

22 August 2019



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# Special Report

## on

# Incidents Involving Tug Boats and Barges in the Singapore Strait

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SR 01/2019

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## Incidents involving tug boats and barges in the Singapore Strait

1. The number of incidents occurred on board tug boats towing barges in the Singapore Strait is on the rise in 2019. During 2019 (up to 15 August), a total of 14 incidents were reported. Of these, nine incidents reported loss of scrap metal from their barges. This is the highest number of incidents of theft of scrap metal from barges while underway in the Singapore Strait since the first incident of such nature was reported to the ReCAAP ISC in 2011.

2. Although all the 14 incidents were CAT 4 (petty theft) in nature as the perpetrators were not armed and the crew not harmed, the ReCAAP ISC is concerned about the increase in the number of incidents. With 14 incidents occurred over a period of seven months (Feb-Aug 2019), it is about an average of two incidents occurred per month.

3. This Special Report is to alert the shipping industry and law enforcement agencies to the increase in the number of incidents involving tug boats towing barges in the Singapore Strait, particularly the theft of scrap metal from barges. The Report provides an insight of the incidents, the modus operandi of the perpetrators and recommendations to the tug boat industry and authorities to prevent the continued occurrence of such incidents.

4. The ReCAAP ISC encourages the littoral States to strengthen the conduct of joint coordinated patrols, increase the enforcement in their respective waters and promote sharing of information on the latest situation and the criminal groups involved in order to arrest and prosecute the perpetrators. The ship master and crew are advised to report all incidents, suspicious activities and presence of suspicious small boats in the vicinity to the nearest coastal State immediately. The contact numbers of the littoral States are as follows:

**Singapore:**

Phone number: +65 6325 2493/4

**Malaysia:**

Phone number: +60 7221 9231

Phone number: +60 7219 9401/9409

**Indonesia:**

Phone number: +62 812 7754 8766

## Incidents involving tug boats and barges in the Singapore Strait

### Overview

#### Total number of incidents involving tug boats and barges in Asia

1. Between 2007 and 15 August 2019, a total of 228 incidents occurred to tug boats and barges in Asia. Among them, **98** incidents occurred in the Singapore Strait. This accounts for 43% of the total number of incidents involving tug boats and barges in Asia during the 13-year period.

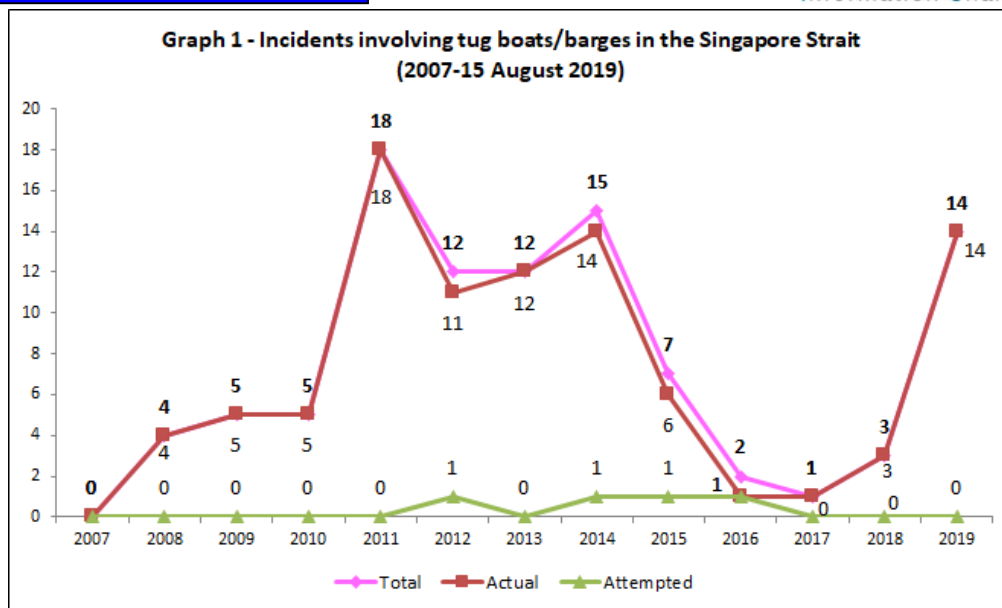
#### Type of incidents involving tug boats and barges

2. There are three main types of incidents occurred to tug boats and barges in Asia over the past 13 years. They are (1) hijacking of tug boats for resale, (2) theft of scrap metal from barges, and (3) robbery of crew's cash and personal belongings, and unsecured items from tug boats and barges. Of the 228 incidents, 14 (6%) were hijacking of tug boats for resale, 25 (11%) were theft of scrap metal from barges and 189 incidents (83%) were robbery cases. Of the three types, the hijacking of tug boats for resale is the most severe in nature as the crew members were thrown off the boats and abandoned in life rafts. Refer to **Annex A** on the number and modus operandi of the incidents involving tug boats and barges reported during 2007-15 August 2019.

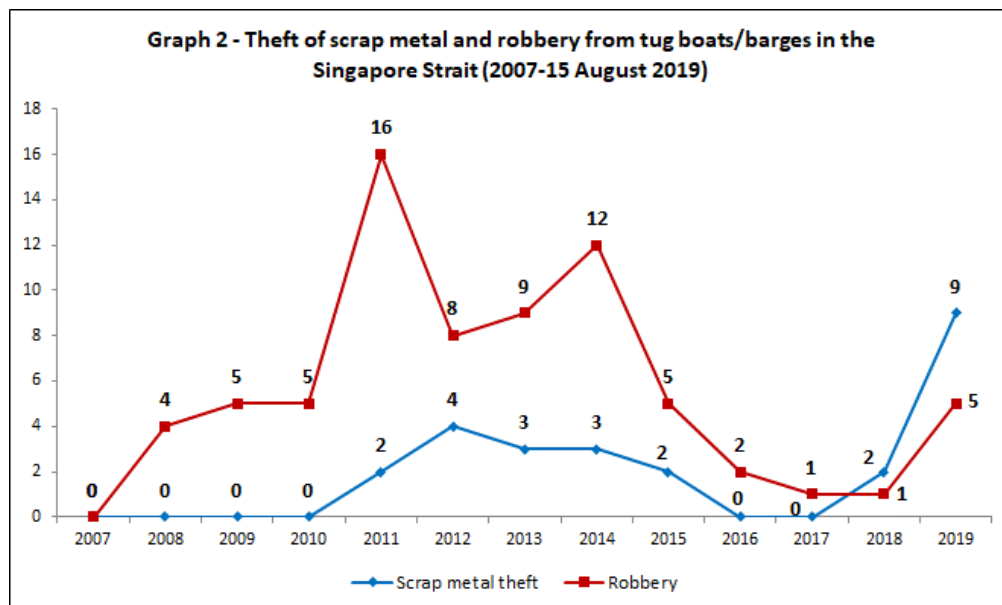
### Incidents in the Singapore Strait during 2007-15 August 2019

