



# RCC PILOTAGE FOUNDATION

## Aleutian Islands and the Alaska Peninsula to Prince William Sound



Mike and Hilde Gill 2015

Edited by Martin Walker 2019



## Aleutian Islands and the Alaska Peninsula to Prince William Sound

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"This is an area of stunning beauty and magnificent views."

This Guide covers the area which includes the Aleutian Islands, The Alaska Peninsula, including Kodiak Island, and Prince William Sound. It has been developed from the input of a few experienced sailors who have cruised these waters and is offered to help the planning for those who follow in their wake.



### Introduction

The few people who cruise the Aleutian Islands, Alaska and British Columbia speak of its stunning beauty. However, much of the area is remote and the cruising season short; facilities are rare and crews planning to visit here need to be mentally and physically self-sufficient. This publication flows from West to East and is aimed primarily for crews approaching from the Pacific. There is little published yachting information on the Aleutian Islands; readers are strongly advised to view the further reading in the Planning section below.

### Cruising Southeast from Prince William Sound

The associated RCCPF, free to download, Cruising Notes to this publication provide an introduction to SE Alaska and British Columbia including Queen Charlotte Islands. However, a good guide to these waters is essential. Many of the Pilot books for that area are readily available in North America but not in Europe, except via Amazon. Those that have been recommended by our contributors are listed in this publication.

## Cautions

### CAUTION

Whilst the RCC Pilotage Foundation, has used reasonable endeavours to ensure the accuracy of the content of this file, it contains selected information and thus is not definitive. It does not contain all known information on the subject in hand and should not be relied on alone for navigational use; it should only be used in conjunction with official hydrographical data. This is particularly relevant to any plans, which should not be used for navigation. The RCC Pilotage Foundation and the contributors believe that the information which they have included is a useful aid to prudent navigation, but the safety of a vessel depends ultimately on the judgment of the skipper, who should assess all information, published or unpublished. The information provided in this file may be out of date and may be changed or updated without notice. The RCC Pilotage Foundation cannot accept any liability for any error, omission or failure to update such information. To the extent permitted by law, the RCC Pilotage Foundation, the contributors, editor and the publishers do not accept liability for any loss and/or damage howsoever caused that may arise from reliance on information contained in these pages.

### Positions

All positions are to datum WGS 84. Some result from direct observation, others are derived from Google Earth. They are included to help in locating places, features and transits. Do not rely on them for safe navigation. Some charts may not be to this datum.

### Bearings and Lights

Any bearings are given as °T and from seaward. The characteristics of lights may be changed during the lifetime of this publication. They should be checked against the latest edition of the UK Admiralty List of Lights.

### Updates, Supplements and Feedback

Visit [www.rccpf.org.uk](http://www.rccpf.org.uk) for any mid-season updates, cruising notes or annual supplements, for cruising logs for this area, or if you notice any errors or omissions and would like to let us know.

## Background and Acknowledgements

The RCC Pilotage Foundation has long published individual works on Northern waters. The basis of this document lies with Phil Hogg and Liz Thompson who, in 2011, offered the full use of their website <http://www.finelineboatplans.com/> to the RCC Pilotage Foundation. Their detailed work, resulting from their cruises in 2003 and 2004, and the Pilotage Foundation's published information on Faroes, Iceland and Greenland, led to the web pilot *Arctic and Northern Waters*. It included a parallel representation using Google Maps. That web pilot evolved into a book edited by Andrew Wilkes and is now in its second edition [www.rccpf.org.uk](http://www.rccpf.org.uk) while the Aleutians element reverted to an epilot. In 2016 this was extended to include the Hogg/Thompson work on Alaska – it is updated annually.

In addition, the Royal Cruising Club had long maintained text records of member's cruising in these waters. Major, recent contributions in the title area have been by:

Tom & Vicky Jackson	Sunstone
Tom & Vicky Jackson	Sunstone 2014
Mike and Hilde Gill	Quicksilver 2015
Mike and Hilde Gill	Quicksilver 2016
Jo Winter	Brother Wind 2018



This Guide combines these two sources and provides links to many others – but the Pilotage Foundation does not accept liability for their content. Few yachtsmen cruise these waters and the RCC Pilotage Foundation is grateful to all for their contributions. This Guide often retains the use of the first person to emphasise that comments about a place may relate to a single fleeting visit.

© RCCPF has been granted right to publish all contributions; contributors retain individual copyright. Photographs © *Finelines* except as shown. Chartlets are thanks to Fine Lines and Navionics and are provided for orientation purposes; they are not to be used for navigation. The Navionics images included in this publication are for illustrative purposes only. We recommend cross-reference with more inter-active electronic chart apps or to the free chart viewer at <https://webapp.navionics.com/>

### Note by Editor

This Guide covers straight-line distances of around 1,500nm from the rarely visited Aleutian Islands to Prince William Sound. It is primarily for the yachtsman approaching from the Pacific Ocean and heading broadly from west to east. Along with the associated RCCPF Cruising Notes to this work - covering from Prince William Sound towards Vancouver Island - there are detailed guides and pilot books available for the Southeast Alaskan and Canadian waters (which most cruisers and tourists visit from the South) and they are listed in this Guide – some are now available in Europe through Amazon. Feedback from yachtsmen cruising these waters is always welcome – to [www.rccpf.org.uk](http://www.rccpf.org.uk).

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## Associated Cruising Notes

### RCCPF Cruising Notes to SE Alaska and British Columbia

Download separate RCCPF document from [www.rccpf.org.uk](http://www.rccpf.org.uk)

#### Prince William Sound to Vancouver

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# Chapter 1.

## Background Information

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### Introduction - Getting There/Passage Planning

The few people who cruise the Aleutian Islands, Alaska and British Columbia speak of their stunning beauty. However, much of the area is remote and the cruising season short; facilities are rare and crews planning to visit here need to be mentally and physically self-sufficient. In 2018, Jo Winter wrote *"We dodged another gale on our way to Dutch Harbour, and took shelter deep into Egg Bay on Akita Island. The sense of isolation as you sail along the Aleutian chain is extraordinary. There is simply nobody there, no boats, no fishing, and day after day we sailed past beautiful snow clad volcanoes and true wilderness. We were accompanied by dolphins, the occasional whale and Lysan and Black footed Albatross as well as northern Fulmar and sea eagles, and as we approached Dutch Harbour a pod of Orcas (killer whales) passed by. It is hard to believe that on many of these islands are the remains of WW2 detritus, a legacy to the very bitter fighting and lives lost in a battle where the weather proved the biggest enemy."*

This publication flows from West to East to South East and is aimed primarily for crews approaching the Aleutians from the Pacific. (Of course, the vast majority of cruisers (and cruise ships) 'only' visit SE Alaska and British Columbia and sail up from the South and return there before the weather deteriorates after the short summer.) Whereas there is little published yachting information on the Aleutian Islands many of the numerous guides, to the south of Prince William Sound, available to the North American sailors are listed in this Addendum to this publication. This chapter provides references to those books, logs and blogs that sailors have found useful when planning to visit parts of this vast area.

The North Pacific High dominates the weather of the North Pacific. During the summer months (June to September) the Pacific High tends to move north to around 38N although in some years it never seems to get established.

The cruising season, for any but the very hardiest, is short - basically June, July and early August. Even in those months, it can be extremely cold and there are often severe depressions which pass through the islands before dying out over the Bering Sea or the Alaskan mainland. (*'Fog is wet! Without a heater of some description everything on board ends up damp - it is not only books, clothes and bedding that suffers, but the dampness can also affect the electronics and electrics. A reliable cabin heater is highly recommended.'*)

Except for those heading for, or arriving from, the North West Passage, or from mainland North America, there are three possible approach routes from the Pacific Ocean – see below. The Pacific routes, from Hawaii, the Marshall Islands or Japan, involve longish passages which are likely to eat into the potential time for cruising. In addition, if one wishes to spend time cruising in the rest of Alaska it means rushing through the Aleutians, or over-wintering in that state or returning the next season. Approaching the islands from Alaska itself, really means spending the previous

winter in a pretty inhospitable climate in that area – or trucking the boat to, say, Anacortes or Seattle and heading North as soon as (and if) conditions permit.

## Trans-Pacific Routes South to North

*'We have now sailed three times from New Zealand to Alaska, by three different routes. Each has its advantages and disadvantages. Also - few of the cruisers we know who have cruised Alaska for one season do not go back for at least one more. This is worth bearing in mind when choosing a route.'* (Sunstone)

**Route 1. via Tahiti and Hawaii.** The most common route is that from New Zealand to Papeete, Tahiti, to Hawaii, to either Kodiak or Sitka, depending on how much of Alaska one wishes to cruise or has time for. In order to arrive in Alaska at the beginning of the cruising season in early June it is advisable to leave New Zealand no later than mid-April, by which time the chances of a late cyclone are very small. This also means that the chance of a May or early June hurricane, in the northern hemisphere, is also lower than if one leaves later.

Though a good deal longer than Route 2, this route has the advantage of two stops which divide the route into three passages of similar 'digestible' length, around 2,000 miles. In addition, it is the most popular because it makes the most of the historically common weather conditions so long as one makes good easting from New Zealand before heading up through the southeast trade winds to Tahiti. Similarly, from Tahiti it is wise to make easting south of the equator before the trades take a more northerly slant above it. If the northeast Pacific high is established this should give predominantly southerlies on the way from Hawaii to Alaska once out of the trades. However, early in the season there is a likelihood of encountering at least one strong depression in the north Pacific.

**Route 2. Straight North.** The shortest of the three routes is that straight north from New Zealand through Micronesia to the Aleutians or possibly Kodiak. There are a variety of possible stops in the southern half of this route, in Fiji, Tuvalu and Kiribati. However, apart from Fiji, none of these stops offers much opportunity for provisioning or repairs, though refuelling is possible. The slow process of clearance in and out at some of these nations also means that 'pit stops' of short duration are not easy. The most useful stop is at Majuro in the Marshall Islands, which is almost exactly halfway in the whole route. For an island nation, it has relatively good stocks and good communications with the USA for spare parts.

The weather on this route can be somewhat trying. Once again it is wise to depart New Zealand by latest mid-April, keeping a close eye on the pattern of the southern cyclone season, as late storms can brew up quickly in the Solomons or on the Queensland coast and swing eastwards across the route. Once into the trade winds, conditions are likely to be favourable until one reaches the ITCZ. The zone can be quite broad at this time of year with light, often contrary, winds. We found that there was also considerable contrary current to the west of the Tuvalu and Kiribati island chain. It may be worth trying the east side of the chain in the hope of more favourable conditions. Once through the ITCZ the trades are likely to have a more northerly component, though, at first, they are often easterly and relatively light. The Marshall Islands have little history of tropical storms from either north or south. However, as one sails into the north Pacific it is possible that the remains of an early typhoon may swing through from Japan.

The major disadvantage of this route, apart from the 3,000 mile length of the two passages, is that from the Marshalls northwards one will be on the wind for most of the time until reaching about 30 degrees north latitude and perhaps much higher. Though the winds are not generally strong this can be tedious. Once in the temperate zone, the likelihood of depressions crossing the north Pacific increases. If the northeast Pacific high is not too strong these depressions can give several days of moderate to strong favourable southerlies. However, there is also the likelihood of at least one strong depression which will cause a steep gradient 'squash zone' giving very strong though favourable winds.

**Route 3. via Japan.** The third route is via the western Pacific islands and Japan. Few cruisers opting for this route intend to go from New Zealand or Australia to the Aleutians in a single season. The major advantage of the route is the variety of interesting stops available and the relatively short length of the passages between them. Some cruisers prefer to leave from southern Japan, taking advantage of the north and eastward set of the warm Kuro Shio current in the early part of the passage. This route is significantly longer than the alternative departure from the east coast of Hokkaido. However, on the latter route it is important to make good easting initially to escape the clutches of the cold, southeast setting Oya Shio which runs down the Kuril Trench along the edge of the continental shelf. This route also

follows the main, great-circle ship route from North America to East Asia. With the prevalence of fog, this requires a very good and continuous look-out; radar and perhaps AIS are virtually essential.

However, in terms of reaching Alaska for cruising, the major disadvantage is that realistically one is unlikely to leave Japan before the end of May or early June. Once one has passed along the Aleutian chain, with or without stops, there is little of the short Alaskan cruising season left to explore the rest of this huge cruising area. As a result, one has three choices: accept that the cruise of Alaska will be relatively hurried, or winter over in Alaska and continue cruising the following summer, or winter in southern Alaska or British Columbia and return north the following season. The other important disadvantage of this route is that it is very cold, often very foggy and is on the great circle shipping route from western North America to Asia. Note the advice in the information listed below from *Quicksilver*, *Bosunbird* and *Brother Wind*.

## **From North America**

Although this guide runs clockwise from the Aleutian Islands, west-coast Americans, Canadians and those who truck their boats to south of Vancouver from elsewhere will initially be cruising anticlockwise. The Cruising Notes which cover SE Alaska and British Columbia, may be helpful to those wishing to head well north as soon as weather permits - the majority will head back south as soon as the weather deteriorates. The Addendum, to that work, includes 2017 experience on trucking.

## **Planning - Charts, Publications and Experience**

Many of the references given below are viewable on line. Charts and RCC Pilotage Foundation books can generally be obtained through major chart stores. Charlies Charts for Alaska are available through Imray, Laurie, Norie and Wilson whilst online NOAA charts are particularly useful for early planning. Many other books are now available in Europe through Amazon. The use of Google Earth will help with orientation and routing and it also provides numerous photographs.

Aside from using Amazon, getting hold of copies of the other British Columbia and Alaska publications, and detailed tidal information, can be difficult outside North America. However once there, yachtsmen will find that charts, tidal information and publications are readily available throughout the region. In particular, in the more northern regions there are book shops in Sweeper Cove Adak Island, Dutch Harbour Unalaska Island, Seward Kenai Peninsula, Whittier Prince William Sound amongst others. West Marine have numerous outlets for those approaching from the south while their northernmost shop, at Anchorage, may be reached by boat, by train from Seward and by road from Whittier.

### **Background Information to get there:**

**Book: The Pacific Crossing Guide** – Kitty van Hagen RCCPF/ Imray – [www.rccpf.org.uk](http://www.rccpf.org.uk)

**Book: Arctic and Northern Waters** – Andrew Wilkes RCCPF/Imray - [www.rccpf.org.uk](http://www.rccpf.org.uk)

**Articles:** by Mike and Hilde Gill of *Quicksilver* in RCC Journal – Roving Commissions 2015 & 2016 and by Jo Winter in Roving Commissions 2018.

**Presentation:** by Mike and Hilde Gill

<http://ba45dd6d5442cb0b22f2-b1837982921a7a55b0cd696d1bf73e0b.r35.cf3.rackcdn.com/feb4rcc.mp4>

**Blog:** [www.bosunbird.com](http://www.bosunbird.com) - logs Japan to Alaska 2012,2014,2015

**Admiralty Pilot NP23:** Bering Sea and Strait Pilot is considered essential if you are crossing from Japan or Russia. It covers as far as Kodiak.

## Aleutian Islands to Prince William Sound (Chapters 2,3,4)

### Aleutian Pilots and Charts

The charts for the entire Aleutian chain are very accurate, no doubt due to the fact that these islands have been subject to a high US military presence. In 2003-2004 C-Map electronic charts showed 100% accuracy with the natural features, although nearly all the man-made features (jetties, buildings, etc), shown on both the electronic charts and paper ones, no longer existed or were in the last stages of existence. In the absence of radar, C-Map coupled up to a GPS and used as a plotter proved invaluable to *Finelines*, especially in the thick fog that these islands are prone to throughout the summer months. (*Of course, electronic charts have developed considerably since 2003.*) This Guide adds extracts of Navionics charts to aid orientation. In 2014 some of the more detailed NOAA charts (of Prince William Sound for instance) were not yet available. CMap appears to include recent detailed chart information. Navionics charts do not include latitude and longitude.

**The NOAA Alaskan Coast Pilots** provide excellent and detailed information about almost every useable anchorage on the Alaskan coast. The pilot is down-loadable free from the NOAA site, though some may prefer to buy a paper copy as the down-loaded version is difficult to 'flip' or browse through.

Note too that all NOAA charts are freely down-loadable in electronic format from the NOAA site.

### **Prince William Sound Cruising Guide by Jim and Nancy Lethcoe 2009.**

Many cruisers consider the Lethcoe Cruising Guide to be essential for a cruise of Prince William Sound. It gives excellent coverage and detailed guidance on entry and anchoring positions for all the many coves and harbours.

**Logs and Blogs.** Newcomers to the area can get a flavour of what is in store for them by reading reports from those who have gone before. Search engines will identify reports from people who have cruised this vast area. Royal Cruising Club and Ocean Cruising Club members tend to feature. OCC member contributions include: *Kokiri* (OCC's Flying Fish 2005/2) and *Shingebiss* (OCC's Flying Fish 2007/1). A sample of RCC articles published in Roving Commissions is listed below:

2018 *Brother Wind* – Japan to Alaska 2018

2016 *Quicksilver* – Quicksilver 2016

2015 *Quicksilver* – Sabah to Kodiak Alaska

2015 *Sunstone* Victoria BC - Inner Passage and Vancouver Island then Hawaii to New Zealand.

2014 *Sunstone* - New Zealand to Dutch Harbour Aleutians then Kodiak, Prince William Sound and inside passages from Cape Spencer to South Vancouver Island.

2011 *Young Larry* - Kodiak (after the North-West Passage in 2010) to San Francisco via Alaska.

### Navigation and Pilotage

The Aleutian island chain and the Alaskan Peninsula pose considerable navigational and pilotage challenges. Not only can the weather be volatile, but there is a very high frequency of fog and limited visibility during the summer months. There are virtually no navigational aids in the islands and few along the Peninsula. Despite GPS, caution is still required in dealing with the very strong and unpredictable currents which run around and between the islands of the chain. There is tidal information available for the area, but it must be used with caution as the resulting currents can be strongly affected by weather conditions, swell from distant depressions and other variables. In general, the tide floods north into the Bering Sea and ebbs south. Most cruisers tend to move along the Aleutian chain on the Bering Sea side, which is somewhat less prone to swell. Further east and south, tide times will continue to dominate passage planning for many of the passes and inside passages; movement may only be possible close to slack water.



## Anchoring

Deep anchoring, say 25m depth, may be a necessity in Alaska and one needs a windlass that will cope with this. In addition to an all chain system, it pays to be able to deploy at least 100m of chain/rope combination to cope with the greater depths. Occasionally, running a long line ashore may also be needed.

## Formalities

Foreign nationals (except Canadians and Mexicans) entering the US by yacht require a visa and have to be seen by an immigration official on arrival.

US Authorities require all vessels to have registered EPIRBS and proof of their registration.

