



Simplified report of safety investigation

**COLLISION BETWEEN THE FRENCH TRAWLER *BILLABONG*
AND THE FINNISH TANKER VESSEL *PURHA*
ON 9 NOVEMBER 2012 OFF BELLE-ÎLE**

Bureau d'enquêtes sur les événements de mer

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COLLISION BETWEEN THE FRENCH TRAWLER *BILLABONG* AND THE FINNISH TANKER VESSEL *PURHA*, ON 9 NOVEMBER 2012 OFF BELLE-ÎLE

VESSELS AND CREWS

BILLABONG :



Length overall: 16.50 m;
Breadth: 5.81 m ;
Gross tonnage: 48,25 Tx ;
Power: 294 kW ;
Registration: LO 691333 ;
Year of building: 1986.

Steel-hull trawler, fitted for second category coast fishery with a four men crew (the skipper asked for a reduction to a three member crew for 48 hour fishing periods in 2008. The request was signed by the Safety Centre but has not been submitted to the DDTM (Local Maritime administration Director)). On 7 November 2012, DDTM asked the skipper to sort out his minimum safe manning certificate, which had been done on 26 November 2012.

On the day of the accident, the crew was made of 4 men, one of them was a trainee unknown from DDTM.

Skipper/engineer, 39 year old, holding a fishing vessel skipper certificate (1992), an under 750 kW certificate of proficiency (2004) and a ROC (1991), owner since 2008. Valid medical certificate.

Able fisherman, on watch at the time of the accident, 42 year old, holding a fisherman certificate of proficiency (1992), a basic safety certificate (2008) and a Certificate of competency in lifeboat, liferaft and rescue boat operation (2008), joined the ship as a replacement 3 weeks ago.

Fisherman, 50 year old.

PURHA :



Tanker/chemical tanker vessel built in China in 2003. Owned and operated by Neste Shipping Oy, she is classed by Det Norske Veritas.

Flag: Finnish ;
IMO registration number: 9255268 ;
Length overall: 169.50 m ;
Breadth: 23.75 m;
Gross tonnage: 15980;
Main engine power: 9450 kW ;
Bow thruster: 1200 kW.

The vessel had been subjected to a port state visit on her arrival in Donges: no deficiencies.

Crew made of 17 persons of Finnish nationality (except one Estonian seaman).

The female deck officer on watch at the time of the accident was 59 year old.

FACTS

Time UTC on **9 November 2012**.

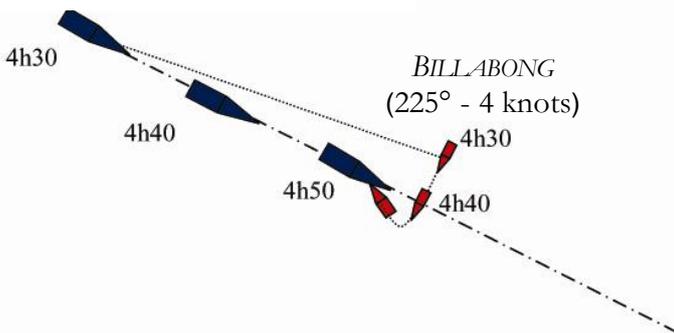
Weather conditions (SITREP and sea protests consistent): clear, smooth sea, east-north-easterly wind Beaufort 1 to 3, good visibility.

BILLABONG had finished the shooting of her fishing gear around **4.00 am**. The able fisherman took over the watch from the skipper who gave him the order to follow a southerly, then a south-westerly and finally a north-westerly course and to be careful not to sail off-track because of the risk of snagging on the rocky bottom in the vicinity and to be ready to react in this case.

PURHA was bound to Donges heading 120° at 12,7 knots. The second officer has been on watch since **2.00 am**. *BILLABONG* was detected at 20 miles on the port bow and regularly monitored on the radar display and by sight, she was not identified by the AIS and her blip was too weak to be acquired by the ARPA. Her bearing was not steady and her CPA was assessed 1 mile ahead. *PURHA* was overtaking a vessel, *CFL PROGRESS*, having a slightly convergent track at 10 knots, located at about 1 mile afore her starboard beam at **4.30 am**.

Around **4.40 am**, *BILLABONG* crossed ahead *PURHA* at about 3 miles heading a south-westerly course at 4 knots. She began then to turn on starboard to the northwest.

PURHA (120° - 12.7 knots)



Around **4.45 am**, the officer of the watch aboard *PURHA* observed that *BILLABONG* had altered course. But *BILLABONG* was not yet stabilized at her new course and she perceived her as coming on her portside. She was at 1 mile and was disappearing in the radar sea clutter. She did not manoeuvre because she thought it was too late.

Around **4.48 am**, the AB on watch aboard *BILLABONG* informed the skipper that a cargo vessel had a collision course. When the skipper arrived

in the wheelhouse, *PURHA* was at about 20 meters, he backed the engine but the collision was unavoidable. Two impact sounds are audible on the VDR recording at **4.49 am** with a two-second interval.