#### Total number and type of incidents

3. A total of 98 incidents involving tug boats and barges were reported in the Singapore Strait during 2007-15 August 2019 (Graph 1). Of the 98 incidents, 25 incidents (26%) were theft of scrap metal from barges and 73 incidents (74%) were robbery incidents. There was no hijacking of tug boats for resale in the Singapore Strait. The number of incidents involving tug boats and barges in the Singapore Strait is on the rise in 2019. In 2019 (up to 15 August), 14 incidents involving tug boats towing barges were reported. The number of these incidents in 2019 has increased compared to the past four years (2015-2018).

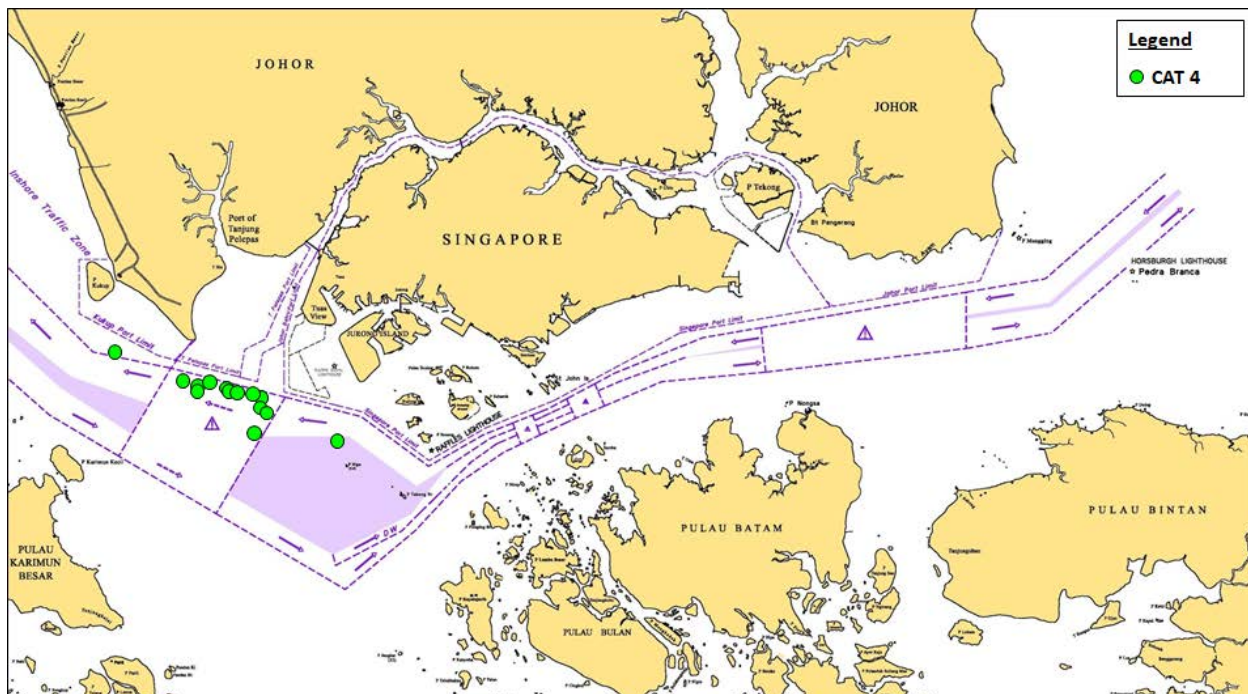


4. Of the 14 incidents reported in the Singapore Strait in 2019, nine incidents were theft of scrap metal from barges and the other five incidents were robbery cases. The theft of scrap metal from barges was first reported to ReCAAP ISC in 2011. Between 2011 and 2019 (up to 15 Aug), a total of 25 incidents of theft of scrap metal from barges were reported. The number of such incidents is the highest in 2019 among the past nine-year period (2011- 15 August 2019). Graph 2 shows the number of incidents of theft of scrap metal and other robbery incidents involving tug boats and barges in the Singapore Strait.



## Location of incidents during January-15 August 2019

5. All the 14 incidents during January-15 August 2019 were CAT 4 incidents. The perpetrators were not armed and the crew not harmed. Refer to **Annex B** on the description of the 14 incidents. The 14 incidents occurred in the western sector of the Singapore Strait in the westbound lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS). Of the 14 incidents, 11 were Malaysia-registered ships, one was a Cyprus-registered ship, one was a Niue-registered ship and one had no information on the flag of the ship. Five of the ships were sailing to Penang, three to Port Klang, Malaysia, and no information available to where the remaining six ships were sailing. Refer to Map 1 below on the approximate location of the 14 incidents.



