



Accident Report
La Mer & Universal Spirit
Close Quarters Situation, 7 miles
north east of Napier on
20 November 2004
Class B



REPORT NO.: 04 3612

LA MER & UNIVERSAL SPIRIT – CLOSE QUARTERS

The inshore trawler *La Mer* was trawling on a course of 140°(M) when the car carrier *Universal Spirit* approached on her port side. The ship maintained her course and *La Mer*, which was exhibiting trawling shapes, took evasive action to avoid collision.



La Mer



Universal Spirit



Details of Vessel, Owner & Management, Classification, Navigational Equipment, Manning & Crew

Name of Vessel:	<i>La Mer</i>
Vessel Type:	Inshore Trawler
Flag:	New Zealand
MSA No.:	101102
Built:	1979
Construction Material:	Wood
Length Overall (m):	12.14
Maximum Breadth (m):	4.01
Gross Tonnage	24
Net Tonnage:	6.73
Propulsion:	Diesel, 157 kW
Safe Ship Management Company:	SGS-M&I
Accident Investigator:	Ian Webb



- **Owner Details**

Western Trawling Company, Napier.

- **SSM Certificate**

Issued 27 September 2002 and valid until 13 September 2005.

- **Skipper Details**

The Skipper of *La Mer* holds a Skipper Coastal Fishing Vessel and a Second Class Diesel Trawler Engineer Certificates of Competency. Both were obtained in 1978. He has been in the fishing industry for 40 years and has skippered fishing vessels for 26 years. He has owned various fishing vessels over the last 24 years and has owned *La Mer* for two years.

- **Crew Details**

There was one crew member on board *La Mer*.

- Navigational Equipment

Radar: Furuno 24 mile daylight

Depth Sounder: Furuno

GPS/Satellite Navigation: Furuno

Electronic Chart Plotter: Furuno



Details of Vessel, Owner & Management, Classification, Navigational Equipment, Manning & Crew

Name of Vessel:	<i>Universal Spirit</i>
Vessel Type:	Car Carrier
Flag:	Monrovia
Port of Registry:	Liberia
IMO/Official No.:	8400919/9446
Built:	April 1985
Construction Material:	Steel
Length Overall (m):	173.53
Maximum Breadth (m):	30.4
Gross Tonnage	39 948
Net Tonnage:	11 984
Propulsion:	Akasaka Mitsubishi 6UEC60L Diesel Single Fixed Propeller



- **Owner Details**

World Car Carriers Inc., of Monrovia

- **Operator Details**

M.O. Ship Management Co. Ltd., of Tokyo

- **Classification**

Nippon Kaiji Kyoka (NKK)

- **Master Details**

The Master of *Universal Spirit* has 36 years experience at sea and has been in command for 20 years. At the time of the incident he had been Master of *Universal Spirit* for five months. He holds a First Grade Maritime Officer (Navigation) Certificate of Competency, issued in Japan in 1978.

- **Third Officer Details**

The Third Officer of *Universal Spirit* holds an unrestricted Third Mate's Certificate of Competency, issued in the Philippines in 2000.

- **Junior Third Officer Details**

The Junior Third Officer of *Universal Spirit* holds an unrestricted Certificate of Competency as Officer In Charge of a Navigational Watch, issued in the Philippines in 2004.

- **Navigational Equipment**

Radar: 2 x Tokemec A823(19) ARPA 10 and 3 cm

Depth Sounder: JRC JFE 5705

GPS/Satellite Navigation: 2 x JRC



NARRATIVE

Evidence of *Universal Spirit*

At 0735 hours on 20 November 2004, ***Universal Spirit*** was stopped and drifting approximately seven miles northeast of the Port of Napier (See *Chart Extract - Approaches to Napier*). The vessel was awaiting a pilot, who was due to board at 0830 hours. The weather was partly cloudy, fine and clear, with a light NNW breeze.

The Master, Third Officer, Junior Third Officer and helmsman were on the bridge. Both ARPA radars were operating; one on 3 mile range and the other on 1.5 mile range. The echo sounder was switched off. The VHF sets were monitoring channels 16 and 12.

The engine was tested ahead and astern at 0735 hours. The vessel was about three miles east of No. 2 pilot boarding area (See *Chart Extract*).