Foreign yachts will have to purchase a one year Cruising Licence, the conditions of which vary from time to time, but usually involve continued reporting of movements by phone or occasionally in person at larger harbours. The initial licence is for a year. Renewal is possible at any port of entry, certainly for a few weeks, and possibly much longer: Canadian boats have wintered at Haines (north of Juneau) more than once. The Alaskan authorities seem keen to encourage cruising, and realise that it may make sense to spend more than the allotted 12 months doing so. Technically if you arrive back in the US from Canada before your licence has expired, a new one cannot be issued unless you have formally surrendered it at your Port of Exit, eg Ketchikan. Customs Officers may nevertheless issue a new one for a year. Noonsite offers comprehensive advice - [www.noonsite.com/Countries/USA](http://www.noonsite.com/Countries/USA)

Fishing Permits are required and are available from most hardware shops or marinas.

## Ports of Entry

Alaskan Ports of Entry include: Dutch Harbour (see following page for initial arrival in the Aleutians at Sweepers Cove, Adak) Nome (for North West Passage), Kodiak, Anchorage, Valdez, Juneau, Skagway, Wrangell and Ketchikan. The northern port of entry to British Columbia from/to Ketchikan in Alaska, is Prince Rupert.

## Communications

**Use of VHF in the USA.** It should be noted that commercial craft, and some pleasure craft as well, make far more use of VHF than is customary in Europe. This is particularly true when commercial craft are approaching or passing yachts. The skippers of these vessels will often wish to confirm their intentions. It is essential to have a radio with the US frequencies.

**Weather Channels.** The NOAA Alaska VHF weather channel forecasts are very useful, but cannot be picked up everywhere along the coast.

**Public transport.** If contemplating crew changes, or wishing to see more of the country away from the boat, the following links may be helpful.

Train – [alaskarailroad.com](http://alaskarailroad.com)

Ferry – [alaskaferryvacations.com](http://alaskaferryvacations.com)

Flights – [travelalaska.com](http://travelalaska.com)

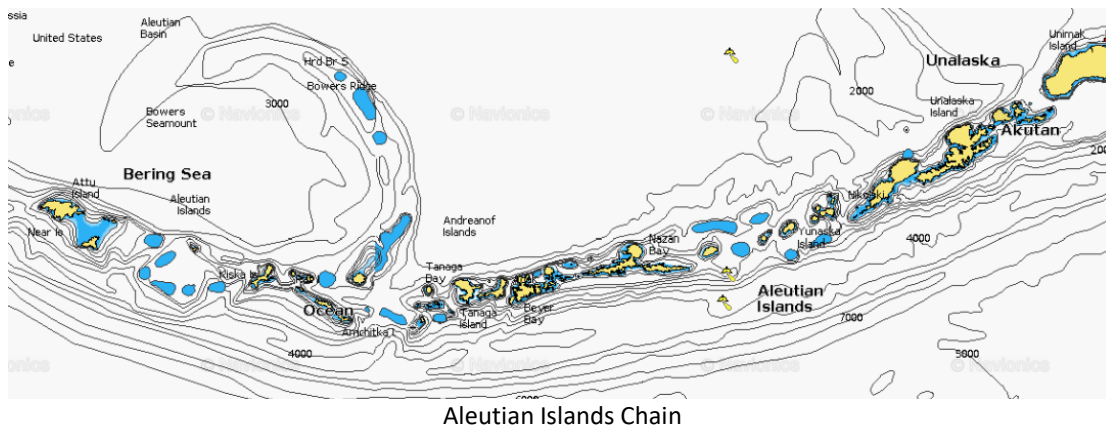
## Chapter 2.

# THE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS

### General and Weather Overview

This is an area of stunning beauty and magnificent views. There is also an absolute peace in finding oneself in such deserted, safe anchorages. The hiking is superb with easy walking over the treeless tundra.

It is common to do a lot of motoring when cruising along the Aleutian group of islands as the weather here is mainly either calms or blowing a gale. There is very little in-between, so the usual course of action is to avoid the storms and motor to the next anchorage in the calmer spells. Seas can build up quickly with the storms but calm down equally as quickly after they have gone. There is very little swell in the summer months.



### Formalities and Introductory Notes

Cruising the islands from west to east is a technical bureaucratic problem in that the only port of entry, **Dutch Harbour**, is at the eastern end of the chain. Though we have heard of a few cruisers who have had problems with the authorities, these have mostly been because they failed to get formal visas in advance. Some cruisers have been fined for this failure. Though there is no guarantee, it would appear that the American authorities accept that yachts will enter at Dutch Harbour having stopped periodically along the chain for reasons of adverse weather or to conserve fuel. Now that there are no admitted military installations on the islands, there is less sensitivity about stopping at them. Those yachts which stop at the Sweeper Cove settlement at **Adak**, used to have their crew details forwarded to the Department of Homeland Security (this included Customs and Immigration) for a kind of advanced clearance, by the Harbour Master. (This system was not in operation in 2018. ) Once at Dutch Harbour, normal formalities follow, all undertaken by the Customs Officer.

The Aleutians and Alaskan Peninsula are an elusive goal for most cruisers. However, for cruisers who enjoy visiting the distinctive wilderness areas of the world, the area has a strong attraction. When visibility is good the stark, mostly volcanic scenery, is very beautiful. For those with any interest in birds there are plenty of seabirds to observe as well as bald eagles, golden eagles and sea eagles. In addition, there is a wide variety of other marine wildlife, including whales, sea lions and sea otters. There are no land animals in the western Aleutians other than the introduced rats. Unlike the rest of Alaska, the islands have no bears, though there are foxes and, on Adak, introduced caribou. Though it does detract somewhat from some of the islands' beauty, there is also some historical interest in the detritus left by both the American and Japanese armed forces during and after World War 2.

None of the western islands is inhabited. Thus, the islands are unusually isolated and demand a high degree of self-sufficiency. Many of the islands have no reasonable anchorage and many others have anchorages with protection from only limited quarters. As with much of the Pacific rim, the islands are in an area of regular seismic activity and there are quite a number of volcanoes which are potentially active if not actually smoking.

## Water

Good water is easily available from streams in most of the islands.

## Fuel and Stores

Fuel and stores are only available at Sweeper Cove (Adak) and Dutch Harbour (Unalaska Amaknak). From the western end of the Aleutians, there are no supplies available until you get to Adak, which is approximately 300 miles along the chain; it is important to factor in a high percentage of motoring when fuelling for your cruise. There are only two settlements on the eastern islands (Adak and Dutch Harbour) which offer any opportunity to get supplies; only Dutch Harbour, right to the east has repair facilities. Fuelling at Sweepers Cove (Dutch Harbour) is no problem except perhaps in strong easterlies. Fuel is somewhat more expensive than elsewhere. There is also a store there which has a reasonable range of supplies and even a few bits of hardware. At Dutch Harbour there is a much more extensive range of supplies and services available. Water can be taken on when fuelling.

## Aleutian Islands Passes

Tides run very strongly through the Aleutian Islands passes. In some cases at springs it would be very difficult for many yachts to make headway against the flow and in wind against current conditions some passes become dangerous. When choosing a pass for entry to the Bering Sea, suitable account should be taken of the likely state of tide. Tides and currents (where available) are reasonably accurately predicted by both CMap and the Admiralty 'Total Tide' programs, so long as the computer is set to the correct time zone and time.

## Aleutian Islands and Anchorages

*(Click on the Google Map link beneath a map to see the Google Map presentation)*

Attu Island

Massacre Bays incl Pyramid Bay, Navy Cove, Casco Cove; Chicagof harbour

Agattu Island

Shemya Island

Kiska Island

Kisko Hbr, Gertrude Bay

Little Sitkin Island

Rat Island

Amchitka Island

Kanaga Island

Adak Island and Kagalaska Island

Sweeper Cove, Bay of Islands (Beverly Cove, Trappers Cove, Fisherman's Cove, Unalaga Bight), Three Arm Cove, Bay of Waterfalls, Hidden Cove, Quail Cove

Atka Islands

Bechiven Bay, Kigun Bay, Egg Bay, Martin Hbr, Nazan Bay

Amlia Island

Umnak Island

Unalaska Island

Chernfsky Hbr, Dutch Harbour

Akutan Island

Unimak Island

False Pass, Dora Harbour

## Attu Island 53°N 173°W

In an 1880 census Attu was listed as having 107 people. This went down to 101 in 1890 and then to only 44 in 1940. When this island was occupied by the Japanese in 1941 these last people were forcible removed. The Japanese held the island for 18 months before they were forced to retreat by the US Army. Once home to 100,000 armed personal, it is now deserted except for a Loran station located at Massacre Bay manned by 20 United States Coast Guard personal. There remains a sense of history here, amidst the beauty and solitude.

**Charts:** NOAA 16420, NOAA 16423, small scale charts NOAA 16430, NOAA 16431, NOAA 16432 and NOAA 16433.



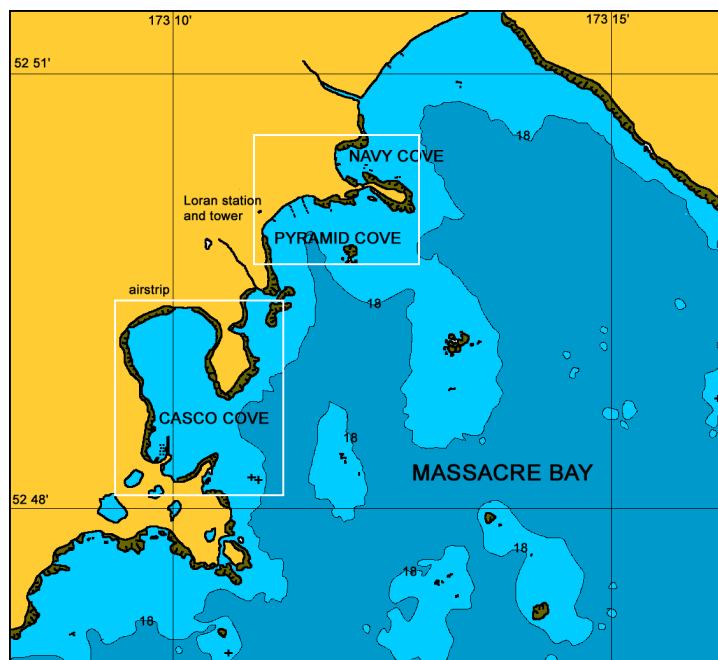
**Approach:** All reefs and rocky outcrops are within a mile or so from shore except in the region of Massacre Bay on the southeastern end where there are some isolated reefs and islets lying up to 6 miles offshore.

**Anchorage:** Massacre Bay, which includes Casco Cove, Navy Cove and Pyramid Cove, and Chichagof Harbour. There are several potential anchorages on the east and northeast coasts of the island. Chichagoff Bay on the northeast corner is reputed to be excellent except in the northeast to east conditions.

## Massacre Bay 52° 49'N 173° 13'.5W

Massacre Bay is a large bay protected to some degree by the many off-shore rocky reefs. At the retaking of Attu by the US Forces during WW2, Massacre Bay claimed 70 of their 74 landing-craft in the first 10 days of engagement due mainly to the fog and conditions. Nowadays, with modern charts and GPS positioning there is very little to cause concern. There is a well-maintained track leading up to Engineers Hill from the current Loran station.

**Charts:** NOAA 16421, NOAA 16423, large scale chart NOAA 16432.



[Go to Googlemap](#)

**Approach:** Out to sea there are no dangers but as you approach you need to keep a lookout for the many reefs and rocky outcrops, all of which are marked on the chart. There are no navigational beacons in this area although, if there is no fog, the Loran tower stands out (a guess is that it is around 220mts (700ft) high.) It is lit up at night.



[Go to Googlemap](#)

**Navy Cove** 52° 59'.4N 173° 12'.5W

**Charts:** NOAA 16421, NOAA 16423, large scale chart NOAA 16432.

Not visited by boat but checked out by foot. The remains of the jetty shown on the chart are still visible but are now just a few stumps on the shore. Being close to the end of a long valley, gusts of wind coming off the mountains could be stronger than at Casco Cove. This cove is closer to the manned Loran station than Casco Cove. This is the closest reportedly safe anchorage to leave your boat should you decide to hike up to Engineers Hill. World War II relics are lying around everywhere and the main WW II base appears to have been in this area.

**Approach:** Although this anchorage is at the head of Massacre Cove you should experience no problems when using the correct chart

**Anchoring:** This anchorage has been visited by two boats that we know of. One drew 1.8 m, the other was a centreboarder drawing 0.8 m.



Looking over the northern end of Casco Cove into Massacre Bay. The Loran station at Pyramid Cove, including part of the airstrip that services it, is visible to the left of the photo.

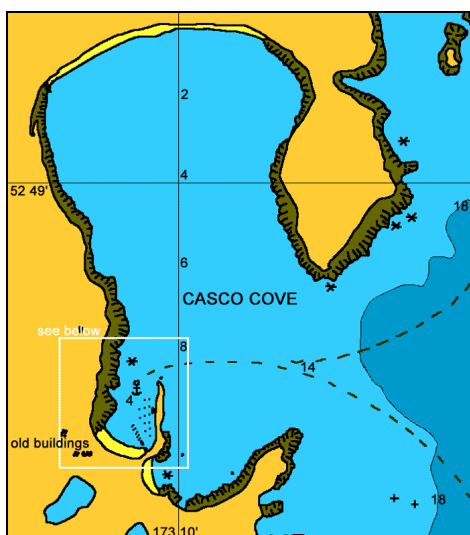
**Pyramid Cove** 52° 49'.9N 173° 11'.5W

**Anchoring:** The NZ trawler yacht *Starlight* reported anchoring overnight between the ruins of the two long jetties that lie in front of the current Loran station at 52° 49'.9N 173° 10'.1E, before re-anchoring in Casco Cove the following day. The bottom was black sand. This is suitable as a calm weather anchorage and is right in front of the Loran Station. Casco Cove and Navy Inlet are both only 10 to 15 minutes away from this spot and offer better shelter.

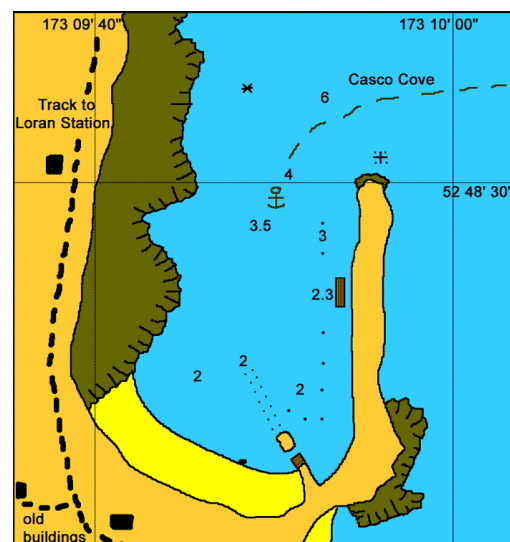
**Facilities:** There is a small store for Coast Guard Personal at the Loran Station where Attu caps and tee shirts are available. It also carried crisps, chocolates and various other snacks which, if they have a good supply, you may be able to purchase some of. However, keep in mind that access to the store, which is for base personal, will depending on the policies of the current commander. There are no diesel or repair facilities available at the Loran Station. They are also not equipped in any way to affect a rescue. Their only vessel is a small inflatable kept for recreational purposes.

**Casco Cove** 52°48'.6N 173° 10'.2W

**Charts:** NOAA 16421, NOAA 16423, large scale harbour chart NOAA 16432.



[Go to Googlemap](#)



**Approach:** There are many rocks in this area but all appear to be well marked on the chart. There is plenty of room to manoeuvre between the various widespread rocky outcrops and reefs.

**Anchoring:** *Fine Tolerance* anchored in two spots. The first was at 52° 48'.7N 173° 10'.1E in 8m, black sand, good holding. This spot can get a bit rolly when there is a swell running outside and, after sounding out the area with a lead line from the dinghy, we moved and re-anchored at 52° 48'.5N 173° 09'.8E. in 3.5 m. This puts you further in behind the breakwater. The bottom here is also black sand with a light weed cover. A centreboard yacht drawing 0.8m has reportedly tied to the old seaplane poles that are just inside the breakwater. If the wind is from the north you may wish to anchor in the northern part of the bay. There do not appear to be any rocks or obstructions here, although you will need to anchor about 200 plus meters out as this northern end of the cove gently slopes up. It appears to be all good holding black sand.

The anchorage would be uncomfortable in a strong easterly, but only become untenable if a largish swell develops from that direction. It gives good protection from all other directions depending where in the cove one anchors. Holding is very good in sand. There is some kelp, but not enough to cause problems.

Casco Cove also allows good access to the various, now defunct, military installations. WW2 relics abound here. If you walk out on the track towards the coast you will come across heavy gun sites with trenches and wooden ammo' racks. In 2003 there was a nine person archaeologist team evacuating an early Aleut home which dated back to pre-Russian times. The old buildings at the south end of the cove were once the Loran station. It, and the associated airstrip, are still in good condition and effectively moth-balled. The Loran tower has been removed. There is a survival hut next to the airstrip near the station. It has food, medical supplies, a small petrol generator, heater and VHF radio. Longer hikes are also possible in the open terrain.

A stream, which is convenient for watering, comes down to the western shore of the cove.

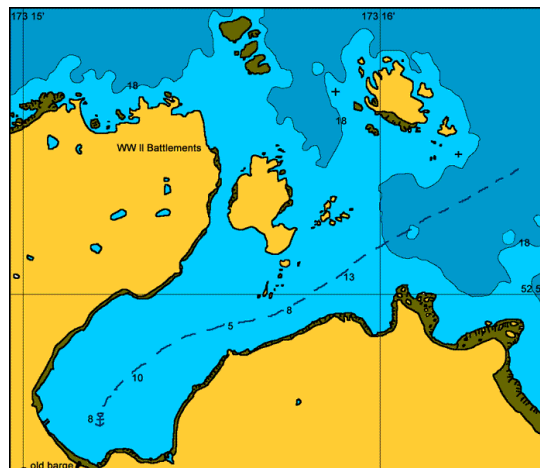


Looking into the southern end of Casco Cove. Seaplane poles and jetty ruins visible.



**Chichagof Harbour** 52° 56'.3N 173° 16'.2W

**Charts:** NOAA 16421, large scale chart NOAA 16433.



[Go to googlemap](#)

**Approach:** The trip around the eastern part of the island from between Massacre Cove and Chichagof Harbour passes two large sea lion rookeries. The entrance may be hard to identify, although once identified it is quite wide and safe. You may encounter some kelp in the passage. However, it is not thick and your prop should be able to chew it up. The US scientific research vessel *Tiglak*, which had been doing research in the Aleutians for the preceding 17 years, reported in 2003 that it would have been impossible to get into the harbour some years previously due to the kelp in the entrance. But with the decrease of the sea otter population, and with the corresponding increase of the sea urchin population, the kelp has largely disappeared. Depending on wind and sea conditions the large bays to either side of Chichagof Harbour also offer good anchorages.

