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## FISHERS SAVED

## Rescue mission at sea brings 12 crewmen home

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A MAJOR rescue mission by the National Sea Rescue Institute (NSRI) Emergency Operations Centre and the crews of three fishing vessels that took place in the early hours of Sunday morning saw 12 crew members returned to safety after a 24m-long Saldanha Bay fishing vessel capsized.

NSRI Simon's Town station commander Darren Zimmerman said the centre was alerted by Telkom Maritime Radio Services and the Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC) to the capsized fishing vessel, and that there were people in the water, eight nautical miles south of Cape Point.

NSRI Simon's Town, NSRI Hout Bay, and the NSRI Kommetjie duty crews were activated and the Western Cape government Health Department and EMS metro control alerted.

This was after a VHF marine radio Mayday distress call was intercepted by Telkom Maritime Radio Services. The MRCC informed the NSRI that there were three fishing vessels in the vicinity and that they were assisting at the scene. "The vessels rescued the casualties until all 12 crew members were accounted for," the NSRI said.

"It was confirmed that the fishing vessel Oceana Concord had safely rescued seven crewmen; the fishing vessel Oceana Mercury rescued four crewmen, while the fishing vessel Alert III rescued one crewman," Zimmerman said.

Zimmerman said NSRI Simon's Town stood down after confirmation was received that none of the 12 crewmen were injured. However, the NSRI Hout Bay and NSRI Kommetjie crews remained on high alert until all three fishing vessels and the rescued crewmen were safely in Hout Bay Harbour and no further assistance was needed.

Telkom Maritime Radio Services broadcast an "All ships alert warning" to alert marine traffic that the capsized vessel was still drifting.

"The owners of the drifting fishing vessel are arranging a salvage operation," Zimmerman said.

NSRI commended the swift response of all the rescuers, while the skippers and crew of the three fishing vessels were commended for successfully rescuing all 12 crewmen.