

Marine casualty

Safety Investigation

Law 4033/2011 as amended and applies

(summary extract of art. 1.b, 4.1.a & 4.1.b)

The conduct of Safety Investigations into marine casualties or incidents is independent from criminal, discipline, administrative or civil proceedings whose purpose is to apportion blame or determine liability. The sole objective of the conduct of a safety investigation is to ascertain the circumstances that caused the marine accident or incident through analysis, to draw useful conclusions and lessons learned that may lead, if necessary, to safety recommendations or proposals addressed to parties or stakeholders involved in order to take remedial actions, aiming to prevent or avoid future

Points of Interest

- This Interim Report has been prepared by virtue of art. 16.2 Law 4033/2011, as applies (art. 14.2 Directive 2009/18/EC) as the full investigation report will not be published within 12 months of the marine accident date.
- The Interim Report has been published for the sole purposes of the safety investigation process with no litigation in mind and should be inadmissible to any judicial or other proceedings (administrative, disciplinary, criminal or civil) whose purpose is to attribute or apportion blame or liability.
- The Interim Report only aims to present a concise summary of the events occurred on the 28th of August 2021 that led to a very serious marine casualty.
- The Interim Report does not constitute legal advice in any way and should not be construed as such.

Very serious marine casualty

AUGUST 2022

HBMCI conducts the safety investigation of issued marine casualty as the Lead Investigation State. The content of this Interim Report is based on currently available information and data collected and analyzed during the safety investigation process into captioned marine casualty. The completion of the procedure as defined in relevant legislation may reveal or identify new information, data or evidence and consequently cause changes or amendments in data provided by this Interim Report.

G/C Vessel SEA BIRD

SEA BIRD under Togo Flag was a 4337 gross tonnage General Cargo Vessel engaged in international trade. She was built in 1984 in Tuzla (Turkey) by Kok Tersanecilik A.S. The vessel sunk in Mirtoo Pelagos (sea area of South West Aegean Sea), after impacting on Karavia rocky Islets with her starboard side. Due to the heavy impact and extensive damages lengthwise on her hull structure the forepeak tank and cargo hold No.1 were flooded causing a heavy list to starboard and forcing the crew to abandon her approximately 20 minutes after the impact. Sea Bird finally sunk in position Lat: 36 46' 21" N, Long: 023 36' 34" E, approximately 28 nm NE of Cape Maleas (SE end of Peloponnese - Greece), at a depth of approximately 191m. Her Voyage Data Recording capsule (VDR) was not retrieved. Thus events timeline as well as navigational data is based on information that was acquired from the interview process with the involved crew members as well as EMSA's Integrated Marine Data Environment (IMDatE), which supports the relay of data such as Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) and Satellite AIS.

Marine Accident Synopsis

On 20th of August 2021 "SEA BIRD" sailed from Berdyansk port/Ukraine bound for Sousse port/Tunisia with a crew complement of 16 seafarers all of same nationality. She was loaded with 7.100 MT of grain and carrying approximately 150 MT of fuel oil, 50MT of diesel oil and 7.000 LT of lube oil.

According to the Minimum Safe Manning Document SEA BIRD's crew complement required, amongst others, one Master and one Chief Mate as navigational Officers and three deck ratings or AB for navigational watch. However, the vessel's crew comprised two ABs, one deck cadet and two OS. Consequently, SEA BIRD was navigating under different navigational watch patterns for Officers and deck ratings. Master and Chief Officer were on a 6on-6off pattern performing the 0600-1200/1800-2400 and the 0000-0600/1200-1800 navigational watch respectively. The ABs were on a 4on-4off navigational watch pattern as the 0000-0400/1200-1600 watch was performed by the deck cadet assigned with lookout duties.

The vessel's course was monitored every 30 minutes by plotting the GPS extracted positions on the chart.

On 28th August 2021, the watch was not changed at midnight as the Master allowed the Chief Officer to continue resting in his cabin. At approximately 01:30, the Chief Officer came on the bridge and relieved the Master. The Cadet was already on the bridge conducting the 0000-0400 lookout watch. Based on electronic evidence, at 01:31:49 SEABIRD was recorded to navigate at Mirtoo Sea with COG 218,6° and speed 8.5 knots.

According to information from the interviews, the last plotted position on the chart was reported to have been recorded by the Chief Officer at approximately 02:00 and was on her charted course of 219° that was leading to Cape Maleas. The last recorded position by the IMDatE was at 03:09 showing that SEABIRD was in position Lat: 36°46' 26'' N - Long: 023° 36' 25'', navigating with COG 219° and speed 8.7 knots; Karavia Islet were 0.469 nm and approximately 17° off her port bow.