**Anchoring:** In 2003, *Fine Tolerance* anchored in 10 meters at 52° 55'.5N 173° 14'.3 E, off the wooden barge lying on the beach and the remains of the jetty. This harbour also has good holding black sand. They found no evidence of the many wrecks that are shown on the chart as sunken in the harbour.



From the head of the bay, looking north out to the islands that guard the Harbour. Entrance is from the channel to the right side of the picture. Entrance left is only suitable for dinghies.

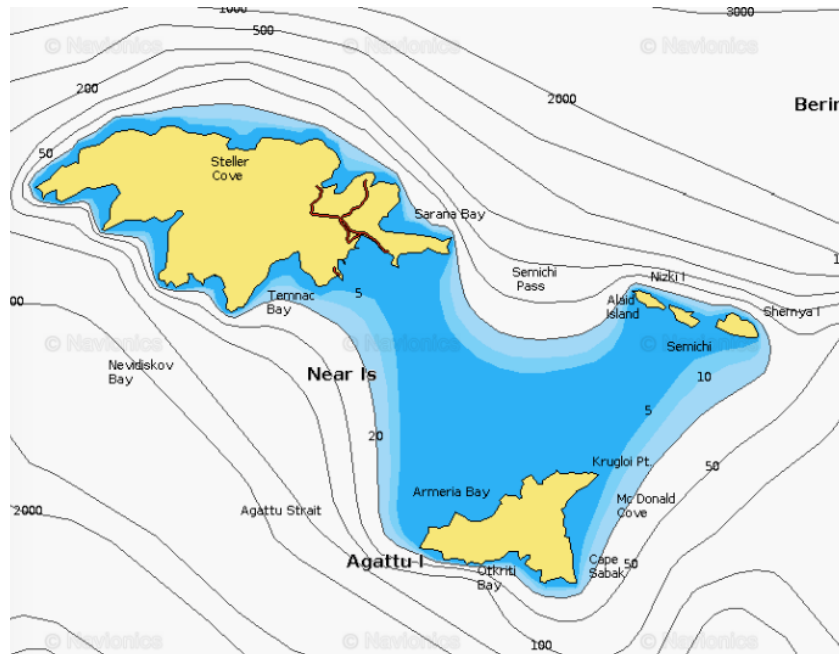
Once again, this is a treasure trove of WW2 remains. A walk up the track on the western edge of the harbour to the head leads to many relics. The plaque on the flat at the head of the bay commemorates the Aleut villages that were interned by the Japanese. You can also walk cross country up to Engineers Hill from here. Gibson Island, one of the islands in the entrance has a small sea lion colony on it. A killer whale came cruising into the harbour while we were there, an indication that the river flowing into the east side of the harbour has a salmon run.



## Agattu Island 52° 25'.4N 173° 36'.8N

Agattu was an important USA air base situated on this island during the Second World War. It is now a deserted island with war relics.

**Charts:** NOAA 16421, NOAA 16423, small scale chart NOAA 16434.



[Go to Googlemap](#)

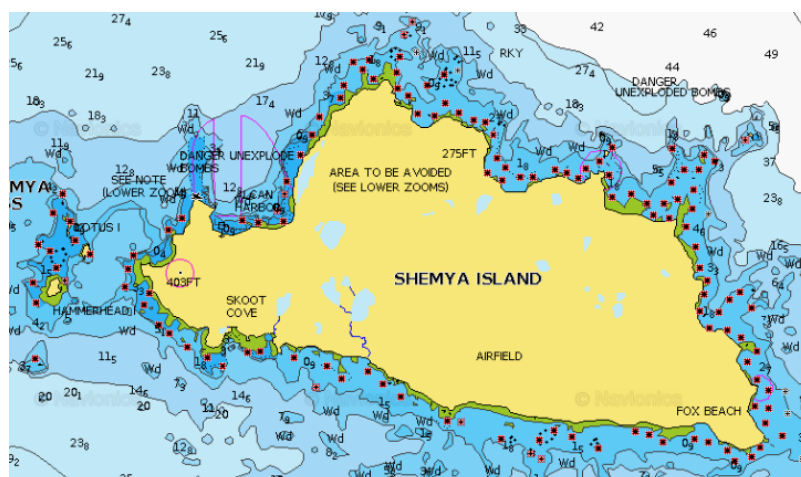
**Anchorage:** In 2003 the MV *Starlight* anchored off the north shore.

## Shemya Island 52° 42'.8N 173° 05'.8W

*Fine Tolerance says (2003)* Stop here at your peril. This is still an active US base. — for refuelling and diversions but rumoured to have something to do with 'Star Wars'. Visiting or anchoring of any kind is not permitted and it is advised that this island not be approached in any way.

**Charts:** NOAA 16421, large scale harbour chart NOAA 16436.

**Anchoring:** The harbour is close to being an open roadstead, completely open to all winds from the northerly direction.

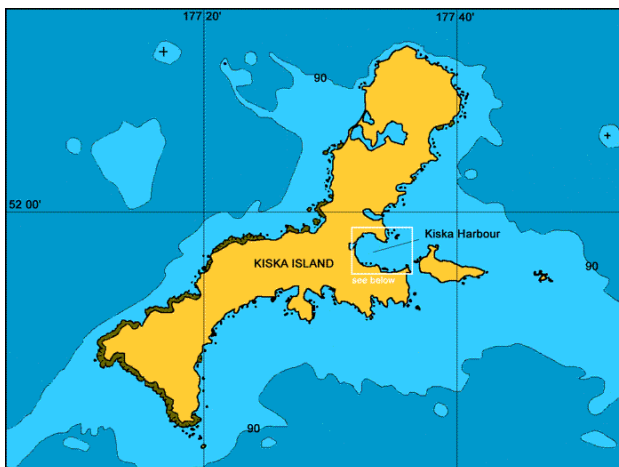


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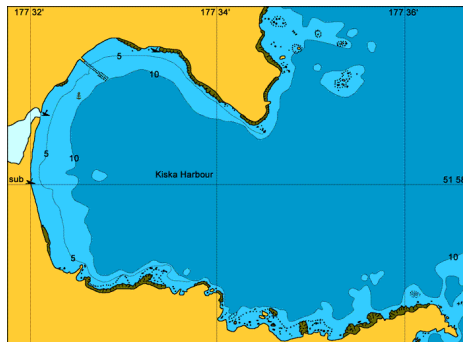
## Kiska Island

**Kiska Harbour** 51° 58'.61N 177° 32'.59E

**Charts:** NOAA 16441, large scale harbour chart NOAA 16442.



**Approach:** Kiska Harbour is a large bay with good protection except from ENE to ESE. Because it is large it can be subject to swell from the north through east. Approaching the bay from the north, there may be rough conditions off the northeastern point even in moderate winds. There are some rocks about but they are clearly marked on the charts and there is plenty of room to avoid them. The entrance is wide and safe. If the fog is not thick you should be able to see the guns on the top of both headlands as you enter through the northern passage into the harbour. Details of the southern passage are not known.





Looking out over the harbour from the northwest corner. Jetty ruins and ship wreck in view.

There is a sign on the beach warning of unexploded ordnances in the area. *Fine Tolerance* came across whole areas littered with old, rusting, live ammo. Also 10 inch shells lying around that were used for the large, intact guns on the headlands. The wrecks against the shore are very interesting. There is a Japanese two-man submarine on what used to be its slip. There is an old wooden road, the 1940s tip, and the list goes on and on.

**Gertrude Cove** 51° 55'.93N 177° 27'.31E

Good anchorage in easterly winds to which Kiska harbour is exposed. Anchor 6m in sand, some kelp patches. It is possible to anchor inside the wreck in strong stormy weather - Sea Lion colony at entrance, river at head of cove. If approaching from Kiska harbour, hug the western shore off South Head to avoid all dangers.

## Rat Island

**Gunners Cove** 51° 48'.7N 178° 18'.9W

An easy entrance but the anchorage is very exposed to the north. In calm weather, it makes a good stopover when sailing between Kiska Island and Constantine Harbour.

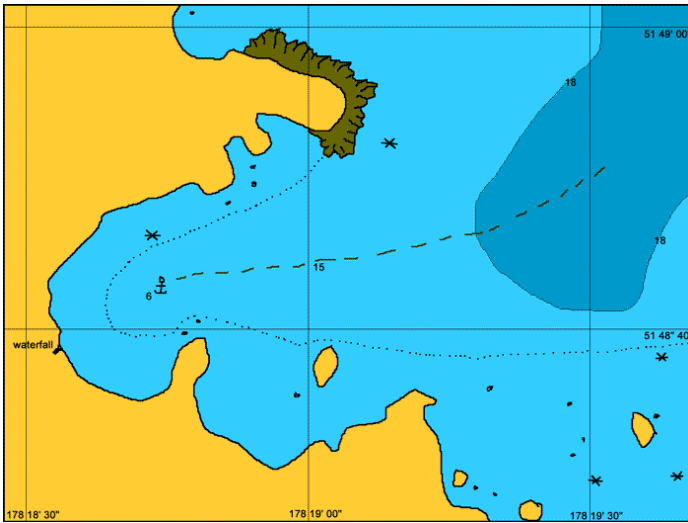
**Charts:** NOAA 16441, NOAA 16450.



[Go to Googlemap](#)

**Approach:** There are no off-shore dangers here.

**Anchoring:** *Fine Tolerance* went just inside the rocky island on the eastern side of the cove and anchored at 51°48'.7N 178°18'.7E in 6 m on a rocky bottom. As this area was all rock and not sand, the bottom was easily seen. They only stayed one night in breathless conditions. With a north wind, it would be a dangerous anchorage.

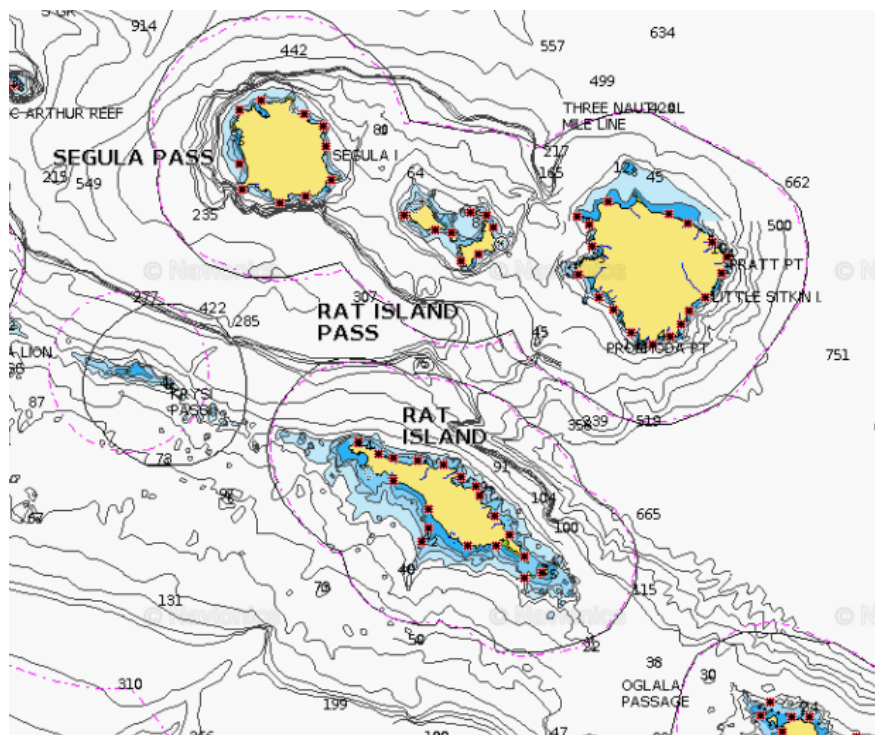


Rat Island anchorage, looking northward from above the waterfall at the head of the bay.

There is a waterfall at the head of the bay for filling up water containers. There is good beach combing here. All sorts of flotsam seem to end up in this cove. We filled up our portable water bottles from the waterfall directly in front of the anchorage.

## Little Sitkin Island

**West Bight** 51° 57'.33N 178° 27'.61E



Good anchorage in easterly winds in 8m sand, though prone to williwaws. If approaching from the west, Tanadak Pass deserves respect; there are significant tide rips in calm weather but less kelp than advised by the Pilot.

## Amchitka Island

**Constantine Harbour** 51° 24'.5N 179° 18'.3W

***Fine Tolerance says Be Warned:*** This island, while it appears to be cleaned up, was the site of US nuclear bomb tests in the 1970s. We did walk across bright green pools of water when walking around on shore and, although this may have been caused by naturally forming algae, it looked mighty suspicious to us and so we left the next morning. This is quite a large harbour and would accommodate a few hundred yachts. The runway, seen at the head of the harbour when entering, is just a minor one compared with the main ones further inland. We were informed that the wharf, by far the best one in the Aleutians, was built solely for the clean-up program undertaken after testing was abandoned. Although well cleaned up there were still many items of interest lying around.

**Charts:** NOAA 16450, large scale harbour chart NOAA 16446.



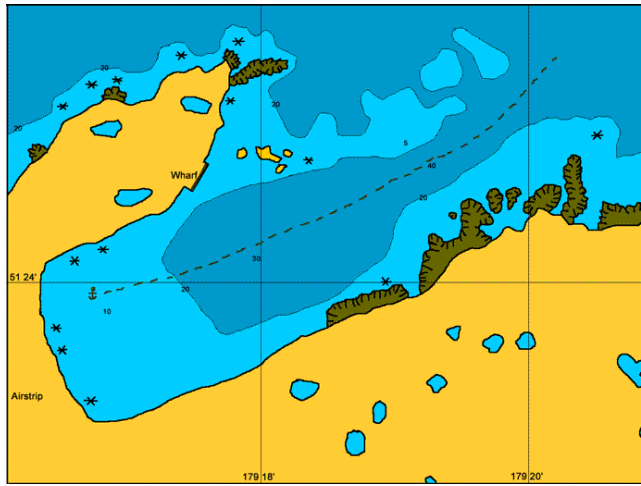
**Approach:** There are no off-shore dangers and this is a nice, easy harbour entrance to negotiate. It appears that one could sneak in through the gap to the west of the entrance islands but we felt that would be asking for trouble. The mooring buoys shown on the charts as inside the harbour entrance no longer exist. There is a certain exposure to the north and the large concrete wharf carried a sign warning not to remain tied alongside in a blow due to waves entering the harbour.

**Anchoring:** We headed well into the harbour and dropped anchor in 9 m on rock and black sand at 51° 24'N 179° 15'.7E. Kelp lay in long strands throughout a lot of the harbour but did not present any problems to either the yacht or dinghy.

MV *Starlight* reported anchoring between the wharfs and the entrance islands 18 m.



Looking out over the wharf to the island at the mouth of the bay.

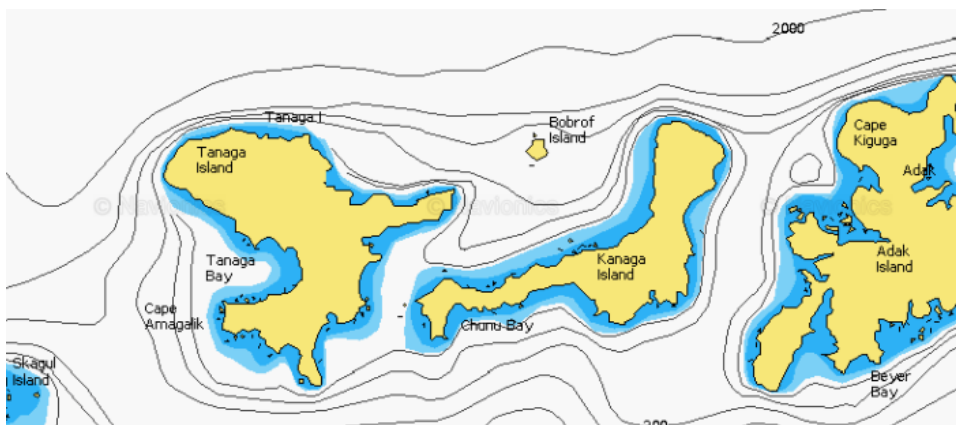


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## Tanaga Island

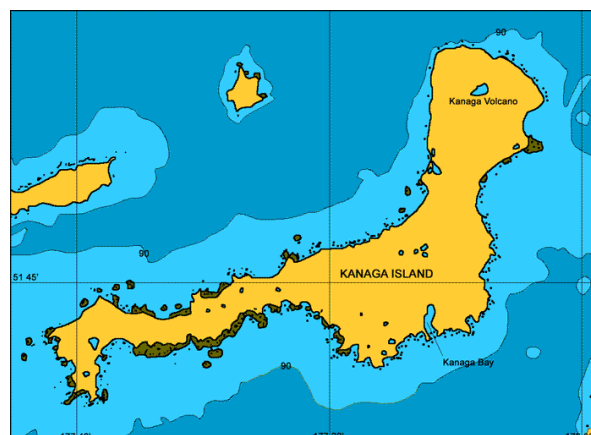
**South Bay** 51° 38'.82N 177° 58'.01W.

Reasonable anchorage in northerly weather but open to Pacific swell. Good holding in mud, No shack, many bald eagles. Note: Tanaga Pass is uncomfortable, even in quiet weather, until south of Cape Amagalik.

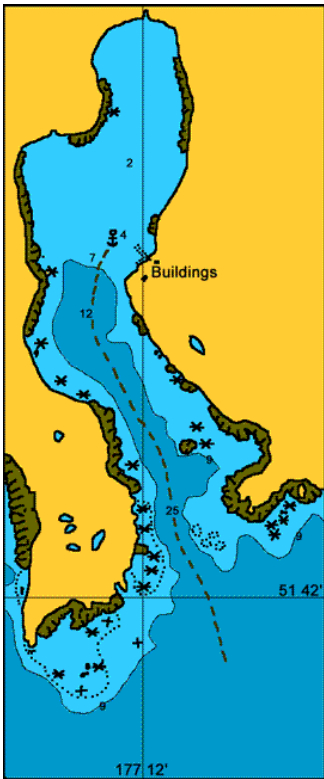


## Kanaga Island Bay 51° 42'.1N 177° 11'.6W

Charts: NOAA 16467







[Go to Googlemap](#)

**Approach:** The entrance to this bay is on the Pacific Ocean side and as such is subject to more swell than the Bering Sea side. It is easily identified from the waves breaking on the rocks on either side and is wide and clear although all around are clumps of rock and kelp. With a large swell we would imagine that this entrance could be impassable. On the day we entered, and also on the day we left, the swell would have been a meter with no seas. This presented no trouble.

There is a long wide channel leading up to the bay proper which, by keeping a central path, is easily negotiated. Inside is completely protected from any swell.

