

Fishing nets caught in propellers

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While preparing to resume survey operations close inshore during the hours of darkness, a vessel caught unmarked fishing nets in both main propellers.

What happened?

The incident occurred a little over one nautical mile from shore, after around three days of waiting on weather.

The propulsion system was stopped before completing a visual inspection at the stern of the vessel. Fishing nets were observed on the port side, leading beneath the vessel. It was confirmed that the fishing nets were entangled in both propellers, disabling both and leading to limited vessel manoeuvrability.

The bow thruster was used to maintain control of the vessel and slow down to drift towards the shore. In due course, the vessel was able to anchor in a safe location away from seabed assets and await assistance.

What actions were taken? What lessons were learned?

- Suspension of operations until such a time that a review and improvement of the project risk assessment document was completed to fully capture the scenario where multiple propellers and/or thrusters are compromised/immobilised due to entanglement with fishing nets or other floating debris.
- A proper look-out should be maintained by sight and hearing as well as by all available means appropriate in the prevailing circumstances and conditions, so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and reduce the risk of encountering in/on water debris/fishing activities. If hazards are observed and considered by the Officer of the Watch (OoW) to pose a significant risk to the vessel, consider suspending operations.

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