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IHB File No. S3/0128

20 August 2004

HCA Letter No. 5/2004

To: Members and Observers of the IHO Hydrographic Committee on Antarctica (HCA)

Subjects:

- 1. 4th HCA Meeting, Kythnos, Cyclades, Greece, 6-8 September 2004**
- 2. The HCA Hydrographic Survey Plan and the International Polar Year (2007-2008).**
- 3. INT Chart Scheme for Region 'M'**

Dear Sir or Madam,

1. 4th HCA Meeting

1.1 Documents to be referred to at the 4th HCA Meeting, and which are available, have been posted on the IHO website (www.iho.shom.fr > Reg. Hydro. Commissions > HCA > HCA4doc_list). Those States and Observer Organizations who have not yet provided the Secretary (Michel HUET, mhuet@ihb.mc) with their reports to HCA/4 are urged to do so as soon as possible.

1.2 I am pleased to report that a dinner will be offered by the Mayor of Kythnos on the evening of 6th September and that a cocktail party will be hosted by the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the evening of 7th September.

1.3 Any representatives of States / Observer Organizations who intend to participate in HCA/4 and have not yet informed the Greek HO should send their registration form at the earliest opportunity (Attn: Mr. Giannis Papaioannou, dcd@hnhs.gr), so that appropriate reservations for accommodation and transport can be made. A registration form is available from the HCA page of the IHO website.

2. HCA Hydrographic Survey Plan

The annotated draft agenda for the 4th HCA Meeting, which was annexed to HCA Letter No. 4/2004 proposed to discuss the development of an "Antarctic Survey Programme" (Agenda Item 7.4 refers). The context was the need to prioritise the

exploitation of potential work from ships of opportunity. The analysis leading to such a programme would naturally benefit from the data provided by contributors to S-55.

To energise and provide momentum to this proposal, I would like to ask the HCA to discuss the suggestion that a major survey plan be co-ordinated to mark the International Polar Year (2007-2008). The aim would be that HCA States with national programmes of survey in Antarctica would work together to maximise the effort in that year, and that other HCA States might consider allocating personnel and equipment for deployment into vessels of opportunity.

If work on a prioritised HCA Survey Programme was approved at the forthcoming 4th HCA meeting, this would provide good lead-time to identify the work for 2007-2008, as well as improving co-ordination of existing national programmes, and informing the response to any offers of ships of opportunity which emerge in the shorter term. The earlier that an authoritative HCA statement of requirement for surveys can be produced, the greater will be the support to Hydrographers in seeking commitment to their national programmes in the HCA region.

UK has offered to chair a planning group to handle the work of prioritising survey requirements. I would propose that the HCA discuss this offer and the membership of such a planning group.

You are asked to discuss this proposal with your appropriate national authorities so that we can achieve a full and constructive review at the 4th meeting, and identify a sensible way ahead.

3. INT Chart Scheme for Region 'M'

Following IHO presentation of HCA activities to the 15th IAATO General Meeting (Christchurch, New Zealand, April 2004) by Mr. John SPITTAL, Hydrographer of New Zealand (see Doc. HCA4-INF6), the IHB has received a letter from Capt. Leif SKOG, Vice President of Marine Operations, Lindblad Expeditions, Seattle, Wa, USA. Lindblad is a member of IAATO. Capt. SKOG has a long experience as Master onboard cruise ships sailing in waters around the Antarctic Peninsula. In his letter (enclosed as Annex A), he shares a number of observations he made throughout his career in Antarctica, duly notes that "the most fundamental safety factor is good and reliable charts" and, having carefully analysed the IHO INT Chart Scheme for Region 'M', proposes that some additional charts be included in the scheme. This is outlined on the graphics in Annex B, which have been amended by Capt. SKOG from pages M-12 and M-15 of IHO Publication M11. In total, 11 new charts are proposed for inclusion in the scheme.

Rationale behind Capt. SKOG's proposals is quoted from his letter:

"I have with great interest analyzed the region M-12 and M-15. Unfortunately the new chart scheme for those regions seems to not fully consider the landing sites for the cruise ships. I have some suggestions of the missing areas for special charts where I think it indeed would increase the safety of navigation in the Antarctic Peninsula. I have divided my suggestions in three priorities. First priorities are those landing sites that are very frequently visited. Second is the landing site repeatedly visited. Third those landing sites not yet so often visited but it might be because of their outstanding wildlife. I have enclosed some maps for clarifications.

