**Lost a Boat?**

**Concerned about Crew?**

We often get contacted by family and friends concerned about a boat that is 'out there somewhere'. We also get asked how we follow up when someone stops reporting in to the net.

Starting in the albeit Covid affected 2021 season, we have full AIS capability which means that if a boat has AIS then we can find them anywhere in the world. The information we get is their position, course and speed if they are moving, and any detail they have registered with their AIS. Because there are multiple boats with the same name it makes it much easier if we have some filtering information such as what flag they are sailing under or their call sign or MMSI number. Have this information ready if you contact us.

Gulf Harbour Radio is not really a check in service. However, in addition to what we see on AIS we do take position reports on the radio from boats that do not have on board email. However, if a boat does not report in to us we cannot spend a lot of radio time calling them. A boat should know that NZ Maritime Radio operates 24/7 and monitors all the emergency frequencies so if they miss calling Gulf Harbour Radio they can pick whatever frequency is appropriate to the time of day and their position, and call Maritime Radio. We always used Maritime Radio when we cruised as you can call them at any time, so you dont need to remember a schedule. Also they are next door to the RCC if anything goes wrong, and they can get medical advisers in if required.

Having said that, we are of course talking to boats each day and if someone has an equipment problem, or is going to encounter bad weather, or has any other problem that will affect their passage, we start to monitor them closely. This means David will provide detailed upcoming weather, and we usually advise the NZ RCC and NZ Maritime Radio of the situation so that they are pre warned that something may escalate.

Sometimes land based friends and family are looking for a boat to pass on information to crew. Often the boat is not in an area where land email is available so radio is the only way of contacting them if they do not have on board email.

So, the steps to take if you are looking for a boat are:

* check the boat position on their tracking web site – if they have one. Be aware that some names have several boats associated with them!
* check with NZ Maritime Radio to see if they have checked in with them. Email is maritime@kordia.co.nz or phone 0800 MARITIME, or 0064 (0)4 9148333. It is useful to know the boat call sign. eg ZM2831
* Email or phone Gulf Harbour Radio. If they are not visible on AIS we can put out a call. Usually boats are found very quickly as cruisers are very observant. It makes it easier if you know the boat type and flag and the crew first names. Email ghradio@xtra.co.nz or phone Patricia at 0064 (0)9 4245765.
* There are some ham radio nets that have YOTREPS reporting but these are not normally useful as you need to know the amateur radio call sign, rather than the boat name.

The cruising community, like farming communities worldwide, is a very friendly, caring community where everyone helps each other. Cruisers, radio stations, land based marine operators, and authorities all work together when things go pearl shaped, so don't hesitate to enquire.  More often than not this will put your mind at rest.