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Unmanned Surface Vehicle USV Market - Global Industry Size, Share, Trends, Opportunity, and Forecast, Segmented By Size Type (Less than 11 Meters, 11- 26 Meters, More than 26 Meters), By Application Type (Defense, Commercial), By Mode of Operation Type (Autonomous Surface Vehicle, Remotely Operated Surface Vehicle), By Region & Competition, 2021-2031F

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Abstracts

The Global Unmanned Surface Vehicle (USV) Market is projected to expand from USD 1.45 Billion in 2025 to USD 2.78 Billion by 2031, registering a CAGR of 11.46%. These autonomous or remotely piloted vessels are engineered to perform maritime operations without an onboard crew, driven largely by the urgent need to lower operational expenses by eliminating complex life-support systems and the necessity to safeguard personnel by utilizing unmanned units in dangerous settings. Furthermore, the rising requirement for continuous maritime domain awareness to support defense strategies and oceanographic data gathering is sustaining the market's growth trajectory.

However, the absence of robust regulatory frameworks for autonomous navigation in shared waterways poses a major obstacle to widespread commercial uptake. Adhering to international collision regulations remains a complex issue when integrating these systems with manned vessels. Underscoring the sector's enduring strategic value, the U.S. Naval Institute reported in 2024 that the U.S. Navy?s fiscal year 2025 budget request included $54.0 million in research and development funding specifically for the Large Unmanned Surface Vehicle program.

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Market Driver

The rising demand for asymmetric warfare capabilities and enhanced maritime security acts as a primary catalyst for the Global Unmanned Surface Vehicle USV Market. Naval forces are increasingly focusing on affordable, expendable autonomous systems to challenge conventional fleets and conduct Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) operations in hostile waters, prompting significant defense contracts for rapidly deployable units. For example, DefenseScoop reported in an August 2025 article titled 'Navy moves to buy autonomous maritime drones from Saronic via $392M OTA' that the U.S. Navy finalized an agreement exceeding $392 million with Saronic Technologies to manufacture autonomous maritime drones, highlighting the military's shift toward hybrid fleets to reduce human risk.

Concurrently, the growth of hydrographic surveying and oceanographic research is fueling commercial expansion. USVs offer a budget-friendly alternative for deep-water mapping that significantly lowers carbon emissions compared to manned ships, while also demonstrating exceptional endurance for data acquisition. According to a June 2025 Naval News report titled 'Saildrone and Meta Complete First Unmanned, Autonomous Deep-Water Route Survey in the North Atlantic,' the Surveyor USV autonomously mapped over 4,500 km of the seabed. Furthermore, signaling the move toward larger platforms, Baird Maritime reported in December 2024 in 'Ocean Infinity takes delivery of first in new series of robotic vessels' that Ocean Infinity acquired the first of its new 85-metre robotic vessels engineered for remote operations.

Market Challenge

The lack of extensive regulatory frameworks for autonomous navigation acts as a significant impediment to the broad commercialization of the Global Unmanned Surface Vehicle (USV) Market. Existing international maritime laws are primarily based on physical presence and human judgment, resulting in considerable legal ambiguity for crewless vessels operating in shared waters. This legislative gap generates substantial liability concerns, complicating the process for operators to obtain essential insurance and for manufacturers to certify that their navigation algorithms meet the rigorous safety standards needed for interacting with manned traffic.

As a result, this uncertainty compels potential users to restrict USV deployments to isolated test areas or specific military uses, effectively neutralizing the operational cost efficiencies offered by full autonomy. The challenge of seamlessly integrating with standard shipping lanes hinders the scalability of commercial fleets for logistics and

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oceanographic missions. Highlighting the scale of capital facing these hurdles, the U.S. Naval Institute noted in 2024 that the U.S. Navy requested $101.8 million in research and development funds for the Medium Unmanned Surface Vehicle program; however, without clear legal definitions, the transition from this significant financial investment to operational capability remains impeded.

Market Trends

The transition toward modular and multi-mission payload architectures is empowering navies and commercial operators to optimize fleet utility by enabling individual platforms to quickly adjust to diverse operational needs. This architectural adaptability minimizes the necessity for specialized vessels, allowing operators to exchange sensor suites for tasks such as mine countermeasures, surveillance, or electronic warfare based on the current mission profile. Confirming this emphasis on versatile systems, Naval News reported in April 2025 in 'Textron Systems awarded contract to support MCM USV craft' that Textron Systems secured a contract worth up to $100 million to supply payload integration and software support for the U.S. Navy?s Mine Countermeasures Unmanned Surface Vehicle program.

At the same time, the adoption of green hybrid and solar propulsion systems is becoming more prevalent as operators aim to prolong mission endurance while adhering to increasingly strict environmental regulations. These renewable energy setups permit unmanned vessels to operate quietly for months without the need for refueling, which is essential for extended oceanographic data gathering and acoustic monitoring. Underscoring the environmental advantages of this shift in propulsion, a June 2025 Hydro International report titled 'Autonomous survey sets new benchmark in deep-water cable mapping' noted that a mission performed by the Saildrone Surveyor in the North Atlantic prevented an estimated 243 tons of CO2 emissions relative to conventional crewed survey vessels.

Key Market Players

L3Harris Technologies, Inc.

Fugro

Textron Inc.

ECA Group

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Thales S.A.

Teledyne Technologies Incorporated

Elbit Systems Ltd

Kongsberg Gruppen ASA

QinetiQ Group

Saab AB

Report Scope

In this report, the Global Unmanned Surface Vehicle USV Market has been segmented into the following categories, in addition to the industry trends which have also been detailed below:

Unmanned Surface Vehicle USV Market, By Size Type

Less than 11 Meters

11- 26 Meters

More than 26 Meters

Unmanned Surface Vehicle USV Market, By Application Type

Defense

Commercial

Unmanned Surface Vehicle USV Market, By Mode of Operation Type

Autonomous Surface Vehicle

Remotely Operated Surface Vehicle

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Unmanned Surface Vehicle USV Market, By Region

North America

United States

Canada

Mexico

Europe

France

United Kingdom

Italy

Germany

Spain

Asia Pacific

China

India

Japan

Australia

South Korea

South America

Brazil

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Argentina

Colombia

Middle East & Africa

South Africa

Saudi Arabia

UAE

Competitive Landscape

Company Profiles: Detailed analysis of the major companies present in the Global Unmanned Surface Vehicle USV Market.

Available Customizations:

Global Unmanned Surface Vehicle USV Market report with the given market data, TechSci Research offers customizations according to a company's specific needs. The following customization options are available for the report:

Company Information

Detailed analysis and profiling of additional market players (up to five).

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