Dredging and managing historic wrecks

Project details

In the context of aggregate extraction in the UK, risks to dredging from the presence of shipwrecks have been managed and mitigated for many years now through the use of ‘exclusion zones’. These zones serve a dual purpose – they mitigate the impacts of sediment extraction on important archaeological sites and material, and they also reduce operational risk for dredging operators.

About

The use of exclusion zones in UK territorial waters developed from an operational need to avoid damaging dredging plant and contaminating cargoes from wrecks on the seabed. Before dredging a new area, operators would review charts of wreck locations to define exclusions around obstructions. The practice was heavily influenced by the introduction of GPS and computer navigation systems in the late 1980s to support dredge management.


The archaeological assessment that exclusion zones are now based upon provides a risk management tool for dredging companies. Archaeological exclusion zones are defined through the EIA process and monitored at regular intervals over the course of an aggregate extraction licence through the collection and analysis of geophysical survey data. This approach delivers mutual benefits, ensuring compliance with relevant licence conditions while ensuring protection and management of these wrecks.

In recent years, rather than working solely in isolation, companies have formed associations that have sought to co-ordinate their monitoring and management activities. This regional approach benefits industry, regulators and archaeological advisors alike, delivering reporting efficiencies and more effective assessment and monitoring of impacts to historic wrecks.

For more information contact:
Ed Salter: ed.salter@marinespace.co.uk
MarineSpace Ltd

www.ciria.org/emsagg