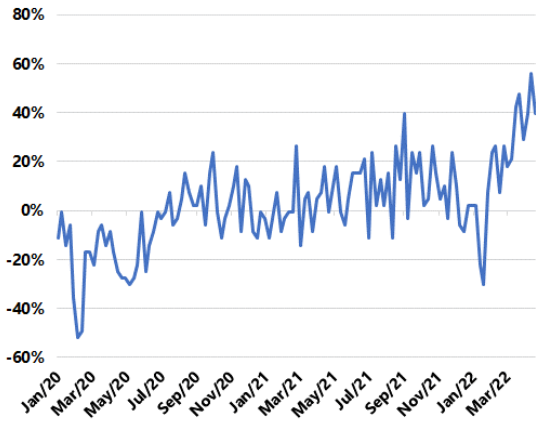
Continued Transpacific vessel pressure

In issue 551 of the *Sunday Spotlight*, we looked at one of many elements causing congestion issues in the ports around the world: the number of deployed vessels.

In very simplified terms, it is less efficient to handle two 5,000 TEU vessels than it is to handle one 10,000 TEU vessel, once the time to get to and from berth is factored in. A change in the number of vessels will therefore be an element feeding into the congestion issues. To analyse this particular aspect, we used data from our *Trade Capacity Outlook* database.

During the early pandemic period, there was an unusually large decline in the number of deployed vessels as blank sailings rose rapidly. But after this early phase, the number of deployed vessels first increased back to normal, and then reached a high point towards the end of peak season 2021. There was a temporary drop for Chinese New Year 2022, followed by a very sharp upwards correction as we get into the current outlook for March/April 2022.

Fig. 1: Asia-NAWC Additional weekly vessels compared to 2017-19 baseline



To better view the changes, figure 1 shows the change in the number of vessels since the start of 2020, relative to the pre-pandemic period (2017-2019). With the recent data, we can see a seasonal dip due to Chinese New Year 2022, but it is the increase in March/April 2022 which should be particularly noticed. The number of vessels scheduled to depart Asia – and subsequently arrive on the North American West Coast – will increase sharply and surpass a 40% increase compared to the pre-pandemic normality. This in itself will add further pressure on the port infrastructure.

What is more alarming is that there is a 60% increase in the number of vessels on the Asia-North America East Coast trade lane in the coming months, as carriers try to circumnavigate port congestion on the West Coast. This will severely increase pressure on the port infrastructure on the East Coast.

--- 000 --- END OF PRESS RELEASE --- 000 ---

All quotes can be attributed to: Alan Murphy, CEO, Sea-Intelligence.
For more information, please contact: ia@sea-intelligence.com, am@sea-intelligence.com