

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
Washington, D. C.

MVI
7 DEC 1954
(REDSTART - a-1 88)

Commandant's Action

on

Marine Board of Investigation; F/V REDSTART, foundering off Nantucket Island in vicinity of Davis South Shoal during Hurricane "Carol", 1954 with loss of life

1. Pursuant to the provisions of Title 46 C.F.R. Part 136, the record of the Marine Board of Investigation convened to investigate subject casualty, together with its Findings of Fact, Opinions, and Recommendations, has been reviewed.
2. The motor fishing vessel REDSTART, of 99 g.t., built in 1936 of wood construction, on 25 August 1954 departed from Fairhaven, Massachusetts, for the fishing grounds on Georges Banks with eleven crew members on board. On the approach of Hurricane "Carol", a number of fishing vessels, including the REDSTART, departed from the fishing grounds for port. At 1030 31 August 1954 the REDSTART and other fishing vessels hove to and on this date a hurricane with tremendous seas overtook the fishing vessels. The REDSTART was last seen lying to, 45 miles SSE from No Man's Land Island, in no apparent trouble. Due to the force of the hurricane, propulsive power was required for safe vessel control purposes. Apparently the propulsive power of the REDSTART failed and the vessel sometime after 1100 31 August 1954 struck Davis South Shoal and broke up before any boats or floats could be launched, and all persons on board perished. A prompt and diligent search for the vessel or any survivors therefrom was instituted when information was received that the vessel was overdue. This search continued until it was positively ascertained that the vessel was lost.
3. The recommendations of the Board with respect to the reporting of fishing vessel positions to a central source and the marking of life-saving equipment on fishing vessels are desirable. Compliance with such requirements, however, would have to be on a voluntary basis. Accordingly the District Commander should take every action for the effectuation of the recommendations to the extent possible.

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4. The Findings of Fact, Opinions, and Recommendations of the Marine Board of Investigation convened to investigate subject casualty are approved.

(signed) J. A. Hirshfield

J. A. HIRSHFIELD
Rear Admiral, U. S. Coast Guard
Acting Commandant

REPORT

of a

BOARD OF INVESTIGATION

Convened at

New Bedford, Massachusetts

To inquire into the loss of the IV FEDERAL
G. N. 235 274, with all hands, on or about
31st August, 1954, Elmistry Davis South Shore

After full and mature consideration the board made the following findings:

1. That the fishing vessel REDSTART, Official No. 235 374, of 99 gross tons, 67 net tons, length 85.6 feet, width 20.5 feet and depth 9.7 feet, was built in 1936, of wood, at Essex, Massachusetts.

2. That the FV REDSTART was owned by Michael B. Smith of 34 School Street, South Dartmouth, Massachusetts, and the Master was Bras MacDonald, 14 Stowell Street, New Bedford, Massachusetts.

3. That on 25 August the FV REDSTART departed Fairhaven, Massachusetts, for a fishing trip on Georges Banks, with eleven in the crew, namely:-

MACDONALD, BRAS - Master	14 Stowell Street	New Bedford, Massachusetts
DEGERS, THEO	58 Covell Street	New Bedford, Massachusetts
FITTS, JAMES	574 Kempton Street	New Bedford, Massachusetts
CORDEIRO, JOSEPH	44 Bridge Street	Fairhaven, Massachusetts
MACEDO, ANTONIO	363 Shaw Street	New Bedford, Massachusetts
MARTINS, RONALD	30 Branscomb Street	New Bedford, Massachusetts
RIVARDS, LEO	58 Mechanics Street	Camden, Maine
MARCOTTE, MAURICE	225 Princeton Street	New Bedford, Massachusetts
KESTERIS, MIKELIS	15 Hitch Street	Fairhaven, Massachusetts
BALDWIN, EDWARD	36 Spring Street	Fairhaven, Massachusetts
OSHEICART, SAMUEL	24 Brown Street	Fairhaven, Massachusetts

4. That the FV REDSTART had left the Fishing Grounds, bound to port in company with other vessels and was contacted by several vessels during the passage in. There was voice radio conversation with FV MARY D'EON at 0900, 31 August, 1954, on same date, to the effect that seas were coming "every which way" and she could not run.