**Anchoring:** We anchored out from the ruins of an old fox farm in 4 m, good mud. Position 51° 43'N 179° 12'W. (Note West!) We imagine that the entire bay would be an excellent anchoring ground. It would depend entirely on your draft as it would most likely be rather shallow

There is an abandoned fox farm and Fisheries and Wildlife have a hut here with emergency supplies. There is a plaque on the hill behind the buildings in memory of a plane crash in the 1930s. There were also some abandoned buildings visible in the valley opposite where we anchored but we did not go and check them out.



Kanaga Island, looking out over the deserted fox farm and jetty ruins.

## Adak Island 51° 47'.5N 176° 38'.4W and Kagalaska Island

There are several possible anchorages. **Sweeper Cove is the only place west of Dutch Harbour where supplies are available.** There is also a twice weekly air service from Anchorage, Alaska.

**Charts:** NOAA 16460, NOAA 16471, large scale charts NOAA 16474, NOAA 16476 and NOAA 16476.



An eagle swooping on salmon. One of the many scenes to see on the waters around Adak Island.



## Sweeper Cove 51° 51'.5N 176° 38'W

Sweeper Cove provides a sudden return to western civilization. It is a large, well-built town constructed by the US Navy for over 8000 military personnel once stationed here. The current population is about 60 (2018). Walking the streets, Phil Hogg of *Finelines* was reminded of the Neville Shute novel 'On the Beach'. Houses are in perfect order, streets, paths and playgrounds are all in place. Everything of a town this size is as it should be, except there are no people. The Aleutian's summer Headquarters for the Fisheries and Wildlife is here. They have quite a bit of literature on the Aleutians available.

The locals and fishermen are extremely friendly seeing so few new faces. *Fine Lines* were given a 'guided car tour', visiting many old military sites, had showers in a private house and had supper with another local.

**Charts:** NOAA 16480, NOAA 16471, large scale chart NOAA 16476



Shows *Brother Wind* track to Inner Harbour 2018

[Go to Googlemap](#)

**Approach:** The harbour entrance is marked by maintained lights and buoys. (In 2018 there was no longer a Harbour Master available through Ch16.) There are some rocky islands on the outside of the harbour but with the chart and beacons it is a very easy harbour to enter. It is possible to continue past the docks to the inner harbour (bottom left of chartlet above).

**Anchoring:** The docks have been constructed with big ships in mind, as has the fuel dock, and *Finelines* was allowed to raft off one of the old navy tugs which made life easy for them. 'We don't know if anchoring is allowed within the harbour as we never needed to and the subject never came up.' In the past, most yachts which stopped at the Cove did not generally lie alongside the large piers, which are in reasonable repair, but pretty rough. In any case, the cost of lying at the piers is \$100/night. Some anchored off, though the Cove is quite deep. Others moved to nearby anchorages in Finger Bay. Recently there has been dredging to reopen the small boat basin in the southwest corner of the Cove. There is now about 3.5 m in the entrance to the basin, with somewhat more inside and room to manoeuvre for yachts up to about 50'. There is excellent protection here and even in strong easterlies there is little surge. The cost, if collected, is less than \$10/night. **In 2018** *Brother Wind* advised berthing in this inner harbour, avoiding kelp on the narrows, which may be attached to rock. The dock here is high but there is a ladder for scrambling up if no one is around to take lines. Small fishing boats also use this harbour so leave space.

**Formalities:** Sweeper Cove is not a port of entry. There is no longer a harbour master stationed there and the previous facility to do a preliminary check into Alaska was no longer available in 2018.

**Facilities:** The settlement has most basic amenities – including a burger restaurant in town and a bar - and there is a store (in 2018 it opened at 1730 for a couple of hours daily) with plenty of dry goods, cans and alcohol. Long life milk and bread are available. The locals are very welcoming and helpful. Apart from diesel, all supplies are flown in, so expect prices to be relatively high. Diesel, food, liquor and limited hardware are available, and there is a US Post Office in town. The fuel dock is at the western end of the harbour. It is in fairly good condition and yachts should be able to lie alongside to fuel except in moderate to strong easterly conditions. However, in 2018 it could be delivered by mini tanker which is a much better option than going to the big dock – call on VHF Ch16. There are no laundry or shower facilities nor are there any commercial repair facilities. There are regular flights each week from Anchorage via Dutch Harbour, weather permitting. Flights may repeatedly be cancelled due to low lying fog.

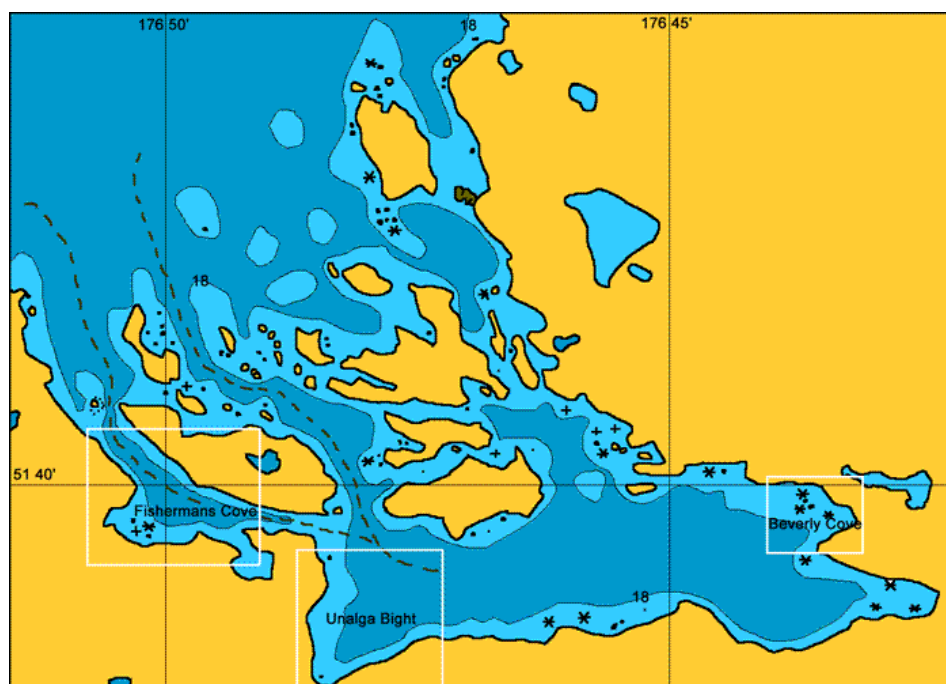


Fine Tolerance lying alongside two old navy tugs on one of the jetties in Sweepers Cove.

## Bay of Islands 51° 49'.7N 176° 49'.5W

A true gem. There are many places where one can anchor within this protected area. This is a beautiful and peaceful place.

**Charts:** NOAA 16467; large scale chart NOAA 16474.



[Go to Googlemap](#) (heavy cloud cover)

**Approach:** There are a couple of entrances to this bay. Both are wide and easily negotiated but you will need the chart to get into here. There are many rocks at the entrances that lead into the Bay of Islands and although there is plenty of room you need to be alert and sure of where you are. Once inside anchorage possibilities are pretty near unlimited, depending on wind direction.

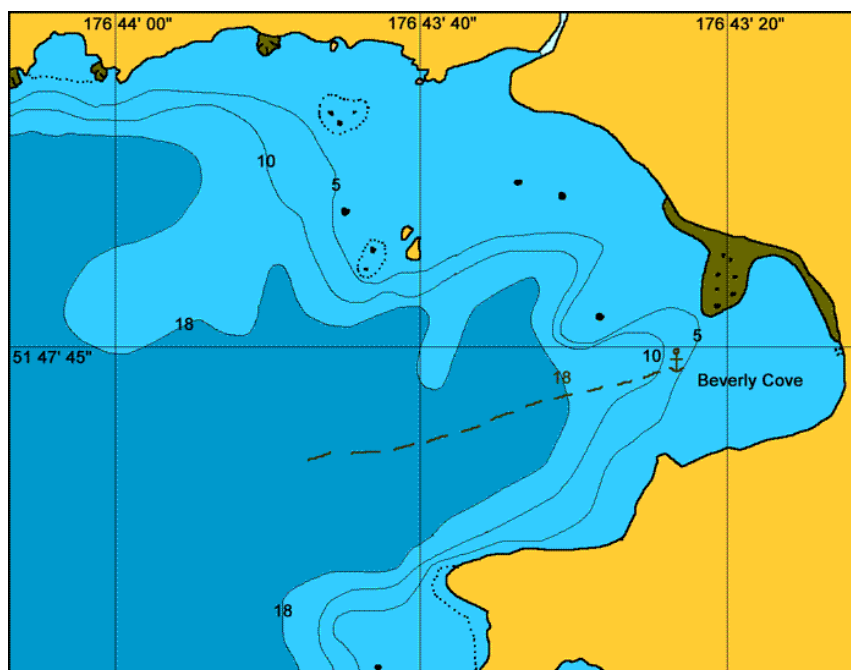


There are secluded anchorages galore in the Bay of Islands

**Beverly Cove, Bay of Islands** 51° 47'.7N 176° 43'.7W

Beverly Cove is near the head of the Bay of Islands. Ruins of a small jetty are on the pebbly shore. Wild life abounds in this area, both above and below the water.

**Charts:** NOAA 16471, large scale chart NOAA 16474.



[Go to Googlemap](#)

**Approach:** There are some rocks that are below water at high tide on the northern side of the bay. However the track in to the anchoring place near the short isthmus that juts out at the southern end of the bay is clear.

**Anchoring:** *Fine Tolerance* anchored at 51° 47'.7N 176° 43'.4W in 8 m. Holding was good. There is some kelp in this area but not enough to cause any trouble.

**Trapper's Cove, Bay of Islands** 51° 47'.519N 176° 49'.185W, 8m

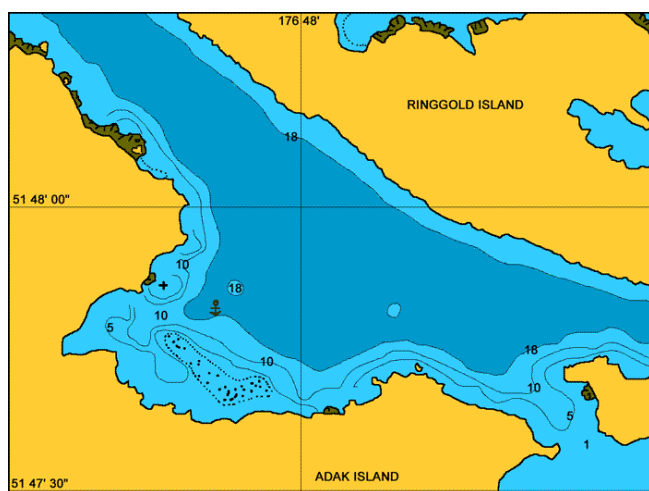
Trapper's Cove is in the Bay of Islands on the northwest corner of Adak Island. The Bay has numerous possibilities for anchoring, but Trapper's Cove is probably the best protected except from the northwest. Though the approach through The Race sounds daunting, in fact we did not find that the tides ran excessively strongly. The entrance to the cove is shallower than the pool inside, but there is plenty of water in the centre despite considerable kelp. There are some isolated rocks on the west side of the cove, but plenty of swinging room even if one anchors somewhat to the west of the position given in order to close the entrance to the cove and get some protection from the northwest. There is heavy weed on the bottom and the anchor requires careful setting; the holding appeared to be good, though we had no strong winds to test this.

There is excellent hiking in the hills around the cove. There are also numerous opportunities to observe wildlife in the area. There are sea otters in Fisherman Cove and in the passages between the islands to the north. There are numerous bald and golden eagles as well as eider ducks and scooters.

#### **Fisherman's Cove, Bay of Islands 51° 48'N 176° 48'W**

This anchorage is just off the southern passage into the Bay of Islands. *Fine Tolerance* used this anchorage only during the day to explore around the nearby area and went back inside the Bay of Islands to anchor at night. The rich water life among the rocky islets and inlets separating the two passages was a spectacle with seals and sea otters all over the place.

**Charts:** NOAA 16471, large scale chart NOAA 16474.



[Go to Googlemap](#)

**Approach:** A simple turn to starboard off an inbound transit through the southern entrance passage will bring you into this small cove on the southern side.

**Anchoring:** We anchored at 51° 47'.8N 176° 50'.3W in 20 m over rock. It took two grabs before the anchor set and we never felt really safe.

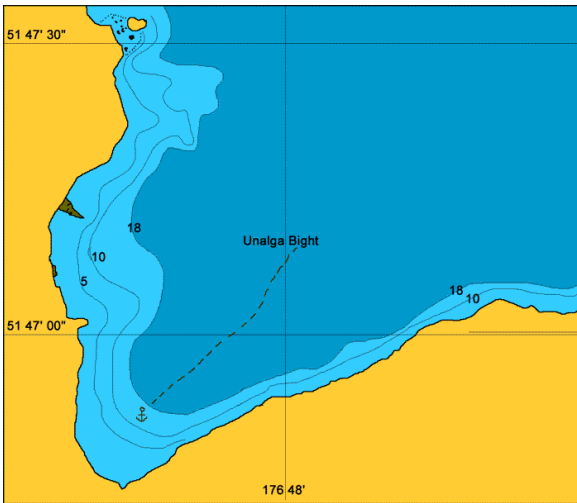
#### **Adak Dora Islands, Bay of Islands 51° 48'.58N 176° 47'.10W**

Anchor in muddy sand. Lovely little cove with swinging room for only one boat. There is a convenient exit from the Bay of Islands through the narrow (38M), but deep, gap at 51 48.79N 176 46.87W.

#### **Unalga Bight, Bay of Islands 51° 47'N 176° 48'W**

Our reason for stopping here was to visit a group of three Fisheries and Wildlife personnel in a camp at the head of Unalga Bight. They were engaged in an extermination experiment on imported rats that are wreaking havoc on the bird nesting sites on one of the islands in the entrance of the bay. This was also the closest safe anchorage to Fisherman's Cove. A nice, peaceful spot.

**Charts:** NOAA 16471, large scale chart NOAA 16474.



[Go to Googlemap](#) The Fisheries and Wild life campsite at the head of Unalga bight

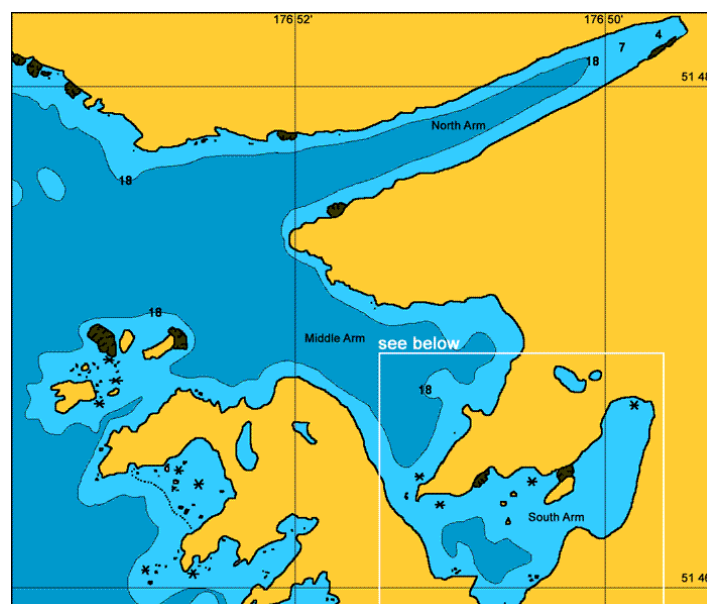
**Approach:** This is a very straightforward approach.

**Anchoring:** *Fine Tolerance* anchored at 51° 46'.9N 176° 48'.4W, which is pretty much in the middle of the bight, over a rocky bottom 16 m deep.

### Three Arm Cove 51° 45'.2N 176° 53'.2W

Three Arm Cove is on the west coast of Adak Island, south of Argonne Point. The entrance to the Bay is wide and deep.

**Charts:** NOAA 16471, NOAA 16467.

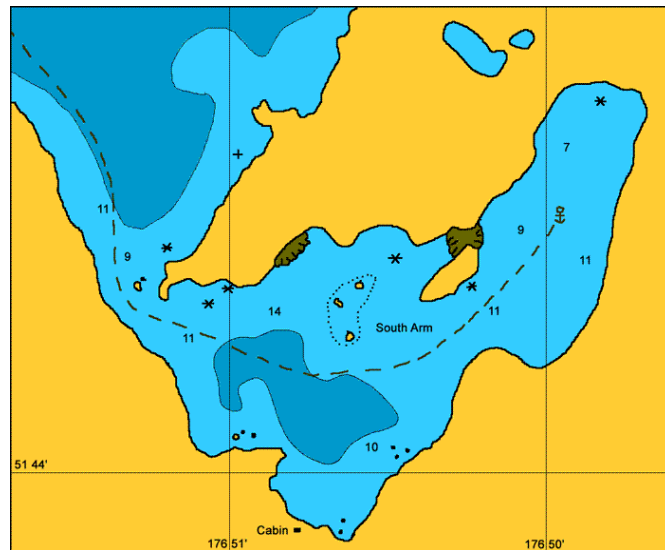




**Approach:** Entrances to North and Middle Arm are straight forward. Middle Arm is suitable for larger ships while the North Arm is exposed to westerly winds.

**South Arm Three Arm Cove** 51° 44'.622N 176 °49'.914W

South Arm is then approached through a narrow, but deep, channel to the west of an islet. This is well charted. There is a rock in the narrow channel as you enter. Keep to the starboard hill side as you enter, leaving the rock to your port side. In clear visibility you will have no problem but it becomes a bit nerve racking when going through here in thick fog.



[Go to Googlemap](#)

**Anchoring:** In the South Arm there is perfect protection from all winds - a true hurricane hole. The anchorage position above is appropriate for north through east to south conditions (7m). For westerly conditions anchorage in the southwestern corner of the Arm might be more appropriate. In strong conditions there are heavy williwaws in the northern section of the anchorage. Though there is heavy weed on the bottom in the indicated anchorage, holding appeared to be good in mud. The anchor must be carefully set.

*Fine Tolerance* anchored in South Arm in 9 m of water at 51° 44'.6N 176° 49'.9W on a good holding mud. You can also anchor off the Fisheries and Wildlife hut which is to starboard a short way after entering through the narrow entrance. There was quite a bit of kelp but not thick enough to present any problems.



The entrance to South Arm showing the rock that you need to leave to the port side of your boat as you enter.

There are excellent opportunities for hiking and caribou may be spotted on the surrounding hills. Archaeologists have investigated prehistoric Aleut habitation sites near the southwest corner of the Arm. The Wildlife and Fisheries hut indicated on the chart and in the pilot has collapsed.

You can fill up with water from the waterfall near the anchoring area. We also dinghied around to the head of North Arm and walked the hill which gave a good view of the Bay of Islands. There are introduced caribou in this area.

