

Unipeec involved in one of every nine dirty spot charters

Last year also saw more crude being carried on larger vessels, according to Poten & Partners.

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Unipeec was responsible for almost one in every nine dirty spot charters in 2018 reflecting China's dominance of the tanker industry.

The trading arm of state oil major Sinopec carried out 985 fixtures last year out of an industry total of 10,515, according to Poten & Partners.

It shipped an estimated 217.1mt of crude last year, or 14.7% of all dirty cargoes, up from 13.8% in 2017, the US shipbroker said.

Shell was in second place with 5.9%, while IOC moved up to third place on the same percentage as Shell, but with much fewer fixtures.

Of the big traders Vitol fell one place to fourth, while Glencore fell five places on a year ago to 14. Trafigura fell a couple of places to 15

Poten's figures also showed that more crude oil cargoes were carried on larger ships, with the number of reported VLCC spot fixtures increasing 7.8% to 2,284 last year.

Suezmax fixtures in 2018 showed the greatest increase up 15% year-on-year to 2,944. In contrast, aframax spot fixtures fell 8.6% to 3,551.

In the VLCC segment, Unipeec continued to dominate, with Poten counting 703 reported fixtures for the Chinese charterer, more than the second through eighth largest VLCC charterers combined.

Shell moved up to second spot from fifth, while PetroChina dropped a few places. Asian charterers and Western supermajors, namely Shell, ExxonMobil and Total, continued to dominate the VLCC segment, Poten said.

Repsol, the Spanish oil major, emerged as the largest suezmax tanker charter last year, narrowly pipping Chevron and Shell to the top spot.

Poten recorded 181 such fixtures for the Madrid-based company, one more than Chevron and five more than Shell.

Unipeec and ENI are said to have dropped out of the top 10, but they are still ranked 11th and 12th respectively. Their places in the top 10 were taken by BPCL and ExxonMobil, who were just outside the top 10 in the prior year.

Vitol remained the largest aframax charterer, while fellow traders Glencore and Trafigura lost some ground compared to 2017 falling to ninth and 10th respectively.

