

IHB File No. S3/3055/A

**CIRCULAR LETTER 51/2004
13 July 2004**

HYDROGRAPHY AND NAUTICAL CARTOGRAPHY IN REMOTE AREAS

Dear Hydrographer,

The sub-committee on Safety of Navigation (NAV) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) at its 48th session in 2002 invited the IHO to report to the 49th session in 2003 on the “How the quality and availability of hydrographic data in remote areas could be improved including a report on the current status of hydrographic surveys in remote areas” as part of its study into “Large Passenger Ship safety: Effective Voyage Planning for Large Passenger Ships”. The report was duly made (IMO Document NAV 49/11) together with the recommendation that the IHO should make a further report on “How the quality and availability of hydrographic data in remote areas could be improved” to the 50th session of NAV in 2004.

IHO consequently reported to NAV 50 which was held at IMO’s London headquarters from 5th to 9th July 2004. A copy of this report is attached at Annex A. The report was well received and the IHO were invited to keep NAV informed as to further progress on this subject.

Member States are requested to keep the IHB informed of any relevant developments with respect to this subject.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,

Vice Admiral Alexandros MARATOS
President

Annex A. IMO document NAV 50/11



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SUB-COMMITTEE ON SAFETY OF
NAVIGATION
50th session
Agenda item 11

NAV 50/11
28 April 2004
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LARGE PASSENGER SHIP SAFETY: EFFECTIVE VOYAGE PLANNING FOR LARGE PASSENGER SHIPS

Study by the IHO on the quality and availability of hydrographic data in remote areas

Submitted by the IHO

SUMMARY

Executive summary: The report assesses the current status regarding the quality and availability of hydrographic data in remote areas

Action to be taken: Paragraph 6

Related documents: NAV 48/19, paragraphs 12.9 and 12.11.1, NAV49/11 and NAV 49/19, paragraph 11.13

1 INTRODUCTION

This report builds on that submitted to NAV 49 (document NAV 49/11). The IHO has continued to consult widely. The matter was raised at the 3rd meeting of IHO's Hydrographic Committee on Antarctica (HCA), which took place at the IHB in Monaco from 8-10 September 2003. Additionally the IHO wrote to 18 organizations involved in Arctic/Antarctic activities. Substantive replies were received from the following four organizations:

- International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO);
- Australian Antarctic Division (AAD);
- New Zealand Antarctic Institute (NZAI); and
- Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI).

There is no organization corresponding to IAATO for the Arctic, however since several of the Antarctic Tour Operators also operate in the Arctic, IAATO agreed that they would consult appropriate members regarding the Arctic.

Denmark responded to the request for information made in NAV 49/11, paragraph 5.5. Their report covered Greenland waters.

For reasons of economy, this document is printed in a limited number. Delegates are kindly asked to bring their copies to meetings and not to request additional copies.

2 ISSUES

The issues raised in the responses are summarised below with comments as appropriate:

- .1** *‘Surveys and charting in areas of national interest, i.e. Antarctic bases and areas of infrastructure development in Greenland are generally satisfactory. Away from the immediate vicinity of these areas the situation is generally unsatisfactory, in many areas there are only a few isolated track lines.’*

As outlined in NAV 49/11, paragraph 2, the cost of conducting surveys to modern standards, as set out in IHO Publication S-44, is high particularly in ‘Remote Areas’. National Hydrographic Offices have to prioritise their activities. The IHO will continue to promote the need to conduct surveys in these remote areas. It is believed that the 3rd Edition of IHO publication S-55, Status of Hydrographic Surveying and Nautical Charting Worldwide, will contribute significantly to raising awareness of the need for surveying in these areas. (See paragraph 3 below).

- .2** *‘Charting discrepancies and other relevant information provided by Tour Ships sometimes take up to 5 years to appear as corrections to charts.’*

This was a generalised comment and the IHO has asked for more definitive information in order that the cause of such delays can be investigated and hopefully rectified. Companies that responded to IAATO’s survey indicated that they forwarded chart information either to their national hydrographic office or to the nation publishing the charts in use. IAATO have suggested the possibility of a single focal point to which information should be sent. The focal point would then ensure that all information would be sent to all relevant charting agencies as a matter of priority. This matter is being raised at the 4th meeting of the HCA, which is being held in Greece in September 2004.