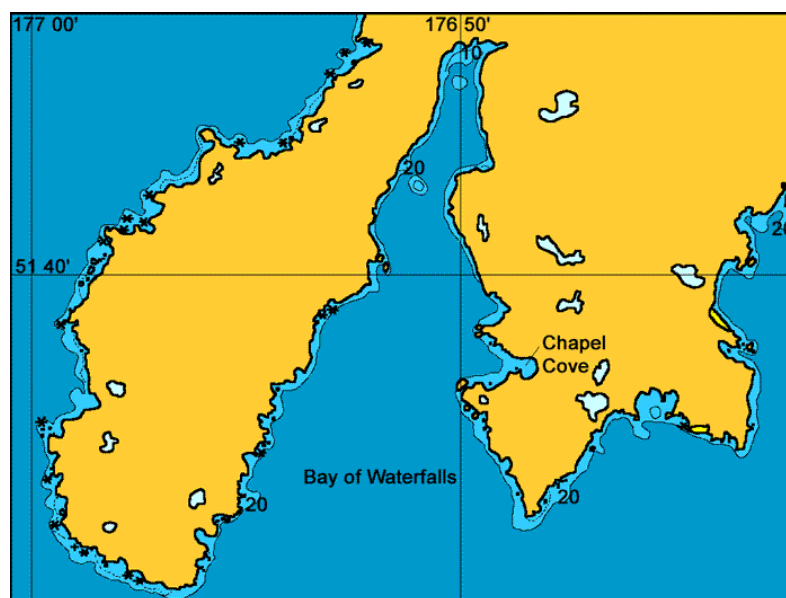


Inside South Arm from near the Fisheries and Wildlife cabin.

### Chapel Cove, Bay of Waterfalls 51° 39'N 176° .51'W

This is a large open bay with, when we were there, surprising few waterfalls. It is very open to the south. Chapel Cove, on the eastern side, seems to be the pick of the places to stop. MV *Starlight* reported backing up to the waterfall in this cove and using a funnel and hose to fill up their water tanks. There is a Wildlife hut in this cove also but little else. The caribou that were imported by the armed forces for recreational hunting purposes are said to congregate at this end of the island.

**Charts:** NOAA 16460, NOAA 16471, NOAA 16467.



[Go to Googemap](#) (Foggy image):

**Approach:** There are no dangers in the Bay of Waterfalls but when entering Chapel Cove there is a rock in the centre of the entrance to the cove. We left this rock to starboard when entering.

**Anchoring:** *Fine Tolerance* anchored here at 51° 38'.6N 176° 49'.9W in 8 m on a rocky bottom. We were not really happy with this anchorage and after spending half a day looking around here moved on.

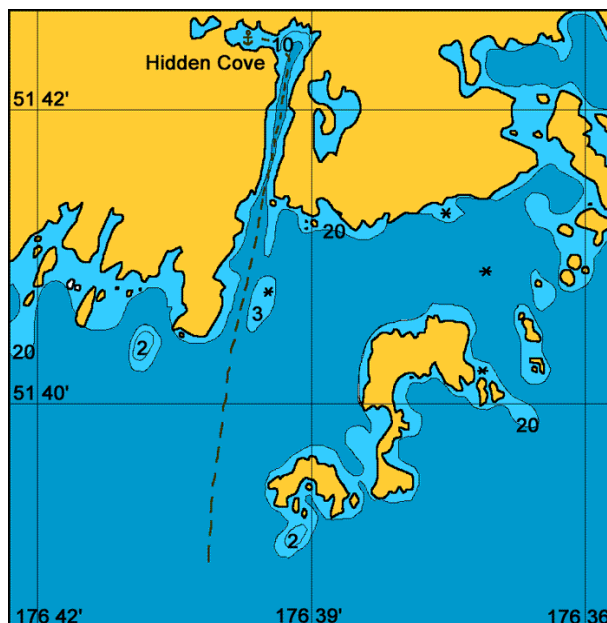


Chapel Cove anchorage showing the refuge cabin and rock near the centre of the bay.

### **Hidden Cove** 51° 41'N 176° 40'W

This is another hurricane hole with protection from all winds. The entrance is open to the Pacific but is wide and deep and it would take a large storm and swell to shut this entrance down. Hidden Bay is on the south coast of Adak Island. Though narrow, the approach to the Bay is clear and deep, with only a single, well charted rocky reef close to the east of the channel. The anchorage in the pool at the head of the Bay is quite deep, but holding appears to be good and the sides of the pool are mostly steep-to. Protection should be excellent, though there might be williwaws in strong conditions. It is also possible that the outer end of the entrance channel would become dangerous in conditions of heavy southerly swell, though it seems unlikely that much surge would penetrate into the anchorage itself. The anchorage is attractive and there is a stream at the western end suitable for taking on water.

**Charts:** NOAA 16460, NOAA 16471, large scale chart NOAA 16475.



[Go to Googlemap](#)

**Approach:** From seaward, there are many large rocky islets which are well marked on the charts. The entrance through these to the long channel that leads up into Hidden Cove is wide and should present no problems. There are no hidden dangers when keeping a middle course in the long, fiord like entrance channel.



**Anchoring:** When we first entered the wind was from the east and we anchored in front of an old hand rail unloading system left over from the war. This was on a rocky bottom. The wind shifted and we moved and re anchored at 51°42'.5N 176° 39'.1W in 17 m on a mud bottom. We investigated the small coves on the north side of this cove by dinghy but found these too shallow for anchoring.



Hidden Cove, Looking eastward from the head of the bay.

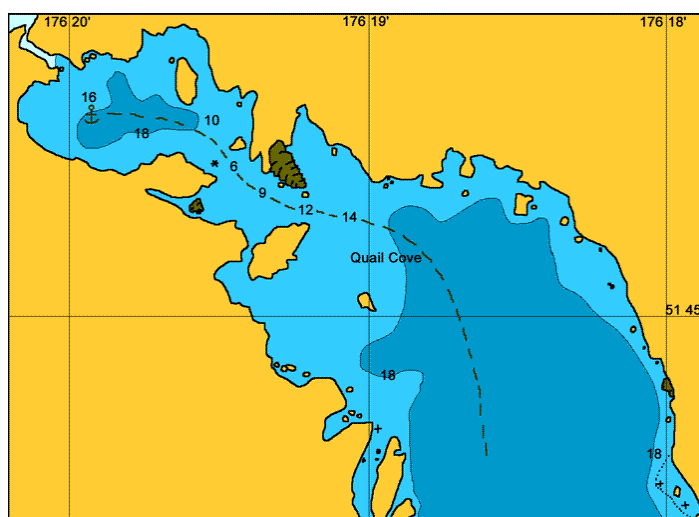
Fisheries and Wildlife have a hut here behind which is an attractive valley. There are ruins of an old lookout post on the hill behind the rail like offloading system at the eastern end of the bay.

## Kagalaska Island

**Quail Cove** 51° 45'N 176° 18'.8W

A narrow entrance. Do not attempt an entry if sea state is rough. There is some kelp in the entrance but not enough to cause concern. Inside is a relatively deep but completely protected anchorage. There is salmon fishing in season.

**Charts:** NOAA 16471, large scale chart NOAA 16477.



[Go to Googlemap](#) (cloudy)

**Approach:** There are many rocks around the outer entrance which in a large swell would make this anchorage impossible to enter. There are some narrows before the bay opens out. Keep to the middle of the channel.

**Anchoring:** Anywhere in this cove seems to be OK. *Fine Tolerance* anchored in mud in 20 m at 51° 45'.4N 176° 19'.8W in company with the US cruising yacht *Dreamtime* and the Adak harbour master who had run around for some salmon fishing.

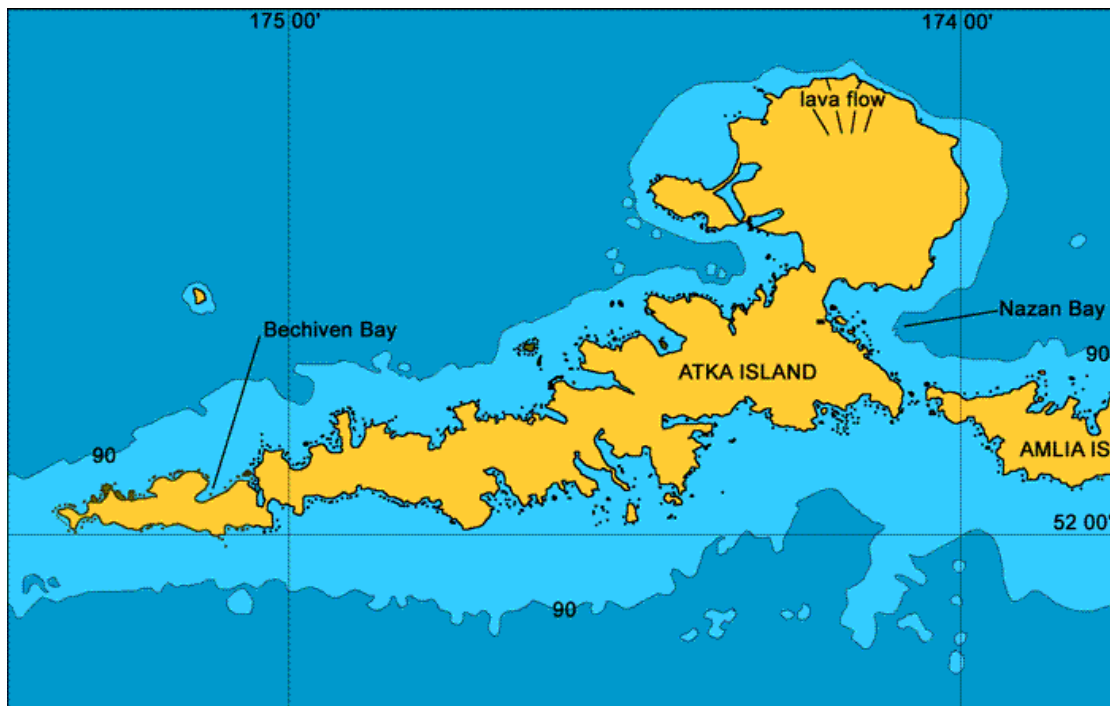


The photo of Quail Cove shows a common sight in the Aleutians. Clear skies over the land with fog hanging just offshore. You can hike around the lake above the anchorage (about 3 hrs).

## Atka Island 52° 08'N 174° 23'W

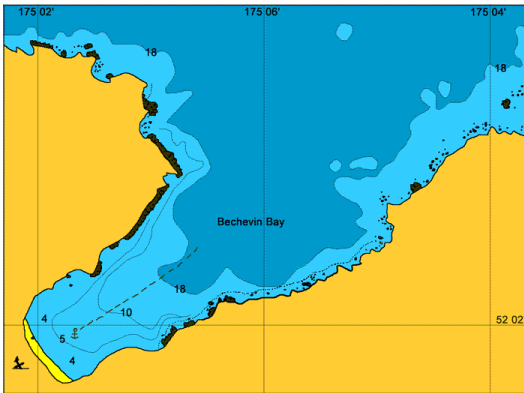
The north coast is spectacular, and appears to have many anchorages in addition to Bechevin Bay.

**Charts:** NOAA 16480, large scale chart NOAA 16486.



### Bechevin Bay 52° 02'.1N 175° 07'.6W

An easy bay to enter, but exposed to north east winds and does seem to create a south wind all of its own. There is reportedly a nearly fully intact B-24 Liberator 4 engine bomber just behind the berm at the head of the bay.



**Approach:** Easy open approach.

**Anchoring:** *Fine Tolerance* anchored at the head of the bay in 10 m, excellent holding in black sand at 52° 02'.1N 175° 07'.6W.

[Go to Googlemap](#)

There also appear to be many other anchorages around this island.

### Kigun Bay 52° 01'.62N 175° 17'.82W

The tides run extremely fast through Atika Pass. *Brother Wind* found Kigan Bay provided a very good anchorage in 10m sand; they were well protected in good holding with 25 knots wind from the SE.

### Egg Bay 52° 10'.27N 174° 25'.08W

This is a deep bay, very pretty and well sheltered from all directions. *Brother Wind*, anchored in 10m light mud and happily sat out a SE gale here despite being blasted with 40 knot gusts..

### Martin Harbour 52° 12'.58N 174° 17'.0W

Easy approach. Secure anchorage in mud/sand in most weather at head of bay (which shelves steeply) Many halibut.

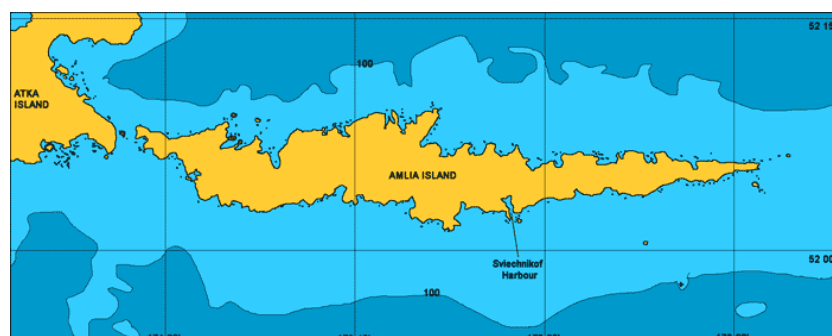
### Nazan Bay 52° 11'.55N 174° 11'.31W

For boats less than 50 feet, there is plenty of swinging room between Bolshoi Islands and Atka itself, giving good all-round protection. Anchor in 9m mud. Approach requires care to avoid shoals.

Small village (100 Aleuts plus contract workers at the cannery) with church, shop (better stocked than in Sweeper Cove, and homemade bread), free unlimited internet 24/7 outside school, just beyond shop, or during office hours at the 'City Office', on top of the hill, with permission from the City Clerk. Friendly.

### Amlia Island 52° 05'N 173° 31'W

Charts: NOAA 16480.

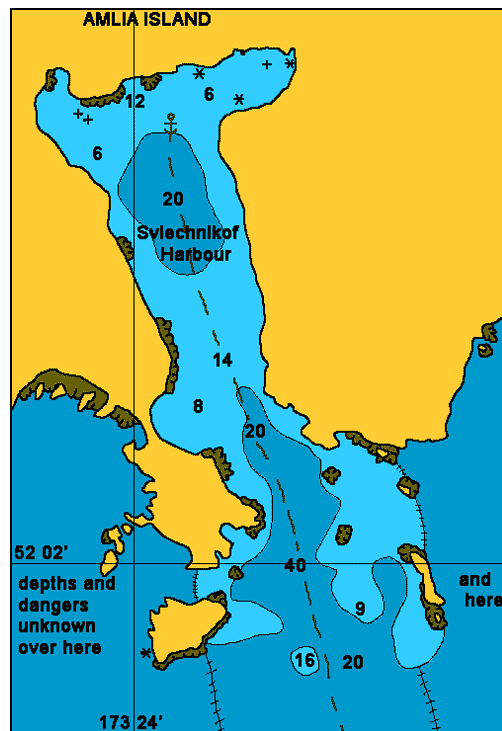


[Go to Googlemap](#)

## Sviechnikof Harbour

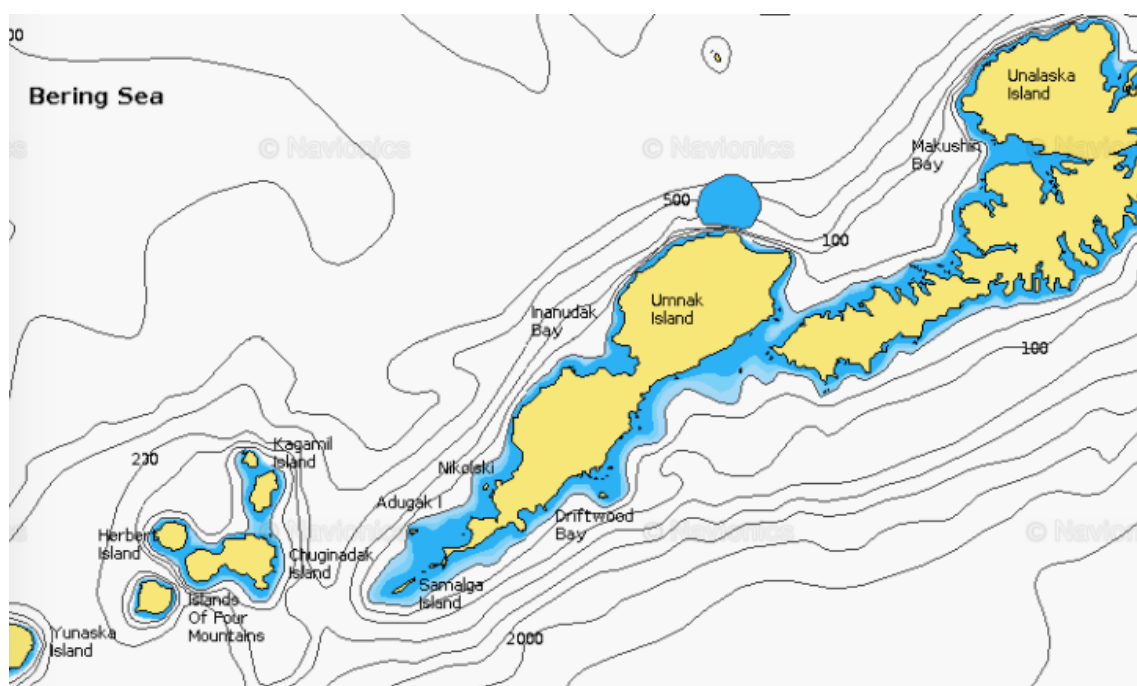
Although not visited by *Fine Tolerance*, this is reported to make a handy stop-over harbour between Adak and Dutch Harbour when sailing along the south sides of the Islands.

**Approach:** Approach waypoint given as 52°01'.5N 173°23'.0W



**Anchoring:** *Byjingo* anchored at 52° 03'.5N 173° 23'.4W in good holding.

## Umnak Island 53° 10'N 168° 30'W



**Hot Springs Cove** 53°15'.32N 168°22'.12W

The surrounding coast is especially stunning, and the anchorage, in sand, very beautiful. Open to Northwest. Apparently, fumaroles are visible at very low tide in the beach. The hot springs are a good kilometre's hike up the valley.

