



# National Transportation Safety Board

## Marine Accident Brief

### Allision and Sinking of Offshore Supply Vessel *Celeste Ann*

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|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Accident no.</b>         | DCA13NM025   |
| <b>Vessel name</b>          | <i>Celeste Ann</i>   |
| <b>Accident type</b>        | Allision and sinking   |
| <b>Location</b>             | Gulf of Mexico, 20 nautical miles southeast of Grand Isle, Louisiana               |
| <b>Date, time</b>           | June 14, 2013<br>0836 central daylight time (coordinated universal time – 5 hours) |
| <b>Injuries</b>             | None   |
| <b>Damage</b>               | \$1 million  |
| <b>Environmental damage</b> | Undetermined quantity of oil products discharged into the Gulf of Mexico           |
| <b>Weather</b>              | Clear, northwest winds 15 knots  |
| <b>Waterway information</b> | Gulf of Mexico, seas 2–4 feet, current 2 knots                                     |

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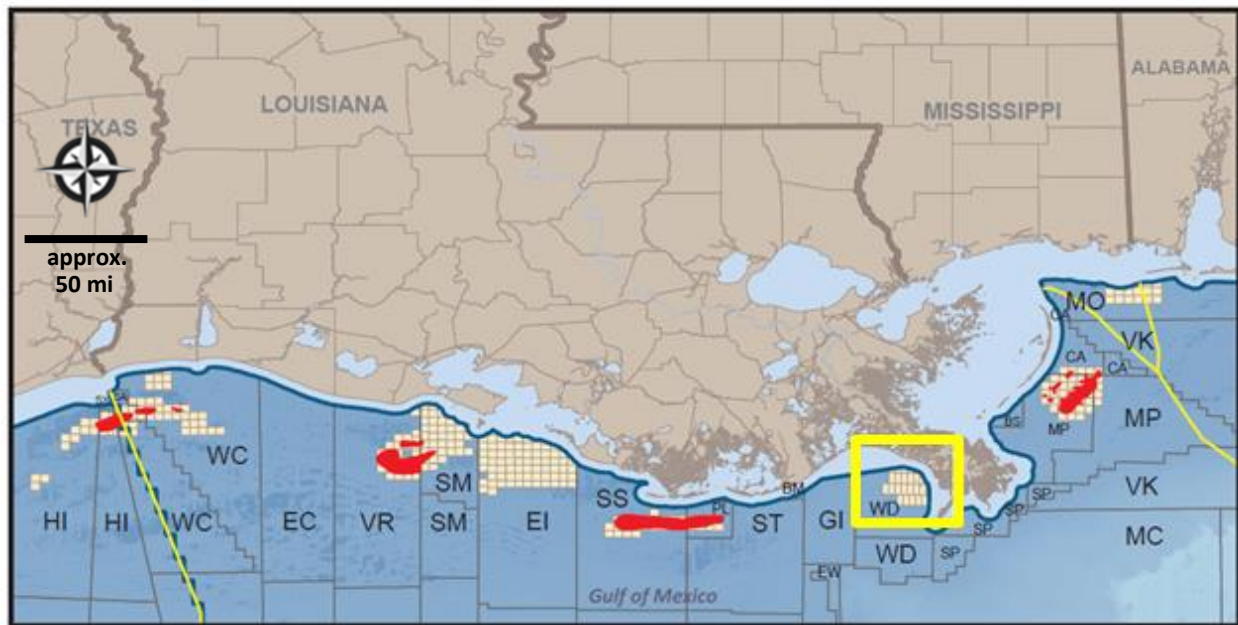
The offshore supply vessel *Celeste Ann* was receiving passengers from West Delta oil platform 73 about 20 nautical miles southeast of Grand Isle, Louisiana, when the vessel allided with the platform about 0836 on June 14, 2013. The allision punctured the hull, and the *Celeste Ann* subsequently flooded and sank. All passengers and crew evacuated to another vessel, and no one was injured.



