

Victorian Heritage Database Report

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BLACK WITCH II

Location

Apollo Bay

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S95

Date lost

08/1958

Construction material

Wood

Hull

Wooden framed, wooden planked

Propulsion

Motor

Engine specification

126 horsepower diesel engine

Number of masts

2

Length/Breadth/Depth

70.00 Feet / 14.00 Feet / 8.50 Feet

Year of construction

1924

Built port

Williamstown, Victoria

Built country

Australia

Date lost

08/1958

Departure

Apollo Bay

Destination

Apollo Bay

Owner

1924: Royal Australian Navy
 1949: private interests
 1954: Jim Anderson, Apollo Bay fisherman

Weather conditions

Easterly gale

Cause of loss

Driven ashore at Apollo Bay

Number of crew

3

Crew comments

The crew were lucky to escape with their lives.

Statement of significance

<p>At time of writing the Black Witch II is not classified as an historic shipwreck. However along with its predecessor the Black Witch I, both vessels are the only known wrecks involved with commercial fishing operations in the Surf Coast study region.</p>

VHR history

The Royal Australian Naval Depot at Crib Point operated a small tender originally called the KOORONGA and later renamed H.M.A.S. CERBERUS. It foundered in Western Port in an incident during World War II but fortunately with no loss of life, and was soon after salvaged. The Royal Australian Navy sold the HMAS Cerberus to private interests in 1949 who converted it to a schooner rigged fishing vessel.

 Apollo Bay fisherman Jim Anderson bought the vessel to replace his recently lost Black Witch I, and renamed it Black Witch II. In almost exactly the same circumstances as the loss of the Black Witch I four years previously however, in 1958 the Black Witch II dragged her anchors into the surf in an easterly gale at Apollo Bay - the three crew aboard at the time were lucky to escape with their lives.

 "On 14th August the Black Witch II was caught in an easterly gale and wrecked opposite the current position of the Surf Life-Saving Club. Mr Anderson, the owner, knew he was taking a risk but he wanted to see his father who was in hospital. The gale came up in

the intervening time, the ship was driven on to the sand and could not be refloated" (Bellair:57)
It is believed the wreck is buried in sand on the Apollo Bay main beach, that has built up significantly since 1956 when the harbour breakwall was constructed.