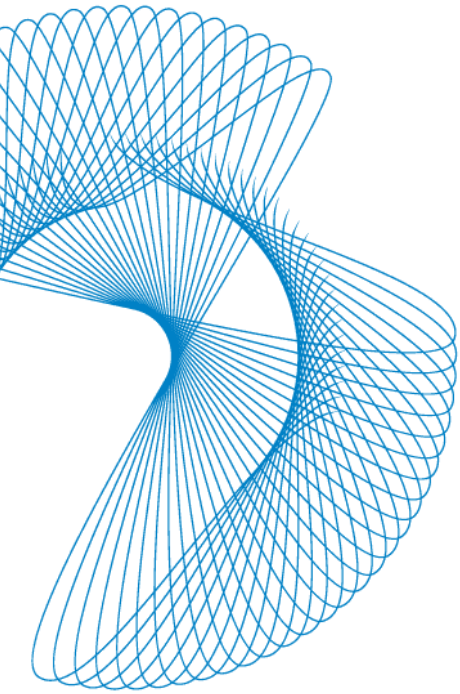
MARITIME NEW ZEALAND



Accident Report

Grounding

Seawyf

26 August 2005

Class B

PHOTO COURTESY OF MR D BOULTON

Photograph 1

Seawyf aground at French Pass

NARRATIVE

At 2135 hours New Zealand Standard Time (NZST), on 25 August 2005 the 18 metre fishing vessel *Seawyf* departed Port Nelson. Onboard was the Skipper and two crew. The vessel was bound for fishing grounds near Kapiti Island via French Pass.

The Skipper went to bed at 2245 hours, after setting all relevant alarms and briefing the watch keeper about the navigational track to be maintained.

The watchkeeper woke the Skipper at 0130 hours, on 26 August. The Skipper then took over the navigation of the vessel for its approach to French Pass *(See Diagram 1)*.

At 0210 hours, the Skipper slowed the vessel while the Deckhand removed the stabiliser arm from the water before closing on the narrows of French Pass. At 0215 hours, course and speed was resumed towards French Pass.

At 0225 hours, the Skipper realised that the rudder was not responding to the helm. He immediately put the engine full astern but, due to the following tidal stream at the time, was unable to stop the vessel before it grounded.

Seawyf grounded in position 40° 55.620' S 173° 50.618' E *(See Diagram 1)*.

The Skipper and crew checked the vessel internally for any ingress of water and found none. The Skipper found the reason for the steering failure, but was unable to remedy it at this time *(See Findings)*. He attempted to refloat the vessel using full astern propulsion but to no avail.

The Skipper realised that the vessel could not be refloated due to the falling tide; he then called Maritime Radio to advise them of the situation. He also called another fishing vessel in the area and asked for assistance. At about 0600 hours, *Corsair* arrived on scene and stood by.

During low tide, *Seawyf* was completely out of the water and the Skipper and crew exited the vessel and made a visual inspection of the hull, which looked to be sound *(See Photograph 1)*.

Another vessel arrived on scene during the day and ropes were passed for a tow attempt at high water.

At 1230 hours, *Seawyf* refloated at the stern, with just the bow aground. Tension was taken from another vessel to stop *Seawyf* from swinging around with the tidal flow. At 1300 hours *Corsair* pulled *Seawyf* free of the rocks and then towed her back to Nelson.

