Eleven Fishermen Safe After Boats Ground, Sink

Wednesday, 25 January 2012

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

Kodiak-based Coast Guard and emergency medical personnel transfer a fishing vessel Kimberly survivor from a rescue helicopter to an ambulance Jan. 25, 2012. The Kimberly went aground in Portage Bay with four people aboard.

Coast Guard Petty Officer David Call and Petty Officer Jose Varela-Sanots check a survivors medical condition at Air Station Kodiak Jan. 25, 2012. The man survived the sinking of the fishing vessel Heritage south of Kodiak Island. U.S. Coast Guard photos by Petty Officer 2nd Class Charly Hengen.

Eleven fishermen from two boats are safe after separate incidents Tuesday night and this (Wednesday) morning around Kodiak Island.

The 58-foot fishing vessel Kimberly ran aground on Portage Bay southwest of Kodiak on the Alaska Peninsula last night around 8 p.m. The 68-foot

fishing vessel Heritage sank south of Kodiak Island this morning.

Coast Guard spokeswoman Charly Hengen in Kodiak said extreme weather prevented the rescue of the crew from the Kimberly last night. As helicopter crews were returning to the site of the Kimberly grounding this morning, they were diverted to respond to the Heritage mayday call. Five crewmen were rescued from their liferaft by the tug Tuxendi, and the other two, who were in the water, were hoisted aboard the Jayhawk and returned to Kodiak in good condition.

Hengen says the Good Samaritan tug dropped off the five crewmen it rescued at Lazy Bay on the south end of Kodiak Island, where the men said they would arrange for their own transportation back to Kodiak.

After that rescue, the Coast Guard returned to Portage Bay and hoisted the four fishermen from the Kimberly. Hengen says two were mildly hypothermic and the other two more severely hypothermic. Their current condition is unknown.

The reasons for the grounding and sinking have not yet been investigated, but severe weather in the region and icing from heavy freezing spray could be factors.