*Celeste Ann* under way. (Photo from [www.gcaptain.com](http://www.gcaptain.com))

The *Celeste Ann* was an offshore supply vessel working in the oil and gas industry off the Louisiana coast west of the Mississippi River delta, primarily carrying offshore workers and equipment and supplies between platforms and to and from shore. On the morning of June 14, the vessel was operating in about 175 feet of water in West Delta block 73 in the Gulf of Mexico. West Delta 73, the eighth largest oil field on the Gulf of Mexico shelf, is 28 miles offshore from Grand Isle and owned by Energy XXI.

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The West Delta area of the Gulf of Mexico (yellow box) is divided into numbered blocks; the allision occurred in West Delta 73. (Image from Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, <http://www.boem.gov/Non-Energy-Minerals/West-Delta-Area.aspx>)

The vessel's crew consisted of two credentialed masters, one senior and one junior, and two deckhands. The junior master and a deckhand stood a 12-hour watch from midnight to noon. From 0600 to 0800, the *Celeste Ann* made several runs between West Delta 73 platforms A, B, and C to transport passengers and other materials.

About 0810, the vessel arrived at West Delta 73 platform A to pick up passengers. The junior master backed the vessel into the landing area and held position for the transfer. The vessel was positioned stern in to the platform with its bow into a northwest wind of about 15 knots in 2- to 4-foot seas. Between 0820 and 0830, eight passengers boarded using the crane and man-lift on the platform. Shortly after taking on the passengers, the bow began to swing to starboard and the wind pushed the vessel sideways towards the platform.

The junior master attempted to maneuver the vessel away from the platform, but he was unable to overcome the wind on the vessel's beam. The *Celeste Ann* allided with the platform about 0836. The vessel's starboard side hit the platform twice before the junior master was able to back the vessel away.



West Delta platform 73A, the landing platform (red arrow), and the area where the *Celeste Ann* allided after loading passengers (white arrow). (Photo by the United States Coast Guard)

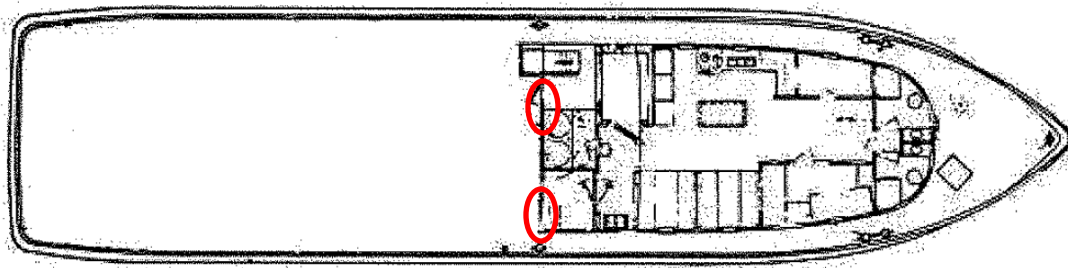
The junior master sent the deckhand to the engine room to check for damage, and the deckhand found flooding from a 2-foot gash on the starboard side. The junior master sounded the general alarm and went to the engine room to assess the damage, passing through a watertight door on the portside main deck, down a ladder into the pump room, and through a second watertight door to reach the engine room, which was aft of the pump room (see drawing below). The junior master told Coast Guard investigators he saw water in the bilges approaching the deck plates. He turned on both dedicated bilge pumps and a fire pump capable of bilge suction, but he did not close any of the watertight doors before returning to the bridge. The Coast Guard determined that even if the pumps had been operating properly, the likely rate of flooding would have exceeded their capacity.

About 0900, another offshore supply vessel, the *Oddysea Endeavor*, pulled alongside the *Celeste Ann* to assist. By 0910, the *Celeste Ann* lost electrical power and, as a result, lost steering capability, and all passengers and crew evacuated to the *Oddysea Endeavor* by 0915. With watertight doors left open, progressive flooding ensued, and the *Celeste Ann* sank about 1000.