First and highest priority is Point Wild & Cape Valentine, Penguin Island, Brown Bluff & Fridjof Sound, Grandidier Channel and Crystal Sound.

Second priority is Hydruga Rocks & Pampas Passage, Devil Island & Crystal Hill area, and Snow Hill Island.

Third priority is Gaudier Island, Danger Islands and Active Sound”

You are kindly requested to consider and review the proposals at Annex B. It is suggested to address this issue under Agenda Item 7.1 of HCA/4 and that participants in the meeting be prepared to provide comments, including producer status indications. Comments by States not represented at HCA/4 are also invited and will be conveyed to the meeting by the IHB.

This is going to be the last HCA Letter before the 4th Meeting.

I wish a safe trip to Greece to all those who will attend and I strongly invite those not attending to provide any comment that could provide guidance to the meeting towards the successful achievement of the HCA responsibilities.

Thank you for your support.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely



Captain Hugo M. GORZIGLIA
IHB Director and Chairman of HCA

Enclosures: Annex A – Letter to the IHB from Capt. SKOG, Lindblad
Annex B – Proposals to amend the IHO INT Chart Scheme

LETTER TO THE IHB FROM CAPT. LEIF SKOG - LINDBLAD EXPEDITIONS

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14 June 2004

Dear Steve,

Dennis Landau, the Executive Director of IAATO sent me a copy of your email dated April 20, 2004, subject: Hydrographic in Remote Areas just before the IAA TO meeting in Christchurch April 27 -30. I promised her to reply to your email and after listening to John Spittal, the International Hydrographic Bureau representative for New Zealand at the IAA TO meeting I find it necessary to send you a letter with some more details about the charting of remote areas, particularly waters in the Antarctic Peninsula, South Orkney and South Georgia. I have with interest studied the suggested International Chart Scheme in Antarctica and I found that from a cruise vessel point of view, it would be desirable to have some additional special charts, as I will describe later.

Before I go further however, I would like to briefly introduce myself. I came down the Antarctic Peninsula in the late seventies onboard Lindblad Explorer as 2nd Officer and since then I have been onboard ships either in the Ross Sea or mostly in the Peninsula more or less every Austral summer season. I had my first command as Master onboard Lindblad Explorer in 1984. I have been working in Antarctica as Master onboard expedition ships Lindblad Explorer, Frontier Spirit, Explorer and

Endeavour. I have for certain seasons been working as active ice pilot, Ice Master, onboard the cruise ships Ocean Princess, Illiria and the cargo ship Columbiand. As Ice Master I have always actively piloted the vessels, being in charge, during the operation in the Antarctic waters.

My second season 79/80 ended abruptly when Lindblad Explorer on the 24 December 1979 at full speed, 14,5 knots, ran severely aground on an uncharted rock North East of Wiencke Island, Gerlache Strait. I learned the hard way that even a so-called charted water could be risky particularly in such remote areas as Antarctica.

Through the years I have encouraged and established sounding procedures onboard the ships I have been in charge of. I have made so-called "mud maps" in charted and uncharted waters charted water to confirm the depths and uncharted for obvious reasons. I have through the years taught many officers to make "mud maps" and there are now officers that have continued with this important task when they have been working onboard other ships although I am not certain that they are sending in their findings to any hydrographic office. Peter Skog (we are not related) was Chief Officer under my command for a number of years and I inspired him to do soundings. He has always been very enthusiastic and for the last years he has had his own command and he kept the routines.

Good and reliable charts are not the only important factor when operating vessels in Antarctica; there are other factors as well. The Antarctic continent surrounded by the coldest and wildest Ocean is an extreme place to visit. It is also one of the most dangerous and unknown destinations on earth and only very few can truly comprehend all the risks. So what is the most significant navigation difference Antarctica has compared to other remote and risky destinations? Excluding the most obvious such as inaccessibility, coldest, windiest, most uncharted waters etc., it is the quick and dramatic changes of weather, sea, current and ice conditions that make the distinction. However, the most fundamental safety factor is good and reliable charts.

