

# Fishing vessel removed from channel

Inland Salvage, Inc (ISI) recently completed the wreck removal of the F/V *Sandy Point* and clearance of the Gulfport ship channel.

ISI was appointed the salvor of the 51.21m fishing vessel *Sandy Point* which sank after an incident involving the container ship *Eurus London* on May 18<sup>th</sup>. ISI mobilised salvage equipment and personnel and were on scene within 24 hours of receiving notice to commence operations. ISI faced a daunting list of environmental and public concerns, as *Sandy Point* was laden with around 18,927 litres of diesel oil, 1,200,000 menhaden fish and 379 litres of lubrication oil when it sank.

The vessel sank on the western edge of the Gulfport ship channel. Ship traffic sensitive to the economy of Gulfport could not be impeded. Further complications arose with the salvage operation coinciding with the traditional Mississippi boating weekend of Memorial Day, hurricane season and the flooding of the Mississippi River.

The first priority for Inland Salvage, Inc was to locate and recover the remains of three missing crew members, which took two days in total. Eli Zatezalo, president of ISI, said: "This was a sensitive salvage operation, our main focus was locating and recovering the three missing crew members remains so that they could be returned to their loved ones."

Fuel, lube oil and hydraulic oils were removed with hot-tapping. The cargo of fish was discharged into a receiver boat and was also air-lifted. Purse-netting and then the two seine boats had to be removed before a diving survey could be conducted.

The diving survey determined that *Sandy Point's* hull girder section modulus was so compromised that the hull would have to be divided into two sections. Using airlifts and water jetting, divers excavated five tunnels between the port side of the casualty and the sea floor. Eight sets of rolling and catching rigging (par buckling) were passed through the two forward and two aft tunnels. A cutting chain was then passed through the middle tunnel.

Inland Salvage, Inc's A-Frame H/L salvage barges, *Large Marge* and *Big Al*, were used to render the three-inch ORQ anchor chain loaded to 300 tonnes in the cutting operation. The task of preserving the damage to *Sandy Point* was complicated by its location in aft part of forward fish hull. Divers resolved the problem by making pilot cuts with underwater torches, which steered the cutting chain and divided the damage into two equal halves. This preserved the impact area for investigation and eliminated the complications of a single lift of the severely weakened hull.



The vessel sank on the western edge of the Gulfport ship channel.



Bow section lift.

The 350 tonne bow section containing the crew's accommodation and wheelhouse were par buckled upright, lifted off the sea floor and then placed on a receiver barge, which had pre-arranged cribbing specifically calculated by a naval architect, and sea-fastened for travel. The section was then towed in to the Mississippi State Docks for further USCG investigation and surveys. Within a few days the same course of action was taken in recovering the 480-tonne stern section. A debris field recovery followed the removal of the hulls.

Daily safety and job task meetings were conducted by ISI to ensure that all participants in the salvage and pollution response operation were aware and prepared for the daily activities.

"We were faced with almost every facet of salvage during this operation. Locating and recovering the missing crew members, chain cutting the vessel in half, underwater hot-tapping for lightering operations, par-buckling each section and heavy lifts in the 400-500 tonne range – all conducted eight miles offshore," Zatezalo added. "I'm proud to have the skilled personnel we have within our organisation. The support of our J/V partner River Salvage Company as well as the support of the USCG was significant in an overall safe and successful operation."

A prelube system can save you a fortune in engine overhaul costs and downtime.



If you count on your diesel powered equipment to be out earning it's keep you can't afford to have it in dry dock.



Visit [www.MarinePrelube.com](http://www.MarinePrelube.com) and protect your engine.