**Unalaska Island** 53° 50'N 166° 47'W

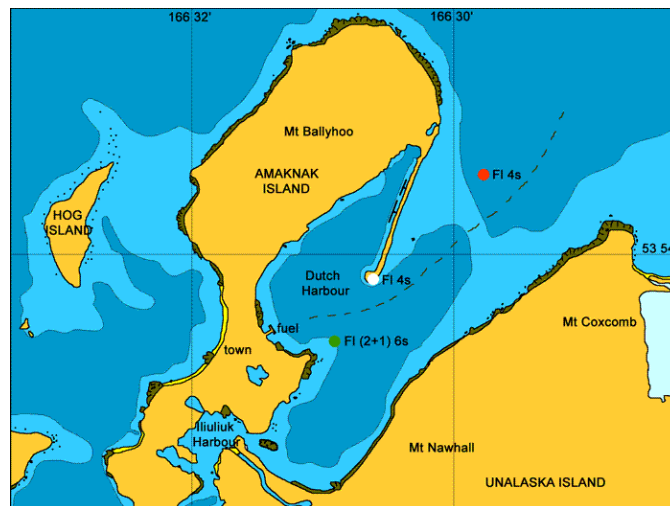
**Chernofsky Harbour** 53° 24'.3N 167° 22'.1W

Good protection from all north sector winds in Mutton Cove, and south sector ones at the head of the harbour, but the holding is indifferent at the latter, and Southeasterlies are said to blow much harder into here than into Station Bay, the next bay to the west. A rancher lives in Mailboat Cove. There are mustang and cattle on the hills.

**Dutch Harbour** 53° 53'.8N 166° 30'.1W

Dutch Harbour is a port of entry. It is the centre of commercial activity in the Aleutian Islands and is an extremely busy place, as the USA's largest fishing port by catch size. In addition, there is constant traffic of container ships taking away that catch once it has been processed by one of seven fish processing plants in the area. It may be used by boats heading to or from the North-West Passage.

**Charts:** NOAA 16500, NOAA 16520, NOAA 16528, large scale chart NOAA 16528, NOAA 16529 and NOAA 16530.



[Go to Google map](#)

**Approach:** There are no off-lying dangers. Approach from the North by Illulik Bay and East Channel. The entrance is wide and is marked with maintained navigational buoys.

**Anchoring:** In 2018, helpful 'George' handled immigration; provide you have a B1,B2 visa he will take the passport and arrange a 6 month visa and a year cruising permit for a charge of \$11. There are marinas and wharfs aplenty in Illuliuk Harbour, but space is at a premium. There are no facilities in Dutch Harbour for a small vessel to permanently tie up. In 2015 the small boat harbour was being re-pontooned, apparently complete by 2016. Yachts were put in the new 'Carl Moses' Harbour south of the bridge. Both are more convenient for the town than the Spithead pontoons. The HM on Ch16 will direct you.

**Facilities:** Flights come in every day. Repairs are available for electrical, electronic, mechanical and all aspects of commercial boating. Fuel, oil and propane are all available. There are also two well stocked supermarkets in town.

If you are coming in from the west, here are all the trappings of western civilization, fresh donuts and the works. If you are coming from the east then this is the last place to stock up on fresh fruit, vegetables and goodies. Virtually all supplies and marine services are available – at a price. There are air services to Anchorage as well as a ferry service. It may be possible to get a berth in the inner harbour if staying for more than a day or two. Spithead Dock in the outer harbour is a long way from town along a very dusty or muddy road. Taxis are expensive. A car or van may be rented at the airport for a price not much different from that on the mainland.

There is laundry (one floor up) at the big UniSea building that looks like a hotel with blue roof, on the left as you walk into town. The facility is meant for the seasonal workers, but they are very happy to take yachts' laundry too. They ask for a voluntary payment, we took lots and gave them \$10 which they were very happy with!

There is chandlery and a big Safeway in town, and behind it after a small hill is propane refill. They also have gas fittings for almost anything!

The best internet is at the Norwegian Rat Bar, opposite but before Safeway, \$5 for 24 hours for each device. The library is near to the Orthodox church, and has free but desperately slow internet.

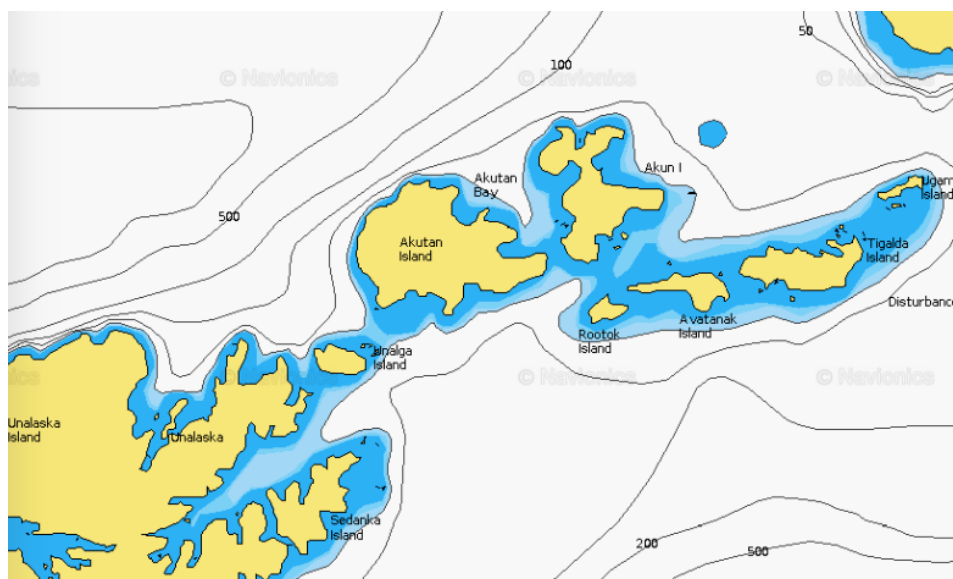
In the town of Unalaska there is free Internet at the library, though there is also Wifi in the outer harbour through KDH Guest facilities. The Aleut Museum is well planned and interesting and also has a wide range of books about the Aleutians and the Aleut people. There are a variety of hikes available on trails in the area, some of which are marked and others only indicated on maps. There are a large number of cafes and bars. The Sunday, 'all-you-can-eat brunch' at The Grand Aleutian Hotel is well worth the price.



Dutch Harbour looking northeast over Iliuliuk Harbour towards the entrance channel  
© Alex Whitworth



## Akutan Island 54° 02'.3N 165° 54'.8W



In settled weather there are several anchorages in the area between Akutan and its neighbour Akun. However, in strong westerlies and southerlies these anchorages are subject to terrific williwaws coming down from the slopes of the central volcano. We found one anchorage giving adequate shelter from a strong south to south-westerly gale at 54° 07'.228N 165° 42'.740W in 7m, sand, excellent holding. Most of Akutan Bay is very deep for anchoring. When the wind went northerly and lighter, we moved to 54° 07'.944N 165° 49'.147W, 20m, in mud; however, though the anchor was in 20 m the boat was swinging over a depth of 30m. There is a new harbour being constructed at the west end of Akutan Bay. It might be possible to get a berth alongside the docks at the fish processing plant on the south shore of the Bay, where there is a small settlement. When leaving Akutan by the southern route it is important to do so near slack water. Although the pass is very short, the tide runs very strongly (the Coast Pilot says up to 12 knots through the narrow pass).

## Abandoned whaling station: 54° 07'.64 N 165° 48'.55 W

Uncertain holding in 11-14m on steeply shelving bottom, close off abandoned whaling station jetty. The bay has an Aleut village (population 40) and the largest US owned cannery in America (population 1200).

## Unimak Island 54° 40'N 164° 10'W



**False Pass (See Chapter 3)** 54° 49'.6N 163° 22'.7W

The small community of False Pass is at the eastern end of Unimak Island, the most easterly of the Aleutians. Until recently the only mooring options were alongside fairly rough docks or anchoring as much out of the strong tidal flow as possible. However, a new small boat harbour has recently been completed, which gives good shelter. Whether arriving from the north or the south, it is best to do so with a fair tide, which runs very strongly in the strait. The approach from the south is straight-forward through a clear if narrow strait. The northern approach is shallow and winding, but well-marked with regularly up-dated buoyage. Fuel is available, and there is a small store and Post Office.

**Dora Harbour** 54° 42'.14N 163° 16'.52W

This anchorage is an attractive alternative to the Boat Harbour at False Pass, which has a heavily tidal approach and is well off the usual route to the east. Holding is good in sand, 8m. The anchorage is somewhat exposed to the south and southwest, but is otherwise well sheltered. It is popular with fishing boats during the salmon season. This is a good jumping off place for either the inshore route to King Cove and Captain Harbour or the offshore route to the Shumigan Islands. Bears and foxes may be seen along the shore.



Looking southwards past the fuel dock in False Pass and into Isanotski Strait.

***Refer to Chapter 3 Introduction and section 3.1 for the Alaska Peninsula and False Pass***

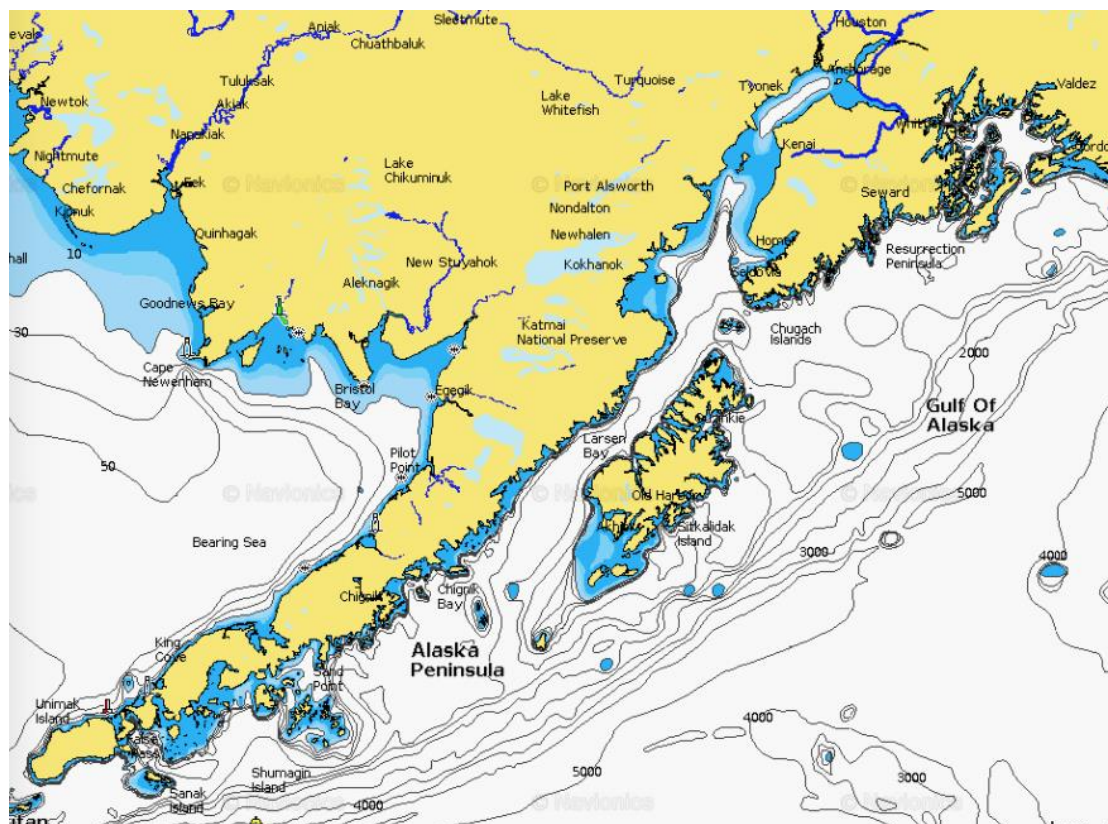


## Chapters 3 & 4.

# FALSE PASS TO PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND

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## Introduction

This whole area is subject to very strong winds in the winter months with the summer weather being characterized by long spells of calm weather. Be prepared to motor a lot as the reality of this area is that to avoid the winds one tends to motor and make passages when there is little to no breeze.

A number of small fishing ports on the Peninsula offer some supplies and services.

There are thousands of anchorages in Alaska, most of them in places untouched by civilization. It is a strong maritime area and there are many small boats about but the area is so vast that often many days can go by without sighting another vessel. Kodiak offers an excellent place to lay up.

## **Cruising Guides**

Note the listings in Chapter 1 and in particular:

Many cruisers consider Jim and Nancy Lethcoe's, *Cruising Guide to Prince William Sound* to be essential for a cruise of Prince William Sound, The Guide gives excellent coverage and detailed guidance on entry and anchoring positions for all the many coves and harbours.

The official NOAA Pilot Books for Alaska are good value also.

## **Anchoring on the Southern Alaska Coast**

Cruisers of the southern Alaska coast need to be prepared for anchoring in deep, sometimes very deep water. It is not unusual to have to anchor in depths of 25m or more on shingley or even rocky bottoms with only fair holding. Unfortunately, the contours of many anchorages and often the lack of trees make tying to the shore generally impractical, though one can do so in a few places. Local cruisers tend to use short lengths of chain and very long rope rodes, sometimes with anchor weights to gain some catenary effect. For those normally using all chain rodes, it may be important to have the ability to extend this with rope. For this reason, having a windlass with a capstan as well as gypsy can be useful.

## **Passage up the Alaska Peninsula**

From the Shumigan Islands northeastwards, anchorages are relatively far apart and the only Boat Harbour is at Chignik, well off the route. Several of those anchorages, which are available, are relatively exposed or subject to heavy williwaws in strong winds. Most cruisers choose to make longer passages to reach the more congenial anchorages in the Shelikof Strait.

## **Weather Forecasts**

Marine forecasts are generally available throughout Alaska though *Sunstone* reported 2015 that the NOAA VHF weather forecasts cannot be heard once beyond range of Sand Point, until nearing Geographic Harbour. Further out in the Gulf of Alaska and North Western Alaska the weather is broadcast throughout the day on HF 4125 MHz. South in the Inside Passage, there are continuous weather broadcasts on the VHF weather channels.

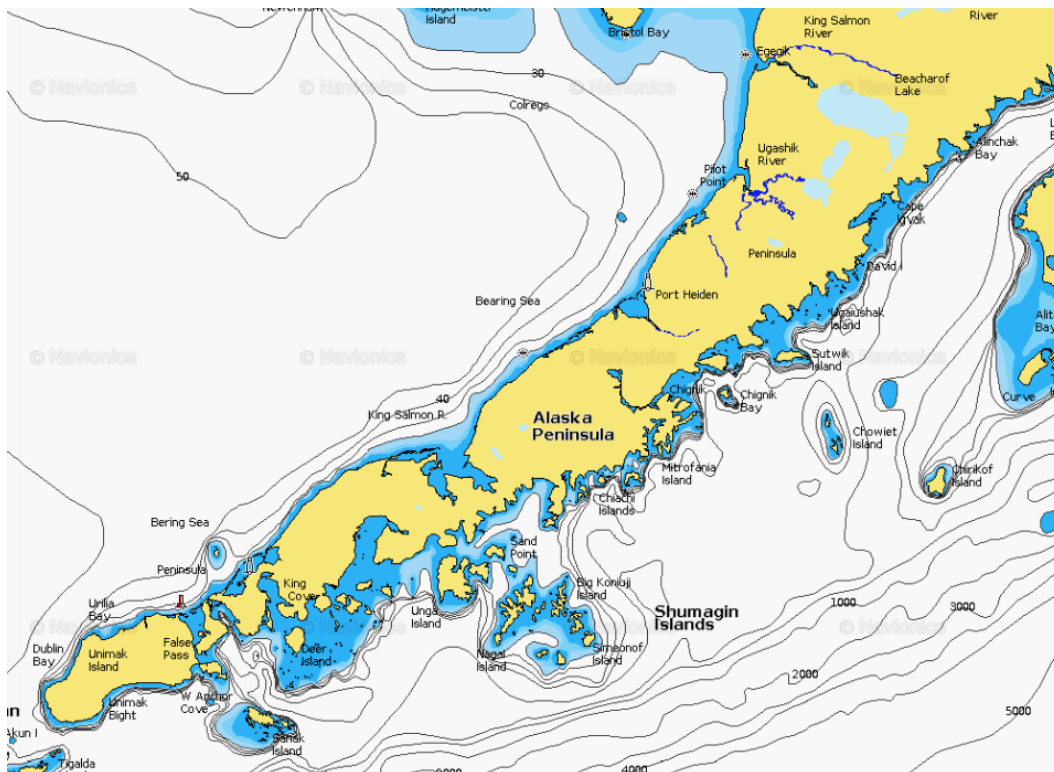
## Chapter 3.

### Alaska Peninsula Shumigan Group and Kodiak Island

- 3.1 The Alaska Peninsula  
(Unimak Island (False Pass) King Cove, Captain Harbour, Volcano Bay, Agripina Bay, Geographic Harbour, Kukark
- 3.2 Shumigan Islands
- 3.3 Kodiak Island (Sharatin Bay)

### 3.1

#### The Alaska Peninsula



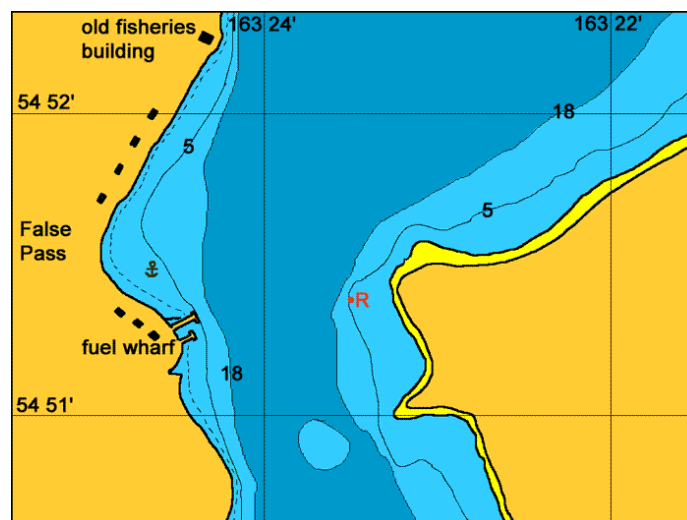
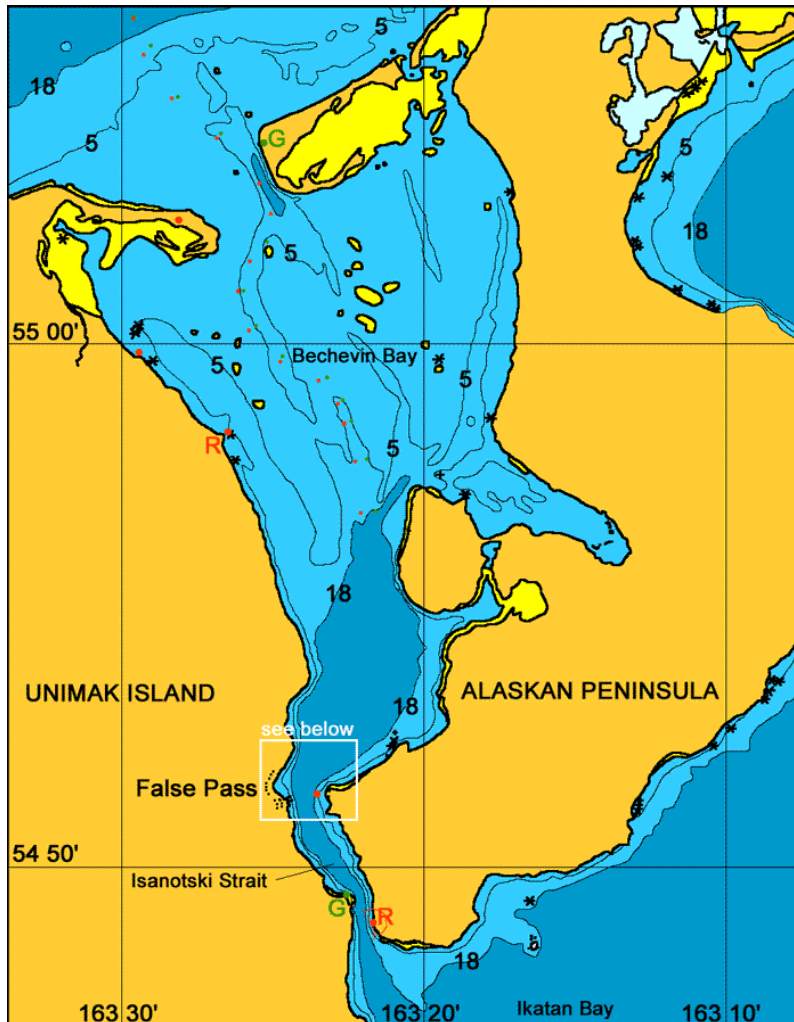
**False Pass** 54° 51'N 163° 24'W

Mainland America finishes at Isanotski Strait which divides Unimak Island from the Peninsula. False Pass is a great example of a company fishing town. The old company part of town is a board walk community and in very good condition and offers many photo opportunities, as does this entire area. The company has since ceased all operations except for the fuel wharf. The fuel supply is operated by Peter Pan Fisheries out of King Cove and it would probably pay to call there to check the availability of fuel at this location. This whole area is big on fishing and fuel is available at many locations within a 100 mile radius of here. This pass is used as a shortcut by fishermen heading up into Bristol Bay. *Fine Tolerance* used this route to head north towards Nome. Other yachts may choose to use Unimak Pass or continue to Dutch harbour before heading north.