Map 1 – Location of incidents in the Singapore Strait (January-15 August 2019)

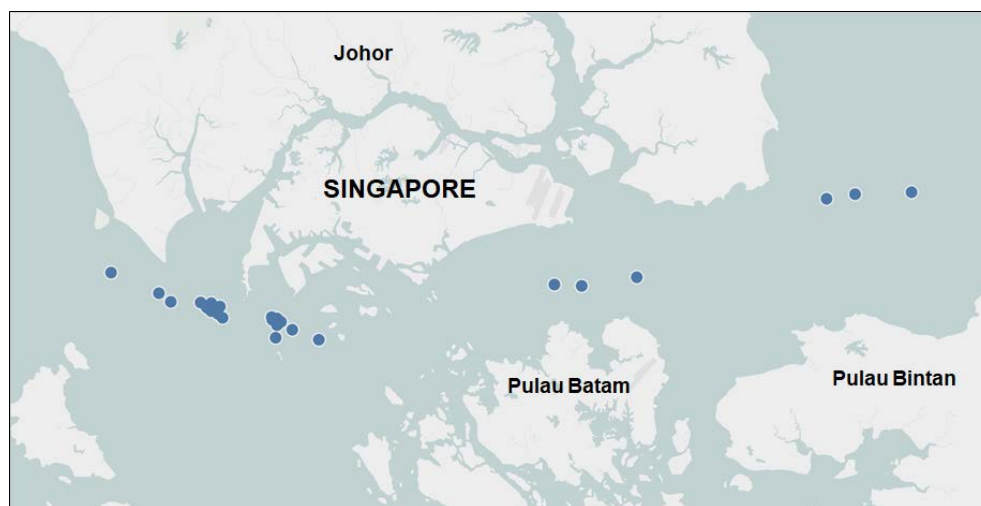
## Incidents of theft of scrap metal from barges in the Singapore Strait (2011-15 August 2019)

### Number of incidents

6. Between 2011 and 15 August 2019, 25 incidents of theft of scrap metal from barges were reported in the Singapore Strait.

## Location of the 25 incidents

7. Among the 25 incidents, 19 incidents (76%) occurred in the western sector and the other six incidents (24%) in the middle and eastern sector of the strait. The ships underway in the westbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait pass through the busy sea lane; and are vulnerable to boarding by perpetrators as the tug boats are slow-moving with towed barges loaded with scrap metal. Refer to Map 2 below on the locations of the 25 incidents occurred in the Singapore Strait between 2011 and 15 August 2019.



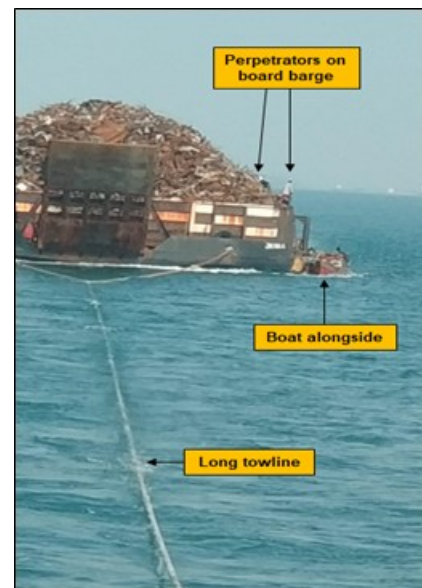
Map 2 - Location of the 25 incidents of theft of scrap metal (2011-15 August 2019)

## Modus operandi of the perpetrators

8. In most of the incidents, the perpetrators came alongside the barge and transferred the scrap metal into their small boats. The barge is usually loaded with a huge heap of the scrap metal and towed by a long towline (see photograph on right). Due to the heavy load on the barge, the tug boat and barge are moving at slow speed.

9. On 3 Aug 19, the MMEA arrested three perpetrators suspected to be part of the criminal groups involved in the theft of scrap metal. The initial investigation revealed that the men committed the crime in groups.

**Perpetrators on board barge stealing scrap metal**  
(Photograph courtesy of ship owner)



## Insights of the incidents

10. The insights of the 25 incidents are as follows:

- a. Number of perpetrators. Eleven of the 25 incidents (44%) have no information on the number of perpetrators since most of the time, the crew members of the tug boats were not aware of what was happening on the towed barges which were unmanned. For incidents with information on the number of perpetrators, five incidents involved groups of 1-3 men, two incidents involved 4-6 men, one incident involved 7-9 men and six incidents involved more than 9 men.
- b. Type of weapons. Of the 25 incidents, 22 incidents (88%) had no information on whether the perpetrators were armed; and three incidents reported that the perpetrators were not armed.
- c. Treatment of crew. There was no 'physical encounter or contact' between the crew and the perpetrators as the crew members were in the tug boats and the perpetrators were on the barges.
- d. Time of incidents. Of the 25 incidents, 17 incidents (68%) occurred during daylight hours (between 0700 and 1759 hrs) and eight incidents (32%) during hours of darkness (between 1800 hrs and 0559 hrs). Most of the incidents during daylight hours occurred between 1100 hrs and 1800 hrs; with the highest number of boarding occurred between 1300 hrs and 1400 hrs. As the barge was not manned, the perpetrators were rather bold in carrying out the theft during daylight hours.
- e. Flag of ships. Of the 25 incidents, 20 were Malaysia-registered tug boats, four were Singapore-registered tug boats and one had no information on the flag of the ship. There is no evidence to indicate that certain flag ships were targeted by the perpetrators. The perpetrators were opportunistic in nature and targeted ships that were less vigilant, slow moving and with low freeboard.
- f. Economic loss. The perpetrators were more interested in stealing scrap metal from the barges which indicates that the gains from selling the stolen scrap metal is lucrative and there is demand in 'black markets'.

Refer to **Annex C** on the detailed insights of the 25 incidents.

## Recommendations to the tug boat industry

11. The ReCAAP ISC recommends that tug boats and barges transiting the Singapore Strait to be updated of the latest situation (refer to ReCAAP ISC website [www.recaap.org](http://www.recaap.org)), apprise of the location of past incidents and the time when the majority of the incidents occurred. Prior to entering the area, ship masters are to conduct voyage risk assessment, prepare emergency communication plan, and adopt preventive measures taking reference from the '*Regional Guide to Counter Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia*'.

