

Technical Report: Underwater noise signatures of ships in Australian waters

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E2 – Characterising anthropogenic underwater noise to better understand and manage impacts to marine life

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INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

The National Environmental Science Program within its Marine Biodiversity Hub has supported a project to quantify underwater noise from ships in Australian waters, with the ultimate goal of guiding the management of noise impacts on marine fauna. As part of this project, ship noise was recorded and archival recordings of ships from the Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS) acoustic observatories were analysed to build a catalogue of ship noise signatures in Australian waters. These signatures will then be used to inform a spatial model of ship noise around Australia. The results of this project will feed into the management of underwater noise by the Australian Government.

This report presents the field recordings and the methodology developed for computing ship source spectra and source levels. The results of applying the software to recordings from an initial set of five IMOS deployments, spanning a total of 1463 days, are presented.

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2. VERTICAL ARRAY RECORDINGS OF SHIP NOISE

2.1 International Standard for Ship Noise Measurement

The International Standardisation Organisation (ISO) has developed an international standard for recording and measuring ship noise (International Organization for Standardization, 2016, 2019). Ship noise is recorded with a vertical array of three hydrophones (Figure 1). The depths of the hydrophones are computed from the ISO-set slant angles of 15°, 30°, and 45° as the distance from the ship times the tangent of the slant angle. The distance at closest point of approach (CPA) has to be the greater of 100 m and the ship length. The minimum water depth must be the greater of 150 m or 1.5 times the ship length.



Figure 1 Left: Sketch of a vertical array for ship noise measurements showing hydrophones (4), an optional surface buoy (6), a subsurface float (7), an anchor (8), signal lines to shore (9) unless autonomous recorders are used at the locations 4, sea surface (10) and seafloor (11). Right: Sketch of a ship (1) passing at distance (2) from the hydrophone array (3), whereby the hydrophones are at slant angles 15O(4), 30O (5), and 45O(6) from the ship (International Organization for Standardization, 2016).

2.2 Potential Australian Sites

We looked for potential sites where the ISO requirements of water depth and range from the ship could be met using common shipping routes. The first step to find general locations was to map vessel density based on AIS data at the depths 200-500m at a selection of ports around Australia (e.g., Figure 2 and Figure 3).

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Figure 2 Mapping of AIS-equipped vessel traffic for determination of suitable logger deployment sites, for locations near Portland, VIC (top), and Port Hedland, WA (bottom).



VERTICAL ARRAY RECORDINGS OF SHIP NOISE



Figure 3 Mapping of AIS-equipped vessel traffic for determination of suitable logger deployment sites, for locations near Gladstone, WA (top left), Perth, WA (top right), Brisbane, QLD (bottom left), and Sydney, NSW (bottom right).





However, we require no other vessels to be within range when the vessel passes the array. Hence, more busy shipping lanes may not necessarily provide usable data as there is more chance another vessel will be in range. The second phase involved a more detailed analysis of placing a hypothetical array at the centre of each grid cell and determining how many vessels would have provided measurements of isolated sound.



Figure 4 Number of unique vessels meeting ISO ship noise recording criteria when no other vessel is within masking range; Fremantle, WA.

There is no site where ships would routinely pass in sufficient numbers to have a sufficient sample size of recordings. However, we deployed the vertical array outside of Fremantle

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Port, WA, to confirm the number of vessels that would meet criteria and to trial the vertical array for future deployment at a site where vessels could intentionally sail past the array in order to meet ISO standards.

2.3 Fremantle Port Deployment

The vertical array was deployed 37 nm offshore of Fremantle, WA (31°39'15.8" S, 115°10' 30.5" E) on the 14/06/2019 in approximately 120 m water depth (Figure 5, Figure 6). Deployment of the acoustic vertical array was undertaken using the Inception II 16.76 m charter vessel from Andro Maritime Services Australia. The duration of the deployment was a total of 56 days, with retrieval on 09/08/2019.



Figure 5 Left: The position of the moored vertical array in relation to Fremantle Port and the surrounding bathymetry. Right: A map of the AIS tracks of large vessels transiting north and south from Fremantle Port, with the position of the vertical array mooring highlighted



Figure 6 Photos of the vertical array. Left: The float system and SoundTrap used as an acoustic receiver. Right: The tethered system of rope and anchor used for the mooring.

