

# NOAA Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Case Study



## M/V Seabird

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### Vessel Overview

**Name:** M/V Seabird

**Incident:** Vessel grounding

**Date reported:** February 16, 2014

**Vessel type:** Merchant vessel

**Hull material:** Steel

**Length:** 160 ft.

### Vessel Location

**Location:** Hoonah, Alaska

**Site Name(s):** Long Island

**General description of location:** The vessel ended up grounded on a beach on Long Island.

**Average Site Depth:** N/A

**Habitat/Substrate Type Impacted:** Gravel beach with rock outcroppings.

**Jurisdictions:** The State of Alaska, through the Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), United States Coast Guard (USCG) and the City of Hoonah shared jurisdictional authority. Due to the threat of pollution and inaction on the part of the owner, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) issued a notice of federal assumption to the owner and took authority over the response.



### Incident Narrative

**History:** On February 16, 2014, high winds caused the anchored M/V Seabird to ground on Long Island near Hoonah, Alaska. The vessel's engines had been removed by a previous owner but an unknown quantity of fuel remained in the fuel tanks. Additionally, two 500-gallon day tanks held an unknown quantity of diesel and an assortment of oil, and other hazardous materials were present in containers throughout the vessel. Hull damage occurred to the 160 foot vessel during the grounding and the subsequent tide cycles, and heavy diesel discharge and sheen was reported coming from around the hull. The damage was focused in the engine and generator rooms near the day tanks. On the day of the grounding, the Hoonah Harbor Department staff deployed 500 feet of ADEC containment boom and absorbents around the vessel. The following day, assessments by the local law enforcement and a USCG overflight confirmed no pollution beyond the containment boom. Initially, the vessel owner expressed interest in conducting the response and salvage himself. In the meantime both ADEC and USCG representatives visited the site several times to assess booming tactics and cleanup efforts.

Financial and logistical challenges resulted in minimal cleanup progress and the USCG issued a notice of federal assumption to the vessel owner on March 4, 2014. Southeast Alaska Lightering was contracted by the USCG to remove the remaining fuel and hazardous material, which was completed on March 9, 2014. Following removal of the hazardous material the vessel owner said he was going to organize the removal of the vessel from the beach; however, he never did and eventually the city issued trespass notices against him for failure to remove the vessel from city owned land. Instead of removing the vessel the owner forfeited ownership and a salvage company and a construction



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company partnered to remove the vessel for scrap. On September 8, 2014, Harbor Marine salvors successfully refloated the vessel and moved it to a more manageable part of the beach. A salvage plan was then developed for USCG and ADEC approval as temporary repairs were made in preparation to tow the vessel to Hoonah for scraping. The target date for this was September 25, 2014. The hull damage was eventually repaired enough to allow the vessel to be towed to the port and scrapped. In June of 2015, both the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Department of Natural Resources received confirmation that the vessel was removed and the salvage process was completed.

**Lead agency or organization:** The USGC and Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation were in charge over the pollution aspects, while the city of Hoonah owned the impacted submerged lands and had authority over the vessel for removal and disposal.

**Other collaborators/stakeholders involved:** Because the vessel grounded on land owned by the city of Hoonah, the Department of Natural Resources, who normally deals with ADV in Alaska, wasn't involved in this case.

**Funding source(s):** The federal government paid for most of the initial pollution cleanup and removal efforts. Additional funding came from the City of Hoonah and the Department of Environmental Conservation. The owner paid approximately \$3,000 for absorbent boom. The contractors who removed the vessel agreed to take the vessel as payment.

### Threats from ADV

**Environmental:** Diesel and sheen was reported in the area around the vessel; however, there were no reports of impacted wildlife. The Department continued to receive occasional reports of sheen around the vessel during high tides even after the hazardous materials were removed by the contractor.

**Public safety and health:** Leaking fuel, oil or other hazardous liquids presented a public health hazard.

**Aesthetic:** The vessel was located close to the town of Hoonah and easily visible to boat traffic.

### Vessel Removal Actions

**Start date:** September, 2014

**End date:** June, 2015 (ADEC confirmed removal)

**Removal options considered:** It's unknown if the contractors considered other options prior to submitting their plans to the city, state and USCG.

**Environmental Considerations:** Preventing any additional release of pollutants into the bay.

**Removal Methods:** The vessel was towed to a nearby suitable beach and grounded (again) so they could repair the hull enough to get it seaworthy for transport into Hoonah where it was cut apart and scrapped.

**Authorities used to take Possession of Vessels:** The vessel was taken into possession by the city of Hoonah after the owner forfeited his rights to the vessel in response to a trespassing violation issued by the city.

**Permits Required:** The contractors salvage plan had to be approved by the USCG and Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation prior to disposing of the vessel.



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**Salvage Contractor(s):** Several contractors were used including Southeast Alaska Lightering (hazardous waste), Harbor Marine LLC (salvager), and Channel Construction (scrapper).

**Contractor Selection Process:** N/A

**Approximate removal costs:** The costs incurred by the contractors for removing the vessel are unknown. The USCG provided over \$50,000 for the pollution abatement and ADEC spent \$900 on direct costs.

**Additional types of debris removed:** The contractor removed 500-gallons of oily water from the fuel tanks and 8 pallets of miscellaneous containerized hazardous material.

**Vessel Disposal Process/Issues:** The containment boom used initially in the response remained deployed around the vessel until it was refloated due to the occasional reports of sheen emanating from the vessel. The USCG and ADEC conducted a joint site inspection of the vessel before it was towed.

### Project Challenges

**Environmental:** The vessel was grounded on a beach in the tidal zone and was subject to tidal flow and wave action.

**Geographical:** The vessel had to be grounded again on Long Island to undergo repairs prior to being towing into the port of Hoonah.

**Funding:** Financial challenges during the initial oil spill cleanup resulted in the USCG assuming authority over the vessel. Once the vessel was no longer a pollution threat the vessel was turned over to the contractors who agreed to salvage the vessel at no cost.

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