

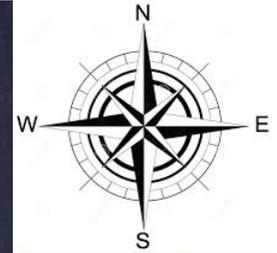
# Case Review – Grounding of R/V “AUBI”



U.S. Coast Guard Sector San Juan - Incident Management Division

Photo Credit: M. A. Mercado

- Foreign - 49' Sailing Vessel
- Reported hard aground on shallow reef
- Cueva del Indio Natural Reserve
- Unknown fuel potential
- Minimal contact with Responsible Party
- Unknown vessel condition or structural integrity
- Owner made contact with SEA TOW



**Rock Island - Hazard**



El Coayuco La Cueva Del Indio



**Vessel Location**

**PATH OF VESSEL**

681

681

681

Camino La Via

Callejón de Cristo

Via

**Incident Brief - 15MAY15 - 0835**

# Immediate actions

- Pollution Responders departed Sector San Juan to incident location.
- Sector San Juan Command Center completed and submitted a Natural Resource Trustee Incident Report for the vessel grounding.
- Additional attempts were made to contact vessel owner via cellular phone.
- SEA TOW was contacted - Confirmed potential salvage operation financed by the vessel owner.

# On-Scene Investigation



- Validated no signs of pollution.
- Found website for the R/V in bold lettering on bulkhead of vessel.
- Met with Barceloneta Police and DNER representatives for the Natural and Marine Reserves.
- Interviewed witnesses and confirmed time of grounding - 14MAY15 @ 2300.
- Met with Mr. Miguel Mercado (pictured), a volunteer coral reef conservationist. His photos showed the extent of damage to present Endangered Species.

# Investigation continued

- A Notice of Federal Interest was issued to the owner. However, the owner's broken English made it difficult to determine the exact amount of fuel on board. The owner stated he had 1000 liters of diesel on board.
- IMD directed the owner to sound his tanks and check for flooding.
- IMD discovered the vessel design particulars on the owner's website.
- The vessel had a total capacity of **2,430** gallons in **04 individual tanks**, 02 in each pontoon.
- The two forward tanks were integrated with the hull.
- The hull thickness was **8mm** thick and constructed out of aluminum.  
**8mm = 0.32 inches**



# Weather and Tide

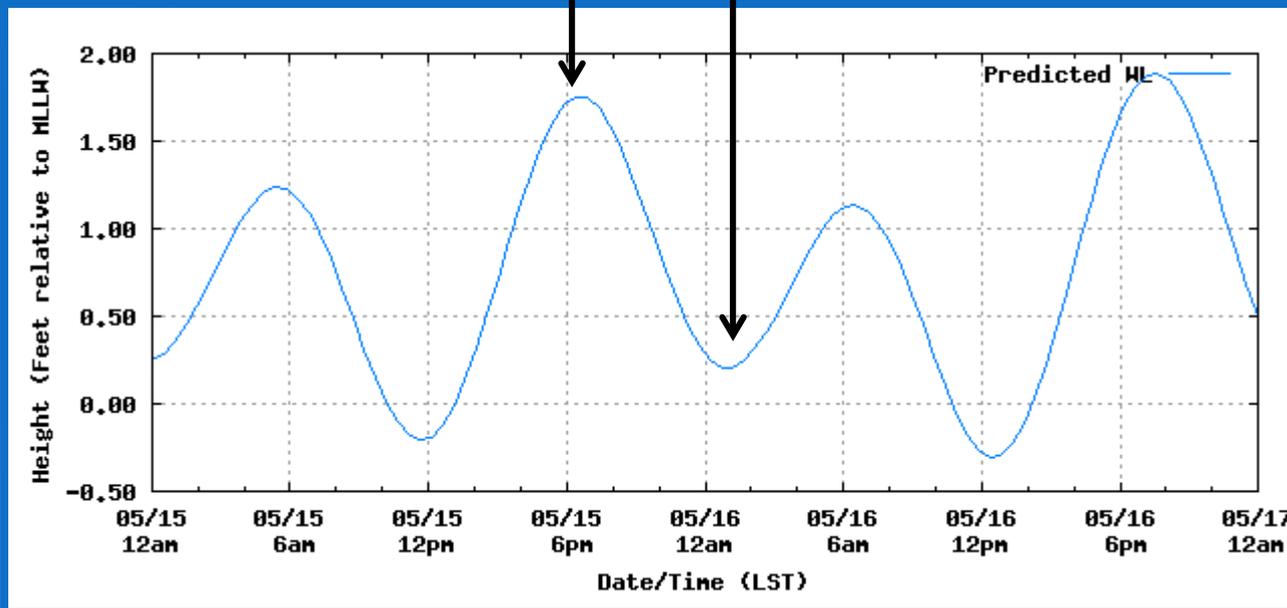
Wave heights were increasing with incoming tide. A small NNE swell of 1-3ft was expected to last until the next day. Light winds and scattered showers were expected that evening.

- **Low Tide** - 0.21ft @ 1142

- **High Tide** - 1.75ft @ 1835

- **Low Tide** - 0.2 ft @ 0055

- **High Tide** - 1.14ft @ 0626



Date	Day	Time	Hgt
05/15	Fri	05:30 AM	1.24 H
05/15	Fri	11:42 AM	-0.21 L
05/15	Fri	06:35 PM	1.75 H
05/16	Sat	12:55 AM	0.2 L
05/16	Sat	06:26 AM	1.14 H
05/16	Sat	12:30 PM	-0.3 L
05/16	Sat	07:29 PM	1.89 H

- SEA TOW - Assessed the incident and made plans for extraction.
- SEA TOW - Verified fuel in all four tanks.
- SEA TOW - Confirmed no water intrusion.

- IMD determined the best course of action would be to remove all the fuel prior to salvage operations. With no spill equipment on scene or contingency plan in place, salvage could cause damage to vessel hull and further damage to reef system.



*Caribbean Reef Life Conservation*

An Endangered Species Consultation for Emergency Responses was completed and submitted by Sector San Juan IMD due to the possibility of damaging listed endangered species as a result of response activities.

The owner of the vessel was ordered to remove all fuel on board his vessel prior to conducting salvage operations.

Increasing tide and wave action made for a stressful few hours prior to equipment arrival.



# Fuel Removal Operations



# Extraction

- Fuel operations were complete by **0500**
- **0709** – Towing operation commenced
- An estimated **1500** gallons of fuel was removed
- One gallon of diesel weighs between 6.85 - 7.5lbs
- An estimated **10,500 lbs** of fuel was removed
- Increased buoyancy of vessel
- Vessel was free-floating at high tide, even with a **0.6 ft decrease** than the previous high tide



# Questions?

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