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Mariners should use caution near buoy site

Data buoy off Rhode Island coast providing vital wave information to scientists, mariners

CONCORD, Mass. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other agencies deployed a data buoy off the coast of Block Island, Rhode Island, three years ago to gather information on wave action for a Corps study and the scientific instrument has been providing useful information to scientists, mariners and the general public since that time.

One of the main purposes of deploying the data buoy was to acquire wave information for a study, known as the Rhode Island Regional Sediment Management Plan, a multi-year program focused on developing a plan for managing sand as a resource rather than as a waste product. The foundation of the study is numerical modeling which is highly dependent on site-specific wave data.

The buoy was deployed in October 2009 about 10 miles southeast of Block Island, Rhode Island, and since that time has been providing vital information to scientists, mariners and the general public. Funding for the \$150,000 buoy came from the project study.

The buoy measures wave height, wave direction, wave period and sea surface temperatures. The data are broadcast on the National Weather Service Marine Weather Channel and are updated every 30 minutes to the Coastal Data Information Program website. The New England District and the Corps' Engineer Research and Development Center partnered with Scripps Oceanographic Institute Coastal Data Information Program (CDIP) to facilitate the buoy purchase, deployment and data processing.

Mariners are encouraged to use caution if in the vicinity of the data buoy. The location was chosen based on input from a variety of coastal experts, fishermen, local interests, and researchers as well as coordination between state and federal agencies. Of particular concern was avoiding entanglement in fishing gear by not placing the buoy in popular fishing grounds. Another component to the buoy location was avoiding areas of heavy ship traffic. At night, the buoy emits a yellow color Coast Guard-compliant flashing light.

The buoy has some direct benefits to researchers and the general public by making all data generated publicly available and in 'real time.' The data can be used for a variety of applications beyond the original study purpose, including fishing, diving and other research which depends on wave data. Interested mariners can check the wave conditions before they leave the boat dock.

For further information and buoy data visit the Scripps CDIP website: <http://cdip.ucsd.edu>.

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