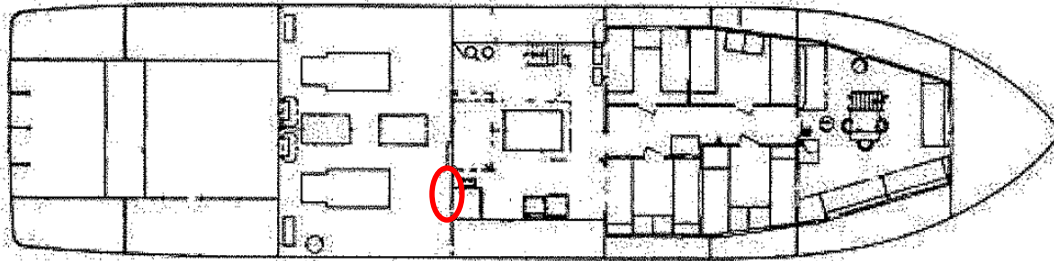
About a month later, the owners of the *Celeste Ann* decided to salvage the vessel, and it was raised and brought to Morgan City, Louisiana, for repairs. A damage survey determined that the initial impact with the landing platform resulted in a 2-inch-wide hole about 7 feet below the waterline near the pump room. The second impact resulted in two holes in the engine room—one about 1 inch in diameter located 6 feet below the waterline and another about 12 inches by 1 inch about a foot below the first. The Coast Guard estimated the total flooding rate to be greater than 1,000 gallons per minute. Estimated costs to salvage and repair the vessel were \$1 million.



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MAIN DECK



BELOW DECK

Layout of the *Celeste Ann* main deck and below deck. Watertight doors (red ovals), two on the main deck and one on the below deck, separated the engine room from the pump room. All three watertight doors were left open after the junior master checked the engine room following the allision. (Drawing provided by Coast Guard)



Damage to starboard side of the *Celeste Ann*. The first impact punctured the hull along the vessel's chine in the area of the pump room (circled in red at right). The second impact caused two punctures to the hull near the engine room (shown circled in blue at left). (Photo by Coast Guard)

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The platform owner conducted an underwater survey of the landing area on the West Delta 73A platform after the accident. The survey noted that a vertical pipe on the platform was arranged with a clamp attaching the vessel landing to the platform. The clamp had two horizontal protrusions that extended off the vertical pipe that likely punctured the hull of the *Celeste Ann*.

### Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines that the probable cause of the allision of the offshore supply vessel *Celeste Ann* with West Delta 73 platform A was the inability of the junior master to compensate for and overcome wind forces that pushed the vessel into the platform. Contributing to the hull breach and subsequent sinking of the *Celeste Ann* were underwater protrusions from the platform and open watertight doors on board the vessel.

### Vessel Particulars

| Vessel                     | <i>Celeste Ann</i>                               |
|----------------------------|--|
| Owner/operator             | B&J Martin Inc.                                  |
| Port of registry           | Cut Off, LA                                      |
| Flag                       | United States                                    |
| Type                       | Passenger vessel (OSV service)                   |
| Year built                 | 1979   |
| Official number (US)       | 614034   |
| Construction               | Steel  |
| Length                     | 112 ft (34.1 m)                                  |
| Draft                      | 7.5 ft (2.3 m)                                   |
| Beam/width                 | 26 ft (7.9 m)                                    |
| Tonnage                    | 93 gross tons                                    |
| Engine power, manufacturer | 1,270 hp (947 kW), General Motors Detroit Diesel |
| Persons on board           | 12   |

For more details about this accident, visit [www.nts.gov/investigations/dms.html](http://www.nts.gov/investigations/dms.html) and search for NTSB accident ID DCA13NM025.

**Adopted: January 14, 2015**

The NTSB has authority to investigate and establish the probable cause of any major marine casualty or any marine casualty involving both public and nonpublic vessels under 49 *United States Code* 1131. This report is based on factual information either gathered by NTSB investigators or provided by the Coast Guard from its informal investigation of the accident.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for a marine casualty; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “[NTSB] investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties . . . and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person.” 49 *Code of Federal Regulations*, Section 831.4.

Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by conducting investigations and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. 49 *United States Code*, Section 1154(b).

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