

Coast Guard Leads Effort to Free Freighter

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SAVANNAH, Ga. -- Coast Guard pollution investigators led the effort to safely re-float a 612-foot freighter at about 4 p.m. just two days after it ran hard aground nine-miles east of the Brunswick Harbor, Ga., entrance June 23.

The Bulgarian flagged freighter *Koznitsa*, which is owned by Navigation Maritime Bulgare, was headed to sea after loading grain products in the Port of Brunswick when it ran aground. The cause of the grounding incident remains under investigation.



BRUNSWICK, Ga. -- An aerial view of tugs attempting to free the 612-foot freighter *Koznitsa*. Coast Guard photograph courtesy MSU Savannah.

“We’re investigating the cause of this grounding and sorting out all the contributing factors. The purpose of this investigation is to determine the cause and where responsibility lies using that information to prevent accidents like this from happening in the future,” said Lt. Cmdr. Kevin Lynn of Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Savannah.

The Coast Guard contracted three towing vessel from the Ports of Savannah and Brunswick to assist in the emergency response operation.

The towing vessels arrived shortly before high tide and soon had the *Koznitsa* free from the shallow water. There were no injuries or release of oil pollution as a result of this operation.

Divers conducted a thorough inspection of the *Koznitsa*’s hull ensure that no damage resulted from the grounding. The Coast Guard Captain of the Port of Savannah reviewed the inspection report. The vessel was released and allowed to continue on its initial voyage because the inspection findings were acceptable.

A Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Savannah federal on-scene coordinator's representative was aboard the *Koznitsa* during this afternoon's evolution to ensure it was conducted safely. Also present was a Coast Guard marine inspector and Coast Guard casualty investigator. The marine inspector directed and monitored the vessel's crew as they inspected the vessel for damage. The casualty investigator continued efforts to determine the cause of grounding incident.

“Coast Guard boat crews and air crews were critical in providing real time information to help the federal on-scene coordinator make well-informed decisions regarding response counter measures and operational objectives,” said Lynn.

Coast Guard aircrews from Air Station Savannah conducted over flights of the vessel to ensure no pollution was released and to gain a better operational perspective of the

situation. Coast Guard Station Brunswick boat crews helped transfer personnel to the vessel and keep boaters clear of the area where the ship was grounded.

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