I always try to anchor the ships close to shore to minimize the distance for the small landing boats and reduce the risks and at the same time carefully charting the waters around the landings to establish safe approaches and anchorages.

The last years I have sent in my "mud maps" to Mr. Andy Willett, Mapping & Charting Officer - Antarctica, The United Kingdom Hydrographic Office, Admiralty Way, Taunton, Somerset TA1 2DN, United Kingdom. Andy has been exceptionally helpful and after a request from myself in 1998 he sent us copies of "collector charts" covering South Georgia, South Orkney and the Antarctic Peninsula. Those collectors' charts have been very useful indeed.

The major concern from my point of view is the suggested International Chart Scheme in Antarctica. I have with great interest analyzed the region M-12 and M-15. Unfortunately the new chart scheme for those regions seems to not fully consider the landing sites for the cruise ships. I have some suggestions of the missing areas for special charts where I think it indeed would increase the safety of navigation in the Antarctic Peninsula. I have divided my suggestions in three priorities. First priorities are those landing sites that are very frequently visited. Second is the landing site repeatedly visited. Third those landing sites not yet so often visited but it might be because of their outstanding wildlife. I have enclosed some maps for clarifications.

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Another issue is the time from when I am sending in the mud maps until something is published. Sometimes it takes 3 - 5 years from the time we have sent in our observation until anything is

officially published. On the other hand new charted rocks and other dangers are promptly published in Notice to Mariners so that part is working well. Just to give you some samples of areas where we have made "mud maps" and waited years before any official update. Back in the early nineties I was onboard Explorer as Captain and we sounded certain areas in Prince Gustav Channel. In the late nineties I was Captain onboard Endeavour, (former Caledonian Star) and was doing soundings south of James Ross Island which we circumnavigated four times. Those areas are today officially updated but it took some time before anything was published. Mid and late nineties I sent in soundings from King Haakon Bay and Saint Andrew Bay South Georgia and still no official charts are distributed. My mud maps are often close ups and the scale is such that there are not any special charts published yet and of course than there is nothing to adjust.

Finally I am very concerned about the northeast approach to South Orkney and Crystal Sound in the Antarctic Peninsula. Many cruise ships are now calling the South Orkneys and most of them are entering the Washington Strait and our sonar indicate that the bottom is very irregular and there might be uncharted pinnacles in the area. The problem is that often the sea is very rough when approaching the South Orkneys' and the safe draft is considerably more than that of the ships' max draft, maybe as much as 15 - 20 meter. The Crystal Sound has also a very dramatic bottom structure and probably hides dangerous rocks.

Please find enclosed maps from Region M-12 and M-15 illustrating where special charts would be useful in the future. Please also find a booklet with some samples of the mud maps we have produced the last years. The sounding booklet does not include the soundings that are presently plotted directly in the charts that are in use onboard Endeavour.

