage on U.S. merchant vessels. Similarly, the ring life buoys could have floated free if they had been secured in hydraulic release-operated

1/ For more detailed information read Marine Accident Report--"Sinking of the U.S. Fishing Vessel SANTO ROSARIO about 35 Nautical Miles East of New Smyrna Beach, Florida, July 23, 1984" (NTSB/MAR-86/06).

frames or had been lying flat in an open box. The life preservers would have been more readily available to the crew if some had been stowed in the wheelhouse and in a storage locker on deck. The Safety Board believes that ring life buoys and liferafts on fishing vessels should be stowed so they can float free and that additional life preservers should be located near work areas where they can be readily available.

As a result of its investigation of the AMAZING GRACE accident in 1984, 2/ the Safety Board issued Safety Recommendation M-85-82 on August 12, 1985, to the National Council on Fishing Vessel Safety and Insurance:

Promote through your organization and your member organizations:

- (1) The training of fishing vessel captains and their crews, as appropriate, in basic safety such as stability, watertight integrity, firefighting, and the use of lifesaving equipment;
- (2) The determination of the stability characteristics of fishing vessels by their owners and the provision of guidance to fishing vessel captains on proper loading. . . .

As of the date of this letter no response to this recommendation has been received from the National Council on Fishing Vessel Safety and Insurance. Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board reiterates Safety Recommendation M-85-82 and also recommends that the National Council on Fishing Vessel Safety and Insurance:


Promote through your organization and your member organizations:

- (1) The installation of a speaker or alarm in the crew berthing spaces on fishing vessels that is operable in the wheelhouse so that persons below can be alerted to an emergency, and
- (2) The practice of stowing ring life buoys and liferafts so they can float free and of locating additional life preservers near work areas where they can be readily available.

(Class II, Priority Action) (M-86-40)

The National Transportation Safety Board is an independent Federal agency with the statutory responsibility ". . . to promote transportation safety by conducting independent accident investigations and by formulating safety improvement recommendations" (Public Law 93-633). The Safety Board is vitally interested in any actions taken as a result of its safety recommendations and would appreciate a response from you regarding action taken or contemplated with respect to the recommendation in this letter. Please refer to Safety Recommendation M-86-40 in your reply.

GOLDMAN, Acting Chairman, and BURNETT, LAUBER, and NALL, Members, concurred in this recommendation.


By: Patricia A. Goldman
Acting Chairman

2/ Marine Accident Report—"Loss of U.S. Fishing Vessel AMAZING GRACE about 80 Nautical Miles East of Cape Henlopen, Delaware, about November 14, 1984" (NTSB/MAR-85/07).