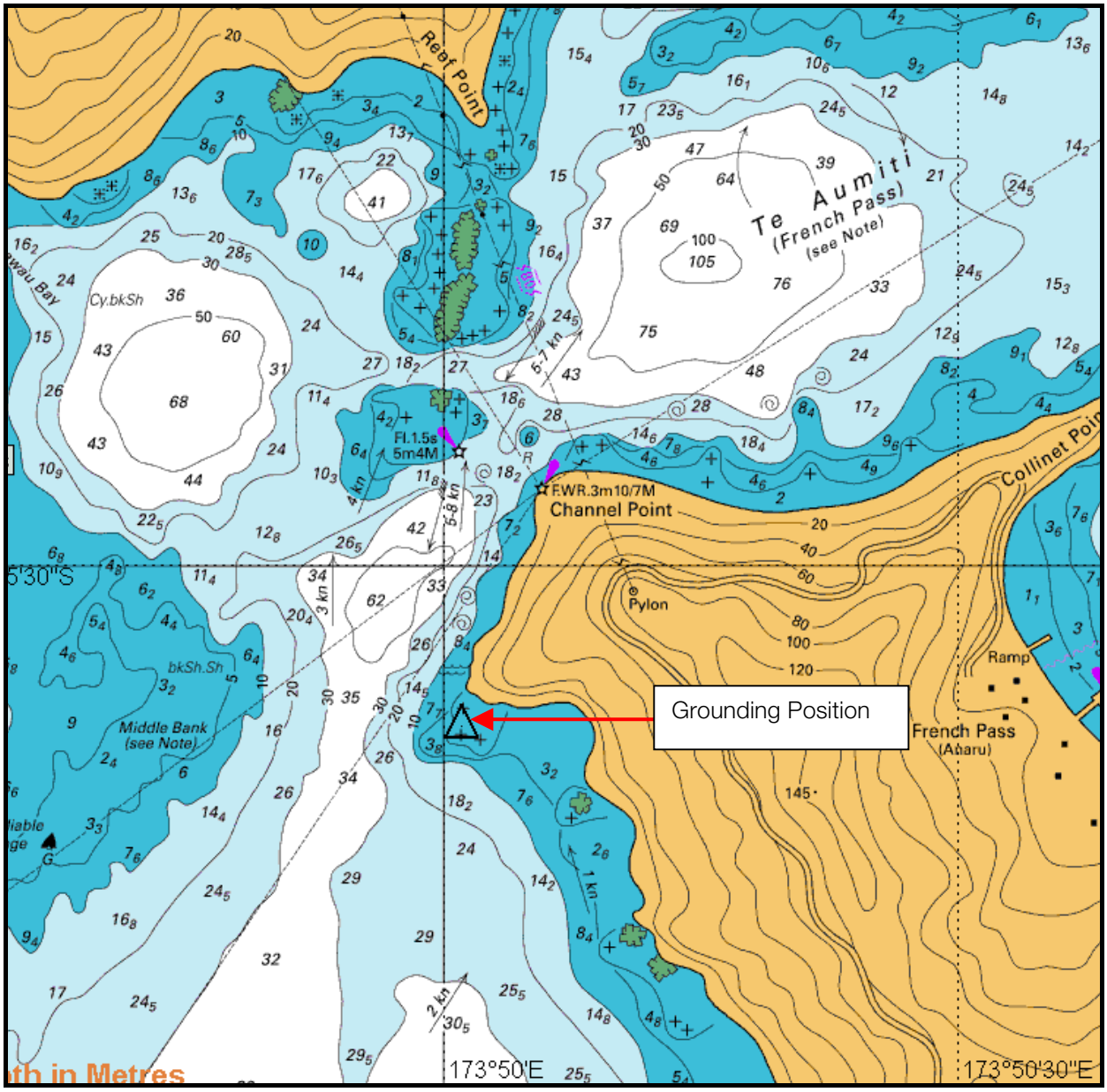


Diagram 1
Chart Extract

FINDINGS

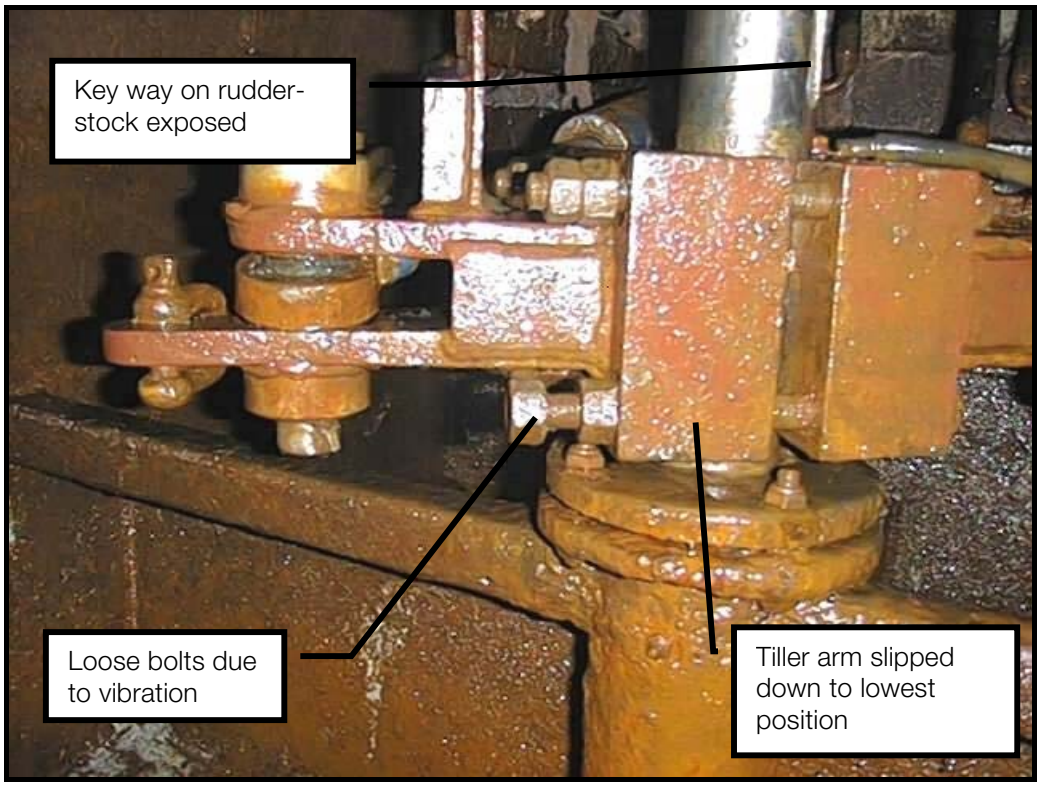
Upon inspection of the steering gear it was found that the tiller arm had come loose from the rudderstock and had slipped down the shaft and off the key-way. This allowed the tiller arm to activate but did not have any purchase on the rudderstock.

The Owner and Skipper stated that this problem had first occurred about 2 months before the grounding. They had engaged a local marine engineering company to fix the problem in such a way so that it could not happen again.

Evidence suggests that the bolts attaching the tiller arm to the rudder stock were tightened but not setup in such a way as to prevent them loosening again in the future.

Since this accident, the marine engineers have now installed new high tensile bolts; they have used double nuts with the outer nut consisting of a Nylock nut.

They also installed a new key-way into the rudderstock and have attached a split collar below the tiller arm to arrest its movement should the bolts ever come loose again.



Photograph 2

SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Owners had previously engaged an engineering company to rectify the loose tiller arm. They tightened the bolts, which subsequently came loose. There were some communication difficulties between the Owner and the engineers. It is important to clearly state exactly what is required of engineers and ensure that they completely understand before any repair is conducted.

2. The steering gear was regularly inspected at the start of each voyage as per the Safe Ship Management requirements. It is recommended that an additional procedure be included in the vessel's SSM Manual which requires the engine room and steering compartment to be inspected before leaving port and additionally before transiting restricted waterways such as French Pass.

3. That this report be sent to Seafood NZ and Professional Skipper for inclusion.

4. It is recommended that a Safety Bulletin be issued to highlight the importance of ensuring that appropriate locking nuts are fitted between the tiller arm and rudder stock.