

Friends, Agents and Terminals,

Please ensure the following message gets to all vessels prior to transiting the Houston Ship Channel:

Between the months of March and October the Houston Ship Channel has very large schools of menhaden, krill and small fish within its banks. This has caused almost daily incidents in peak season which occasionally result in vessels without power anchoring in the channel. **It will inevitably cause a serious accident over time.**

In an attempt to be pro-active with this issue we are issuing the following guidance.

These sea creatures have the capability of clogging up and reducing the flow of seawater through your sea strainer – which in turn can have an adverse effect on the cooling median for your main engines, generators and auxiliary equipment.

Please take any preventative action available on your end to reduce the risk of this phenomenon contributing to an unsafe operational condition such as –

- Verify that your main high and low sea suction strainers are clean before transiting.
- Have spare clean strainers available in the event the baskets need to be pulled for cleaning.
- Have the necessary tools in place such as chain-falls, sockets, and impact wrenches for completing this task.
- Ensure that the engineering personnel are familiar with crossing over and securing the sea water cooling systems if needed for cleaning.
- Consider switching from low to high suction before beginning your transit in the ship channel.
- Have extra personnel rested and readily available for the transit if needed to assist.
- Ensure the on duty engineers are closely monitoring your sea water cooling systems especially for spikes in cooling water temperatures and are familiar with the operational parameters of these systems.

With proper planning & preparedness from engineering personnel, this issue can be resolved in only a few minutes, versus what could be several hours if the crew is not ready for this.

Regards,



Robert M. Shearon  
Houston Pilots