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News Release

February 3, 2014

IAGC Issues New Towed Passive Acoustic Monitoring Guidance for Geophysical Operations to Further Protect Marine Animals

Houston, TX – The International Association of Geophysical Contractors (IAGC) has released new Guidance on the Use of Towed Passive Acoustic Monitoring (PAM) during geophysical operations. IAGC has taken steps to inform the geophysical industry and has developed recommended guidance for PAM use and reporting.

As part of the efforts to minimize the very low potential impact on the marine environment, the geophysical industry takes a variety of measures for purposes of monitoring and mitigation. When used in the most optimized way, PAM can be an effective measure to detect marine mammals near seismic vessels.

PAM employs the use of a hydrophone array pulled behind a seismic vessel to detect the presence of vocalizing marine mammals, and software technology that allows the data to be analyzed as it is collected. In addition to visual observers, PAM can be a useful monitoring tool, particularly during low or impaired surface visibility conditions.

The [IAGC Guidance on the Use of Towed Passive Acoustic Monitoring](#) during Geophysical Operations was developed to maximize the operational performance of PAM systems during geophysical surveys. It was prepared by IAGC member company volunteers, using their experience and expertise to provide the industry with useful information for implementing PAM systems.

Chip Gill, IAGC President said, “The new Guidance is another demonstration of the industry’s efforts to further enhance the capabilities of PAM systems. We also support the use of the PAMGuard software for consistency within the industry. The geophysical industry is committed to conducting our operations in an environmentally responsible manner.”

IAGC has been an early supporter of complementary monitoring techniques to visual observations, such as PAM. IAGC recommends that PAM operators be trained and that minimum requirements for PAM equipment (including capabilities of software and hardware) should be considered.

As a member of the International Association Oil & Gas Producers (OGP) E&P Sound and Marine Life Joint Industry Program (JIP), IAGC has supported research projects to improve the capabilities of PAM systems, including the development of PAMGuard. PAMGuard is a software package developed by the JIP for use on PAM systems. PAMGuard software is free and open to use. More information on PAMGuard and the free software can be found [HERE](#). Other JIP projects supported by IAGC can be found [HERE](#).

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About IAGC

IAGC is the international trade association representing the industry that provides geophysical services (geophysical data acquisition, seismic data ownership and licensing, geophysical data processing and interpretation, and associated service and product providers) to the oil and gas industry.

More information on IAGC and the geophysical industry can be found at <http://www.iagc.org> and <http://geophysicsrocks.com>

For reference material on Marine Mammal Protection, see
<http://www.iagc.org/MarineEnvironment/references/>

For a video overview of marine seismic operations, see
<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLEE2ECC235BCA5FA0>

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