12. While transiting the area, the ship master and crew are advised to adopt the following measures:

- Enhance vigilance, maximise alertness of lookouts for suspicious small boats and increase watch keeping
- Maintain communication with their ship company by providing periodic updates and establish daily communication checks
- Report all incidents, suspicious activities and presence of suspicious small boats in the vicinity to the nearest coastal State and flag State
- Sound alarm when sighted suspicious boats loitering in the vicinity of the barge, or suspicious personnel on board the tug boat and barge
- Listen to advisories and navigational broadcast

13. Feedback from some tug boat companies on the measures they adopt to prevent boarding by the perpetrators are as follows:

- Shorten the tow line between the tug boat and barge while maintaining a safe distance
- Ship company to maintain updates and daily communication with the ship master to ensure that the tug boat is on planned course
- Satellite tracking of the tug boat
- Ensure that the AIS on tug boat is switched ON
- Use night vision binoculars during hours of darkness to facilitate checking the barge and the surroundings
- Secure loose items onto the barge to prevent the perpetrators from taking them away easily
- Sound the alarm immediately when sighted suspicious boats approaching the barge or perpetrators on the barge



## Recommendations to authorities

14. The ReCAAP ISC urges the relevant littoral States to step up surveillance, increase patrols and respond promptly to all reports of incidents. The presence of law enforcement agencies in the area serves as deterrence to perpetrators, and enable the authorities to provide timely information of the presence of suspicious small boats and perpetrators near the barge to the crew of tug boat who is not always aware of what is happening on the towed barge. As demonstrated in one of the incidents, the information by the authorities to the ship master enabled him to raise alarm which made the perpetrators escape without stealing anything.

15. Enhanced cooperation and coordination among the littoral States in information sharing and operational responses is required to address the increase in the number of incidents in the Singapore Strait. The ReCAAP ISC and its Focal Points will continue to provide timely update of the situation; and serve as the platform for information sharing and operational cooperation with the regional authorities.

## Conclusion

16. The ReCAAP ISC reiterates the importance of collective and shared responsibility among all stakeholders including the littoral States' enforcement agencies and the shipping industry. More need to be done to strengthen regional cooperation and coordination among the littoral States in conducting joint coordinated patrols, surveillance, enforcement, apprehension and prosecution of the perpetrators involved.

Enclosures:

**Annex A:** Number and modus operandi of incidents involving tug boats and barges in Asia (2007-15 August 2019)

**Annex B:** Description of incidents occurred during January-15 August 2019 in the Singapore Strait

**Annex C:** Insights of incidents of theft of scrap metal (2011-15 August 2019)

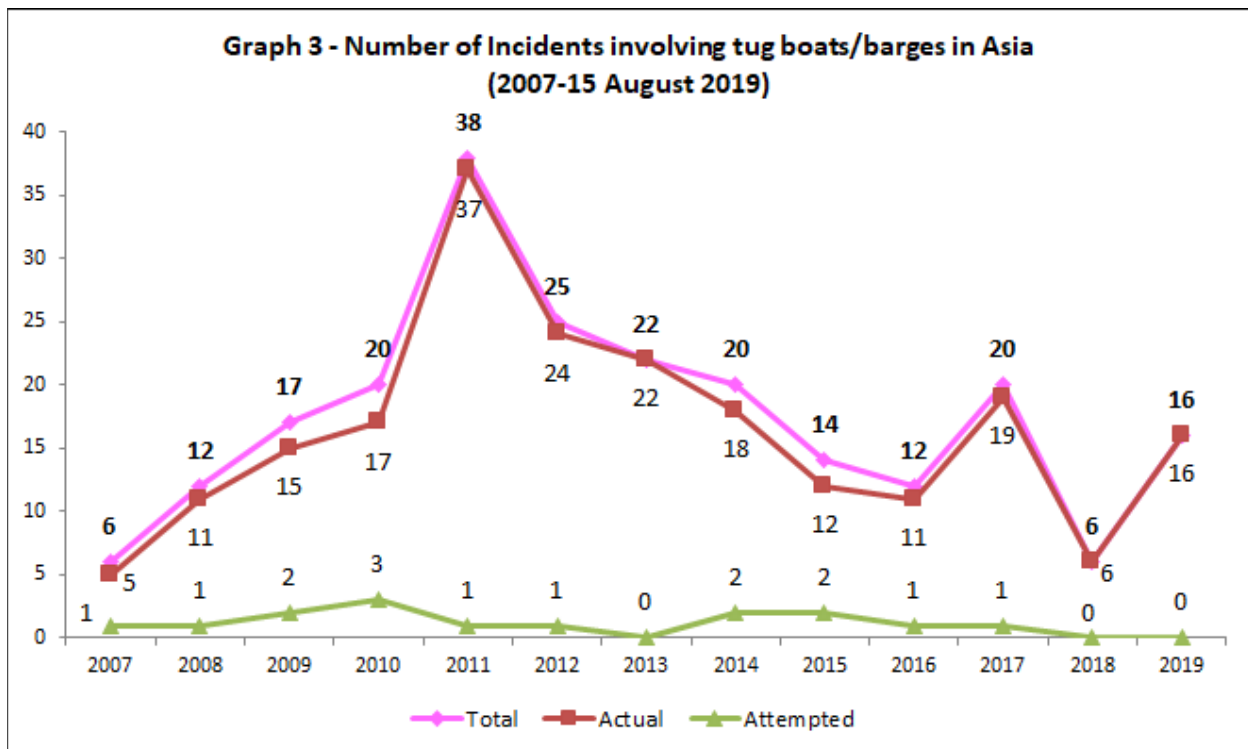
## Annex A

### Number and modus operandi of incidents involving tug boats and barges in Asia (2007-15 August 2019)

#### Number of incidents

1. Between 2007 and 15 August 2019, a total of 228 incidents on board tug boats and barges were reported to the ReCAAP ISC. The number of incidents was at its peak in 2011 when a total of 38 incidents were reported. The number of incidents decreased over the years and was at its lowest in 2018, before it started to increase in 2019.

2. Of the 228 incidents, 98 incidents occurred in the Singapore Strait. This accounts for 43% of the total number of incidents involving tug boats/barges. Of the 16 incidents reported during January-15 August 2019, 14 incidents occurred in the Singapore Strait, one incident occurred off Pulau Batam, Indonesia and one occurred off Pulau Bintan, Indonesia in the South China Sea (SCS).



## Modus operandi of incidents involving tug boats and barges in Asia (2007-15 August 2019)

There are three main types of incidents involving tug boats and barges: (1) hijacking of tug boats for resale, (2) theft of scrap metal from barges and (3) robbery on tug boats and barges. The modus operandi of each of these incidents is tabulated below.