The only way to obtain ISO measurements in Australian waters is by having ships sail a deliberate path over a vertical array in deep water. Given this requires a large number of participating vessels that are able to sail a detour, we switched to archival recordings from single recorders. While this methodology does not fit the ISO vertical array measurements,

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high-quality ship noise source levels can still be determined by using sophisticated sound propagation models.

If ISO standard measurements are to be attempted offshore of Fremantle in the future, then a water depth of approximately 450 m is necessary to satisfy the ISO standard. Figure 5 shows the distribution of vessels offshore of Fremantle relative to the 450 m bathymetry contour. Shipping distribution would either need to be moved approx. 20 km further west or deployment of the vertical array would need to be significantly further north. The limitations are that there are no defined shipping lanes in this region, or in most offshore regions of Australia, resulting in more dispersed shipping traffic and consequently density and sample size decrease. It is likely a more feasible location will be elsewhere, for example offshore of Sydney.

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ARCHIVAL (IMOS) RECORDINGS OF SHIP NOISE 3.

Data processing for each deployment required a number of steps, each of which is described in more detail in the following subsections.

- 1. Extraction of AIS data relevant to the deployment and screening to only include ship passes that came within 1 km of the recorder while there were no other vessels within 5 km.
- 2. Preprocessing of acoustic recordings to calculate received level spectra in 1minute blocks.
- 3. Use of an acoustic propagation model to pre-calculate the likely acoustic propagation loss in the vicinity of the recorder as a function of frequency and range, depth and bearing from the recorder.
- 4. Using the AIS information for each vessel pass to determine the range and bearing of the ship from the recorder at the centre-time of each spectral block.
- 5. Combing the received level spectra and modelled propagation for the geometry determined from the AIS information to calculate an equivalent monopole source spectrum for the ship corresponding to each spectral block.
- 6. For each pass, a block of signal without ship noise was manually selected and processed in the same way as the ship noise data to provide an ambient noise background level.

Step 1 was carried out by CSIRO. Existing CMST software was used to carry out Step 2, and a GUI based MATLAB (The MathsWorks Inc., Natick, MA, USA) program called Ship Noise Acoustics (SNAC) was written by CMST to carry out the remaining steps.

3.1 **Extraction of AIS Data**

CSIRO carried out extraction of AIS data from their 5-minute sub-sampled AIS database. The data was then processed/cleaned (see previous NESP project C5) and interpolated to 60-s time steps, to identify when vessels passed within 1 km of the recorder while there were no other vessels within 5 km. With a range ratio of 1:5, any other vessels would produce received levels about 14 dB (= 20 x log10(5)) below those of the target vessel and hence not interfere with the target vessel's source characterisation.

Information about the useful tracks was provided to CMST in the form of nnnn Passes.csv files and nnnn 15km.csv files, where nnnn represents the corresponding acoustic recording set number (see Table 1). Each row of a Passes file gave details of a period a vessel gualified (i.e., was within 1 km of the recorder and no other vessel within 5 km), whereas the 15 km files had multiple lines corresponding to each pass identified in the Passes file, that gave details of the AIS line segments that made up that pass while the vessel was within 15 km of the recorder. See Appendix C for further details.

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Set num- ber	Latitude Deg Min	Long- itude Deg Min	Start time	End time	Duration (days)	Description	Number of ship passes
3154	31 53.053	115 0.813	10/08/2012 12:15	14/06/2013 10:00	307.9	IMOS Perth Canyon 2012- 2013	11
3274	38 32.218	141 14.854	30/12/2013 9:30	27/11/2014 2:15	331.7	IMOS Portland 2014	124
3315	31 52.033	115 0.068	28/11/2013 17:00	31/03/2014 15:00	122.9	IMOS Perth Canyon 2013- 2014	11
3376	31 50.530	115 0.824	28/11/2013 17:05	4/11/2014 4:35	340.5	IMOS Perth Canyon 2013- 2014	16
3445	31 52.656	115 0.656	5/01/2016 17:00	31/12/2016 5:00	360.5	IMOS Perth Canyon 2016	32