**Charts:** NOAA 16520, NOAA 16535.

**Approach:** Approaching from the south, Isanotski Strait is wide and strait, although the current flows very strongly through here and you will need to watch the tide when transiting. If continuing north through Bechevin Bay it would pay to check with a local fisherman on whether the channel markers are correct.

The approach from the north is through Bechevin Bay which is very shallow. The twisting route through this bay is well marked by many port and starboard marker but, due to shifting sands, is quite changeable. In all but the calmest conditions it would be unwise to use this approach.



[Go to Googlemap](#)

**Anchoring:** *Fine Tolerance* anchored out of the current directly to the north of the jetties at 54° 51.5'N, 163° 24.4W. The bottom here is covered in weed and it took two tries to get the anchor to dig in. *Fine Tolerance* also spent three nights tied up against the wharf. Both these positions are out of the main current flow.

(See the end of Chapter 2 and Dora Cove on Unimak Island as an alternative to False Pass)

### King Cove 55° 03'N 162° 20'W

King Cove is dominated by the Peter Pan fish processing plant, where it is possible to obtain fuel. There is also a store with reasonable supplies. It might be possible to purchase marine specific hardware from the stores department at Peter Pan. The main harbour, called the Old Harbor, gives good shelter and has good facilities. There are showers and a Wifi connection at the harbour office. There is a travel lift for haul outs. The harbour is reputed to be very windy in strong conditions.

**Charts:** NOAA 16549.



[Go to Googlemap](#)

**Approach:** There are no off-shore dangers here.

**Anchoring:** This is a spacious harbour. The Harbour Master is contactable on Channel 16.



King Cove: From the Harbour Masters Office (HM) looking into the old harbour.



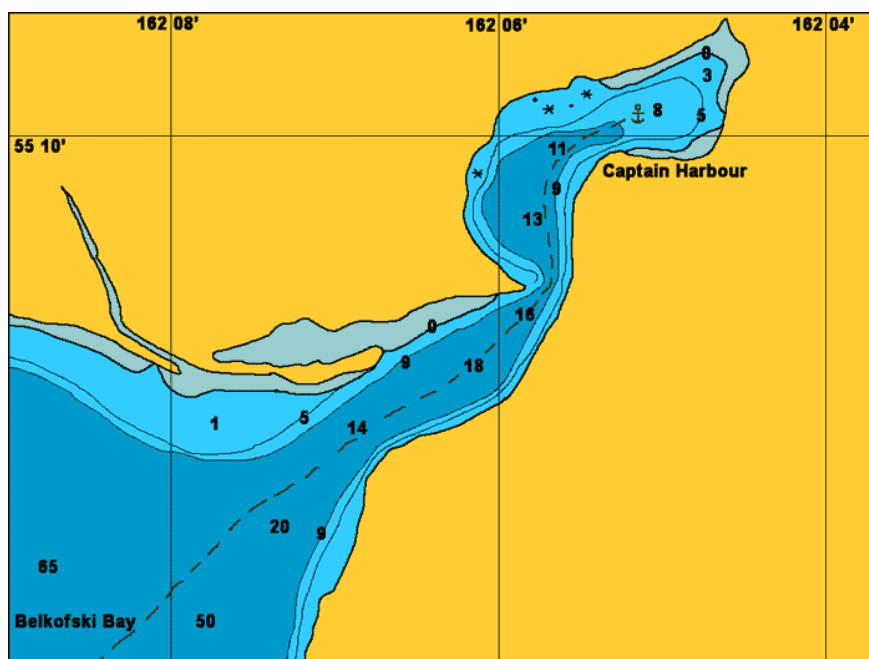


From the HM's office looking into the new harbour and then further out into open water.

### **Captain Harbour** 55° 10'.09N 162° 04'.89W, 7m

This is an excellent, completely land-locked, all-weather anchorage, with excellent holding in mud. It is said to be the best small boat harbour along this section. The approach is winding, but quite clear. There is varied, attractive scenery around the anchorage and the possibility of viewing bears and deer. The wild flowers are profuse in July. It is reportedly possible to hike to Bear Bay or Volcano Bay to the east, if one is brave enough and, or suitably equipped, to face the bears with which one may share the trail.

**Charts:** NOAA 16549.



[Go to Googlemap](#) (very cloudy):

**Approach:** There are no off-shore dangers in Belkofski Bay – where large numbers of Hump Back Whales might be seen. When first entering this harbour it looks like you are going to go aground but as you reach the end of the spit it opens up and it all becomes clear. Keep mid channel until you are due east of the end of the spit then turn into the harbour.

**Anchoring:** *Fine Tolerance* anchored in 8m on a good holding mud bottom with plenty of swinging room.





One of the many bears sighted in Captain Harbour.

**Volcano Bay** 55° 13'.34N 162° 01'.67W, 6.5m

This is a large bay, open to the southeast. However, there is a hooked indentation in the northwest corner where quite good shelter can be had from moderate winds from most directions. The wind does tend to swirl around the heights to the west and north and would probably be very gusty in strong conditions. In clear weather there is very striking scenery all around the Bay with snow-capped volcanoes. Brown bears may come down to the beach at the head of the bay near the outlet of the stream.

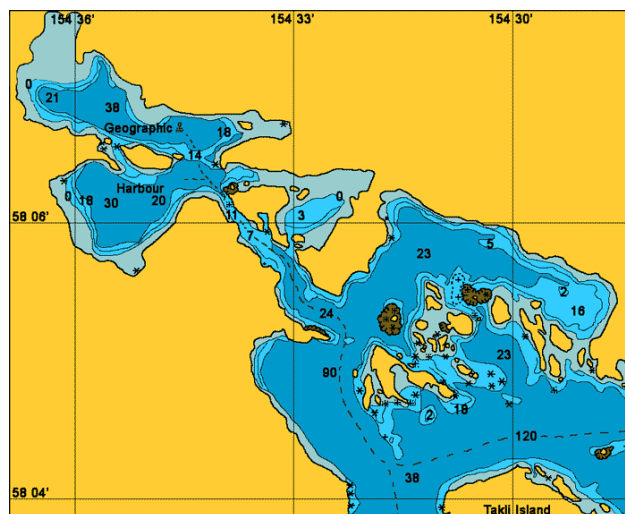
**Agripina Bay** 57° 06'.80N 156° 28'.43W

This is a very well protected and attractive anchorage, with only very small exposure to the southeast. However, it would be windy in strong northwesterlies, which would whistle down the valley at the head. Holding is good in mud and sand, 14m. There is a small river and extensive drying flats at the head, where bears may be seen. The approach is well charted but somewhat intricate.

**Geographic Harbour** 58° 06'N 154° 36'W

Geographic Harbour is probably the most well-known anchorage on the Alaska Peninsula, both for its scenery and for its bear-viewing opportunities. It is a largish, land-locked bay, situated in the Katmai National Park. It is entered through a narrow channel. It is a very well sheltered anchorage although you need to be careful during the approach.

**Charts:** NOAA 16580



[Go to Googlemap](#)

**Approach:** You need a chart here though charting for this channel is not precise and care is needed to avoid shoals and a mid-channel rock. There is plenty of room but there are so many rocks around that you really need to know where you are. The depths generally rise sharply here so in most areas the depth sounder will give you little warning. The final narrow channel leading into the harbour is quite narrow and has a rocky, shallow part on the starboard side just before the inner end. Be careful and favour the left-hand side of the channel at this point.

**Anchoring:** Pick the anchorage by depth and be sure to allow for safe swinging room as the sides of the harbour shoal quite rapidly.



Entering the channel leading into Geographic Harbour: The two small bays that lead off to the right when transiting the channel inbound are reported to be unsuitable for anchorage.

**Anchorage** 58° 06'.64N 154° 33'.83W. This anchorage is in the northeast corner of the bay next to a small island. It is well protected except from the southwest, though even from that direction there is not excessive fetch. The holding is good in mud, 14m. *Sunstone* viewed bears on the beaches near this anchorage. Many visitors anchor the other side of the bay to the southwest off the mouth of the large river. That anchorage is very deep, 25-30m, with a very steep-to shelf, but does give excellent viewing of the bears, which congregate around the river when the salmon are running. During the salmon-run, float-planes and small tour boats regularly bring tourists to the river area to view the brown bears. *Fine Tolerance* used the west part of north pool of Geographic Harbour - 58° 06'.93N 154° 36'.45 W.

In a gale there is considerable fetch, often from unforecast directions. Better protection, in strong westerlies, may be found in the inlet just outside (58° 06'.37N 154° 33'.66W)

**Kukak Bay** 58° 12'.7N 154° 14'.8W is also said to be excellent for scenery, wildlife and protection.

## 3.2

### Shumigan Group



#### **Delarof Harbour, Unga Island 55° 10'.50N 160° 30'.32W**

The anchorage is well sheltered from north through west to south, but somewhat open to the east and southeast. The holding is only fair in shingle and some sand, 8m. The remains of the abandoned Unga Village to the north of the anchorage are interesting.

#### **Baralof Bay, Unga Island 55° 14'N 160° 33'W**

The anchorage is well protected except from the east. The old disused cannery has been bought by an eccentric collector. There is now one reclusive but very friendly caretaker, Rick, along with a couple of noisy dogs. Rick's role is to stop the rot! The extensive buildings, all on a wooden platform are supported by wooden piles. The buildings now house an array of industrial archaeology, belt driven lathes; hoists and machines will whirl into action if you ask Rick. There is a wealth of other stuff too, from white goods to fishing gear, and a couple of old trawlers tied up to the dock.

#### **Coal Harbour, Zachary Bay, Unga Island 55° 19'.83N 160° 36'.36W**

This is a well-protected anchorage from all directions, though there might be some fetch from the northwest in strong winds. The holding is good in mud, 5m. There are extensive drying flats to the south.

#### **Sand Point Popov Island 55° 19'.99N 160° 29'85W**

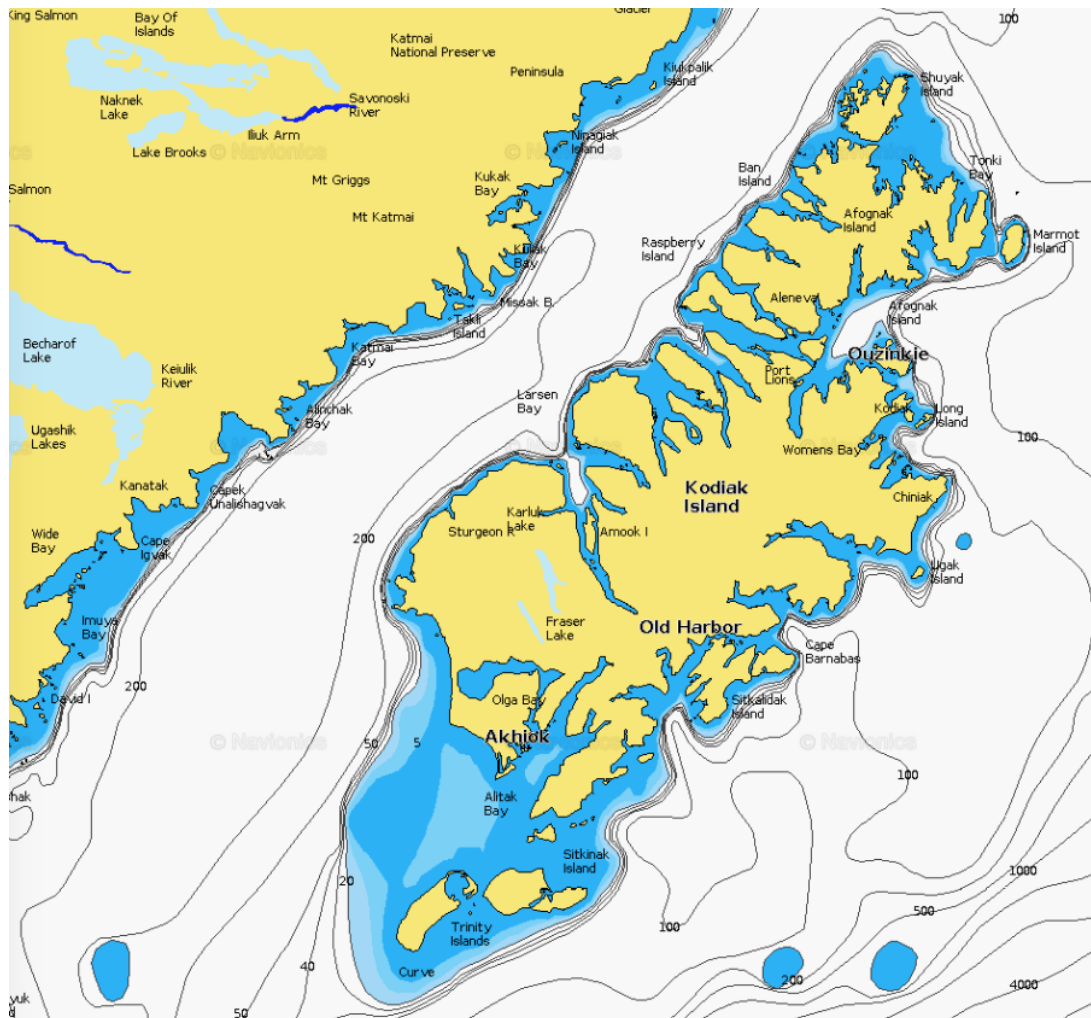
Sand Point is a busy fishing port with quite a large community by rural Alaskan standards (pop. approx. 1,000). Local fishing boats occupy virtually all the individual berths in the harbour, but there is generally plenty of space along the long wharfs for visitors. The Harbour Master does not monitor VHF Ch16 so tie up on the big dock straight ahead on entering. Water is available on the dock as well as expensive power. There is a travel lift for haul outs. There is pay Wifi in the harbour or 'free' at the café, if you have something to eat or drink. In 2018, the best and fastest free internet was at the library, next to the school, about 3 miles away. It is open from 6pm and hitching a lift there is rarely a problem. There is also a store in the village for food and other supplies. There are several bars/cafes. Fuel is available at the Trident fish processing plant which has a convenient store with good chandlery as well as food – also a laundry as well as a good canteen. Tickets for both are available at the Trident office. If you visit the Trident Office, it may be possible to arrange a tour of the processing plant. It is interesting and informative about the essential economic powerhouse of the region. The plant can process up to 350,000 pounds of salmon a day during the summer season. It also processes other fish varieties during the rest of the year.

### **Cove NW of Mist Harbour, Nagai Island. 55° 08'.08N 159° 51'.83W**

Perfect shelter and good holding in 10m. Beautiful and lovely group of islands with numerous sheltered anchorages and abundant wildlife. Would be well worth exploring. *Brother Wind* found Mist Harbour anchorage to be tight for two yachts with lots of kelp and poor holding

## **3.3**

### **Kodiak Island Group**



**Shelikof Strait** between Kodiak Island and the Alaskan peninsula is known for strong winds fierce tides and bad weather.

### **Anchorage NW side from SW to NW**

#### **Halibut Bay 57° 21'.65N 154° 45'.26W**

Reasonable shelter and good holding in 7m. Salmon fishing boats stop here for the night and fish the surrounding area during the day.

#### **Harvester Island**

Several possible anchorages, depending on conditions. *Quicksilver* anchored at 57° 38'.95N 154° 01'.57W.

**Larsen Bay** 57° 32'.20N 153° 59'.88W

Follow pilot and chart for approach. Anchor temporarily off pier, convenient for Cannery shop, open on Sundays, and with good fresh fruit and veg flown in. Smelly.

**Amook Island, Uyak Bay** 57° 31'.22N 153° 49'.09W

Anchor off entrance to Brown's lagoon, and go to head of lagoon for bear watching. In strong NElies, go round corner to 57°30'.86N 153° 50'.15W. Good anchorage further down, south of Alf Island, 57° 23'.71N 153° 51'.49W

**Uganik** 57° 48'.56N 153° 15'.69W Pleasant spot at south end on ledge

**Terror Bay** 57° 44'.17N 153° 12'.41W

This is a largish bay in which depths vary considerably. There is a very extensive drying flat at the southern end of the bay. Protection is good from east and west, but winds would tend to funnel from north and south. There is a long fetch to the north. Holding is fair in sand and shingle, 14m. In fine weather, there are good views of the snow-capped mountains to the south. There are numerous sea otters in the northern approaches to the bay.