Shortly before 0800 hours, the Pilot advised ***Universal Spirit*** to close No.2 pilot boarding ground and the engine was put on slow ahead. The vessel's speed built up to about six knots and the pilot launch could be seen approaching. The Third Officer was monitoring the radar, the Junior Third officer was standing by the telegraph and the Master was at the fore end of the wheelhouse, moving between the centre line and the starboard side. Neither the Master nor either of the Officers went out onto the bridge wing.

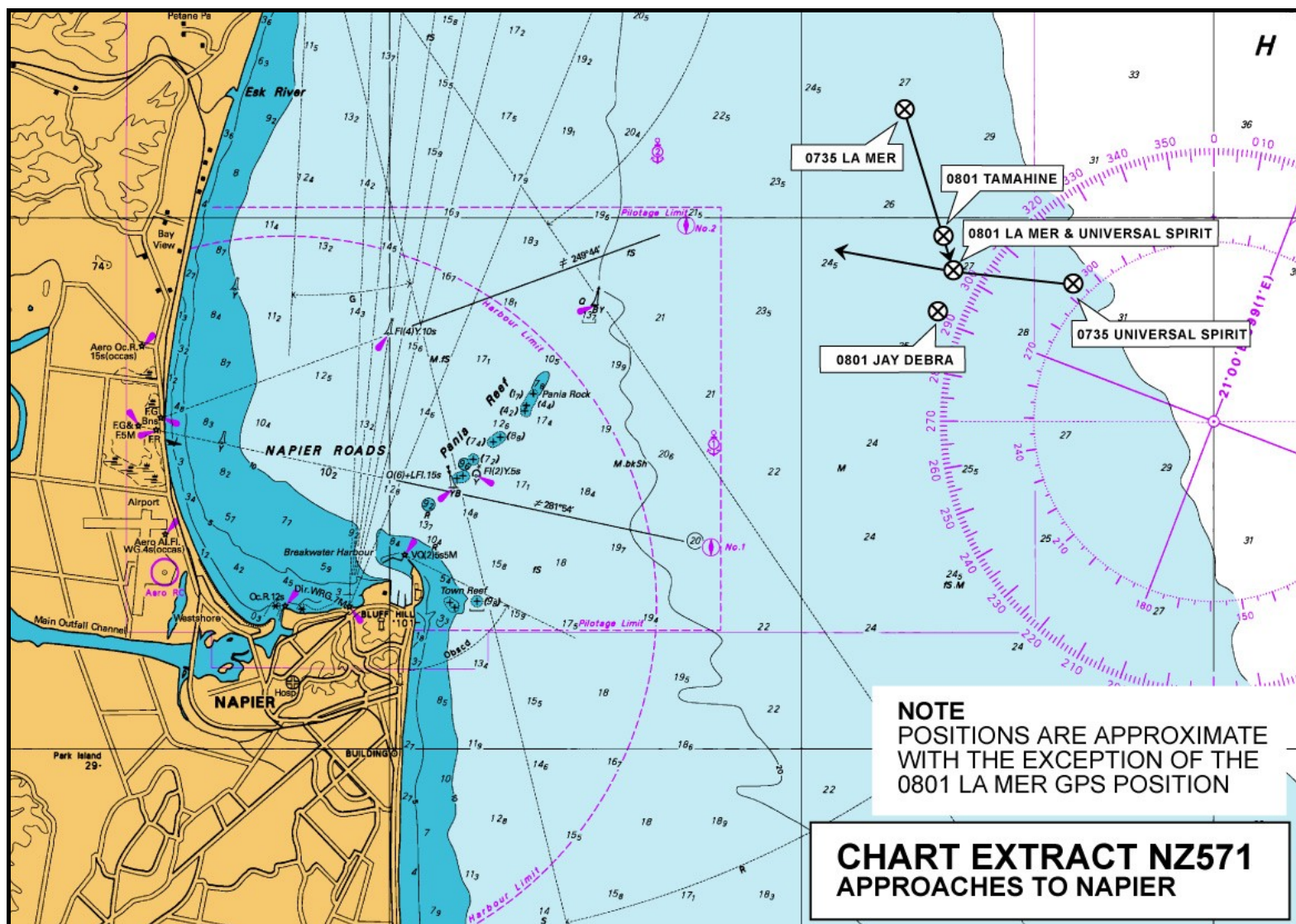
The Master observed a fishing vessel trawling about two miles to port and moving away from ***Universal Spirit*** and another fishing vessel closer and slightly forward of the starboard beam. The latter fishing vessel was trawling at a speed of about three knots and was changing direction. The fishing vessel altered course towards the ***Universal Spirit*** as she commenced her approach to the pilot station. The Master did not place an ARPA lock on the fishing vessel as her heading was altering and the relative bearing was opening. ***Universal Spirit*** passed about 200 metres ahead of the fishing vessel.

