

## Gibdock services Shearwater survey vessels in testing times

Mediterranean shiprepair facility Gibdock is overcoming the challenges posed by the current global health crisis, completing an extensive two-vessel drydocking and maintenance project for returning customer Shearwater GeoServices.

The Gibraltar-based repair and conversion specialist worked on the seismic research vessels *Oceanic Sirius*, drydocked for 14 days in Dock 1, and *SW Empress*, which remained in Dock 2 for 26 days before being moved to South Mole for testing and sea trials. According to Richard Beards, Managing Director, Gibdock, the project went smoothly despite the company facing changes to working practices following the coronavirus pandemic.

“Our workforce has done a commendable job, rising to the occasion to prove that we will continue to carry out complex projects on time and within budget even while adhering to new Covid-19 measures,” he says. “In fact, our work on *Oceanic Sirius* was completed two days ahead of schedule, which shows just how well we have adapted.”

Built in 2011 and sailing under the Norwegian flag, the 12,550-gross tonnage *Sirius* measures 106 by 28 metres and features solid streamer for accurate data collection. Shearwater’s *Empress*, also registered to Norway, was built in 2015 and has a gross tonnage of 10,146. The 1A\*-ice class vessel is 113 metres long and 26 metres in breadth and has capacity for up to 22 streamers.



Gibdock performed comprehensive maintenance and repair work on the two vessels. On *Sirius*, ship repair manager Alejandro Vilches Alarcón oversaw the replacement of the electric propulsion motors and generator and the renewal of the hull’s antifouling coating. Meanwhile, on *Empress*, Filip Tsankov supervised underwater repairs, the upgrade of the seismic handling system and the maintenance of pipework and lifesaving appliances. The ship was also rebranded, with its name changed from *Polar Empress* to *SW Empress* and its hull repainted in Shearwater colours. Both vessels are now ready to resume operations, performing large-scale three-dimensional surveys in waters around the globe.



Beards explains why Shearwater chose to rely on Gibdock to prepare its vessels for a speedy return to service: “We have a longstanding association with Shearwater, and in times like these, they wanted a partner who knew their vessels inside out and could provide quick and reliable repair works. From our perspective, we’re delighted to be able to strengthen our relationship with such an important client, helping them to serve their own customers in marine acquisition.”

Gibdock’s work on *Sirius* and *Empress* is the latest in a series of projects it has undertaken in the offshore survey segment, with the shipyard consolidating its position as a regional hub for value-added repair and maintenance tasks in recent years. “Complex projects like this one provide a welcome boost to Gibraltar PLC, creating jobs and revenue that benefit the local economy and reinforce the territory’s status as a centre for maritime and offshore activities,” says Beards.



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