5. That the FV AMELIA contacted FV REDSTART at 10:30 A. M., 31 August, 1954 and from the conversation it was determined that FV REDSTART stopped on account of heavy seas, twenty-eight miles SW x W from Davis Shoal Can Buoy, at this time. FV AMELIA stopped five minutes later, to remain in company with FV REDSTART, his Loran being out. FV AMELIA had to jog, on account of heavy seas and heard no more from the FV REDSTART.

6. That on 31 August, 1954 at 11:00 A. M., the FV REDSTART was seen by the FV EUNICE & LILIAN, laying to, forty-five miles SSE of No Man's Land Island, apparently in no trouble. There was no communication between them. This appears to be the last time the FV REDSTART was seen by anyone or heard from.
7. That a hurricane was encountered on 31 August, 1954 and that several vessels were caught at sea, most of them, through good seamanship and equipment, were able to weather the storm, none being able to proceed in until the storm abated.
8. That at 10:10 A. M., on 2 September, 1954 a report was received in Rescue Coordination Center, First Coast Guard District, that FV REDSTART was overdue at New Bedford. A Coast Guard U F 1 G airplane departed Quonset Point for search of area where vessel was last reported. Search was supplemented by a P B M 5 G airplane and wreckage observed in vicinity of Davis South Shoal Buoy at 4:30 P. M. CG 83503 later recovered wreckage which was positively identified by owner as that of the REDSTART.
9. A diligent search of the area was carried on for several days after the hurricane, with negative results in so far as locating survivors was concerned.
10. The FV REDSTART had undergone considerable repair of recent date and was considered to be in good condition and properly manned.
11. That the supporting evidence of these facts is affixed to this report in the form of sworn testimony, operations report and bills for repairs to the vessel, all listed as exhibits.
12. Sometime after 11:00 A. M., 31 August, 1954 the FV REDSTART foundered and broke up in the vicinity of Davis South Shoal.
13. That the bodies of the members of the crew have not been recovered.

The Board expressed the following OPINIONS:

1. That the FV REDSTART was in a seaworthy condition when she departed on 25 August, 1954.
2. That vessel had warning of the approach of hurricane "Carol" and was proceeding to port.
3. That the storm overtook the vessel in the vicinity of Davis South Shoal.
4. That vessel may have suffered motor trouble and without power was unable to maneuver out of dangerous waters.
5. That wind and sea forced vessel onto Davis South Shoal.
6. That condition of wreckage observed by the board indicated the vessel broke up.
7. That the vessel struck the shoal before the boats or floats could be launched.
8. That irrespective of notice of accident, nothing could have been done to rescue the crew, due to intensity of the storm.
9. That the entire crew can be presumed dead.
10. That a prompt and diligent search for the vessel and crew was instituted when information was received that the vessel was overdue, and continued until it was positively ascertained that the vessel was lost.
11. That the Masters of the several fishing vessels were made aware of the approach of hurricane "Carol"; however, they were not sufficiently informed of the speed and course of the storm.
12. That although responsible persons failed to promptly report that the FV REDSTART was overdue, it had no bearing on the outcome or possible rescue of the vessel or crew.
13. That the date of foundering was 31 August, 1954, sometime after 11:00 A. M., in the vicinity of Davis South Shoal.
14. That on 31 August, 1954 records show that a hurricane was in the area and tremendous seas were encountered by other fishing vessels, in company with the FV REDSTART, none of which could have survived had they lost their power, as stated by the Masters.

The Board made the following Recommendations:

1. That fishing vessels be urged to report their positions at least once a day to some authorized association or person, such as the Manager, Sea Foods Producers Association, or in the case of fleet operators, such as General Food Corporation, the Marine Department, so that an early and more effective search can be undertaken when vessels are reported overdue or it is necessary to locate them for other reasons. The Rescue Coordination Center to be furnished with names, addresses and telephone numbers of such person or associations.
2. That owners of fishing vessels mark all equipment such as life preservers, cars, floats, etc., with the names of the vessels in a similar manner as is now required on inspected vessels. (46 CFR 97.37-37 et seq.)
3. It is recommended that no further action be taken and that the case be closed.

(signed) W. W. Storey
W. W. STOREY
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard

(signed) E. J. J. Suydam
E. J. J. SUYDAM
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard

(signed) L. W. Raynes
L. W. RAYNES
Commander, U. S. Coast Guard

The Board then adjourned to await the action of the convening authority.

(signed) W. W. Storey
W. W. STOREY
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard, CHAIRMAN

(signed) L. W. Raynes
L. W. RAYNES
Commander, U. S. Coast Guard, Member
and Recorder