Sincerely,

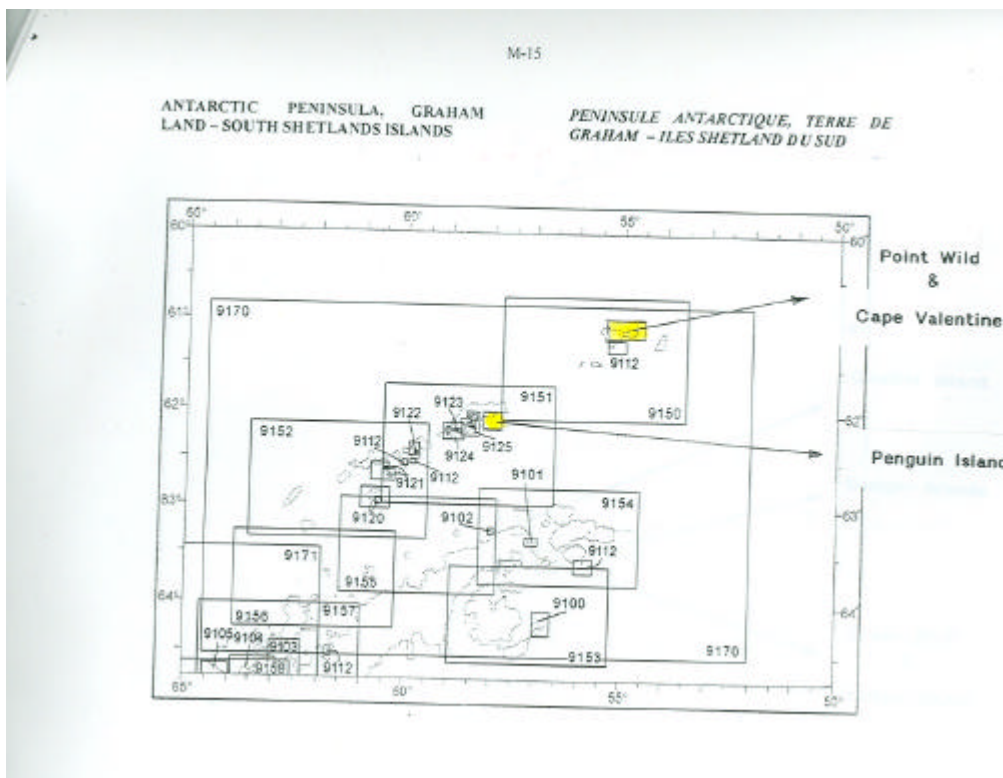
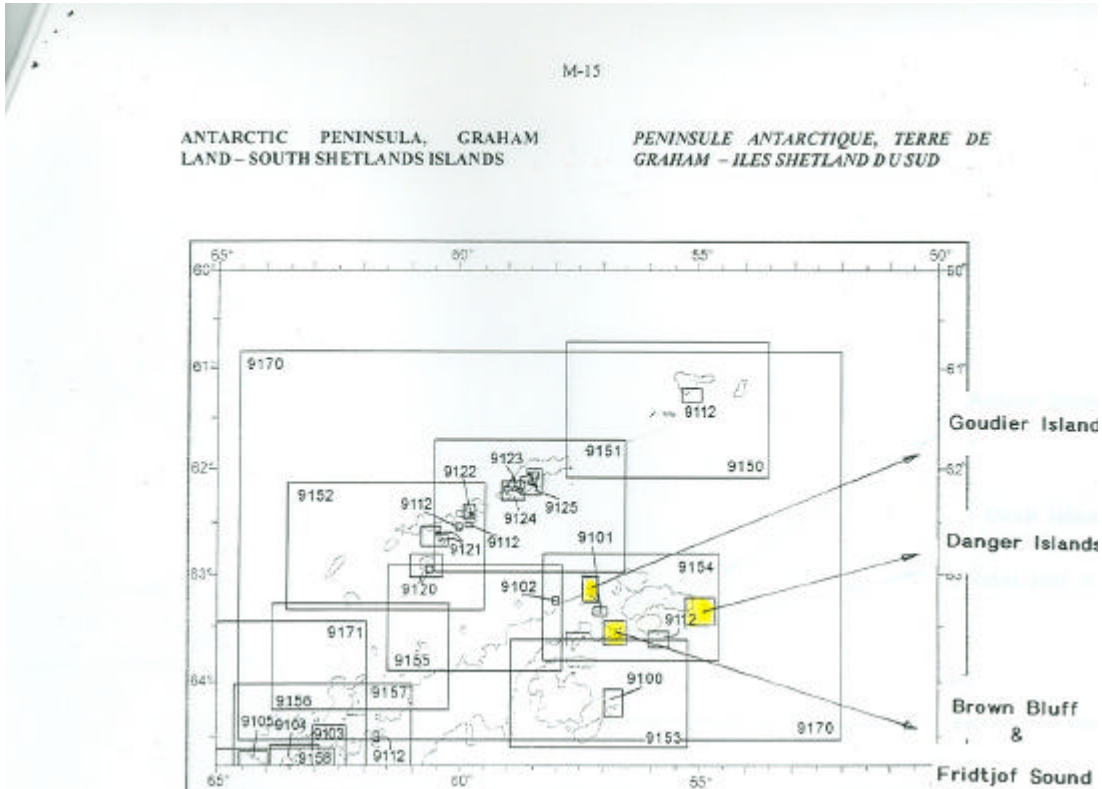
(original signed)