- .3** *‘The information shown on charts from different countries can be inconsistent.’*

No specific cases have been reported and the IHO has requested details in order to raise them with the relevant charting authorities. The IHO believes that such occurrences will reduce as more International (INT) Charts become available (See NAV 49/11, paragraph 3.1). This will not provide a short-term answer however. Currently only about 30 of the charts in the scheme of 100 INT charts have been produced. In the interim the IHO will continue to promote the exchange of chart information.

- .4** *‘Polar Star Expeditions, a member company of IAATO, has proposed that IAATO and IHO develop standards for the collection and forwarding of hydrographic data in ‘ad hoc’ situations.’*

This is a proposal that has merit and the IHO will discuss methods of implementing this with the relevant Hydrographic Offices.

.5 IAATO indicated that, where space permits, their members' vessels could be used as platforms for gathering data.

The IHO is grateful for this offer, which was reiterated at the 3rd HCA Meeting. The IHO and IAATO have developed a procedure to enable the hydrographic offices to identify appropriate opportunities and make contact with the operators of the vessels. The IHO and IAATO will continue to promote this facility amongst Member States at future HCA Meetings.

3 S-55 Status of Hydrographic Surveying and Nautical Charting Worldwide

As reported at NAV 49/11, paragraph 5.4, the IHO is in the process of producing the 3rd Edition of this publication. The quality of the resulting information will clearly depend on the volume and quality of the data received. The IHO is grateful for the issue of IMO Circular Letter No. 2506 dated 31 October 2003 which forwarded the IHO questionnaire to IMO Member States, who are not Member States of the IHO, urging them to forward the required information to the IHO. As of 26 April the IHO has received 41 replies from IHO Member States and 15 replies from Non Member States of the IHO.

The 3rd Edition of S-55 will be a strategic document that will inform debate and promote the provision of resources for hydrographic surveying and nautical cartography within the international community. The data collected is being entered into a digital database, which will be able to be interrogated from the IHO web site. Web forms are being developed to allow hydrographic offices to submit online updates to their data at any time. The IHO will provide regular prompts for such information.

4 ARCTIC CO-OPERATION

The need for charting co-operation in Arctic Waters, as achieved by the HCA for Antarctica, was discussed at HCA's 3rd meeting in September 2003. As a result of this discussion the report of the meeting, which was forwarded to IHO Member States under cover of IHO CL 76/2003 dated 11 December, included a questionnaire regarding the formation of an Arctic Hydrographic Commission. The majority of replies received, as of 26 April, have supported the formation of such a group. The IHO will take this matter forward once voting has been completed.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Hydrographic surveys are expensive and resources are finite. There is no simple action that will, in the short term, provide high quality hydrographic data for remote areas. However, in order to improve matters, the IHO will:

- Continue discussions, through HCA, with IAATO on establishing a standard for *ad hoc* reports from Tour Vessels visiting remote areas and the possibility of establishing a single focal point for such reports.
- Promote the IAATO offer of space for collecting data from their vessels at future HCA meetings and in other appropriate fora.
- Develop and maintain the 3rd Edition of S-55, Status of Hydrographic Surveying and Nautical Charting Worldwide, and promote its use as a tool to assist the provision of services to improve the status with particular regard to remote areas.

- Continue discussions with Member States and Regional Hydrographic Commissions on how best to improve co-operation and hence the quality and availability of hydrographic data in the Arctic. If agreed by IHO Member States establish a new 'Arctic Hydrographic Commission'.

All Maritime States should continue to provide relevant information for the safety of navigation to the IHO or to the Hydrographic Office responsible for charting the relevant area.

This report has limited the scope of 'Remote Areas' to the Arctic, Antarctic and waters around Greenland, however the IHO acknowledges there are other areas which merit consideration as 'Remote' and for which improved hydrographic data is a necessity. The 3rd Edition of S-55 will also facilitate the identification of these areas and their requirements.

6 ACTION REQUESTED OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE

The Sub-Committee is requested to note this report.
