

Satellites used to track ocean eddies

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A new satellite project -- Ocean FOCUS -- is being used to warn oil production operators of warm eddies in the Gulf of Mexico.

The eddies, similar to underwater hurricanes, can cause extensive and costly damage to underwater equipment due to the extensive deep-water oil production activities in the region.

The Ocean FOCUS service provides ocean current forecasts to the offshore oil production industry to give prior warning of the arrival of eddies. The service is based on a combination of state-of-the-art ocean models and satellite measurements.

Oil companies require early warning of eddies in order to minimize loss of production, optimize deep water drilling activities and prevent damage to critical equipment.

Ocean FOCUS was developed by Ocean Numerics and is partially supported by the Paris-based European Space Agency.

Ocean Numerics is a joint venture of France's Collect Localization Satellites, Britain's Fugro GEOS, and Norway's Nansen Environmental and Remote Sensing Center.

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