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CHN MARINE PLANNING PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

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Saltwater News

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Trial Voluntary Protection Zone for Shipping on Haida Gwaii

Early in the morning on October 17, 2014, the Russian cargo vessel, *Simushir*, lost power about 20.5 nautical miles (nm) off the **duu guusd • daawuuxusda** west coast of Haida Gwaii while a major storm was progressing. The vessel was carrying mining supplies and had 472 tonnes of bunker fuel and 59 tonnes of diesel aboard. At its closest point, the *Simushir* came 5.6 nm (10.4 km) from shore, and preparations began for a potential oil spill. The Canadian Coast Guard vessel *Gordon Reid* attempted to tow the vessel, breaking three tow lines. Fortunately, the weather subsided to avoid disaster. The rescue tug *Barbara Foss* arrived at the scene more than 24 hours later and the *Simushir* was towed to **Kxeen Prince Rupert**. Then President of the Council of the Haida Nation, **kil tlaats 'gaa Peter Lantin**, described the event as “a brutal eye-opening experience” for the Haida Nation.

On September 4, 2020, CHN and Canada jointly announced a 14-month trial Voluntary Protection Zone for Shipping off **daawuuxusda** of Haida Gwaii, which began on September 1 (<https://tinyurl.com/y9gd9wer>). In June 2018, the CHN and the Government of Canada committed to work together on the issue of vessel drift on the west coast of Haida Gwaii through the Reconciliation Framework Agreement for Bioregional Oceans Management and Protection (<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/backgrounders/2018/06/21/reconciliation-framework-agreement-bioregional-oceans-management-and>).

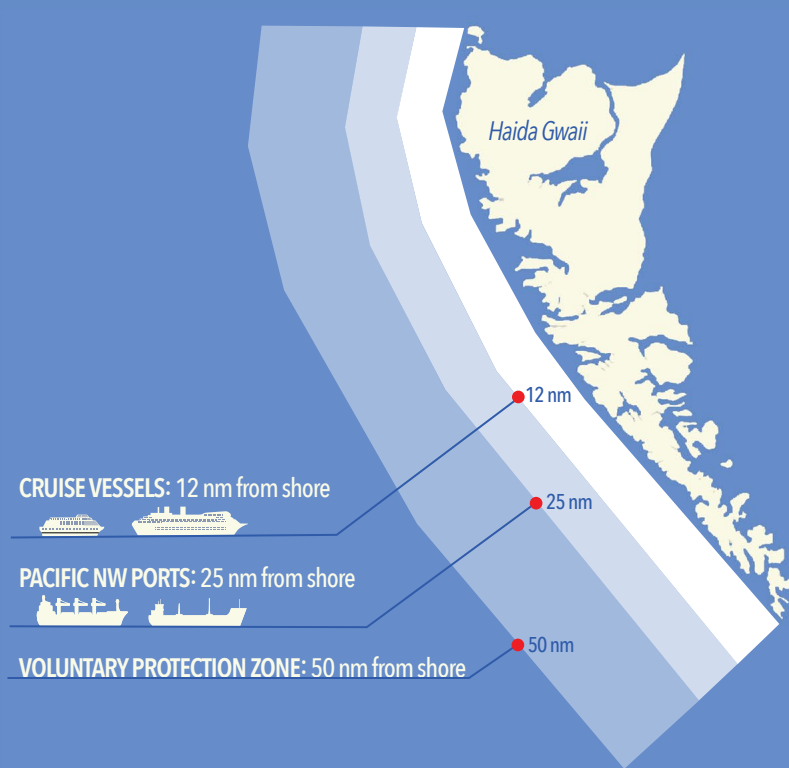
In the 2018 *Vessel Drift and Response Analysis* conducted by Nuka Research for Clear Seas Centre for Responsible Shipping, a drift model was used to estimate the time

required for an Emergency Towing Vessel (ETV) to effectively respond to a drifting vessel. The model estimated a 99% likelihood of an effective response for a scenario with two ETVs for a ship transiting at least 43 nm offshore. This reflects the number of ETVs currently patrolling the Pacific Region.

Since February 2019, the CHN's Marine Planning Program, Transport Canada, and the maritime shipping industry have worked together to analyze shipping traffic patterns in Haida territorial waters and explore preventative measures. This includes encouraging vessels to transit a sufficient distance offshore to ensure an adequate response time by emergency towing and prevent groundings. The analysis was led by Nuka Research in partnership with Clear Seas Centre for Responsible Shipping. The technical report is available here: <http://haidagwaii-vpz.ca/reports/>

CHN now has extensive information on shipping traffic along the **duu guusd • daawuuxusda**, **Siigee • Siigey Dixon Entrance**, and **Siigee • Siigey Hecate Strait**, including the trade routes used, ship types and companies involved, among other information.

During the 14-month trial, vessels 500 gross tonnes or more are asked to stay a minimum of 50 nm off the west coast of Haida Gwaii. Exceptions to this rule apply to cruise ships, which are asked to stay a minimum of 12 nm from shore and vessels transiting between Pacific Northwest ports (Washington, BC and Alaska), which are asked to observe a minimum distance of 25 nm from shore. Tugs and barges, as well as all fishing vessels are exempt from the trial.



The 14-month trial Haida Gwaii Voluntary Protection Zone for Shipping applies to vessels transiting the west coast of Haida Gwaii.

Graphic design: Simon Davies

Laden oil tankers already adhere to the Voluntary Tanker Exclusion Zone, established in 1985, which asks them to travel at least 73 nautical miles offshore of Haida Gwaii.

Since the *Simushir* near-miss event six years ago, CHN's priority has been to prevent marine incidents. This trial is an improvement to the status quo and supports the commitment made by CHN and Canada in the Gwaii Haanas Gina 'Waadluxan KilGuhlGa Land-Sea-People Plan "to encourage large vessels to transit sufficiently far offshore to ensure adequate response time and prevent accidents". For CHN, the trial does not meet the 50 nm distance needed to ensure a high likelihood of effective response. The vessel drift model shows that for vessels transiting more than 12 nm offshore, there is only a 90% likelihood of effective

response - a 1 in 10 chance of an *ineffective* response. "The voluntary measures are a step in the right direction, yet we have much work to do together to protect the coastlines of Haida Gwaii to the highest standards" reminds **Gaagwiis Jason Alsop**, President of the Haida Nation.

Technical staff continue to monitor shipping traffic and analyze adherence to the Voluntary Protection Zone using the Enhanced Maritime Situational Awareness (EMSA) system (see article on Monitoring, page 9). The trial will be evaluated using monitoring information to inform next steps. For more information on the trial, including progress reports, go to <http://haidagwaii-vpz.ca/>