Shortly before the impact at approximately 03:10, the Cadet reported to the Chief Officer that he had visually spotted a dark object at a distance of approximately 250 meters from SEA BIRD's port bow. The Chief Officer rushed to the port bridge wing and assumed that SEA BIRD was heading towards the rocky Islets and he immediately returned in the wheelhouse, set the steering to manual and turned hard to port to avoid the Islets. Nevertheless, at approximately 03:11, SEA BIRD's starboard side hull heavily impacted on a rocky slope at the north side of Karavia Islets and was actually dragged for almost 40 m with the speed of 8.8 knots. Based on electronic evidence, it is deduced that had SEA BIRD maintained her current course of 219° or maneuvered to starboard, she could either have had a clear passage of approximately 0.15 nm west of Karavia Islets or avoid impacting on the rocky slope.

Emergency Response Actions

The heavy impact and dragging awakened the Master and the rest of the crew. The Master run on the bridge and ordered the Chief Officer to set the engine control lever to stop position and to activate the general alarm. The crew was assembled at the Muster stations at port and starboard side lifeboats deck. The Master together with the Chief Engineer went to the forecabin to assess the damages and to evaluate the situation. They observed massive water ingress into the forepeak tank and cargo hold No.1 that was progressively causing a heavy list to starboard. By that time SEA BIRD was drifting away from Karavia Islets.

Following, the Master ordered the crew to abandon SEA BIRD by launching the lifeboats and reported the emergency situation via VHF to Olympia Radio Coastal Station which in turn notified the Hellenic Coast Guard Search and Rescue Center (Piraeus JRCC). A search and rescue operation was immediately launched under the coordination of Piraeus JRCC. Coast Guard patrol boats were deployed to the casualty area and nearby vessels were instructed to proceed to provide assistance. All the crew members were recovered from the lifeboats by two cargo vessels that had approached on scene and were transferred safely at Monemvasia port by a Hellenic Coast Guard Patrol Boat. SEA BIRD rapidly sunk and pollution was caused from escaping bunkers. Pollution response actions were undertaken by the Hellenic Coast Guard and the vessel's company.

Investigation

The evidence and information analysis identified contributing factors related to COLREGs such as insufficient lookout and ineffective passage plan monitoring by all available means; the manning level that had notably weaken the bridge effective watch disregarding STCW principal provisions; and others as will be analyzed in the final report.

Final safety Investigation Report

The draft safety Investigation report is under preparation and is expected to be finalized as soon as all evidence have been analyzed; the draft report will circulated to involved and interested parties for consultation.



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FACTUAL INFORMATION

SHIPS PARTICULARS

Name	SEA BIRD
Flag	Togo
IMO	8202941
Ship's type	Cargo Vessel
LOA	106.35 m
Gross Registered Tonnage	4337 tons
Engine / Power	(01) MAN/3355 KW
Construction	Steel
Year of built/shipyard	1984/Tuzla (Turkey) by Kok Tersanecilik A.S.
MMSI	671389000
BREADTH	17.00 m
DEADWEIGHT	7650 MT
Draft	9.20 m

MARINE CASUALTY

Date & time	28/08/2021 at approximately 03:11 LT (00:11 UTC)
Type of marine casualty	Very serious marine casualty
Weather & environmental conditions	Clear-Visibility Good, SW Wind 4-5 bf , night
Location of casualty	Lat: 36 46' 21" N, Long: 023 36' 34" E
Damages to ships	Total loss of the vessel
Fatalities / injuries / pollution	None/ None/scattered dark spots of petroleum were observed around the sea area of the marine casualty, at a distance of 1.5 nautical miles West of Karavi islet extended up to 7 miles to the south.



Fig. 1: The General Cargo Vessel "SEA BIRD"



Fig. 2: Stern view of the vessel at the foundering position



Fig. 3: SEABIRD's position at 02:02:23 as recorded by IMDatE, almost same time the Chief Officer plotted the last position on the chart.

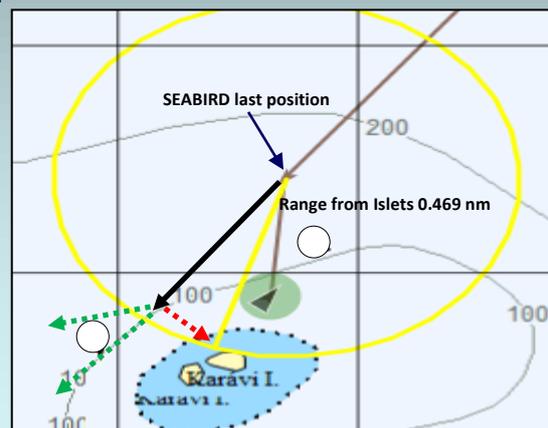


Figure 4: SEABIRD's last position recorded by IMDatE. Black line indicates the estimated followed course before maneuvering by Chief Officer. Red line indicates the maneuver that lead on to the rocky slope. Green lines depict the course that if followed Sea Bird would had had a clear passage.