At the same time, the officer of the watch aboard *PURHA*, as she lost sight of *BILLABONG*, rushed to the wing, observed that *BILLABONG* was passing alongside at a few meters and as she did not hear the impact sounds, concluded that a collision did not happen.

The skipper of *BILLABONG* switched on his AIS around **4.54 am** and stated that he attempted to call *PURHA* on VHF channel 8 then 16 soon after the collision. No call had been recorded neither by the VDR nor by Étrel MRCC audio recording device. He called then the MRCC at **4.57 am** to report the collision.

The officer of the watch aboard *PURHA* recognized the name of her vessel during this communication and informed the master. As she spoke little English, she did not answer MRCC calls. The master answered as soon as he arrived on the bridge around **5.05 am**.

CONSÉQUENCES

BILLABONG:

Bow, tweendeck and shelter deck distorted with several structural members unsoldered. A weld broken on the gantry crane. The winding drum was to be checked.



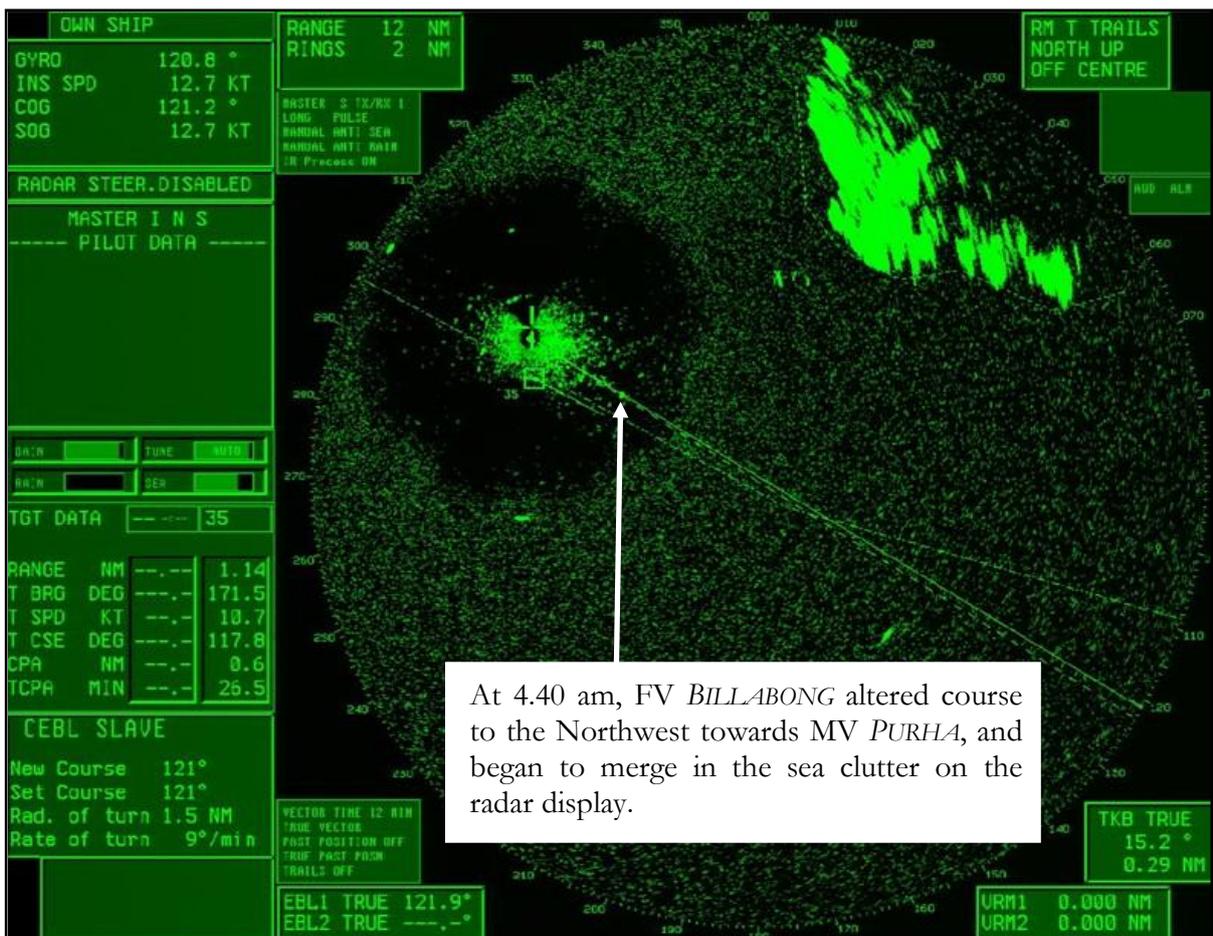
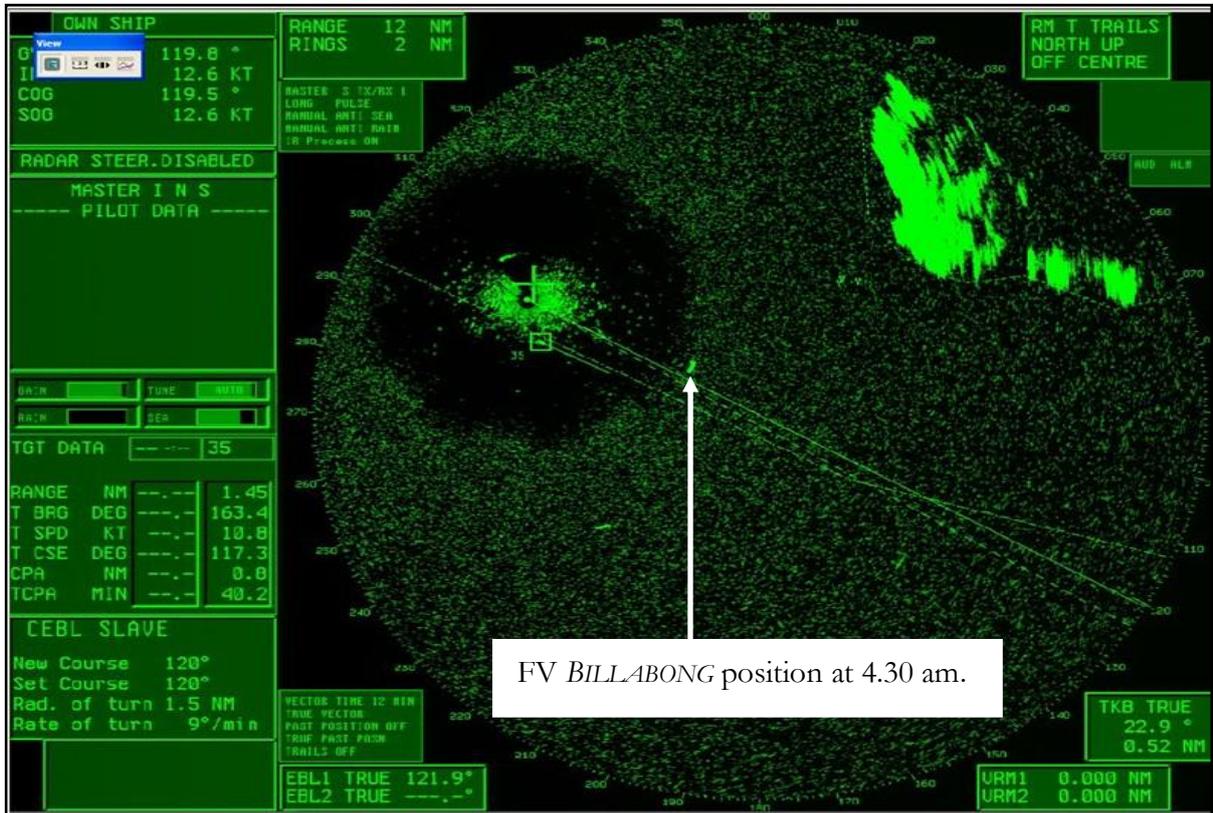
About three weeks of operating loss.