Factors	Hijack (14 incidents)	Theft of scrap metal (25 incidents)	Robbery (189 incidents)
<b>No. of perpetrators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 4 to 6 men (14%)</li> <li>▪ 7 to 9 men (22%)</li> <li>▪ <b>&gt; 9 men (50%)</b></li> <li>▪ Unknown (14%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1 to 3 men (20%)</li> <li>▪ 4 to 6 men (8%)</li> <li>▪ 7 to 9 men (4%)</li> <li>▪ &gt; 9 men (24%)</li> <li>▪ <b>Unknown (44%)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1 to 3 men (14%)</li> <li>▪ <b>4 to 6 men (31%)</b></li> <li>▪ 7 to 9 men (11%)</li> <li>▪ &gt; 9 men (13%)</li> <li>▪ Unknown (31%)</li> </ul>
<b>Type of weapons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More sophisticated weapons (7%)</li> <li>▪ <b>Guns &amp; knives (43%)</b></li> <li>▪ Knives/Machetes/Others only (29%)</li> <li>▪ Not stated (21%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not armed (12%)</li> <li>▪ <b>Not stated (88%)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More sophisticated weapons (2%)</li> <li>▪ Guns &amp; knives (15%)</li> <li>▪ <b>Knives/Machetes/Others only (33%)</b></li> <li>▪ Not armed (5%)</li> <li>▪ Not stated (45%)</li> </ul>
<b>Treatment of crew</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Kidnapped (7%)</li> <li>▪ <b>Crew discarded (57%)</b></li> <li>▪ Taken hostage (29%)</li> <li>▪ No injuries (7%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>No injuries (92%)</b></li> <li>▪ Not stated (8%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Missing (2%)</li> <li>▪ Kidnapped (5%)</li> <li>▪ Seriously injured (1%)</li> <li>▪ Assaulted (6%)</li> <li>▪ Taken hostage (11%)</li> <li>▪ Threatened (3%)</li> <li>▪ <b>No injuries (54%)</b></li> <li>▪ Not stated (18%)</li> </ul>
<b>Economic losses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hijack of ship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Theft of scrap metal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cargo discharged (5%)</li> <li>▪ <b>Cash/Property (37%)</b></li> <li>▪ Stores (22%)</li> <li>▪ Engine spares (2%)</li> <li>▪ Unsecured items (6%)</li> <li>▪ Nothing stolen (20%)</li> <li>▪ Not stated (8%)</li> </ul>

## Description of incidents occurred during January- 15 August 2019 in the Singapore Strait

### Actual incidents

S/No	Ship Name, Type of Ship, Flag, GT, IMO No.	Date, Time Location	Details of the Incidents	Remarks
1.	<p><b>Jin Hwa 43</b> Tug boat Malaysia 148 9689768</p> <p><b>Jin Hwa 44</b> Barge Malaysia</p>	<p>05/02/19 1709 hrs</p> <p>1° 12.63' N, 103° 34.79' E</p> <p>Approximately 1.3 nm southwest of the Western Boarding Ground Alpha, Singapore, in the westbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait</p>	<p>While the tug boat towing barge was underway, the master of the tug boat reported to Singapore Vessel Traffic Information System (VTIS) and Singapore Police Coast Guard that some perpetrators were boarding the barge from a few small boats. The barge was laden with scrap metal. The master later reported that the perpetrators had left the barge with some scrap metal. The tug boat and barge continued her voyage to Penang, Malaysia.</p>	

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S/No	Ship Name, Type of Ship, Flag, GT, IMO No.	Date, Time Location	Details of the Incidents	Remarks
2.	<p><b>Sung Fatt 31</b> Tug boat Malaysia 135 8984446</p> <p><b>Sung Fatt 36</b> Barge Malaysia</p>	<p>05/03/19 1110 hrs</p> <p>1° 12.08' N, 103° 34.62' E</p> <p>Approximately 1.68 nm southwest of Western Boarding Ground Alpha, Singapore, in the westbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait</p>	<p>While underway, the ship's crew spotted 11 perpetrators boarding the barge that was being towed by the tug boat from two small crafts. The tug boat and barge were carrying scrap metal, bound for Penang, Malaysia. At about 1145 hrs, the master reported that the 11 perpetrators have escaped in their small crafts with some scrap metal being stolen. There was no confrontation with the crew. All crew are safe.</p> <p>The master of the tug boat reported the incident to the Singapore Vessel Traffic Information System (VTIS) via VHF.</p>	<p>Singapore VTIS initiated the safety navigational broadcast and notified the Police Coast Guard and the Navy.</p>
3.	<p><b>Union Topaz</b> Tug boat Cyprus 2312 9406427</p> <p><b>Magnor</b> Backhoe dredger Cyprus</p>	<p>24/04/19 0510 hrs</p> <p>1° 10.63' N, 103° 34.3' E</p> <p>Approximately 5 nm west-northwest of Nipa island, Indonesia, in the westbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait</p>	<p>While the tug boat towing a backhoe dredger was underway, two perpetrators boarded the dredger. Two wooden boats were sighted alongside the backhoe dredger. The master shone light at the backhoe dredger, and the two perpetrators escaped via the wooden boats. The crew was safe and no items were reported stolen. The pilot on board the tug boat reported the incident to Singapore VTIS.</p>	<p>Singapore VTIS initiated the safety navigational broadcast and notified the Singapore Police Coast Guard, the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) and the Indonesian authority.</p>

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S/No	Ship Name, Type of Ship, Flag, GT, IMO No.	Date, Time Location	Details of the Incidents	Remarks
4.	<p><b>Vector 1</b> Tug boat Malaysia 106 5330005</p> <p><b>Yong Tat 319</b> Barge</p>	<p>25/04/19 0530 hrs</p> <p>1° 13.33' N, 103° 31.02' E</p> <p>Off Tanjung Piai, Johor, Malaysia, in the westbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait</p>	<p>While the tug boat towing barge was underway, three to four perpetrators boarded the barge. The master reported the incident to Singapore VTIS who informed the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA). The crew was safe and no items were reported stolen.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Barlian T1201</b> Tug boat Niue 153 9433432</p> <p><b>Smit Cyclone</b> Barge Dominican Republic</p>	<p>18/05/19 1650 hrs</p> <p>1° 13.27' N, 103° 32.72' E</p> <p>Approximately 3.3 nm southeast of Tanjung Piai, Johor, Malaysia, in the westbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait</p>	<p>While the tug boat towing barge was underway, the master of the tug boat reported to Singapore Vessel Traffic Information System (VTIS) via VHF that six perpetrators were boarding the barge from a small boat. The master also raised the alarm and mustered the crew.</p> <p>The master later reported that the perpetrators had left the barge with some tools stolen from the barge. The tug boat and barge continued her voyage to Port Klang, Malaysia.</p>	<p>Singapore VTIS initiated the safety navigational broadcast and notified the Singapore Police Coast Guard, the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) and the Malaysian authority.</p>

