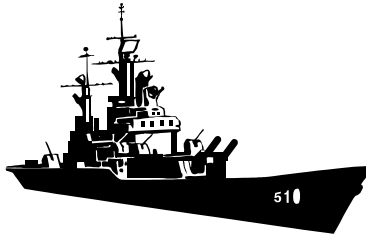


# Sunken WWII Shipwrecks

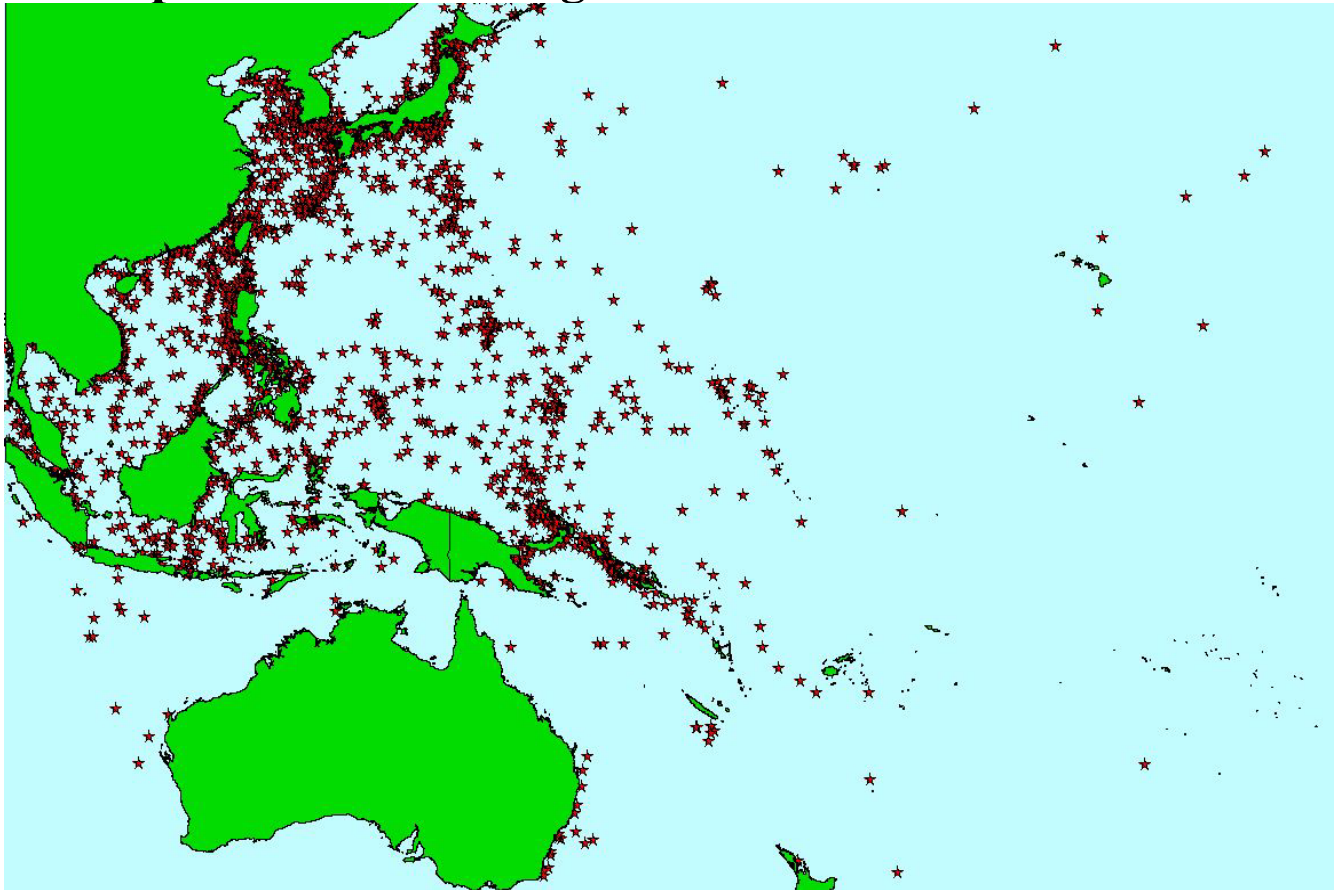
## Risks to the Marine Environment and Trade in the Asia/Pacific Region

### FACT SHEET



- Responsible Oceans Management means identifying the risks to the sustainable use of the oceans and its resources and acting to reduce or mitigate any problems.
- As with all environmental issues; the “precautionary principle” dictates that acting sooner rather than waiting till a problem has begun is best.
- The Asia/Pacific seas are not only a medium for transport and trade but a vital source of food that supports both commercial and subsistence fishing. It is an area of high biodiversity and interconnected in terms of water circulation, fisheries and marine species.
- Approximately 90% of all goods and raw materials are transported by sea and the Pacific region’s sea transport is growing at an accelerated rate. Much of the economic success of the region is due to cheap and effective port and maritime industry. **Anything that affects the viability of shipping trade in the region will have a dramatic effect on trade and the economy of the region.**
- There are currently over 3800 sunken WWII vessels in the Asia/Pacific waters of which 332 are oil tankers.
- This amounts to over 13 million tonnes of shipping on the bottom of the ocean.
- The risk of marine pollution from sunken WWII shipwrecks is a trans-boundary problem. The seas of the region when polluted by oil slicks do not stop at arbitrary maritime boundaries.
- Major shipping accidents around the world (i.e. Prestige, Erika, Exxon Valdez) have caused significant environmental and economic damage after a large scale oil spill. These spills not only caused environmental damage but also shut down fisheries, decreased tourism and ultimately resulted in massive economic losses.
- Any oil spill; be it from current shipping operations or from WWII shipwrecks; will result in public, government and regulatory agency backlash against the shipping industry leading to further constraints on shipping operations and movements, subsequently increasing the cost of shipping goods.
- **The risk of marine pollution from WWII shipwrecks is an issue the countries of the Asia/Pacific region need to acknowledge as this problem will only get worse with time.**
- Well developed risk assessments will identify the vessels and habitats in the highest marine pollution risk category and thus contingency plans can be implemented.

## All ships Asia/Pacific Region



### Of the known vessel types lost...

- 2250 cargo vessels
- 332 tankers
- 14 battleships
- 28 aircraft carriers
- 201 destroyers
- 58 cruisers
- 182 submarines

**Total: Over 3850 WWII ‘potentially polluting’ vessels  
in Asia/Pacific waters amounting to over 13 million  
tonnes of shipping.**

For more information on SPREP WWII database:

[http://www.sprep.org.ws/publication/webpage/004ship\\_waste\\_ww2/WWII\\_strategy/index.htm](http://www.sprep.org.ws/publication/webpage/004ship_waste_ww2/WWII_strategy/index.htm)



For more information please contact:  
Rean Monfils  
[sea.australia@bigpond.com](mailto:sea.australia@bigpond.com)