



National Transportation Safety Board

Marine Accident Brief

Sinking of Fishing Vessel *Mary Kay*

Accident no.	DCA-12-LM-022
Accident type	Sinking
Vessel	Commercial fishing vessel <i>Mary Kay</i>
Location	Dixon Entrance, Alaska (54°38.015' N, 132°04.334' W), Near Cape Chacon, Prince of Wales Island, Alaska
Date	July 26, 2012
Time	2300 Alaska daylight time (coordinated universal time – 8 hours)
Injuries	None
Damage	Total loss; value of vessel and salmon on board estimated as \$625,000
Environmental damage	2,500 gallons of diesel fuel
Weather	Clear; 55°F; no precipitation
Waterway characteristics	Near coastal waters, southeastern Alaska

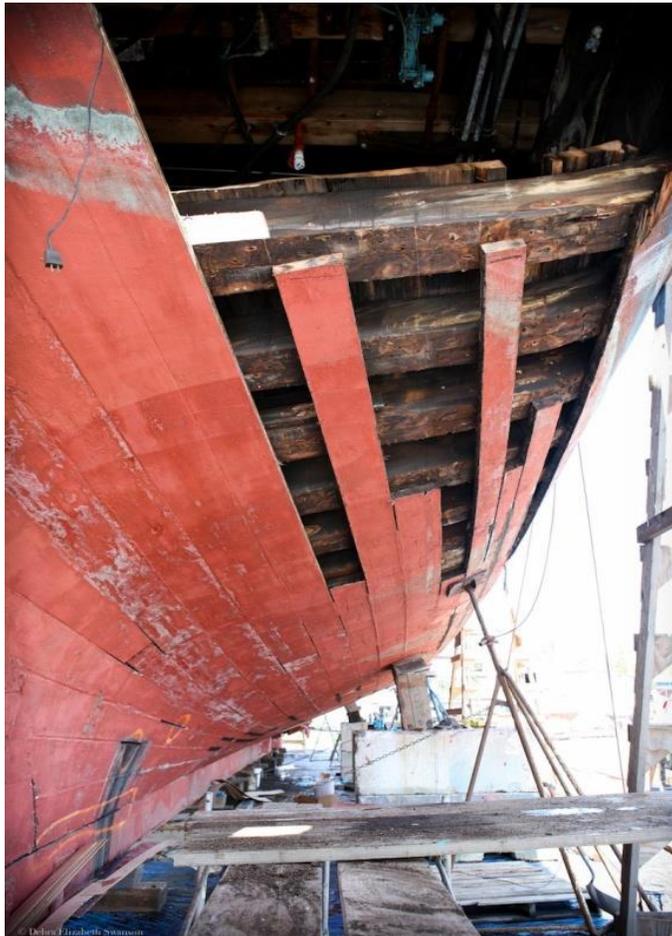
On July 26, 2012, about 2300 Alaska daylight time, the commercial fishing vessel *Mary Kay* sank as a result of flooding in the starboard fish hold, the lazarette, and the engine room. The sinking took place in Dixon Entrance, near Cape Chacon, Prince of Wales Island, Alaska. The four crewmembers safely abandoned the vessel and were rescued.



Mary Kay during its 2012 shipyard period in Port Townsend, Washington. (Photo by Port Townsend Shipwrights Co-Op)

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Almost a month earlier, on July 1, 2012, the *Mary Kay* had returned to service following a 3-month shipyard period at Port Townsend, Washington. During this time, extensive modifications were made, which included adding a third fish hold, replacing worn-out bottom planking, removing a hydraulic bilge pump, and installing a refrigerated sea water circulation pipe. The addition of the third fish hold nearly doubled the vessel's capacity and likely changed its center of gravity.



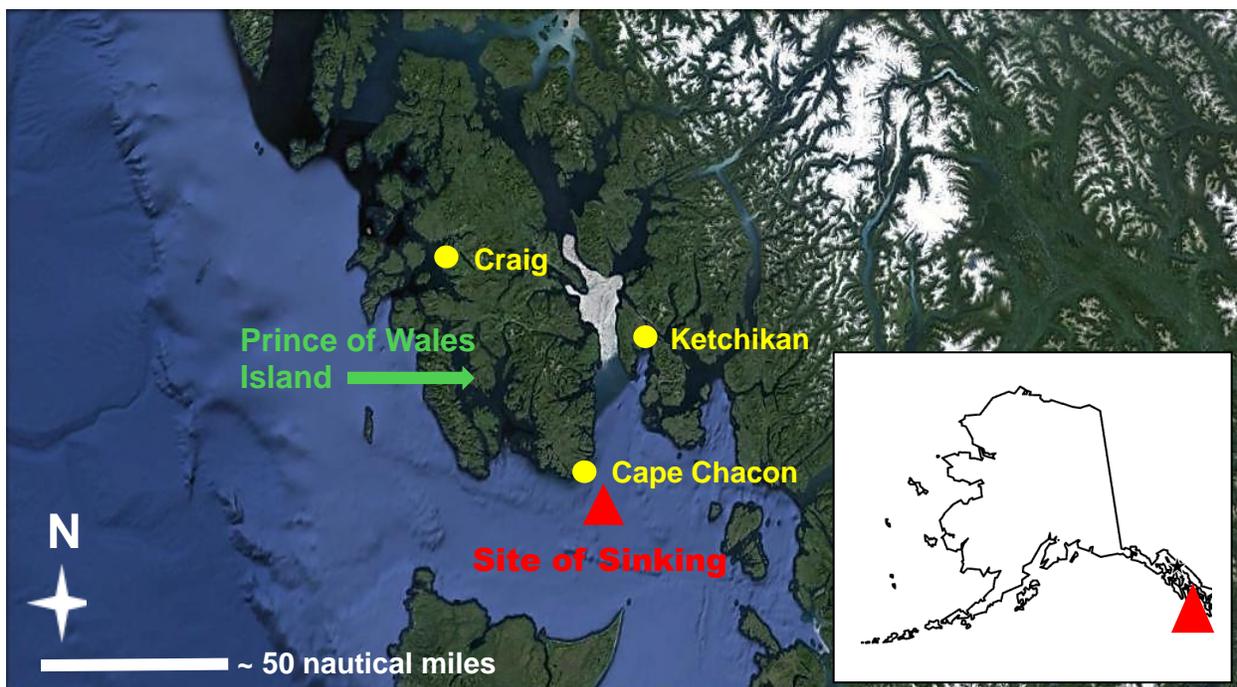
Replacing planks in the stern of the *Mary Kay*, June 2012. (Photo by Port Townsend Shipwrights Co-Op)

