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FASTNET FURY

Death howls in on race

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The News Deputy Chief Reporter
in Plymouth

Two Fastnet Race yachtsmen are known to have died, several yachts have sunk, others have been dismasted, and at least 33 yachtsmen have been saved by helicopters and ships as a full Atlantic storm ripped through the Fastnet Race fleet today.

Five naval helicopters, backed up by Nimrods, were flying constant missions, and there are several yacht crews still reported missing between Land's End and the Fastnet Rock in tempestuous seas.

A Dutch destroyer picking reported up a liferaft with three men in it, together with one body. It is not yet certain which yacht they are from, but earlier, a liferaft with four men in it had been seen by a Nimrod aircraft. The liferaft was believed to be that from the yacht, Magic.

A second body was later recovered.

One of the smallest yachts in the race, Grimalkin, was known to be sinking, and a massive search was mounted for her. Naval helicopters picked up three of her crew, but the remainder are at the moment unaccounted for.

Trophy, a larger yacht, also believed sunk, and five of her crew were rescued by helicopter — but

it is not known if the remainder are safe.

One of the first racers to sink as the storm built up mountainous seas which scythed through the fleet was Charioteer. Her entire crew of seven were saved by the French trawler Massingy, and they are safe in Ireland.

When a naval helicopter reached Tarantula, a small yacht which had been dismasted, one crew member fell overboard. He was plucked from the sea by the helicopter, but the remaining five men were understood to be staying on board their stricken racer.

Abandoned

One yacht abandoned by her crew and feared sunk is Bonaventure, whose entire crew of seven were taken off safely by H.M.S. Anglesea.

While yachts were suffering, one — Dasher, with a Royal Navy crew on board — performed a rescue. She picked up six crew members from the yacht Mulligatawny, which is understood to be abandoned.

It is now certain that 40 yachts have retired from the race, all of whom have been in various degrees of distress. These include three of the Admiral's Cup fleet, Shuttevaer of Holland, Accanito of France, and Regardless of Ireland, which was the leading individual yacht in the whole series.

Regardless's fellow team member, Golden Apple of the Sun has called for assistance, and the Ballycotton lifeboat has been launched to go to her aid.