S/No	Ship Name, Type of Ship, Flag, GT, IMO No.	Date, Time Location	Details of the Incidents	Remarks
6.	<p><b>Modalwan 11</b> Tug boat Malaysia 91</p> <p><b>Asiapride 2332</b> Barge</p>	<p>19/05/19 1700 hrs</p> <p>1° 11.79' N, 103° 34.96' E</p> <p>Approximately 5.9 nm southeast of Tanjung Piai, Johor, Malaysia, in the westbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait</p>	<p>While the tug boat towing barge was en route to Port Klang, Malaysia, perpetrators in four sampans came alongside and boarded the barge. The perpetrators stole some scrap metal and some small items from the barge before they escaped. The crew was not injured. The incident was reported to MMEA.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Asia Jaya 28</b> Tug boat Malaysia 145 9517501</p> <p><b>Sinar Jaya 28</b> Barge Malaysia</p>	<p>30/05/19 2230 hrs</p> <p>1° 13.25' N, 103° 32.75' E</p> <p>Approximately 3.4 nm southeast of Tanjung Piai, Johor, Malaysia, in the westbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait</p>	<p>While the tug boat towing barge was en route from Tawau, Malaysia to Penang, Malaysia, the master of the tug boat reported to Singapore VTIS that an unknown number of perpetrators had boarded the barge on tow. The perpetrators escaped in a small craft, with some small tools stolen from the barge. The crew was not injured.</p>	<p>Singapore VTIS initiated the safety navigational broadcast and notified the Singapore Police Coast Guard, the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) and the Malaysian authority.</p>

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S/No	Ship Name, Type of Ship, Flag, GT, IMO No.	Date, Time Location	Details of the Incidents	Remarks
8.	<p><b>Budget 19</b> Tug boat Malaysia 141 5647360</p> <p><b>Budget 29</b> Barge</p>	<p>18/06/19 1857 hrs</p> <p>1° 12.91' N, 103° 34.12' E</p> <p>Approximately 4.5 nm southeast of Tanjung Piai, Johor, Malaysia, in the westbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait</p>	<p>While the tug boat towing barge was underway, eight perpetrators boarded the barge from nine sampans. The perpetrators stole scrap metal and escaped. The crew was not injured.</p>	<p>The incident was not reported to Coastal State or Flag State</p>
9.	<p><b>Modalwan 11</b> Tug boat Malaysia 91</p> <p><b>Lion Kimtrans 2301</b> Barge Malaysia</p>	<p>11/07/19 1030 hrs</p> <p>1° 13' N, 103° 31' E</p> <p>Approximately 2.9 nm south of Tanjung Piai, Johor, Malaysia in the westbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait</p>	<p>While the tug boat towing barge was underway, an unknown number of perpetrators boarded the barge from six small wooden boats. They stole scrap metal from the barge and escaped.</p> <p>There was no confrontation between the perpetrators and crew. The crew was safe. The master reported the incident to the Malaysian authority.</p>	<p>The Malaysian authorities dispatched a patrol vessel to investigate the incident.</p>



S/No	Ship Name, Type of Ship, Flag, GT, IMO No.	Date, Time Location	Details of the Incidents	Remarks
10.	<p><b>Sung Fatt 31</b> Tug boat Malaysia 133 8984446</p> <p><b>Sung Fatt 36</b> Barge Malaysia</p>	<p>16/07/19 0430 hrs</p> <p>1° 10.23' N, 103° 39.09' E</p> <p>Approximately 0.6 nm west of North Nipa Beacon, Indonesia in the west bound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait</p>	<p>While the tug boat and barge were carrying scrap metal bound for Penang, Malaysia, the master of the tug boat reported to the Singapore Vessel Traffic Information System (VTIS) that his crew spotted some perpetrators boarding the barge from an unknown number of sampans. The perpetrators stole some scrap metal and escaped via the sampans. There was no confrontation between the perpetrators and the crew.</p>	<p>The Singapore VTIS notified the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) and Singapore Police Coast Guard. The Malaysian counterparts and Indonesian authorities were also notified, and the safety navigational broadcast was initiated.</p>
11.	<p><b>Virgo 29</b> Tug boat Malaysia 149 9576612</p> <p><b>Victory 9</b> Barge Malaysia</p>	<p>25/07/19 0703 hrs</p> <p>1° 13.5' N, 103° 31.63' E</p> <p>Approximately 2.6 nm southeast of Tanjung Piai, Johor, Malaysia in the westbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait</p>	<p>While the tug boat towing barge loaded with scrap metal was en route to Penang, Malaysia, perpetrators boarded the barge. The alarm was raised and the perpetrators escaped immediately. The crew was not injured and nothing was stolen from the barge. The tug boat and barge continued their voyage to Penang.</p>	<p>Upon receiving information from Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) that some sampans were approaching the barge, the Singapore Vessel Traffic Information System (VTIS) communicated with the master via VHF. The Singapore Police Coast Guard was notified and the Malaysian authorities informed. A safety navigational broadcast was also initiated for the unauthorised boarding.</p>

