

NOAA Abandoned Vessel Program Removal Case Study: *F/V Reliance*

Contributing Agency: Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary



OVERVIEW

VESSEL

Dimensions: 49' long *Hull:* Steel
Type: Fishing *Tonnage:* 0-50

SITE

Name: South Point
Location: Santa Rosa Island
Coordinates: 33 53.5'N 120 6.8'W
Land: Channel Islands National Park

INCIDENT & REMOVAL

Situation: Ran aground under autopilot
Incident Date: July 26, 2003
Total Duration: Three days
Actual Operations: 1.5 days – fuel only
Cost: \$36,175
Funding: National Pollution Fund Center
Agencies Involved: NOAA, U.S. Coast Guard Marine Salvage Detachment, National Parks Service
Primary Threats:



DETAILS

VESSEL, HISTORY & INCIDENT

Vessel ID#: 557753 (USCG Federal Documentation)

The F/V Reliance is a steel-hulled fishing vessel built in 1974. In July 2003 its operator was "hugging the beach" to save time on the approach to the front side of Santa Rosa Island when the vessel ran aground and sank. The vessel lies in approximately 100 feet offshore in 20 feet of water and is not visible from the surface. Approximately 800 gallons of diesel fuel were reported on board however the fuel amount was later revised to 200 gallons. The captain and a deckhand were picked up by the F/V Lady Raquel and then transferred to a U.S. Coast Guard vessel which later arrived on the scene.

The grounding site is a rocky shoal inside the South Point State Marine Reserve. The area is also within the Channel Islands National Park and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. The subtidal habitat consists of rocky reef and sand, with locally dense kelp assemblages. Approximately 200 gallons of fuel and 1000 pounds of fish were released; neither produced observable environmental impacts.

Removal Case Study: *F/V Reliance*



INCIDENT RESPONSE & SALVAGE OPERATIONS

Contractor: Foss Environmental
Authority: Oil Pollution Act of 1990

Shortly after the incident the vessel owner contracted the F/V Chump Change to salvage the vessel. Chump Change arrived on scene on July 28. They stood on standby until July 29 when they were released by the USCG Marine Salvage Detachment because the crew had insufficient OSHA training to perform the salvage operation. The USCG then issued federal funds and contracted Foss Environmental Services (an USCG approved salvage operator) to remove fuel from the F/V Reliance. Foss sent divers in to "sting" the tanks to determine how much fuel was still onboard. The divers found that both port and starboard fuel tanks were already empty and Foss Environmental left the scene. Subsequently the Sanctuary pursued bids for wreck removal, which averaged approximately \$150,000 for full removal of the vessel. No further salvage operations have been conducted; the vessel remains at the site. The Sanctuary continues to monitor the vessel and is currently reviewing extraction options to accommodate environmental concerns.

At the time of the incident, the owner was not aboard the Reliance and the captain claimed responsibility for the grounding. The owner claims he sold the vessel to the captain "on or about July 26, 2003, after the incident," and denied responsibility for incident. He was informed by USCG MST2 Widman that this sale was not relevant because the responsible party is the entity who owns the vessel at the time of the incident not at some point after the event. The case was forwarded to NOAA general council for civil prosecution under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act and the owner paid a settlement of \$75,000 in 2004 to cover monitoring and potential salvage of the F/V Reliance.

DISPOSAL OPERATIONS

The vessel has not been salvaged or disposed of at this time.

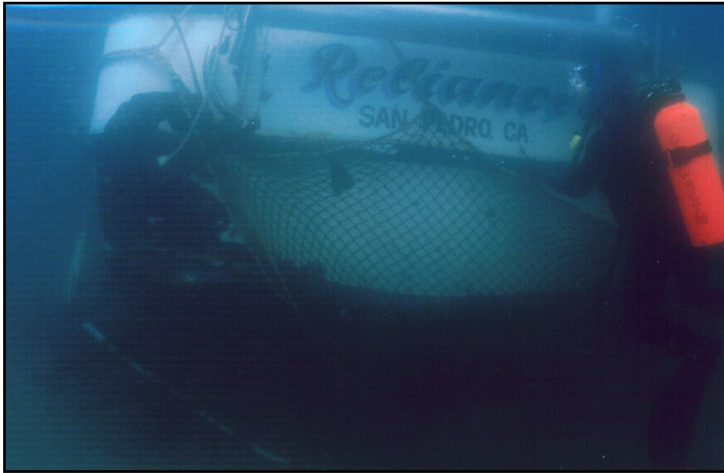
LESSONS LEARNED

Interagency cooperation is essential, especially when the agencies involved follow have differing mandates.

