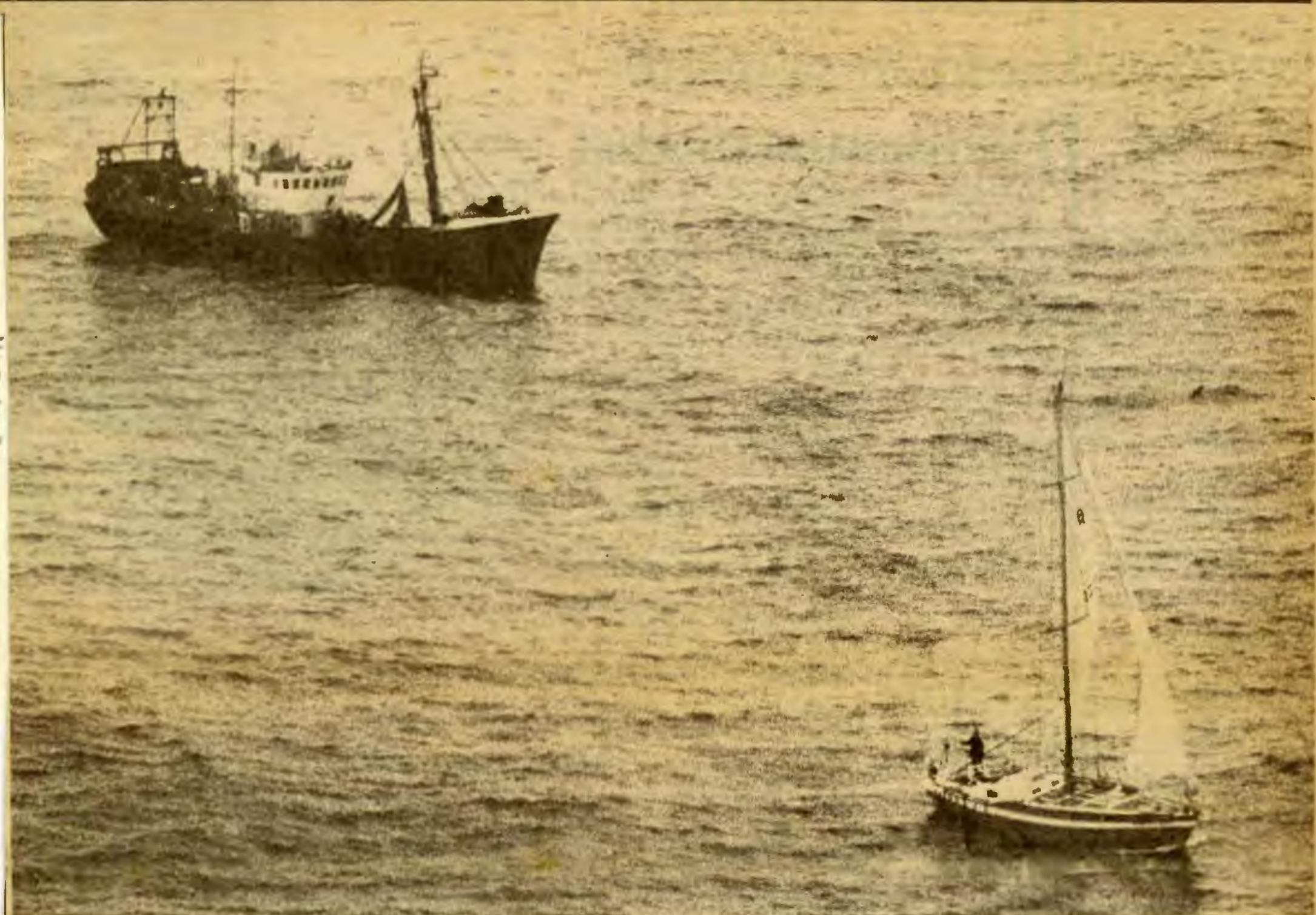


# HIJACKED! Yacht intercepted in St Francis Bay

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The stolen East London yacht, the Compass Rose, is watched by the fishing trawler Boston Jaguar, which later escorted the yacht into St Francis Bay. Picture: COLIN URQUHART

By JEREMY MAGGS

A YOUNG man was escorted under police guard from the stolen East London yacht, Compass Rose, in St Francis Bay late last night, after the yacht had been spotted earlier in the day about 15 kilometres south-west of the Cape St Francis lighthouse.

Dr Neville Hopkins, commander of the St Francis Bay National Sea Rescue Institute (NSRI) station, said one of their launches met the yacht, which had been escorted into St Francis Bay near the Kromme River mouth by a fishing trawler, the Boston Jaguar, which kept

## Lone sailor escorted from Compass Rose

watch over the yacht for most of yesterday afternoon.

Last night four Railways policemen were taken to the yacht by the NSRI, a Railways police spokesman confirmed. Two returned to St Francis Bay with the sailor while the other two remained on board the Compass Rose.

And late last night, the Boston Jaguar threw a line to the Compass Rose and started towing the yacht to Port Elizabeth.

While the man's identity had not been established by the Eastern Province Herald last night, there is strong speculation in East London yachting circles that he was a member of the East London Yacht Club who had taken the Compass Rose as he had financial difficulties and wanted to leave the country.

The R130 000 yacht, belonging to East London yachtsman Paddy Fraser, was stolen from its moorings on Saturday while Mr Fraser

was buying farewell drinks at the East London Yacht Club before setting out on a world cruise.

Last night, Mr Fraser jumped for joy at hearing that the yacht had been found. "We are all absolutely happy, maybe our overseas trip will still occur," he said.

"We have to thank Irvin and Johnson for their assistance. After contacting their local office here, two of their fishing trawlers sighted and approached our yacht

yesterday afternoon, escorting it until late last night."

Earlier in the week, the yacht was spotted off Kayser's Beach, but when radio contact was made with the yacht, the person on board told an NSRI launch crew he had the owner's permission to take the yacht. Radio messages and warning shots from navy vessels were also ignored.

Yesterday evening when the Eastern Province Herald flew over

the yacht, a blond man wearing a blue jacket was seen at the helm of the vessel. He waved several times. The yacht was also watched at close quarters by the Boston Jaguar.

Later, as light was fading, a South African Air Force helicopter, with Railways police officers aboard, approached.

It hovered over the Compass Rose and ordered the man on board to turn around and sail towards Cape St Francis.

This was done, with the Boston Jaguar following closely behind the Compass Rose.