PURHA:

Some scratches on the starboard side.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 2013-E-021 *BILLABONG* skipper should not have let the man on watch with the unique order, linked to the risk of snagging, to keep on the shaped track. 2
- 2013-E-022 The man on watch aboard *BILLABONG* should have informed the skipper when he crossed ahead of *PURHA* before he had to begin to turn to a north-westerly course as he should have anticipated that the next heading could lead to a collision with *PURHA*.
- 2013-E-023 The sailors to whom the skippers hand over effective bridge watch tasks should have a minimal training in order to be capable of discernment when the skipper's orders are not any more enforceable without putting safety at risk.
- 2013-E-024 The officer of the watch aboard *PURHA* should have observed that *BILLABONG* was actually on a collision course with *CFL PROGRESS* and that the situation would change therefore.
This kind of uncertain situation have to be managed by sight and requests a permanent concentration from the officers in order to be able to react on time.
- 2013-E-025 It is essential that the officers of the watch have a good enough command of English language so that they would not be inhibited by a VHF call.
- 2013-E-026 It is necessary that the skippers and the men on watch on board fishing vessels admit that although a fishing vessel is a stand-on vessel, she is not for all that free to alter course without having checked that she could do it without any risk of collision.
- 2013-E-027 The complement on board *BILLABONG* was not in accordance with the minimum safe manning certificate in force. The presence of a trainee was not known by DDTM, which could have had consequences on the rescue management in case of foundering.
- 2013-E-028 AIS ought to remain on aboard vessels fitted.





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