After passing the fishing vessel, the Master altered course to starboard towards the pilot vessel and the pilot boarded at 0810 hours. The vessel proceeded to her berth without incident.

Evidence of *La Mer*

La Mer was trawling on a course of 140°(M), (161°(T)) about seven miles north east of Napier. At about 0730 hours the Skipper observed ***Universal Spirit*** to be lying stopped some 1½ - 2 miles distant on their port bow. ***La Mer*** was on the starboard quarter of ***Universal Spirit*** and she was showing the day shapes for a trawler.





There were about 60 vessels in the area as there was a fishing competition in progress. The fishing vessel *Jay Debra* was trawling on a similar course about half a mile ahead of *La Mer*. Another fishing vessel, *Tamahine* was trawling on the same course about three quarters of a mile astern.

A little before 0800 hours *Universal Spirit* was seen to get underway on an ENE'ly heading for the pilot station. She was still on the port side of *La Mer*, which was now on the starboard bow of *Universal Spirit*.

The ship did not alter course and the skipper of *La Mer* had to take evasive action by putting the helm hard to starboard. The ship passed down the port side of *La Mer* about 10 metres off. *La Mer's* GPS chart plotter indicated this course alteration occurred at 0801 hours in position 39° 25.47'S 177° 01.90'E. From 0730 hours until 0801 hours, when she altered course to avoid collision, *La Mer* had been steering a straight course at a speed of about 3 knots.



FINDINGS

When *Universal Spirit* put her engine ahead and proceeded towards the pilot station shortly before 0800 hours, the Master observed two fishing vessels ahead and adjusted course to pass safely between them. In the opinion of the Investigator the fishing vessels that the Master observed were *Jay Debra* on his port bow, and *Tamahine* on his starboard bow.

La Mer, which was on *Universal Spirit's* starboard quarter, whilst *Universal Spirit* was lying stopped, was now a little forward of her starboard beam, and quite close. Because of the height of *Universal Spirit's* bridge; the bridge wings extending to the ship's side well beyond the wheelhouse, and the deck below the wheelhouse extending well forward and out to the ship's side; a large area of sea on the starboard side of the vessel would not be visible from within the wheelhouse. Neither the Master nor either of the Officers went to the extremity of the starboard bridge wing to check for vessels close to the ship. Consequently, in the opinion of the Investigator, neither the Master nor either of the Officers saw *La Mer*.

Because of the height of the radar scanner, it is probable that *La Mer* was so close that she was beneath the radar transmissions, and consequently was not painting an echo on the radar screen monitored by the Third Officer.

La Mer was forced to take action to avoid a collision.



View from Starboard Wheelhouse Window of *Universal Spirit*



SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Management Company of *Universal Spirit* make this report available to the Masters and Officers of all vessels under their management.
2. The Management Company of *Universal Spirit* remind Masters and Officers of all vessels under their management of the importance of keeping an all round lookout. On high-sided vessels this requires searching the sea in the vessel's immediate vicinity from the extremity of the vessel's bridge wings. This is particularly important when manoeuvring in port approaches, where small vessels are to be expected.
3. The Maritime Safety Authority issue a Marine Notice (Ships) reminding mariners of the importance of keeping an all round lookout. On high-sided vessels this requires searching the sea in the vessel's immediate vicinity from the extremity of the vessel's bridge wings. This is particularly important when manoeuvring in port approaches, where small vessels are to be expected.
4. The Maritime Safety Authority issue a Marine Notice (Boats) advising the skippers of small vessels of the need to navigate with extreme caution in the vicinity of pilot boarding grounds, where they can expect to meet large vessels manoeuvring to pick up or disembark a pilot. Such vessels may apparently manoeuvre erratically to provide a lee for the pilot launch.

