



Friday 16th April 2010

Bulletin 689 - 04/10 - Oil Slicks in Maracaibo Lake - Venezuela

The Association would like to advise Members about the current situation in Maracaibo Lake regarding oil slicks.

A significant amount of oil wells and pipelines in Maracaibo Lake produce around 1.5million barrels to be exported through ports such as Puerto Miranda, La Salina and Bajo Grande. Small oil slicks have been noticed moving around on the surface of the lake due to wind and currents. In



some cases, these "travelling oil slicks" manage to reach the terminals mentioned above and have been known to stain the hull of vessels located within the port. Many jurisdictions will not permit a vessel to enter port in this condition.

In the past, it has been customary to clean any affected vessels hull in the terminal anchorage. The Maracaibo Harbour Office recently issued a circular stating that, from 12th April 2010, no cleaning is to take place at Lake Maracaibo. This situation could lead to future problems and vessels will need to seek alternative arrangements should they encounter these slicks.

Masters should be made aware of the situation in the lake and be informed to remain vigilant whilst in this area. Any slicks should be reported to the appropriate authorities.

Source of information: Matheus & Ulloa
www.matheus-ulloa.net