Improving environmental standards with underwater services

By Rick Shilling, Subsea Global Solutions

With ships' greenhouse gas emissions under more scrutiny than ever, it is important for operators to choose the right solutions and partner for hull maintenance

The latest International Maritime Organization environmental regulations are related to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, including goal 14, which focuses on protecting life below water. This is increasing the passenger shipping industry's demand for underwater services, such as propeller polishing and hull cleaning, to remove marine fouling and thereby improve vessel efficiency.

Safe underwater operations require properly sized teams and quality systems. Vessel operators should consider using service providers that use the correct equipment, have good safety policies established and meet environmental standards. This is well worth the cost.

Many hull cleaning systems may appear equal, but they might not have been designed with the same priorities in mind. It is also beneficial to work with a reputable contractor that understands how to apply the best cleaning solution for the vessel's needs.

Subsea Global Solutions' specialist teams perform thousands of ship inspections annually and we have been operating in-water cleaning and capture (IWCC) systems for hull cleaning and propeller polishing in ports in Canada, USA, South Korea and Northern Europe for a decade.

Our experience has helped us to innovate several technical solutions, such as our EcoFriendly C-ROV which provides full IWCC via a reclaim process down to one micron. Another is our Portable C-ROV, a simple, powerful, and easily transportable non-reclaim system that is also capable of removing all biofouling conditions – including heavier macrofouling.

The EcoFriendly C-ROV is one of SubSea's hull cleaning solutions

We also have developed other advanced IWCC systems, such as the Whaleshark, a diver-controlled hull cleaning machine that removes soluble metals and filters any particulates down to one micron, the Envirohull which filters any particulates down to one micron, and the Beluga interchangeable underwater tool system for niche cleaning and propeller polishing.

In summary, there are many basic factors that influence the cleaning method and equipment set-up to provide optimal cleaning performance and environmental friendliness. Collaboration, teamwork and regular contact with the coating manufacturers, environmental specialists, port authorities and other stakeholders is important to Subsea Global Solutions, we are always learning and seeking to improve the industry's performance and provide a cost-effective professional service to our clients. CFR

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