Table 1 Summary of processed datasets

3.2 Pre-processing of Acoustic Recordings

Pre-processing was carried out in MATLAB programs that form part of CMST's Characterisation Of Recorded Underwater Sound (CHORUS) toolbox (Gavrilov and Parsons, 2014). These routines read the raw binary data files, applied a calibration based on a recorded white noise calibration signal and known hydrophone sensitivity to convert to received acoustic pressure, and then calculated power density spectra based on a 1-s FFT duration, a Hamming window, and averaging of the spectra over 60-s blocks. The resulting spectra had a frequency resolution of 1 Hz and were stored in MATLAB binary .mat files, with each file containing 5 days of data.

3.3 Propagation Loss Modelling

Acoustic propagation loss modelling was carried out using the well-known parabolic equation propagation model, RAMGeo (Collins, 1993) which was incorporated into SNAC using an interface adapted from CMST's standard MATLAB acoustic modelling front-end, Enviroseis. For each deployment, RAMGeo was used to model acoustic propagation in 24 range-depth slices at 15 azimuth intervals, centred on the recorder position. Acoustic reciprocity dictates that the propagation loss for propagation from A to B is the same as from B to A, and RAMGeo is designed to calculate the propagation loss from one source location to many receiver locations, so the modelling was most efficiently done by specifying the recorder position and depth as the RAMGeo source location, and the vessel position as the RAMGeo receiver location. The depth of the vessel source (RAMGeo receiver) was assumed to be 3 m.

Bathymetry was interpolated from the Geoscience Australia 0.15' bathymetry grid (Whiteway, 2009), and representative sound speed profiles were obtained from the World Ocean Atlas

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(Locarnini et al., 2006) The April-June profiles were chosen as being closest to average conditions throughout the year. The seabed properties were chosen to be representative of a fine sand seabed with the parameters given in Table 2. RAMGeo is unable to model elastic effects so shear wave parameters were not included in the seabed model, but are likely to be negligible for the soft seabeds found at the depths where the recorders were deployed.

Table 2 Assumed seabed geoacoustic properties

Density	1941 kg/m ³	Hamilton, 1980
Compressional wave speed	1749 m/s	Hamilton, 1980
Compressional wave attenuation	0.8 dB per wavelength	Jensen <i>et al.</i> , 2011

Propagation loss was calculated along each azimuth out to a range of 10 km. These calculations were carried out at 1/3 octave frequency intervals from 2 Hz to 2.5 kHz and then range averaging was used as a surrogate for frequency averaging over each band as described in Harrison and Harrison, 1995.

3.4 Range and Bearing Calculations

The AIS data and recorder locations were converted from geographical coordinates (latitude/longitude) to Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) coordinates (Easting, Northing). UTM is a rectangular coordinate system with equal scaling in the easting and northing directions, so the required range and bearing calculations were then straightforward. Earth curvature effects were not included because they are insignificant over the ranges involved here.

3.5 Source Spectrum Calculation

The Easting and Northing of the ship relative to the recorder were linearly interpolated to the centre time of each spectral block and then the corresponding range and bearing were calculated. Range and bearing were then used with nearest-neighbour interpolation to obtain the corresponding propagation loss for each frequency band.

The received power density spectrum was integrated over each frequency band and converted to logarithmic units. The corresponding propagation loss was then subtracted to obtain the source level in each band (dB re 1 μ Pa @ 1 m), which can readily be converted to the band spectral level (dB re 1 μ Pa²/Hz @ 1 m) by subtracting $10 \log_{10} W$, where *W* is the width of the corresponding band (Hz).

3.6 Noise Calculations

To allow assessment of the validity of the calculated ship spectra, the SNAC processing pipeline for each ship pass included display of the spectrogram of the corresponding spectral file with the time of the ship pass marked. The user was then prompted to select a period of ambient noise at a time when there was no ship noise visible in the spectrogram, but the noise conditions were otherwise similar to those during the pass. This noise data was then processed the same way as the data from the ship pass and an equivalent noise source spectrum calculated. This was compared to the calculated ship source spectrum so the

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sections of the spectrum that were dominated by sound from the ship could be distinguished from those that only included ambient noise. Although only one noise spectrum was used per pass, the range, and hence propagation loss, were different for each block of data, so there was also a different equivalent noise source spectrum for each block.

