

Long life antifoul saves time, effort and cost

Boaties looking for a long life and hardwearing antifoul should check out Coppercoat.

With a ten year plus lifespan, Coppercoat has several advantages over traditional antifoul coatings.

Waterline is using Coppercoat on a couple of vessels, including the sailing catamaran which beaches often; and a small work barge which spends a lot of time on sandy beaches and dries out. We'll be reporting occasionally on the performance of Coppercoat on these vessels.

We first used Coppercoat on a 30ft keeler about ten years ago. We were drawn to the long life prospects, the hard wearing properties which meant that it handled occasional beaching a lot better than softer antifouls which tended to wear considerably on the grounding points. We also liked the concept of reduced toxins in the waterways.

Since Coppercoat is tiny granules embedded in an epoxy base, there are no biocides released. This means a more planet-friendly antifouling system and also it does not wear out anywhere near the rate of standard applications.

With the beaching advantages of a catamaran, we decided to try Coppercoat as an alternative to the normal antifouls. Although they worked pretty well, abrasive antifouls do not handle the constant abrasion of beachings. Also attractive was the reduced need, and cost, and time, of a haulout every year or so. And with reduced facilities for multihulls since the decommissioning of Omokoroa's slipway, this has become a real issue for the Bay's multihull owners.

Easy application

The Coppercoat was really easy to apply. The hardest part was getting the hulls scraped back to undercoat. When then had the Newcombes spray a fresh undercoat, which provided a brilliant base, and we were ready to go.

The Coppercoat goes on in four or five very thin coats, wet on tacky and all completed in a day. We put several extra coats on the bottoms of the keels and leading edges, anywhere extra wear and tear is likely. It needs three clear days of drying and hardening before the vessel is returned to the water.

The epoxy is water based so clean up is easy. There are no discernible fumes (solvent free) and the application is by roller.

The fine copper granules, virtually a powder, are mixed with one litre of resin to 2kg of copper and stirred regularly to keep the copper evenly in suspension.

Coppercoat supplier Mitch Campbell from MEC Marine kindly gave us a quick lesson and demo to get started.

The copper has been on the cat for several months now and looking good. The brown colour has changed to a greeny black and is clean and smooth. Best of all, it can handle a hard brooming if necessary. So far we haven't needed to do this. Any slime build up has been blown off as soon as the cat gets over about 7 knots.

The high growth times of summer, combined with nutrient rich waters in the estuary may require the odd scrub down, although with regular beaching and regular sailing, this should reduce the



opportunity for any to build up. We found with the keeler that Coppercoat works really in a marina situation, and particularly if a boat is used often. Left on a mooring with little use may mean that occasional rubdowns are necessary. But the good news is that the coating will handle it well.

In fact a light scuff up with a Scotchbright pad or similar has the effect of exposing more fresh active copper to the surface, therefore enhancing the natural antifouling effect of the copper.

We've just completed the twin hulled barge with Coppercoat, and it was easy, since there was no old antifoul to remove first. Just a quick undercoat and roll on the copper. Having the hulls inverted also made the job much easier.

Coppercoat would also be ideal for trailer yachts which are intermittently exposed to weeks in the water – the copper is so hard wearing it will handle trailer rollers, and won't lose its potency while sitting dried out for months at a time.

Success stories

MEC Marine has plenty of examples of long life success stories on the website, www.mecmarine.co.nz including yachts and launches that are enjoying many years of clean running and no annual re-applications. Some vessels have done well over ten years and have had a refresh coat or two.

Many boat owners haul out for engine servicing, anode replacement and general hull inspections, but they don't have to touch the Coppercoat. Just a quick go with the waterblaster and maybe a scuff up, and it's ready to rock for another year. For beachable multihulls, this is even easier. Since it was developed in the early 80s, Coppercoat is now well and truly proven.

It costs a bit more than regular antifoul but this is expected to be recouped in a few years by the savings on haulout, labour and the cost of re-applying limited life coatings.

We certainly won't miss the hard graft of annual haul outs!

For more information on Coppercoat, go to www.mecmarine.co.nz or call MEC Marine Ltd, 09 525 1114.

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