



## MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

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# News Release

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11-63-LST

May 19, 2011

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### ***DMR Marine Patrol Assists Coast Guard in Search for Missing Crewmembers***

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources' (DMR) Marine Patrol and its dive team are assisting the United States Coast Guard (USCG) in a search for three people missing in the Mississippi Sound following a collision between the Eurus London, a 660-foot container ship and the Sandy Point, a 163-foot Omega Protein fishing vessel.

The collision occurred about eight miles south of Gulfport between Cat Island and Ship Island Wednesday night. DMR Marine Patrol dispatch received the call from Coast Guard Station Gulfport at 9:05 p.m. Following the collision the Sandy Point sank with 16 persons aboard. A pilot boat rescued 11 people from the water and transferred them to the fishing vessel Frosty Morn. Two crewmembers of the Sandy Point were able to make it safely to the Eurus London, but three of the Sandy Point crewmembers remain missing.

DMR Marine Patrol has eight officers and three boats on the scene. Marine Patrol Chief of Enforcement Col. Walter Chataginer said a team of divers; including DMR Marine Patrol officers Tommy Jennings, Scott Saucier, Johnny Ladner, Bryce Gex and Biloxi Police Department diver Butch Windom, were on the scene of the sunken Sandy Point to help with search efforts. The Coast Guard has deployed rescue helicopters and vessels from Gulfport, New Orleans, Mobile, Ala. and St. Petersburg, Fla.

"The Coast Guard is the lead agency in this incident and we're here to assist them," Col. Chataginer said.

The Coast Guard and Marine Patrol are searching an area of approximately 25-square miles between Cat Island and Ship Island south of Gulfport. A safety zone has been established in the Gulfport Ship Channel, which encompasses the western tip of Ship Island; all vessels are restricted from entering the zone.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at [www.dmr.ms.gov](http://www.dmr.ms.gov).

PHOTO CREDITS: Photo Courtesy of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

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Photo A: DMR Marine Patrol Chief of Enforcement Col. Walter Chatagner and Coast Guard Captain Donald J. Rose respond to media questions about Wednesday's boat collision at a morning press conference at Coast Guard Station Gulfport.



Photo B: DMR Marine Patrol Dive Team member Bryce Gex loads diving equipment on the Mississippi, a Marine Patrol vessel, as dive team members; Scott Saucier, Johnny Ladner, Tommy Jennings and Biloxi Police Department diver Butch Windom prepare to head to the sunken fishing vessel, Sandy Point, to search for three missing crewmembers.