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Offshore Oil — Riding the Waves

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New acoustic subsea receiver introduced

RJE International has released the STI-350 Surface Acoustic Receiver. Self-contained, the STI-350 uses a staff mounted directional hydrophone to track and relocate underwater sound sources. Designed for the rigorous marine environment, the STI-350 allows an operator to locate underwater pingers that operate between 25 and 45Khz. In addition, the STI-350 can be used with a custom line of underwater transponders that provide an operator range and bearing to a marked subsea target. Battery operated, the STI-350 uses a LCD to display range/signal strength and bearing to the target beacon. Sealed switches allow the operator to access the many functions of the STI-350. A rugged aluminum anodized staff assembly allows easy deployment of the highly directional hydrophone.

Already, RJE International, Inc has been awarded a contact by USCG in Boston to supply customized STI-350 Surface Acoustic Receivers for ensuring proper operation of gillnet pingers used on fishing gear. These devices are mounted on gillnets to prevent bycatch of harbor porpoises by emitting low frequency acoustic noise. The customized STI-350 allows USGC personnel to check for proper operation of the pingers from a small craft when the nets are deployed in the water. Since the implementation of gillnet pingers, the numbers of bycatch have dropped dramatically over the past few years.

For more information, visit www.rjeint.com.

ECOLOCK® long-lasting protection for offshore hulls now available

Ecolock is a new product from the makers of Ecospeed and Ecoshield. It is designed to protect offshore vessels for decades without the need for drydocking. Increasingly, offshore vessels such as FPSOs, FSOs, FLRSUs and others used for offshore oil and gas exploration, drilling, storage and transport need to stay out of drydock for 15, 25, even 40 years. The challenge has been to protect the underwater hull from corrosion and to provide a cleanable surface so that the biofouling that accumulates can be removed successfully and safely for UWILD and to reduce weight. Ecolock is the answer to that challenge.

For decades it has been known that glassflake-reinforced hard coatings last longer, are tougher and more resilient, and need less repair and replacement than any other type of hull coating. Soft coatings such as biocidal antifouling and foul-release coatings do not hold up well. They need to be repaired or replaced often, which is not good news for shipowners and operators and particularly offshore operators who need to keep their ships out of drydock. Their antifouling or foul release properties require that the ship move through the water at relatively high speed. On stationary vessels, the fouling simply builds up.

Since the early 2000s a hard, cleanable, non-toxic, glassflake-reinforced coating has been available, Ecospeed. Ecospeed is actually a coating system that combines a hard coating with routine in-water cleaning. The coating holds up for a remarkably long time, even in the ice or other harsh conditions. It can be cleaned as often as needed and becomes smoother not rougher with each cleaning. It has been used in offshore applications.

It was found over time that a tougher version of Ecospeed, Ecoshield, is an even more effective protection against the forces of cavitation and corrosion that constantly impinge on the rudder and other running gear of a ship. Now Ecospeed and Ecoshield have acquired a cousin, also a glassflake-reinforced coating, but this one intended specifically to meet the hull protection requirements of offshore vessels: Ecolock.

Ecolock is an extremely tough and durable coating designed to remain in excellent condition for 15 to 25 years without drydocking, repair or replacement. Ecolock can be cleaned underwater as often as needed to meet the UWILD and weight requirements of FPSOs, drill ships and other offshore vessels. Ecolock is the result of continual R&D on offshore hull coatings since the 1990s.

Ecolock is completely non-toxic. It is a hard, impermeable coating that even the toughest barnacle will not penetrate. This is in direct contrast to antifouling or foul-release coatings. Barnacles and other fouling organisms attach and penetrate those coatings right through to the steel permitting the start and spread of corrosion. In the case of Ecolock the barnacles, coral and other fouling organisms can be removed completely by divers using special equipment, leaving no trace and restoring the coating to its original condition. And because it is non-toxic, it is safe to clean the Ecolock coated hull when needed for UWILD or simply to reduce the weight when too much fouling has accumulated. This can be done even in sensitive waters.

For more information, visit www.ecospeed.be.