

Large two-ship seismic survey programme begins

12 February 2007 - Two seismic vessels are collecting approximately 10,000 km of seismic data in New Zealand waters over the summer season in a multi-permit programme.

Both ships Pacific Titan and Duke are working for newly-merged CGGVeritas, now the world's largest seismic provider. The French-based Compagnie Générale de Géophysique and Texas-based Veritas completed their merger in January 2007.

The Pacific Titan, which arrived in Taranaki in late January to work in the Northland and Taranaki basins, completed a 40 km shallow gas 2D seismic survey in the Kupe mining licence for Origin Energy.

Origin is also carrying an extensive programme of seismic acquisition in the Northland Basin in the two permits which it operates with joint venture partner OMV New Zealand in PEP 38619 and PEP 38618.

Origin said in its December quarterly report that in PEP 38619, which lies along the coast south of Auckland to Kawhia Harbour, that Pacific Titan was carrying out the Nimitz 400 sq km 3D seismic survey as well as the 1910 km Pantheon 2D survey.

This would be followed by a further 1200 km Akira 2D survey in PEP 38618 immediately to the west.

Approval was also granted to Origin to carry out a further 160 km of 2D seismic outside part of the northern boundary of its two Northland permits as part of the Pantheon survey. This is inside a 636 sq km extension to PEP 38619 which Origin has applied for.

The second CGC-Veritas vessel Duke (formerly the Polar Duke operated by Multiwave Geophysical) is due to arrive in New Zealand in March where it will be carrying out seismic surveys along the east coast of the country.

Origin Energy will carry out further 2D surveys with Duke in its two large offshore Canterbury Basin permits. Rob Willink, Origin Energy's executive general manager for exploration, said late last year that Origin planned to acquire in early 2007 some 2300 km of 2D seismic across both of its PEP 38262 and PEP 38264 permits.

Origin says in its latest quarterly report that the seismic surveys will be carried out in the Caravel area in the inner PEP 38262 and in the Wherry survey area in the outer PEP 38264 in deeper water.

A 200 km survey is also planned for Discovery Geo Corporation in its Cook Strait-Marlborough permit PEP 38343, Discovery Geo's operations manager Bruce Morris said.

The Duke programme will also include Pogo's large 21,460 sq km East Coast Basin permit PEP 38344 where 2500 km of 2D is scheduled.

A 2300 km 2D survey for Crown Minerals in the unpermitted and largely unsurveyed Raukumara Basin north of East Cape is also planned.

Sources: Origin Energy, Discovery Geo, , CGGVeritas, Crown Minerals