

Accident Report
Close Quarters
Manutere & Ocean Monarch
12 March 2006
Class C



NARRATIVE

On Saturday 11 March 2006, at about 1800 hours New Zealand Daylight Time (NZDT), **Manutere** left Tauranga harbour. On board was the Skipper, one Deckhand and eight passengers. They headed for Mayor Island and the passengers were on the after deck, fishing during the passage. At about 2300 hours, **Manutere** entered Southeast Bay, Mayor Island and anchored for the night.



Photograph 1
Manutere

On Sunday 12 March, **Manutere** made its way around Mayor Island, anchoring in different locations for the passengers to fish. At about 1300 hours, it headed for The Pinnacles (37° 22'.4 S 176° 16'.3 E), where it anchored for the passengers to fish. Later it weighed anchor and headed for an area north of Karewa Island.

Visibility was good and the sea calm. **Manutere** was making about eight knots. It was on manual steering. The Skipper at the helm was steering visually and using the destination marker on the GPS to maintain a straight course. The vessel had stern drive propulsion and tended to wander a little if not corrected. The Deckhand had come into the wheelhouse to make coffee and the passengers were on the after deck, filleting fish.

The Skipper recalled seeing the bow of **Ocean Monarch** appear in the starboard side window about 10 metres from his vessel. **Ocean Monarch** was overtaking and heading on an almost parallel course. He immediately put the helm to port but **Ocean Monarch** passed by very quickly then turned across his bow. After **Ocean Monarch** was past, he brought **Manutere** back on course then called **Ocean Monarch** on VHF Channel 3 to complain about his manoeuvre.

Passengers on board **Manutere** said that they were standing near the stern and saw the other boat approach from astern. They thought it odd that **Ocean Monarch** passed so close and cut across in front of them.

After the incident, the Skipper of **Manutere** took a photograph of his chart plotter which would indicate that his vessel was on a heading of approximately 215°(T) (195°M)

The Skipper of **Ocean Monarch** disputes the above account of events and states that his vessel was travelling at 16 knots on a course of 170 M (190°T) to Tauranga when he saw **Manutere** on his port bow. As the two vessels drew nearer he estimated that **Manutere** was making about nine knots and heading approximately 260°M (290°T). In his estimation, the two vessels were crossing and **Ocean Monarch** was on **Manutere's** starboard side. Hence, under **Maritime Rule 22.15**, **Manutere** was the give way vessel.



Photograph 2
Ocean Monarch

Ocean Monarch maintained its course and speed. When the vessels were about 500 metres apart, **Ocean Monarch** sounded its horn. The Skipper saw someone on the after deck go forward, open the wheelhouse door and then return. He expected **Manutere** to turn to port but instead the vessel maintained its course and speed. **Ocean Monarch** turned hard to starboard until clear of **Manutere** and then resumed its course. The Skipper estimated that the two vessels came within 20 metres of each other.

The Skipper of **Ocean Monarch** said that **Manutere's** Skipper called on the radio with threats and claimed that **Ocean Monarch** was overtaking.

One of the passengers on board **Ocean Monarch** said he was in the wheelhouse at the time and saw **Manutere** on a westerly heading, crossing from port. He asserted that they were not coming up with the other vessel from astern. They continued to approach each other for 10 to 15 minutes.

The accounts of the close quarters incident presented by the Skippers of the two vessels do not agree. **Manutere's** evidence shows that **Ocean Monarch** was overtaking while **Ocean Monarch's** Skipper and one of his passengers maintain that the vessels were crossing. However, the following information indicates that **Ocean Monarch** was overtaking **Manutere**:

- **Ocean Monarch** was going to Tauranga harbour entrance, heading 190°(T)
- **Manutere** was going from Pinnacles to Karewa Island, heading 215°(T)
- **Ocean Monarch** was approaching **Manutere** from a direction of about 65° abaft its starboard beam.

It is possible that the Skipper of *Ocean Monarch* made an incorrect estimation of the direction in which *Manutere* was heading.

