

Bulletin 367 - 06/04 - Further Information on Stowaways - Brazil

Further to [LP Bulletin 141](#) that gave details of preventative measures to assist ship operators and their masters in reducing cases of stowaways, we have been advised of several cases concerning stowaways hiding in ship's rudder housing, specifically with ships coming from African ports in ballast to load sugar in Brazil.

Stowaways have apparently discovered that the void space around the rudder stock is the best place to hide from the local stowaway search, since this place is not easily accessible from inside the ship. Crews should be instructed on this new stowaway strategy, intensifying the stowaway search to include the rudder housing. Crew may have access to the rudder housing by opening any of the available accesses in the steering gear room.



One case involved one of our Members ships, which was on a regular run between Djibouti and Yanbu al Bahr, Saudi Arabia. The ship was of conventional construction, but with a peculiarity in the rudder area which the stowaways could make good use of. On arrival at Jeddah anchorage where the ship called for bunkers, a stowaway was found sitting on top of the rudder assembly. This stowaway was a Kenyan national, who had entered the rudder cavity in Djibouti and had travelled for two days in the cavity, less than two metres above the water line with the noise of the propeller and steering gear constantly in his ears. When discovered, the stowaway was barely conscious.

As the stowaway had no documentation with him, and due to difficulties in repatriating stowaways from Saudi Arabia, the stowaway returned with the ship to Djibouti, where temporary travel documentation was obtained to allow for his repatriation. Prior to again sailing from Djibouti, the master requested a search of the rudder cavity. A mooring boat from the Port Harbour Office was used for the inspection, with a crewmember climbing into the rudder housing to check and confirm the space empty.

In other cases of stowaways being discovered in the rudder housing, they were found to be in very poor health and in one case two stowaways were unfortunately found dead.

We advise all Members of this situation and recommend that crews intensify stowaway searches and ensure that hard to reach positions on the ship, like the rudder housing, are thoroughly searched.

Source of information: Ernest Foster (H1)

Gabriel de Oliveira Junior
William Brothers Ltd
Club correspondent
Recife, Brazil
Email: wilpandi@williams.com.br

PANDI Liquidadores S.R.L
Club correspondent
Buenos Aires, Argentina
Email: pandi@pandi.com.ar