

Manager's Report, Harbours

Mike Pryce, Manager

November 1999

1. Harbour Navigation Aids

Work on the repairs to Steeple Rock light is still underway and remains weather dependent.

All other navigation lights operated as normal.

2. Oil Pollution Activities

Three marine oil spill reports were received, and two required follow-up action.

- On 13 October a container ship put a small quantity of fuel oil-contaminated ballast water into harbour after the failure of an internal vent pipe. The ship's crew applied approved dispersant on the oil, supervised by Manager Harbours.
- On 15 October there was a significant spillage of oil from shore tanks at Seaview.

At the same time, water from the interceptor pit was drained into the harbour through a pipe running beneath the road to the foreshore.

Apparently due to a sensor error on the tank gauge, draining continued for an extended period. This resulted in diesel product filling all three stages of the interceptor pit and then escaping via the discharge pipe into the harbour.

The entire length of Petone Beach and the Hut River Estuary were affected by an extensive oil sheen. However, fresh southerly weather conditions prevailed for the next three days which greatly assisted natural dispersion.

The Council's contracted oiled wildlife responders were activated to monitor the affects on wildlife in the area. Fortunately, as it was mainly diesel, the effect on bird life on the water was minimal, with only a few mallard fatalities and some requirement for cleaning.

3. Departmental Activities

- In mid-October, Maritime Safety Authority staff, assisted by our staff, carried out the annual audit and servicing of the oil pollution response equipment stored at Kings Wharf. Due to development work in the port, some of this equipment has started to be moved to another nearby location. We are also planning how to move the rest of the significant quantities of equipment involved.

- During November, Greg Meikle attended and monitored a very successful jet-ski competition day at Lyall Bay, and a Power Boat Club race day at Porirua.
- Grant Nalder spoke to the Wellington Rowing Club and Dragon boat organisers about safety on the harbour.
- Prototype new and larger “5 knot marker buoys” have been delivered from the manufacturer and are due to be placed in the harbour soon.

4. **General Events/Information**

- During the annual 5 November fireworks display from a barge moored in Lambton Harbour, both Harbour Rangers closely monitored the recreational boating viewing the event. Boating behaviour was good and no untoward incidents were noted, except for the discharge of about a dozen red parachute distress flares, which some people erroneously think are able to be set-off on such occasions.
- Fast Cat Ferry’s *Incat 050* commenced an extra night sailing across Cook Strait from 16 November.
- Tranz Rail’s *Condor Vitesse* sailed from Falmouth on her delivery voyage to Wellington on 10 November, and is due in Wellington at the end of the month.