NOAA Awards Teledyne Webb Research US$7 Million IDIQ Contract

Teledyne Webb Research, a division of Teledyne Technologies and a leading provider of neutrally buoyant, autonomous drifters and profilers, autonomous underwater gliding vehicles and moored underwater sound sources, has received an indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contract from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for the provision of Slocum gliders, sensors and service components. The award has a maximum value of US$7 million over five years, with an initial procurement in excess of US$600,000.

The U.S. Antarctic Marine Living Resources (AMLR) programme of the NOAA Fisheries Service has conducted ship-based acoustic and oceanographic research surveys around the Antarctic Peninsula since 1986. Data collected from this programme is used to provide advice to the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) that establish catch limits for the Antarctic krill fishery.

Climate changes have altered the distribution, intensity and timing of this important fishery over the last decade. The fishery season, for example, has expanded as both sea-ice extent and distribution have declined. This expansion leads to a potential negative impact on ecosystem health such as known areas of krill-dependent predators.

Replacing traditional ship-based surveys

In an effort to systematically provide ecological data at appropriate spatio-temporal scales, and over a longer sampling season, the U. S. AMLR programme has implemented a krill research program that will utilise an array of moorings and gliders around the Antarctic Peninsula. Data collected from this research will replace traditional ship-based surveys and will provide standardised spatial and temporal data to better understand the consequences of overlap among krill, predators and the krill fishery, and provide other dynamic oceanic attributes of the study area. Along with arrays of moored ADCPs and CTDs, NOAA has developed a glider-based survey programme. Teledyne Webb Research G3 electric Slocum gliders, equipped with Acoustic Zooplankton Fish Profilers (AZFP) using three acoustic frequencies (38, 67 and 125kHz) to record backscatter of krill biomass. This sampling programme will commence in October 2018, and is expected to provide the framework for sustained ecosystem monitoring using autonomous platforms. This Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) services contract will provide The U. S. AMLR programme with the ability to continue to build out its glider fleet, add additional science components and service the gliders.