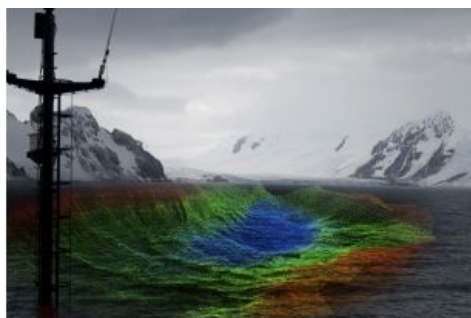
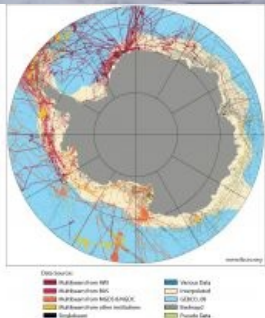


The IHO's Role in Improving the Charts of the Polar Regions



The International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters, the 'Polar Code', recently adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), warns that

... "In many areas, the chart coverage may not currently be adequate for coastal navigation. It is recognized even existing charts may be subject to unsurveyed and uncharted shoals"



and

... "navigational officers should ... be familiar with the status of hydrographic surveys and ... quality of chart information ... and... aim to plan their route through charted areas and well clear of known shoal depths, following established routes whenever possible".

Against this background, the IHO is active in several international forums, seeking ways to address this unfortunate situation.

39th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM),

Santiago, Chile, 23-27 May

In Santiago, the IHO, as an invited expert organisation, was represented by the Chilean Hydrographic Service who reported on the status of hydrographic surveys and nautical cartography in the Antarctic region. The contribution of the commercial sector, as represented by international organisations such as the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO), to support mapping and charting activities in Antarctica was highlighted. The IHO proposed that all vessels operating in Antarctic waters should be invited to gather depth data using their existing equipment, as active participants in the IHO's developing crowdsourced bathymetry initiative.

GEBCO Arctic-Antarctic Mapping Workshop, Monaco, 12-13 June

Ways to compile new editions of the authoritative GEBCO International Bathymetric Charts of the Arctic Ocean (IBCAO) and the Southern Ocean (IBCSO) were addressed by about 40 scientists, cartographers and hydrographers, who gathered at the IHO headquarters in Monaco in June. The Chairs of the Arctic Regional Hydrographic Commission (ARHC) and of the IHO Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica (HCA) both stressed the fact that additional data has been gathered over the years by many scientific cruises, but has not been made available. As a result, it is not currently reflected in the charts of the regions!

14th Conference of the IHO Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica, Tromsø, Norway, 28 June - 1 July

Discussions at the HCA Conference in Tromsø addressed both the need to obtain additional bathymetric data from all sources and observers in the region, and the need to establish a recognised and interoperable GIS-based data and metadata repository so that all existing data may be identified. A comprehensive analysis of the charting coverage in Antarctica was provided and compared against the statistics of recent vessel traffic patterns using both IAATO and AIS data. This enabled the verification of the maritime shipping routes that are currently the focus of charting priorities. Holding the meeting in Tromsø ensured that fruitful liaison was established with experts from the Norwegian Polar Institute involved in both Arctic and Antarctic research.

6th Conference of the Arctic Regional Hydrographic Commission, Iqaluit, Canada, 3 and 6 October

The forthcoming ARHC Conference will be held in the Canadian Arctic in conjunction with 'Ocean Innovation 2016 – Adapting to a Changing Circumpolar North'. The ARHC will bring together the national Hydrographers of Canada (Chair), Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russian Federation and USA. They will meet to coordinate their charting activities and discuss, among other things, the development of an Arctic Voyage Planning Guide and an Arctic Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure.

<https://www.hydro-international.com/content/article/the-iho-s-role-in-improving-the-charts-of-the-polar-regions>