In this case the Coast Guard was responsible for ensuring the safety of mariners and minimizing or preventing oil pollution while the Sanctuary and National Park were focused on all forms of pollution and debris removal. Participants missed a valuable opportunity to address pollution and remove the vessel because there was a lack of communication and understanding concerning these roles and mandates. Additionally, the owners poor cooperation resulted in a lengthy legal process that, fortunately, was settled in 2004.

REPORT DATE: SEPTEMBER 2, 2005

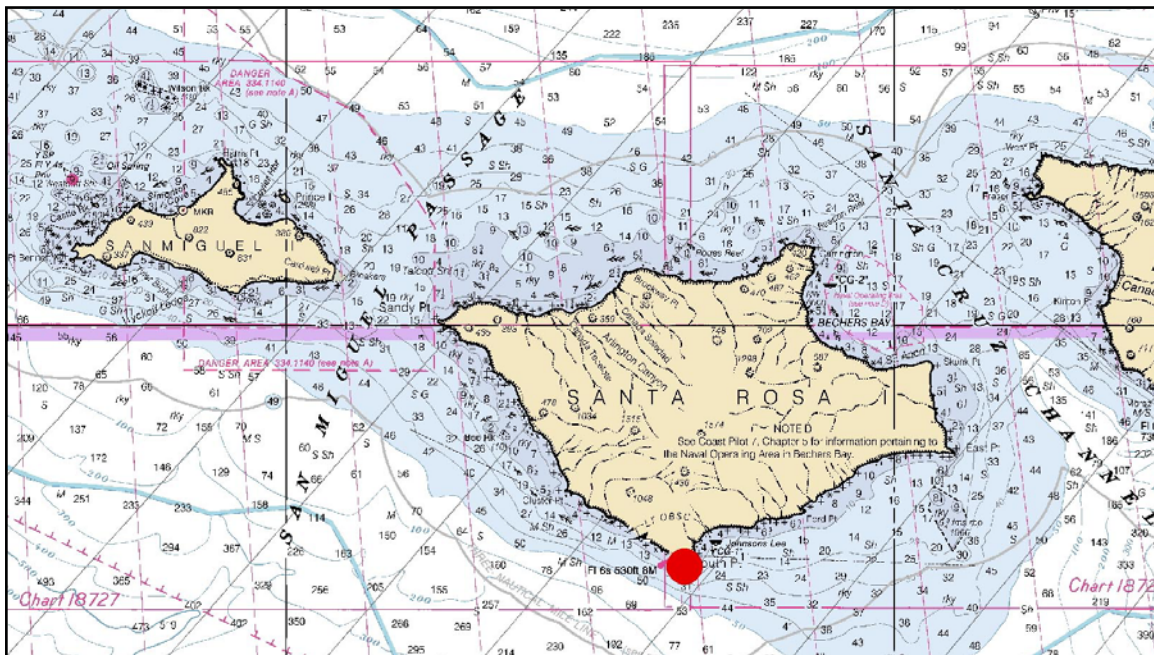
Removal Case Study: *F/V Reliance*



Stern of the vessel



Debris from the vessel in the surf



Location of Vessel

CONTACT INFORMATION

Sean Hastings
Resource Protection Coordinator
Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary
Sean.Hastings@noaa.gov, 805-966-7107

NOAA Abandoned Vessel Program
(206) 526-4599 – orr.vessels@noaa.gov
<http://response.restoration.noaa.gov/dac/vessels/>