



GREEK WATERS PILOT – Rod and Lucinda Heikell, 13th (2018) edition. Published in hard covers by Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson [www.imray.com] at £42.50. 568 A4 pages in full colour throughout. ISBN 978-1-8462-3950-2

Imray, the publishers, unequivocally claim that the Greek Waters Pilot by Rod and Lucinda Heikell is 'the definitive cruising guide to the coasts and islands of Greece' and that it is an 'indispensable guide for anyone sailing around Greece'. Indeed, it is often referred to as 'the Bible'. Charterers and flotilla sailors who cruise only in the Ionian or West or East Aegean for short periods may, however, find the Heikells' pilot books specific to those areas more appropriate to their requirements, given that this might be a cheaper option, and that those pilots do contain more detailed information on some of the smaller harbours and anchorages that cannot be covered as comprehensively in this major guide. Cruisers on their own yachts may also find much of interest, together with additional pilotage information, in these companion publications.

After forty years of cruising, skippering and delivering boats in the Mediterranean, Rod Heikell has become the acknowledged expert on sailing in the Med and in particular in Greece. His first edition of the Greek Waters Pilot was published in 1982 and this early, simpler, monochrome version has become a collector's item. The Pilot has long been the yardstick by which other pilot books are measured and is also published, under licence, in German, French and Italian. Fluent bilingual Scandinavians presumably see no need for a translation.

The Introduction gives an excellent overview, sound advice, and fully covers the common factors and wide range of essential information relevant to cruising in Greece. Since each Sea Area of Greece has a character of its own, each of the book's ten chapters covers issues particular to an area, together with its coastlines and islands.

Although Rod wrote the early editions of the book on his own, Lucinda now contributes significantly to all aspects – she and Rod work as a team, sailing, researching, writing and checking together. In particular she has contributed photographically to the Pilot, which now includes many more excellent shots which help improve their readers' perspective and better complement the text. They jointly write in a concise, clear and yet entertaining style, which conveys first-hand practical advice while conjuring the magic of Greece. Their asides – details of geography and history, food and wine and, in particular, mythological anecdotes – make this book much more than 'just a pilot book'.

Details of over 450 harbours and anchorages are included. The checking and organisation of so much detail within the confines of the 568 pages is a Herculean achievement. Equally impressive are the authors' obvious energy, enthusiasm and

ability to keep on top of the endless changes and corrections that inevitably arise. Their comment that they simply 'potter around the coast and islands checking up on things' is probably something of an understatement. Between editions, free correctional supplements are published on the internet at www.imray.com, and these are enormously helpful.

The 13th edition of the Greek Waters Pilot is said, by the publishers, to contain 'detailed updating of every part of the guide; in particular, areas of the Ionian, Saronic and Northern Greece, visited by the authors since the last edition, have had major revisions'. We understand that other changes to both the text and charts have been effected following information received from the Heikells' network of connections and via reports from individual cruisers. Having visited many locations in the Aegean and, to a lesser extent the Ionian, and vandalised with notes our 12th edition, we can say with confidence that every correction or modification that we thought might be appropriate appears to have been addressed in this latest edition.

With each copy of the new Pilot, Imray provide a voucher for the download (on their free Navigator App) of their digital charts for both Central and Eastern Mediterranean to iPad, iPhone or Android devices. These have a retail value of £70 inclusive of quarterly updates in the first year of use. Thereafter one would have to subscribe to receive such updates, but could still continue to use the charts in their original form. Given the increasing number of yachtsmen who prefer information in digital form, it is possible to buy a PDF version of the entire book via e-bookstores. Theoretically the price is the same as the printed version, but digital stores sometimes discount it.

In conclusion, we would unhesitatingly recommend the Greek Waters Pilot to anyone planning on or already sailing in Greece. The million-dollar question, however, is would we recommend its purchase to owners of previous editions? Our answer can only be that it is each individual's decision where their own priorities lie. We would choose to forgo a meal in a taverna and a bottle or three of wine – or possibly even ouzo – on the boat in order to purchase this latest edition of the book, which at £42.50 (plus delivery) is a snip in terms of value for money.





