

SYNOPSIS

At 2135 Universal Co-ordinated Time (UTC) on 15 August 1999, the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) was informed that a fishing vessel had capsized off the coast of the Shetland Islands at 1850 that day. An investigation was initiated immediately and was conducted by MAIB inspector, Richard Barwick.

Fraoch Ban was fishing for sand eels, which were stowed on board in bulk. The arrangement of the pound boards in the hold did not limit the free surface sufficiently, and as a result the vessel capsized and foundered. The weather at the time was calm and it was daylight. The stability book of the vessel was not approved for the bulk stowage of fish.

As *Fraoch Ban* capsized, the skipper radioed to the fishing vessel *Sarah Joan* for assistance. When the crew abandoned the upturned hull of *Fraoch Ban*, they had to swim to the liferaft, which had floated away because it had been stowed incorrectly. One of the crew became unconscious during the swim and needed to be hauled to the liferaft; the other crew members successfully resuscitated him and he later made a full recovery.

The MAIB has made safety recommendations regarding stability, securing liferafts, and certification of skippers on board fishing vessels.