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4. **RESULTING SOURCE SPECTRA OF SHIP NOISE**

Ship source spectra for each valid pass are plotted in 1/3 octave bands in Appendix A. The spectra calculated from each 1-minute block during which the ship was between 8 km and 1 km of the recorder are plotted, along with the corresponding noise estimates. An identical set of plots with additional vessel range and speed information included in legends can be found in Appendix B.

Figures 7 to 13 summarise this information by overlaying an averaged source spectrum for each vessel pass on a single plot for each vessel class. Spectral frequency bins with a signal-to-noise ratio (SNR) less than 6 dB have been excluded from the averaging process. Note that each of the class names used in the captions encompasses several different AIS "vessel types". See Appendix D for details.



Figure 7 Estimated ship noise source spectra from all 150 CT_CARGO (cargo) class vessel passes from all processed data sets. Segments of source spectra with a SNR less than 6 dB have been excluded.



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Figure 8 Estimated ship noise source spectra from all 4 CT_HRBR (harbour) class vessel passes from all processed data sets. Segments of source spectra with a SNR less than 6 dB have been excluded.



Figure 9 Estimated ship noise source spectra from 2 CT_PASSENGER (cruise ship) class vessel passes from all processed data sets. Segments of source spectra with a SNR less than 6 dB have been excluded.







Figure 10 Estimated ship noise source spectrum from 2 CT_REC (recreational) class vessel passes from all processed data sets. Segments of source spectra with a SNR less than 6 dB have been excluded.



Figure 11. Estimated ship noise source spectra from all 3 CT_SAIL (sailing) class vessel passes from all processed data sets. Segments of source spectra with a SNR less than 6 dB have been excluded.





Figure 12. Estimated ship noise source spectra from all 25 CT_TANK (tanker) class vessel passes from all processed data sets. Segments of source spectra with a SNR less than 6 dB have been excluded.



Figure 13. Estimated ship noise source spectra from all 6 CT_WORKING (working) class vessel passes from all processed data sets. Segments of source spectra with a SNR less than 6 dB have been excluded.

Two vessel types, CT CARGO (cargo vessels) and CT TANK (tankers) had sufficient valid passes to allow percentile spectra to be calculated, which are plotted in Figure 14 and Figure 15. When interpreting these plots, note that 75% of measured source spectra were below the





75% line at a given frequency, and similarly for the other percentile values. The 50% percentile is the median.

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5. CONCLUSIONS

The goal of this project was to develop a catalogue of ship noise source spectra by vessel type. As ship noise also varies by load, speed, and aspect angle, a large number of recordings are needed to also quantify ship noise as a function of these parameters. While CMST has a lot of archival recordings, AIS data become unreliable prior to 2012. Unfortunately, the Integrated Marine Observing System abandoned its passive acoustic observatories in 2017, thus limiting the amount of archival data available for this project. Passive acoustics are also recorded by CMST on behalf of the Department of Defence and offshore hydrocarbon companies and CMST will seek permission to use some of this data for the purpose of quantifying ship noise in future.



Figure 14. Noise percentile source spectra for the CT_CARGO (cargo vessel) class.



Figure 15. Noise percentile source spectra for the CT TANK (tanker) class.

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APPENDIX A – SOURCE SPECTRA FROM INDIVIDUAL SHIP PASSES (NO LEGENDS)

The following figures show calculated monopole source spectra for all processed vessel passes, assuming a source depth of 3 m. In each plot, the solid lines are the calculated source spectra for each 1-minute processing frame in which recorded acoustic data was available during the pass and broken lines are estimated equivalent source spectra of the ambient noise. Line colours correspond between these two sets of curves - see Appendix B for a version of the same plots that includes legends giving the distance from the hydrophone and vessel speed for each frame. NaN indicates no data available.

