

**FORTH MEETING OF THE IHO INTER REGIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE  
IHO-IRCC4  
Singapore, 7 – 8 June 2012**

**Report from the Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica**

Chairman: Captain Hugo Gorziglia, IHB Director  
Vice Chairman: Commodore Rod NAIRN, Hydrographer of Australia  
Secretary : Ing. en chef Michel HUET (IHB)

The 11th Meeting of the Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica (HCA) took place in Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, from 5 to 7 October 2011. The meeting was organised by the Australian Hydrographic Service (AHS) with the support of the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD). Fifteen HCA Member States<sup>1</sup>, out of 23, were represented at this meeting, plus observers from COMNAP, IAATO, IALA, GEBCO and SCAR, and one expert contributor (Fugro-Pelagos). In total, 29 delegates were in attendance.

The Commission re-elected Commodore NAIRN (Australia) as Vice-Chairman of HCA and reviewed all actions arising from the 10<sup>th</sup> HCA meeting concluding that most of the actions had been completed. The following subjects merit special attention:

- HCA Members from Brazil, Chile, France, Germany, South Africa, Spain and UK reported that they have briefed their ATCM National delegates on the importance of improving hydrography and nautical charting for safety of navigation and protection of the marine environment in Antarctica. The meeting agreed this should be a general and an ongoing practice.
- Noting the unique status of Antarctica and the imminent introduction of the IMO Polar Code, the Commission agreed that there was a need to define how safety of navigation, including hydrography and aids to navigation, should be administered in Antarctica.
- The Commission felt that a new strategic approach was needed for raising awareness on safety of navigation and environmental protection in Antarctica. This topic was considered in the IHO 2013-2017 Work Program which includes the following tasks:
  - a) to conduct a risk assessment for the Antarctic region and develop a Work Program to improve Antarctic charting. (2013/2014)
  - b) to submit through the IHB to ATCM the risk assessment conducted by HCA for the Antarctic Region together with a proposed HCA work program to improve Antarctic charting, for consideration, endorsement and support from ATCM. (2015)
- The Commission instructed the HCA Chair to explain ATCM that SOLAS obligations (limited to Chap V, Reg. 2, 4, 9, 27) rely on the efforts of each nation party to the Antarctic Treaty in meeting those obligations. The Commission also instructed the HCA Chair to seek support from the ATCM for the IMO to encourage voluntary participation in data collection activities to be included into the Polar Code.

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<sup>1</sup> Australia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, France, Germany, Korea (Rep. of), New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Spain, United Kingdom, USA, Uruguay and Venezuela.

## **The Status of Hydrographic Surveys**

Out of the 15 National Reports submitted to HCA11, 8 indicated that some systematic hydrographic surveys had taken place during the 2010/2011 season.

The HCA Hydrographic Survey Prioritizing Working Group with cooperation from COMNAP and IAATO, have revised and produced new versions of the HCA Long Term Survey Plan and the HCA Survey Short List to reflect new survey requirements arising from IAATO input based on previous season tourist statistics.

The IHO/HCA acknowledges and appreciates the cooperation and contribution received from several international organizations, particularly from IAATO, COMNAP and research institutions, which have made ancient collections of bathymetric informative data available. This collective effort goes in direct support of the production of INT Charts and ENC covering Antarctic waters.

Following experiences so far gathered the HCA agreed to further develop guidelines for IAATO ships of opportunity willing to collect hydrographic data and for the Hydrographic Offices visiting IAATO ships when calling in ports on her way to Antarctica, or in Antarctica, to advise them on the collection and rendering of hydrographic data.

The Commission took note of a project involving the UKHO and a hydrographic company aiming to improve data coverage in Antarctica (predominately the Peninsula) for all shipping. The system is known as ARGUS (Autonomous Remote Global Underwater Surveillance) and will provide cooperative surveying through the acquisition and collective processing of vessel GPS and Echo Sounder data via a black box recorder. The cost of a box should be about USD 2.000.

## **The Status of Nautical Chart Production**

Six new INT charts have been approved for inclusion in the scheme, to be produced by Ecuador (INT 9129), Spain (INT 9128), Australia (INT 9022 and INT 9038) and UK (INT 9117 and INT 9133). As a result, the total number of INT charts in the scheme is 108. Of these, 67 INT charts had been published as of April 2012 and 27 are planned for publication by 2014 as either new publication or new edition.

The production of Electronic Navigational Charts (ENC) of Antarctica has continued to grow. So far 60 ENCs cells are available based on various national charts and on 32 INT charts. These ENCs include 13 "overview", 7 "general", 15 "coastal", 13 "approach", 11 "harbour" and 1 "berthing".

The HCA feels that coordination at a national level between National Hydrographers and ATCM National delegates facilitates the understanding at a political/governmental level of the importance of improving hydrography and nautical charting in Antarctica.

Noting the unique status of Antarctica and the imminent introduction of the IMO Polar Code, the HCA has identified as a need to invite ATCM to define how safety of navigation, including hydrography and aids to navigation, should be managed in Antarctica.

Finally HCA is pleased to announce that following a kind invitation from the Servicio Oceanografico, Hidrografico y Meteorologico de la Armada del Uruguay, the Commission decided to have the 12<sup>th</sup> HCA meeting in Uruguay, (venue to be determined) on 10 – 12 October 2012.

## **Recommendation.**

It is recommended that the IRCC4 Takes note of the IHO Report.