

## THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT – A MARINE CONSULTANT’S PERSPECTIVE

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Long before Rachel Carson wrote “*Silent Spring*” in 1962 detailing the impact of modern farming and industrial techniques on the environment, seafarers had observed the deterioration of their fragile environment particularly in coastal areas or in the vicinity of maritime casualties. Because of the competitive nature of the industry and the differences in National Regulations coupled with inexact scientific studies of the environment and usable tools, however, little action was taken to mitigate environmental damage. The gradual deterioration was relegated to the natural order.

Change started to come in the maritime industry when, in 1948, an international conference in Geneva established the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO) which was subsequently renamed the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in 1982. Although this organization had prevention and control of marine pollution from ships as one of its original goals, its first actions were to address ship safety issues and only dealt with environmental concerns in response to shipping casualties that seriously impacted the environment. This continued until the 1970s when work was concentrated on marine pollution resulting in the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, which was modified by the Protocol of 1978 and became known as MARPOL 73/78 and which today has or is being extended to include most types of pollution associated to ships and the maritime industry such as oil, noxious liquid substances, harmful substances in packaged forms, sewage, garbage, ballast water, toxins, fluorocarbon emissions, and engine emissions.

Born of the sea and a critical component of the maritime industry are a group of men and women known as Marine Consultants, Surveyors or Inspectors. They

are located throughout the world's ports and travel the world in support of the industry's far roaming ships whether they be tankers, gas carriers, bulk carriers, cruise ships, container ships or any of the many other types of ships engaged in the international or national trades. Most are experienced with ships, their operations and their potential for affecting the environment having come from the ranks of seafarers, shipbuilders or maritime regulators and if asked, we believe, most would avow to be environmentalists.

Our feeling of marine consultants, surveyors and inspectors as environmentalists might raise a few eyebrows in non-maritime circles, but one only has to realize that we, as well as the rest of the maritime industry, make our living from commercial ships and rely on uninterrupted commerce on the world's oceans, seas, and navigable waterways. In order for this to continue we must all act as responsible world citizens and do our utmost to protect the environment in which we work. Given the significant changes in regulations since 1973 and the degree of compliance, we believe that our industry is ahead of the curve worldwide and is still improving.

At Martin, Ottaway, van Hemmen & Dolan, Inc. and our Dutch associate, J.C. van Sas & Associates B.V., we take pride in the numerous projects in which our consultants assist our many clients in their environmental protection efforts. Some of our more noteworthy projects include:

- Attending at IMO meetings and assisting flag state delegations in the development of environmental protection initiatives.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of a developing ballast water purification/sterilization system for use on commercial seagoing vessels.
- Review and evaluation of the effectiveness of present day oily water separators and their proper operation on numerous vessel types.
- Evaluation of computer modeling of TBT impact on the environment as a part of the ongoing TBT phase out.

- Investigation into lowering ferry wakes in harbors and inland waterways.
- Participation with cruise lines, tanker operators and container operators in the development, implementation and subsequent auditing of environmental management programs meeting the ISM Code and the ISO 14001 standard.

Although, as a firm, we do not normally give specifics of client projects, one firm, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. gave permission for us to reveal that they have on both of their brands (Royal Caribbean International and Celebrity Cruises) comprehensive environmental plans addressing grey water, black water, bilge water, sludge, hotel/restaurant waste and special waste, all of which go above and beyond all National and International Regulations. This excess of requirements is evidenced by this Company, not only being ISM and ISO 14001 certified, but also by numerous vessels achieving additional environmental protection (EP) classification designations. Additionally in 2002, the line was awarded the Admiral Benkert Award for environmental excellence, the only cruise lines to ever receive this award.

In order for our consultants to be effective in the area of environmental protection ongoing training both in-house and at qualified educational settings in the United States is used and most of our consultant surveyors are QI qualified at the Incident Commander level as prescribed by the U.S. Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90) and qualified ISM auditors.