

21 July 2003

Hazard to Navigation Caused by Vandalism of Oceanographic Mooring - Newport Oregon

The navigation light and radar reflector on a long term oceanographic mooring were recently stolen, leaving a hazard to navigation. The mooring is ten miles off the Newport coast and is maintained by the College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences, Oregon State University. When the light and radar reflector are gone, the steel surface float and remaining heavy tackle represent a significant hazard to vessels. This has been reported to the U.S. Coast Guard and warnings are being broadcast on VHF radio. An effort is being made to make the necessary repairs as soon as possible.

The mooring site is at: 44 38.65 N. and 124 18.37 W. in 44 fathoms (80 m.).

Mariners and the local fishing community can help prevent future vandalism by reporting suspicious activity to:

Walt Waldorf
College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences
Oregon State University
Tel. # (541) 737-4429
waldorf@coas.oregonstate.edu



Figure 1. Showing buoy during previous repair effort - this is the fourth time this mooring has been vandalized. Note that the vertical spar has been broken off.

This mooring is part of a long term monitoring project aimed at better understanding of the variations in ocean currents and temperatures in Oregon coastal waters (for those with internet access please reference <http://bragg.oce.orst.edu/NH10/>). The measurements have been used to study the role of the ocean in the July 2002 fish die-off, as well as

effects of the El Niño/La Niña cycle. It is one of two moorings in the area (one has no surface expression, being close hauled to the bottom) that have been maintained since 1997. Every effort has been made to make these moorings vandal proof, and mounting repairs is difficult and expensive.



Figure 2. Showing spar buoy as deployed with light and radar reflector 10 ft. above the water level.