

Circular From LONDON

Date: 18 July 2019

South Africa - No Fishing by Crew and Declaration of Fish Products

The Club has been advised by P&I Associates, a correspondent in South Africa, of potential action by South African Authorities against seafarers fishing off the side of the vessel whilst at anchorage or in port. The Correspondent advises that such fishing is illegal unless the seafarer is in possession of a fishing permit and that any fish caught complies with the requirements regarding the catch and bag size. Whilst the Correspondent reports that Authorities previously turned a blind eye to fishing, the Department of Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) now have inspectors to attend on-board vessels to check for any illegal fish on board. Last week three seafarers in Durban were faced with arrest and prosecution under the Marine Living Resources Act No. 18 of 1988, under which offenders can be fined up to ZAR 2 million (approximately USD 135,000) and/or face up to 5 years imprisonment.

In addition, the Correspondent reports that DAFF inspectors have indicated that ALL ships calling at South African ports are required to disclose whether they have fish products on board and where those fish products were obtained. In the event of failure to disclose such information and DAFF inspectors finding fresh fish products on board, offenders can be fined and/or imprisoned (details as above) with the vessel delayed, detained and placed off-hire, amongst other potential adverse effects.

To avoid such problems, Members whose ships call at ports in South Africa should ensure that the Master/crew are aware that no fishing is permitted in South Africa waters without a permit and to liaise with the local agent to ensure that fresh fish products on board the vessel are declared as required.

Source of Information: The London P&I Club