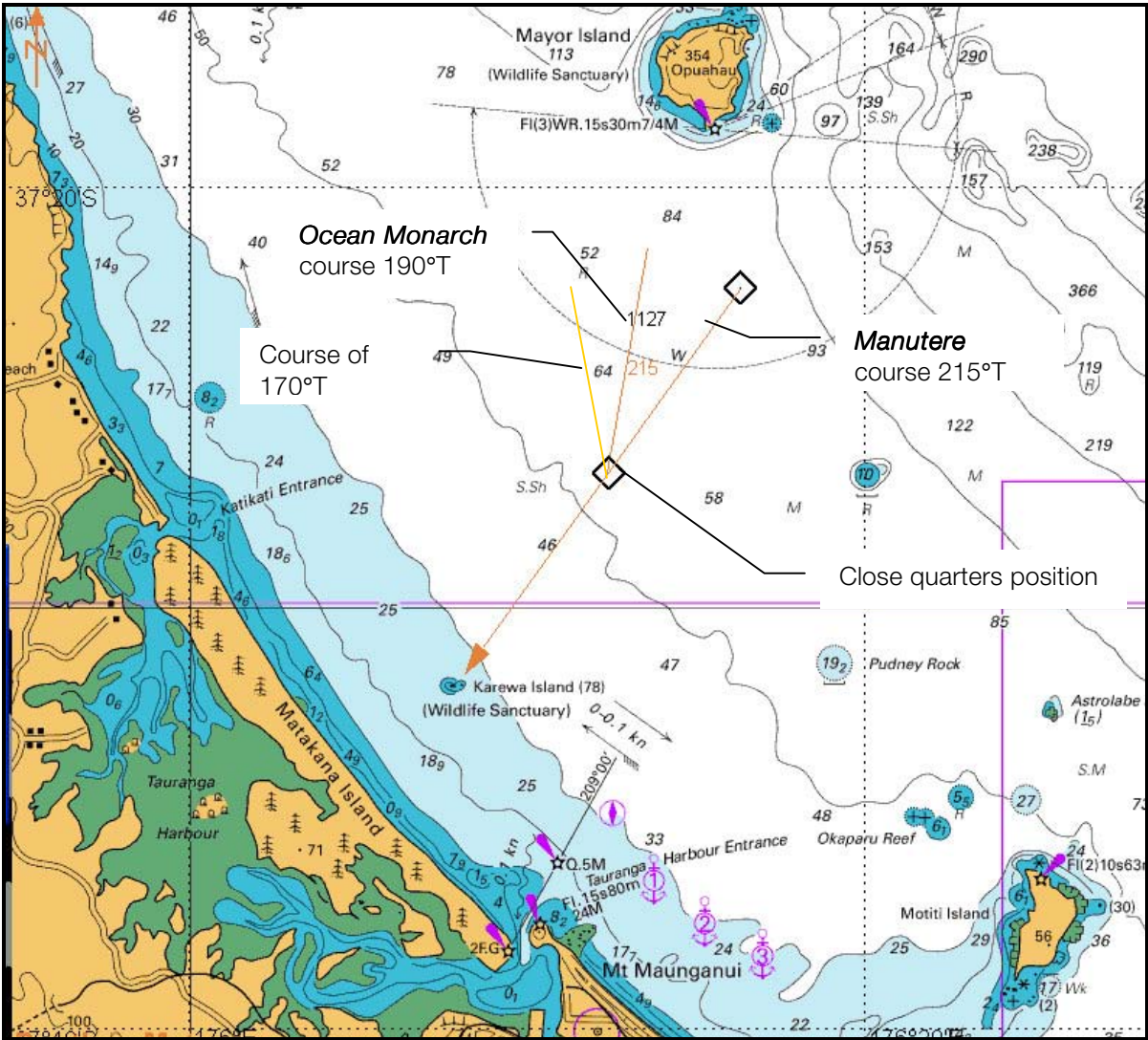


Figure 1
Chart NZ 541

LESSONS LEARNED

Two vessels, both under the control of Skippers holding maritime qualifications, came within 10 to 20 metres of each other in clear weather and in open sea. There appeared to be a misunderstanding about whether the vessels were crossing or one was overtaking the other.

Ocean Monarch had sighted ***Manutere*** when it was at least four miles away. Despite having ample opportunity to resolve the situation early, the Skipper allowed his vessel to close with ***Manutere*** until it was necessary to use hard a starboard helm to avoid collision.

The Skipper of ***Manutere*** did not see ***Ocean Monarch*** approaching. The two vessels were very close before he became aware of the other vessel. The close proximity of ***Ocean Monarch*** gave him a shock and he reacted by making threats and using abusive language on VHF radio.

After reviewing this report, the Skipper and one of the passengers on board ***Ocean Monarch*** maintained that they did not approach ***Manutere*** from behind. The passenger asserted that from the direction they approached ***Manutere***, if it had been night, he would have been able to see the other vessel's starboard sidelight. The Skipper stated that his course was 170°M and that ***Manutere*** was heading approximately 235°M, which would indicate that ***Ocean Monarch*** approached ***Manutere*** from approximately 25° abaft its starboard beam. Since the Skipper of ***Manutere*** did not see ***Ocean Monarch*** approaching and its passenger said it came from behind, the exact direction of approach could not be determined.

SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that Maritime New Zealand censure the Skipper of ***Ocean Monarch*** for allowing a dangerous situation to develop.
2. It is recommended that Maritime New Zealand reminds the Skipper of ***Manutere*** of his absolute obligation to keep a proper lookout, which includes reasonably frequent checking of the after sectors of his vessel.
3. Maritime New Zealand should warn the Skipper of ***Manutere*** against future misuse VHF radio.