Captain Leif Skog
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leifs@expeditions.com
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Enclosed:

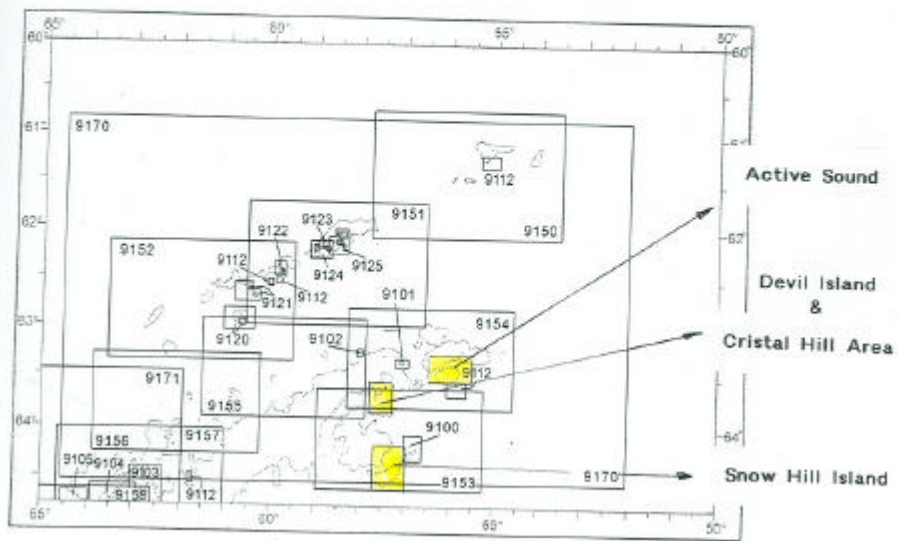
PROPOSALS FROM CAPT. SKOG TO AMEND THE INT CHART SCHEME FOR REGION 'M'

Note: The proposed additional charts are shown in yellow colour on the following copies of the graphic pages M-12 and M-15 of IHO Publication M-11.



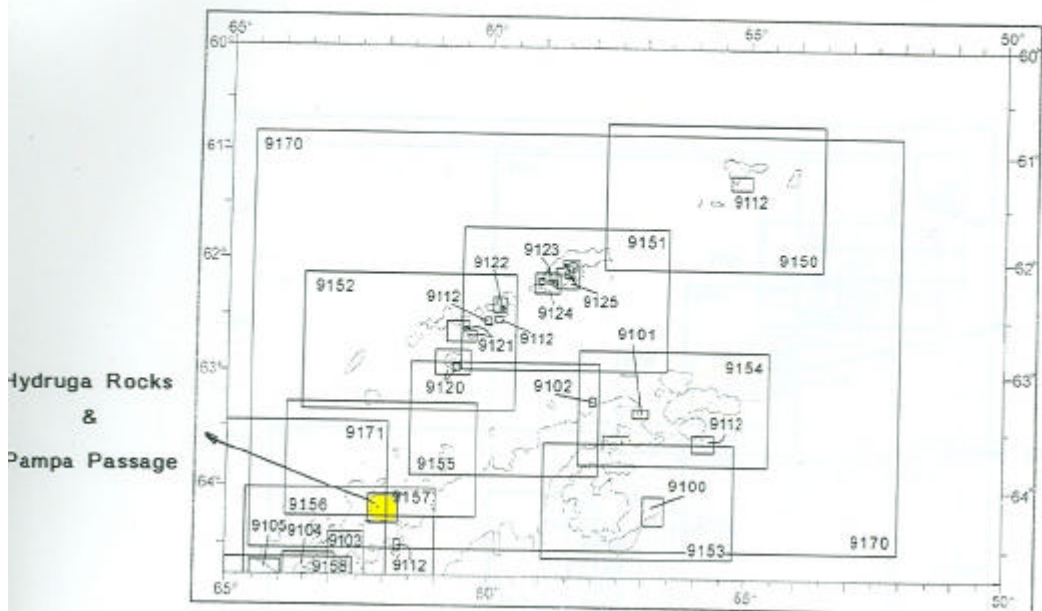
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