

Fishermen Found After Six Weeks Adrift In Pacific

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Two emaciated Marshall Islands' fisherman have washed up on a tiny Pacific atoll after six weeks adrift, authorities said Thursday, but there was no sign of a third person believed to have set sail with them.

Their small outboard-engine boat beached at Namoluk, the smallest atoll in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), 1,600 kilometres (1,000 miles) from where they set out.

"They were skinny and weak as you would expect after 40 days at sea," Marshall Islands Health Secretary Jack Niedenthal said.

The men were identified as Godfrey Capelle and Thomas Benjamin, but there was no word on the fate of Junior Joram who was believed to have been with them when they were initially reported lost at sea.

The three men left Ebeye Island in the Marshall Islands on a fishing trip on April 2 but their craft soon developed engine trouble at they drifted out of the Kwajalein's lagoon during a period of high winds and rough seas.

Searches by the US Army, Coast Guard and Marshall Islands Sea Patrol proved fruitless.

Epic tales of survival are not uncommon in the western Pacific, where tiny islands are separated by vast expanses of ocean.

In 2006, three Mexicans were rescued near the Marshall Islands after nine months drifting across the Pacific Ocean.

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Marshallese fishermen found alive after 42-day open ocean drift

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An aerial view of the southern part of Kwajalein Atoll. Photo / US Army

RNZ

By [RNZ](#)

Two of three Marshall Islands fishermen lost at sea since April 2, washed into a tiny atoll in the Federated States of Micronesia, weak but alive after a 42-day drift on the open ocean.

The small outboard engine boat washed up at Namoluk, the smallest atoll in Micronesia, Thursday morning.

Details about their health and their 1600km drift were not immediately available from the isolated atoll.

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"They were skinny and weak as you would expect after 40 days at sea," said Marshall Islands Health Secretary Jack Niedenthal after he was advised by a FSM government public health official that the two men had been found.

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He said he had not received any further details on their health condition.

Three men left Ebeye Island on a fishing trip April 2, developed engine trouble and drifted out of Kwajalein's lagoon during a period of high winds and rough seas.

A search by the US Army, Coast Guard and Marshall Islands Sea Patrol came up empty.

The two who survived the 1600km drift are Godfrey Capelle and Thomas Benjamin, according to a preliminary report received from Chuuk.

The third man who went with the Capelle and Benjamin was Junior Joram, 32, the Marshall Islands Journal reported when the men were initially lost at sea in early April.

They were in a 6m boat with a single 40hp outboard engine.

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No details were available about what happened to Joram except that he was not with Capelle and Benjamin when Namoluk islanders found them Thursday morning.

A request from the island reportedly went to the FSM national sea patrol vessel to pick up the men and bring them to Weno, the capital of Chuuk, for medical attention and onward repatriation to the Marshall Islands.