

KISH P & I LOSS PREVENTION CIRCULAR KPI-LP-79-2012 ***(Passage Planning & lessons learnt from an incident)***

The following is a summarized report about a claim raised against a vessel in Chinese waters that she had crossed through a Fish Farm/Cultivation Area. The investigations revealed that the laid courses were through the corner of one such area which was not marked on the ship's charts.

The extent of damages was unknown but it raised a huge amount of claims & the company was burdened heavily.

The ship was held by the port authority for various settlements & extra time imposed.

There are some lessons which may be learnt from the incident:

1-The latest correction was not applied on the chart. No electronic means for reception of such corrections was in use. The package of chart corrections was on its way to the load port when this happened & the vessel en route to the port of loading entered the fish farm.

Therefore the timely reception of corrections should receive our proper attention.

2-Apparently there might have been some more information on the Chinese charts but those were unavailable on board & as an international practice, we may all rely on B.A. charts confidently. Furthermore it may be a good practice to ask the local agents to get you a local chart bearing in mind that such charts can be considered as an Aide only & not fully relied upon.

3-As some of the ship managements offer; in such cases the master can request the correction supply company or the ship management superintendents to send the scanned charts of the route, if it is impossible to receive them physically & in time.

Then if the corrections can not arrive; we may get the scanned corrected chart at least.

This is a last option remedy and may not be solidly acceptable but better than going to sea with a chart not reflecting all the existing dangers!

4-Surely, it is not practicable to expect the master to foresee if very important corrections/changes have taken place; but let us look at the matter more professionally & agree that going to sea with uncorrected chart is jeopardizing the safety of life, vessel plus her cargo & environment & thus not allowed.

Hence there is no such thing as more important/less important correction.

They are all necessary & important.

5-Furthermore the investigations revealed that the ship's NAVTEX was not working for quite some time. No one can say that "had the equipment been okay; the ship would be warned of the fish-farm"; but we can certainly accept that a lot of other important informative and warning messages were neglected due to this defect.

6-Perhaps a vital part of passage planning is chart-work & identification of dangers & hazardous areas on the way. It seems that not only with the Colregs but also in many other aspects of navigation we can require that the officer of the watch should determine the accuracy of the information **by all available means** at his/her disposal.

The essence of safe navigation rests on the good & efficient practice of common sense & due diligence.