

Allows surveys for submarine wreckage

SFT authorizes the Coastal Administration to dig in sediments and elevation of any mercury containers in connection with investigations of submarine wreckage at Fedje in Hordaland.

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In February 1945, the German submarine U-864 was lowered about two kilometers west of Fedje in Hordaland. The wreck is 150 meters deep and, according to historical documents, can contain up to 70 tonnes of metallic mercury.



Submarine:

Subsection of submarine of the same type as U-864.

Necessary mapping

High concentrations of mercury on the seabed have been demonstrated close to the wreck. Nevertheless, surveys of sediments and fish show that there has been no proliferation of significance.

Thus, the wreck lies today, therefore, the acute pollution hazard associated with the wreck seems to be limited.

Obtain knowledge

However, if the submarine contains as much mercury as is suspected, the potential for contamination is high. It is therefore very important to clarify the amount of mercury actually present in and at the wreck and how to prevent it from spreading into the environment. In this context it is important to acquire knowledge of corrosion on the wreck itself and on any mercury containers. This is especially in view of the fact that any cleanup measures themselves should not lead to pollution.

Permission and responsibility for follow-up

As an authority for follow-up of shipwreck, the Coastal Administration will carry out the necessary investigations and decide on any measures related to the submarine. In this context, the SFT has granted the Norwegian Coastal Administration permission under the pollution act to a limited dredging and digging in contaminated sediments and to handle and raise up to 10 mercury containers for further assessment of the state and pollution hazard.

Surveys before winter

Because of the urgent need for implementation before winter, and because the investigations now to be done are of limited scope, the SFT has exempted from standard case processing procedures. Therefore, no ordinary consultation of the application has been

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conducted. However, any subsequent cleanup also requires permission under the pollution act. The SFT assumes that in connection with this treatment, consultation of minimum four weeks duration shall be conducted.

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ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Identification number: 999 601 391

Phone: 03400/73 58 05 00 - Fax: 73 58 05 01

E-mail: post@miljodir.no

Mail: Postboks 5672 Torgarden, 7485 Trondheim

Visit: Brattørkaia 15, 7010 Trondheim
Grensesvingen 7, 0661 Oslo

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