

Circular From GARD

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China - Aquaculture Farming Presents a Challenge to Navigation

Vessels calling at Lanshan Port, China are advised to proceed with caution as the number of marine installations associated with aquaculture farming is growing.

Aquaculture farming have long traditions in China, with records of inland aquaculture dating back 2,400 years. Although large-scale production did not begin until after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the industry has grown dramatically over the last decades. Many of the marine installations associated with aquaculture farming are located close to ports and busy shipping lanes and can present a challenge for vessels navigating in the area, see also our Gard Alert of [26 September 2012](#).

At the time of writing, Gard is handling three cases involving damage to Chinese aquaculture farms, and common for all three cases are:

- the incidents took place during the vessels' approach to Lanshan Port;
- a significant number of small craft and fishing vessels in the area made navigation difficult;
- the vessels had deviated from the defined navigation channel;
- the damaged aquaculture farms were poorly marked and lit and difficult to spot from the bridge; and
- information from the agent received by the vessel prior to arrival was incomplete.

Previous case experience has indicated that these matters can prove very expensive and difficult to handle, even where no bodily injuries are involved. The vessel may be unaware that she has caused any damage to the farm in the first place and when claims are lodged a while after the incident, it may be difficult, if not impossible, to take measures to minimise losses and to collect the evidence necessary to defend the claim.

Current situation at Lanshan Port

Gard's correspondent Huatai Insurance Agency & Consultant Service Ltd. published its circular No. PNI 1706 on 21 July 2017. The correspondent identifies five aquaculture farms near Lanshan Port which are located very close to the navigation channel but which are not marked on charts. These are marked as A, B, C, D and E in the illustration below. Three of the farms, A, B and C, were established only in the last two years.

A copy of Huatai Circular No. PNI 1706 is available [here](#). It lists the coordinates of the farm locations and provides recommendations on how to avoid incidents when navigating the waters in question.



Recommendations

Members and clients trading to China are recommended to forward a copy of Huatai Circular No. [PNI 1706](#) to all vessels calling at Lanshan Port and to instruct the duty officer onboard to plot the location of the aquaculture farms on the relevant charts. However, as the number and extent of farms may change, Masters of such vessels should:

- seek advice well in advance of arrival concerning the current siting of aquaculture farms, not only from local agents but also from Gard's correspondents, VTS and the local MSA;
- maintain a proper lookout and consider positioning an extra lookout on the forecabin;
- navigate with caution and do not deviate from the defined channel; and
- proceed at a speed appropriate to these confined and congested waters.

In the unfortunate case of an accident, remember that timely assistance from local correspondents and lawyers will be important for the final outcome of the case.

Source of Information: Gard P&I Club