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S/No	Ship Name, Type of Ship, Flag, GT, IMO No.	Date, Time Location	Details of the Incidents	Remarks
12.	<b>Tekun 16217</b> Tug boat 163 9517862	03/08/19 0830 hrs  1° 15.21' N, 103° 26.42' E  Off Tanjung Piai, Johor, Malaysia	The Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) while on routine patrol sighted and detained a small wooden boat without registration number along with three crew suspected of sea theft. Upon inspecting the boat, they found more than two tons of scrap metal believed to be stolen from a barge towed by <i>Tekun 16217</i> .	The MMEA detained the wooden boat and the three suspects for further investigation. The crew was safe.
13.	<b>Permata 1</b> Tug boat Malaysia 128 3702100  <b>Permata 2</b> Barge	12/08/19 2051 hrs  1° 13.66' N, 103° 30.08' E  Approximately 4.3 nm south of Tanjung Piai, Johor, Malaysia in the westbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait	While underway to Port Klang from Sarawak, an unknown number of perpetrators boarded the barge from a small boat. They stole some scrap metal and ropes from the barge before escaping. The master raised the alarm and reported the incident to Singapore's VTIS via the VHF. The crew was safe.	The Singapore's Port Operations Control Centre (POCC) issued navigational broadcast to alert ships in the vicinity to maintain vigilance, and notified the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN), Singapore Coast Guard, RCC Putra Jaya, Malaysia.

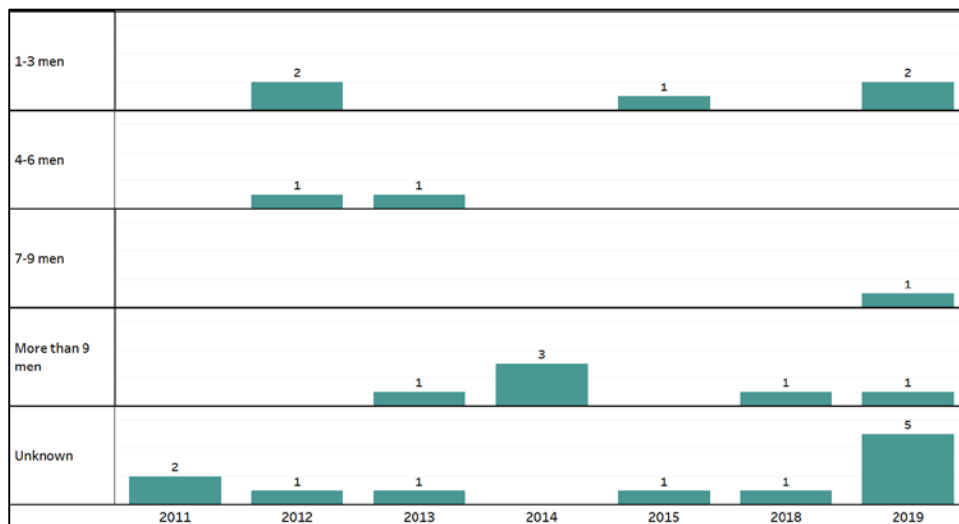
# Special Report

S/No	Ship Name, Type of Ship, Flag, GT, IMO No.	Date, Time Location	Details of the Incidents	Remarks
14.	<p><b>Kien San 1</b> Tug boat Malaysia 192 9218600</p> <p><b>Kien San 8</b> Barge Malaysia</p>	<p>15/08/19 1659 hrs</p> <p>1° 12.95' N, 103° 33.31' E</p> <p>Approximately 3.8 nm southeast of Tanjung Piai, Johor, Malaysia in the westbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait</p>	<p>While underway, three perpetrators from two small boats boarded the barge and stole some scrap metal. The master raised the alarm and reported the incident to the Singapore Vessel Traffic Information System (VTIS) via VHF. The perpetrators disembarked the barge at about 1710 hrs with some scrap metal. The crew was not injured; and the tug boat and barge resumed their passage westbound.</p>	<p>The Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) and Police Coast Guard were notified. The safety navigational broadcast was initiated and Malaysian authority was also notified.</p>

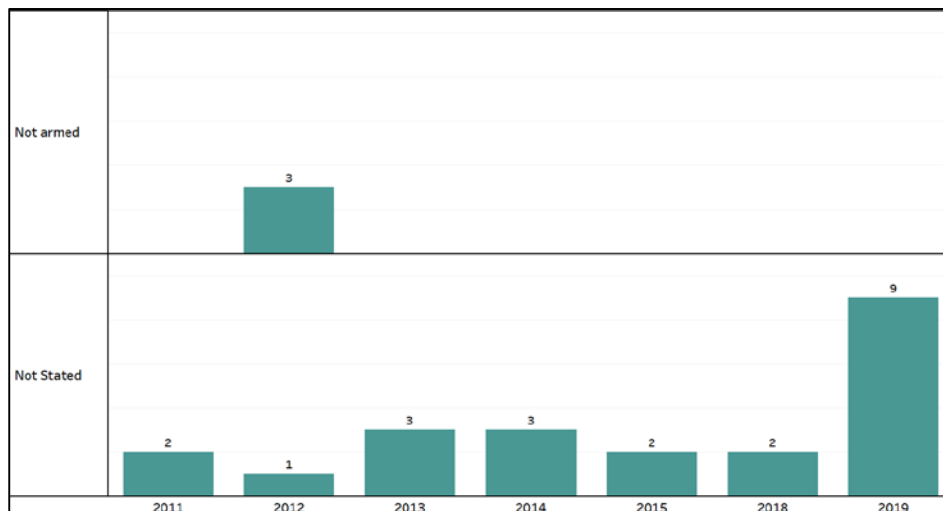
### Insights of incidents of theft of scrap metal (2011-15 August 2019)

1. The insights of the 25 incidents of theft of scrap metal in the Singapore Strait as follows:

a. Number of perpetrators. Eleven of the 25 incidents (44%) have no information on the number of perpetrators. This is because most of the time, the master and crew were not able to see the perpetrators who boarded the barge from behind. Of the 25 incidents, five incidents involved groups of 1-3 men, two incidents involved 4-6 men, one incident involved 7-9 men, six incidents involved more than 9 men, and 11 incidents had no information on the number of perpetrators.

