

The Importance of KIS-ORCA

Collaborating & coexisting with the fishing

The KIS-ORCA project charts the offshore renewable and cable industry activities and structures around the UK, primarily for the safety of fishermen, but also for the protection of assets and development of coexistence offshore.

Fishing is the most dangerous peacetime occupation in the UK, with 200 UK vessels lost and 87 fishermen losing their lives at sea over the past decade. Sadly, in the past, manmade structures have played a part in the loss of life. Following one particularly tragic incident, four fishermen lost their lives following the loss of their vessel after they became stuck on a pipeline span. Loss of vessels and numerous lives has occurred following subsea cable snagging incidents.

Following a Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) Fatal Accident Inquiry into the tragedy, the lack of practical information and awareness of many offshore hazards was highlighted. The MAIB called on the offshore industries to ensure more was done to make fishermen aware of hazards and cited the work of the Kingfisher division of Seafish, in fulfilling such a role. Seafish is a non-departmental public body, whose Kingfisher division has worked with the fishing industry since the 1960s, providing mapping and information to fishermen.

The reaction to the MAIB directive has been impressive, with the offshore oil & gas, subsea cable and renewable energy industries now wholeheartedly supporting fishing awareness projects. The European Subsea Cables Association, Oil & Gas UK and their members, equating to more than 75 global organisations, have supported these projects for more than 15 years.

These additional awareness projects are critical to the promotion of offshore structure and cable locations. As highlighted by the MAIB inquiry, many offshore industry structures and hazards are not included on admiralty charts used for navigating at sea. Those that are charted, are often not identified in sufficient detail, or available in a format that makes them practical to use when operating at sea.

Today, information supplied through the KIS-ORCA (Kingfisher Information Service – Offshore Renewable and Cable Awareness) project, assures fishermen have access to accurate, up to date and practical information on the location of offshore structures. Fishermen are now able to see the location of renewable energy structures, subsea cables and associated hazards in detail, giving them a clear picture of the subsea environment they are working in. The KIS-ORCA project, managed by Kingfisher, in cooperation with European Subsea Cables Association and RenewableUK, aims to ensure that renewable energy and subsea cable industry structures are charted and supplied to fishermen and seabed users in a range of practical formats.

Dave Fenner of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), commented: ***“Supplying fishermen with accurate locations of offshore structures allows skippers to make informed decisions when fishing in the vicinity of these potentially hazardous structures to ensure that they are operating as safely as possible.”***

KIS-ORCA information is the most accurate, detailed and up to date available. The information is publicly available via www.kis-orca.eu, where an interactive Google map, offshore activity news and downloadable charts may be accessed. The most important element of KIS-ORCA to fishermen is seen as the supply of information for their fishing plotter systems. These electronic systems contain a vast array of information and are the tool fishermen use in their... ***(continued overleaf)***

* >75 global organisations are committed to KIS-ORCA and its sister fishing safety project for the waters around the UK

POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- Fishermen have died and vessels lost from snagging manmade offshore structures.
- MAIB directive pressed operators to do more.
- KIS-ORCA reduces the likelihood of snagging incidents.
- The collective benefits of KIS-ORCA are great. (>75 global organisations*)

wheelhouse on a daily basis. Kingfisher converts KIS-ORCA information into formats used by these systems, allowing them to be easily installed and viewed by the skipper.

Colin Warwick, National Fisheries Liaison Officer for The Crown Estate, stated: *“The majority of fishermen use a fishing plotter system on their vessel. Having access to a layer of information containing accurate locations of offshore structures and hazards, means skippers can see exactly where their vessel is in relation to an offshore structure, cable or hazard. This is vital to safe fishing and in reducing the likelihood of a vessel impacting a structure.”*

KIS-ORCA information includes all subsea cable systems in Northern Europe and UK wind farms. Over 2,500 fishing plotter updates are distributed annually throughout the fishing industry by the Scottish Fishermen’s Federations (SFF), the National Federation of Fishermen’s Organisations (NFFO) and Kingfisher. Whilst this ensures great coverage throughout the industry, Kingfisher are also pleased to respond to data or chart requests, from fisheries liaison officers of KIS-ORCA member companies.

Chris Streatfeild of RenewableUK, commented: *“RenewableUK support the important work of the KIS-ORCA project. We see this as a vital tool to promote safe fishing activities, whilst helping to protect operator assets and the integrity of the UK renewable energy industry. The collective benefits of KIS-ORCA are great.”*

The KIS-ORCA project is non-profit making, with running costs associated with the maintenance of data, chart and CD production and promotion to fishermen covered by contributions from asset owning companies. These costs are kept to a minimum and calculated pro-rata, depending on the number of structures and length of cable installed.