When the *Mary Kay* departed the Port Townsend shipyard facility on July 1, 2012, the vessel returned to service without a sea trial. After getting under way toward the first scheduled stop of Bellingham, Washington, the crew detected a leak on the bottom of the starboard fish hold and another leak in the lazarette. On arriving in Bellingham, the *Mary Kay* lost operational control and consequently allided with a dock in port. The damage to the hull of the *Mary Kay* was not investigated, perhaps because the estimated damage was less than the required reportable amount. The *Mary Kay* next visited Sitka, Alaska, on July 9, 2012, where the vessel grounded twice on the boat launch (made of cement) in Sitka harbor. It is unknown whether these groundings caused any damage to the hull, because, like in Bellingham, the incident was never reported and no formal damage inspection completed. Later that same month, on July 22, the *Mary Kay* was under way and returning to Sitka when water began leaking from the starboard fish hold and lazarette into the vessel's bilges. The helmsman set the vessel on autopilot, left the

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pilothouse, and went to the engine room to pump the bilges. The autopilot failed, and the vessel struck a floating aid to navigation in Saginaw Channel. Any vessel damage is unknown, as this incident was not reported either.

On July 26, 2012, at 1800 local time, the *Mary Kay* departed the fuel dock in Ketchikan, Alaska, headed for Craig, Alaska, to offload about 130,000 pounds of salmon that the crew had retrieved at a nearby cannery. After getting under way, a high-level alarm sounded and the crew had to pump the bilges. As the voyage continued, the leaks from the lazarette and the starboard fish hold activated the bilge alarm about every 45 minutes. About a third of the way to Craig, as the vessel approached Cape Chacon, the *Mary Kay* began experiencing large waves and the crew noticed that the bilges were filling with water. The captain activated a gasoline-powered 300-gallon-per-minute (gpm) pump, an electric-powered 300-gpm-pump, and a hydraulic-powered 250-gpm-pump in the engine room.



The *Mary Kay* was traveling from Ketchikan to Craig. The vessel sank near Cape Chacon on the southeast end of Prince of Wales Island. (Background by Google Earth)

The captain issued an urgent call (PAN-PAN) for assistance and returned to the engine room a few minutes later to find that the pumps were not keeping up with the water ingress. He then issued a distress call (MAYDAY) and directed his crew to don survival suits and launch the skiff and the liferaft. The crew successfully abandoned the *Mary Kay* and, moments after the captain as the last person on board left the vessel, it sank bow first. About an hour later, the crew of another fishing vessel rescued the *Mary Kay* crew. The *Mary Kay* sank in deep water and was a total constructive loss. Its value, together with the 130,000 pounds of salmon lost with the vessel, was estimated as \$625,000.

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Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines that the probable cause of the sinking of the *Mary Kay* was the captain's failure to identify and correct the source(s) of the through-hull leaks.

Vessel Particulars

Vessel	<i>Mary Kay</i>
Owner/operator	Mary Kay Fisheries, LLC Bellevue, WA
Home port	Edmonds, WA
Flag	United States
Type	Commercial Fishing Vessel
Built	1940
Official number	239946
Construction	Wood
Length	78.5 ft (23.8 m)
Width	21.6 ft (6.5 m)
Gross US tonnage	117
Engine type	Diesel
Cargo	Fish
Persons on board	Four

For more details about this accident, visit www.nts.gov/investigations/dms.html and search for NTSB accident ID DCA12LM022.

Adopted: October 31, 2013

The NTSB has authority to investigate and establish the probable cause of any major marine casualty or any marine casualty involving both public and nonpublic vessels under 49 *United States Code* 1131. This report is based on factual information provided by the US Coast Guard from its informal investigation of the accident. The NTSB did not conduct its own on-scene investigation.