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APPENDIX B – SOURCE SPECTRA FROM INDIVIDUAL SHIP PASSES (WITH LEGENDS)

As for Appendix A, but including legends indicating the range (horizontal distance) of the ship from the recorder and vessel speed for each pass. NaN indicates no information available.

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APPENDIX C – AIS DATA FILE FORMATS

Passes files

Each row of the Passes files give a period a vessel qualified (eg within 1km of the logger & no other vessel within 5km)

The columns of the Passes file are:

PASSID = An identifier given to each vessel/pass that went within 1km when no other vessel was within 5km of the logger

CRAFT_ID = A vessel identifier (AIS data up to 10/2016 this is from AMSA, after 10/2016 this is just the vessel MMSI)

L0 = Position ID in the original AIS data of the segment when the vessel enters 1km zone (or other vessels leave 5km)

L1= Position ID in the original AIS data of the segment when the vessel leaves 1km zone (or another vessel comes into 5km)

T0 = Start Time (UTC) of when vessel is within 1km of logger and no other vessel is within 5km

T1= End Time (UTC) of when vessel is within 1km of logger and no other vessel is within 5km (e.g vessel leaves or another vessel comes into 5km zone)

MMSI = Vessel identifier from AIS data

CRAFT_TYPE = The AIS info on the vessel type

CRAFT_CLASS = CSIRO classification of type into more simple classes

LENGTH = The length of the vessel (metres)

DURATION = The time in mins the vessel/pass qualified (e.g. within 1km & no other vessel within 5km)

15km files

Each row of the 15km file are a AIS line segment. If you take all the rows with a specific PASSID it will give you the AIS segments

For the vessel 7km before, during and 7km after the pass referred to with that PASSID in the passes file.

The columns of the 15km file are mainly AIS info plus some derived columns:

PASSID = The pass identifier same as the passes file

POSITION_ID = The identifier for each AIS row in the full data set,

CRAFT_ID= A vessel identifier (AIS data up to 10/2016 this is from AMSA, after 10/2016 this is just the vessel MMSI)

MMSI = Vessel identifier from AIS data

IMO = Vessel hull number (only larger vessels)

NAME = Vessel name transmitted in AIS data

LON0 = Start Longitude of line segment

LAT0= Start Latitude of line segment

TIME0 = Start Time (UTC) of line segment

LON1 = End Longitude of line segment

LAT1 = End Latitude of line segment

TIME1 = End Time (UTC) of line segment

COURSE_DEGREES = The heading/course (Deg) transmitted in AIS data

SPEED_KNOTS = The speed (Knots) transmitted in AIS

CRAFT_TYPE = The AIS info on the vessel type

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LENGTH_METRES = The vessel length (metres)

BEAM METRES = Beam of the vessel (metres)

CLS = AIS class (A= larger commercial required AIS, B= smaller vessels voluntary AIS)

CRAFT_CLASS = My classification of type into more simple classes

NATION = Flag country of the vessel based on MMSI number

DESTINATION = The AIS transmitted destination of the voyage

LEN_TIME = Length of time (seconds) the vessel took to cover segment

LEN_DIST = Distance/length of segment (km)

SPEED CALC = The calculated average speed for the line segment (Knots)

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APPENDIX D – AIS VESSEL TYPES INCLUDED IN EACH VESSEL CLASS

AIS data file formats Vessel class: CT CARGO Cargo ship - All Cargo ship - No additional info Cargo ship - Carrying DG, HS, or MP, IMO Hazard or pollutant category C Livestock carrier Cargo ship - Carrying DG, HS, or MP, IMO Hazard or pollutant category A Cargo ship - Carrying DG, HS, or MP, IMO Hazard or pollutant category B Vehicle carrier Other - All Vessel class: CT WORKING Anchor Handling Vessel Offshore Supply Ship Towing Long/Large Salvage/rescue ship Vessel class: CT SAIL Sailing Vessel class: CT REC CT_REC Vessel class: CT HRBR Other - No additional info Towing Long/Large Tug Vessel class: CT TANK Tanker - All Tanker - Carrying DG, HS, or MP, IMO Hazard or pollutant category B Tanker - No additional info Vessel class: CT UNKNOWN Unknown Vessel class: CT_PASSENGER

Cruise Ship



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