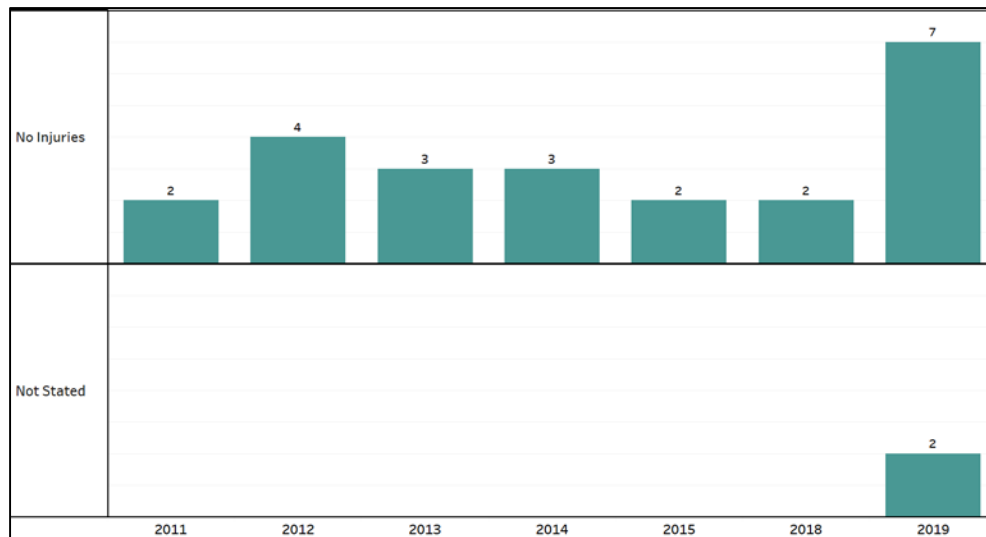


b. Type of weapons. Of the 25 incidents, 22 incidents (88%) had no information if the perpetrators were armed; and three incidents reported that the perpetrators were not armed.

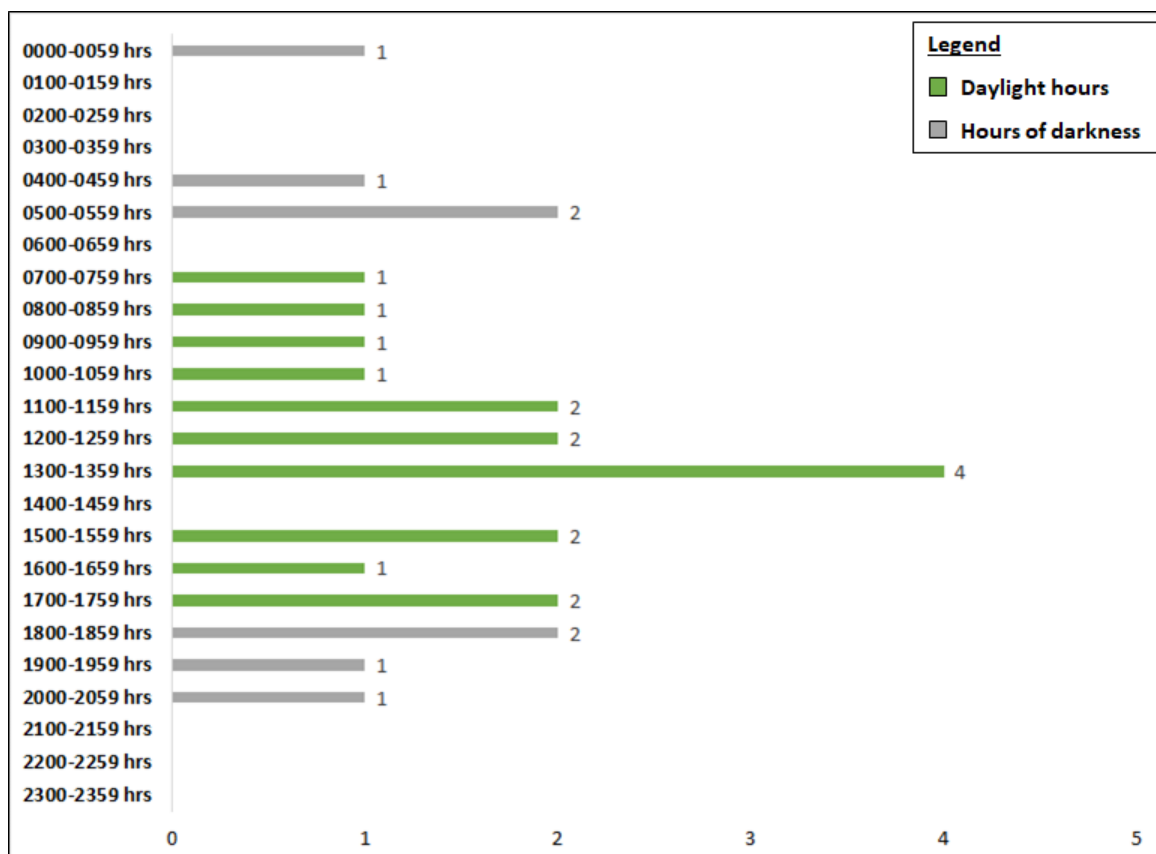


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c. Treatment of crew. There is no 'physical encounter or contact' between the crew and the perpetrators as the crew was in the tug boats and the perpetrators were on the barges. The crew was safe in all 25 incidents.



d. Time of incidents. Of the 25 incidents, 17 incidents (68%) occurred during daylight hours (between 0700 and 1759 hrs) and eight incidents (32%) during hours of darkness (between 1800 hrs and 0559 hrs). Most of the incidents during daylight hours occurred during 1100-1800 hrs with the highest boarding occurred during 1300-1400 hrs. As the barge was not manned, the perpetrators were rather bold in carrying out the theft during daylight hours.



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e. Flag of ships. Of the 25 incidents, 20 were Malaysia-registered tug boats, four were Singapore-registered tug boats and one had no information on the flag of the ship. There is no evidence to indicate that certain flag ships were targeted by the perpetrators. The perpetrators are opportunistic in nature and targeting ships that of low vigilant, slow moving and of low freeboard.

f. Economic loss. The perpetrators were more interested in stealing scrap metal from the barges which indicates that the gains from selling the stolen scrap metal is more lucrative<sup>1</sup> and there is demand in 'black markets'.

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<sup>1</sup>The price of scrap metal may vary over time and in different locations. From the website at <http://www.scrapmetal.sg/>, the price for scrap metal in Singapore ranges between S\$350 to S\$500 per ton, depending on its type.