**Bluefox Bay** 58° 26'.57N 152°42'.65W

An attractive landlocked bay, but large enough to generate fetch, especially with the williwaws around Devilpaw Mountain. In strong westerlies/northwesterlies, good shelter can be found tucked close in under the trees in the cove west of Bear Island in 5m. In the approach, avoid (by leaving to starboard) the mid-channel rock at 58° 26'.31N 152° 42'.07W and beware the ledge extending far out from the western shore.

### **Anchorage SE side from SE to Kodiak Town**

**Japanese Bay** 56° 58'.018N 153° 41'.141W, 9m

This is a completely land-locked bay approached through a narrow but deep channel. In strong conditions, it would probably be gusty because of the heights around the bay. Holding is very good in mud.

**Three Saints Bay** 57° 09'.848N 153° 32'.230W, 13m

This is a well-sheltered anchorage in the southern arm in a dramatic setting. In strong conditions, it would probably be gusty because of the heights around the bay. Holding is good in mud. Bears have been seen near the river at the head of the bay.

**Three Saints Bay, Nanamuit Hook** 57°06.45N, 153°18.11W

Delightful anchorage well sheltered from all directions, behind a sand spit at the entrance to Three Saints Bay. *Brother Wind* anchored in 15m, mud and shingle, good holding and saw deer and what looked like a wolf ashore.

**Barling Bay** 57° 11'.987N 153° 22'.686W, 12m

Barling Bay is just south of Old Harbour along Sitkilidak Strait. The Bay is quite large. There is a considerable area of silty shallows at the head. There is good protection north to east and south to west. The Bay is somewhat exposed to fetch from the southeast and is reputed to be subject to violent williwaws in strong north-westerlies. Holding is good in mud. The bay is in a very attractive setting, with a wide, low valley at the head around two small rivers and mountains further to the west. In July, it was all very green. There are bears and deer to be seen, especially if one takes a dinghy up the river around high water.

**Old Harbor** 57°12.46N, 153°18.11W

Stakes mark the narrow entrance and there was a minimum of 3.6m under the keel at half tide.

Very friendly little fishing port, free for the first night. There is a small shop, with internet, a well preserved Orthodox church, and a shooting lodge, and plenty of bears!

### **Sitkilidak Passage**

This relatively narrow, winding passage north of Sitkilidak Island allows transit northwards along the east coast of Kodiak Island without going seawards of Sitkilidak Island. The depths given on the chart seem to be somewhat

shallower than those we saw. The large-scale chart seems accurate, as does CMap. The Coast Pilot indicates that the current is rarely strong and this seemed the case during our transit.

North of Sitkilidak Passage, and Dangerous Cape, the tide runs very fast inside Ugak Island and up to Cape Chiniak. There can be overfalls with the wind over tide.

**Shearwater Bay** 57° 19'.439N 152° 54'.083W, 11m

Shearwater Bay is a large Bay, somewhat exposed to the southwest, but otherwise giving adequate protection. In fact, the anchorage position above is for a small, virtually land-locked cove in the southeast corner of the bay. The entrance to the cove is narrow, but deep, with a least depth of about 6m. The pool inside has 11m. This anchorage gives almost all-round protection, though there might be a little wave action in a strong northerly. Holding appears good in mud. There may be hiking opportunities ashore in the immediate vicinity, if you are willing to brave possible bear encounters.

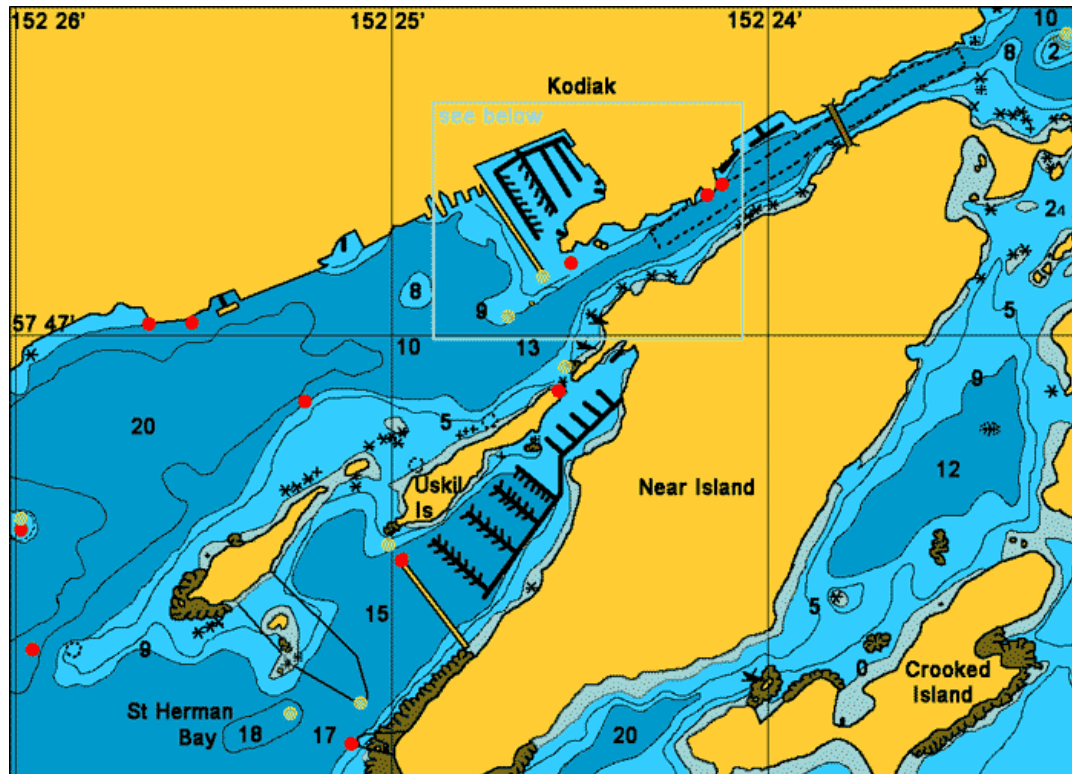
**Kalsin Island, Chiniak Bay** 57°39.84N, 152°24.66W. Anchor in 12m, shingle, good holding, west of Kalsin Island – a lovely peaceful spot and very pretty. This anchorage saved us pushing on to Kodiak in the dark. Do not attempt this anchorage without some light though!



## Kodiak Harbour 57° 47'.2N 152° 24'.4W

Kodiak is the biggest town in the area and is home to a large fishing fleet. It is a highly suitable place to over-winter. This is your last chance to re-supply at reasonable prices if travelling west or northward. Kodiak is a large town by rural Alaskan standards with all facilities, supplies and services, including regular air services to Anchorage and other towns.

**Charts:** NOAA 16580, NOAA 16595.

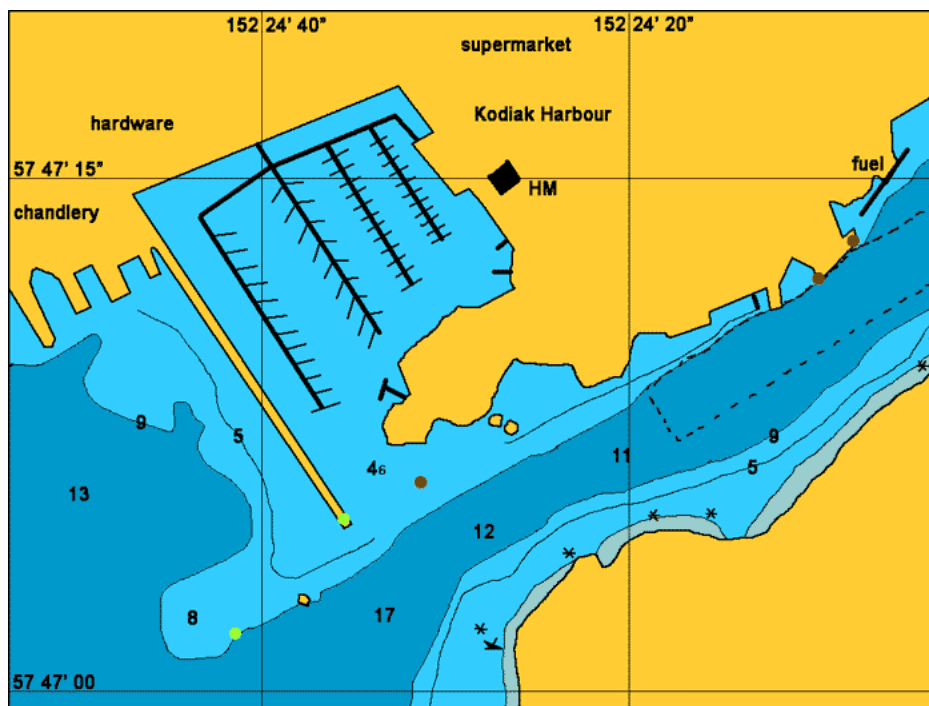


[Go to Googlemap](#)

**Approach:** There are rocks, shoals and islands from which ever direction you come from. You need a chart and to follow it carefully. There is plenty of room between all the obstacles though and you shouldn't experience any problems provided the weather is fine.



Heading southwestward along the dredged channel, under the fixed bridge, into Kodiak Harbour.



**Berthing** 57° 47'.2N 152° 24'.4W

The Harbour Master maintains a 24 hr radio watch on VHF Channel 16. Call ahead and check on the availability of a berth.

Visitors are normally berthed in St Paul Harbour, the northern of the two harbours, which is closest to the town. It can be approached from either the southwest or northeast, but the latter approach involves passing under a bridge with 30.8m vertical clearance. (The other harbour, on Near Island, is some distance from the town by road.) However, space is at a premium during the fishing season. If possible, the Boat Harbour office prefers visitors to give advance notice of arrival, with some indication of length of stay. The office will try to assign a slip rather than sending yachts to the transient dock. Shore facilities are very limited. Charges are reasonable, with a step up in rates at 40'. There are two fuel docks as well as a nearby petrol station. Quite apart from Ace Hardware there is a good chandlery (*'the best chandlery we have seen for 10 years'* – *Brother Wind 2018*). Most other marine services, including Kodiak Canvas, are available in the port and are excellent.

**Port Information:** [www.city.kodiak.ak.us.harbor/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.city.kodiak.ak.us.harbor/Pages/default.aspx)

## Facilities

There is free Wifi at McDonalds close to the harbour and at the Public Library - the latter has moved to a location near the schools at the top of the hill, 3km to the northeast of the town centre. The supermarket near the harbour has ceased trading and one must now go to either Safeway or Walmart, which are both about 6km out of town, but have excellent and varied stocks. There is a large and efficient laundromat just off the road out to the supermarkets, about 3km from the town centre. The laundromat has showers. Laundry may also be available in the Kodiak Hotel across from the Harbour Master and Kodiak Electronics.

A number of cruisers have wintered in Kodiak or left their boats for the winter, either in the water or hauled out ashore. However, unless you are prepared to wait until October, the Harbour Office will be unlikely to guarantee you a winter berth, unless you are 60 ft or more. Hauling out and storage at Fuller's Yard is reasonable, but they require to have a purpose-built cradle, made by the island's cabinet maker, and costing around \$1,600.

For those inclined, there are plenty of hiking and biking opportunities close to Kodiak City or a few kilometres outside the town. The Visitors Centre has some useful information. *Sunstone's* crew joined a summer weekend group walk sharing a car ride to the start of the walk some 10km out of town; details were at the Visitors Centre. The Kodiak

National Wildlife Refuge Visitors Centre also has excellent information about Kodiak wildlife. The Alutiiq Museum provides interesting displays of the 7,500-year heritage of Kodiak's indigenous Alutiiq people.

Quite apart from the cruising to be had on Kodiak Island itself, Kodiak town is an excellent jumping off point for cruising the Alaska Peninsula, Kenai and Prince William Sound.

### **Anchorage SE side from Kodiak Town to the NE**

**Long Island** 57° 46'.1N 152° 16'.3W

SW corner of bay on NW shore. Only 6 miles SE from Kodiak, but secure and peaceful though uncertain holding in weed and mud reported.

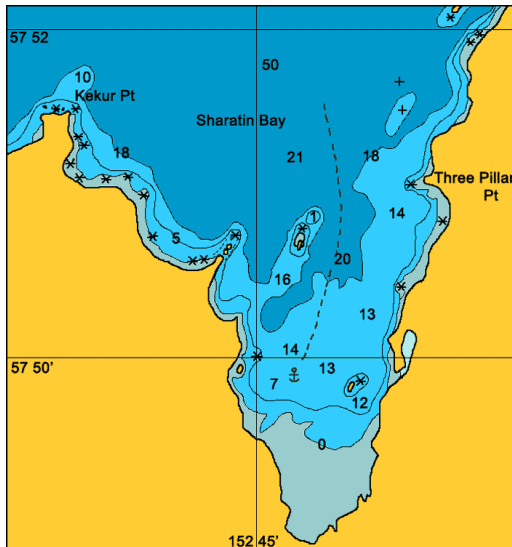
**Ouzinkie Narrows** 57° 54'.17'N 152° 32'.91W

Small cove 0.7NM SW of Entrance Point. Limited shelter and holding in 6m mud and weed.

**Sharatin Bay** 57° 51'N 152° 45'W

This makes for a pleasant, quiet anchorage but would not be suitable if a north wind was blowing. If you are heading west it is a good place to time the tide for Whale Passage which is about 3 nm away. *Fine Tolerance* had a number of sea otters swimming around the boat while they were anchored in this bay.

**Charts:** NOAA 16594.



[Go to Googlemap](#)



Looking southwards from the anchorage towards the flats at the head of Sharatin Bay.

**Approach:** There are no hidden off-shore dangers here when keeping near the track shown. The rocks NNW of Three Pillar Point are covered to 2m. The rocks N of the grass covered islet near the centre of the bay are covered to 1 m. All else is clear water.

**Anchoring:** Very straightforward. Just run in until you are comfortable about the depth and drop the anchor. We anchored at 57° 44'.4N 152° 18'.2'W in 9 m, mud bottom. At low tide a large tidal flat appears at the head of the bay.

**Nachalni Island, Kupreanof Strait - Cove NW** 57° 58'.81N 152° 55'.57W

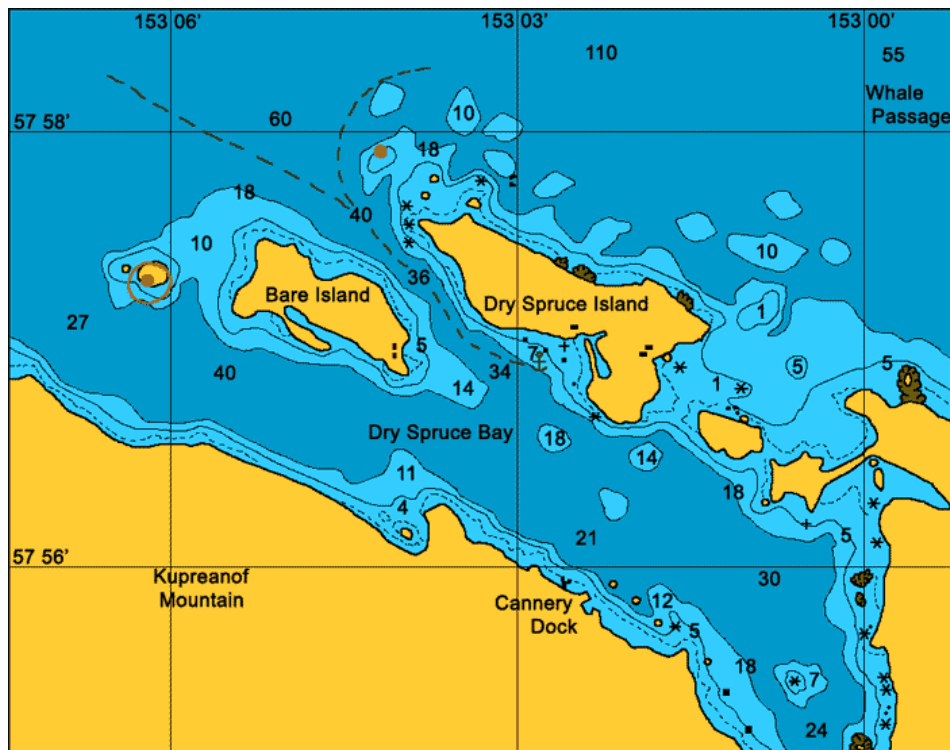
Good shelter and reasonable holding in 6m

**Dry Spruce Bay** 57° 56'.5N 153° 03'W

This is a protected anchorage just to the south of where Whale Passage runs into Kupreanof Strait. While quite wide, Whale Passage has currents that can reach 4.5 knots and transit should be timed for slack water or to run with the flow.

The tidal current sets NW on the flood and SE on the ebb in Whale Passage and Kupreanof Strait. *Fine Tolerance* weathered a two-day blow in this protected spot and were unable to get ashore to explore.

**Charts:** NOAA 16594.



[Go to Googlemap](#)

**Approach:** There are no off-shore dangers in Whale Passage. Kupreanof Strait has some shoal areas which are clearly marked on the chart and easily avoided. Entering Dry Spruce Bay through this channel, be careful to avoid the rocks to the north and west of Dry Spruce Island. There is a light on a pole with a square green day mark on a ledge which can uncover to 2 meters. Be sure to give it plenty of room.

**Anchoring:** *Fine Tolerance* anchored in 9m, about 60m out from three wooden pilings, in good holding. The cannery dock was clearly visible across the bay.



Looking shoreward from the anchorage at Dry Spruce Bay. One of the three mooring poles can be seen in the foreground.



**Ouzenkie, Spruce Island** 57°55.26N, 152°29.73W

This is a delightful little harbour on the native Spruce Island. Well sheltered from all directions. Good walks ashore, no bears to worry about, a pretty Orthodox church and friendly native community. Water on the dock.

**Litnik** eg 58° 04'.25N 152° 47'.25W .

Anchor as far as depths inside Winter Island allow, Many sea otters. Apparently, a good dinghy trip up to the weir at HW. A pretty spot.

**Afognak Bay** 58° 04'.41N 152° 46'.39W

This is an attractive anchorage with good protection from all directions except south. Holding is good in mud and sand, 9m. The river in the northwest corner of the bay gives opportunities for dinghy exploration and bears may be seen on its banks. Seiners come into the bay during the salmon season.

**Kitoi Bay, Izhut Bay** 58° 11'.42N 152° 22'.06W

This is a small bay with excellent protection. The anchorage is deep, mostly about 22-25m, but holding is good in mud. The major attraction of the anchorage is the salmon hatchery and the bears, which are attracted to the stream by the hatchery, during the salmon season. Other cruisers have reported as many as 30 bears around the stream at any one time. Other visitors are large numbers of Fin and Humpback whales. The hatchery is willing to give tours to visitors. These give an excellent insight to the business of the wild salmon fishery in Alaska and how it is maintained and managed.

**Seal Bay** 58° 22'.66N 152° 14'.02W.

A rock-strewn bay requiring careful pilotage, but good shelter from most winds can be found close to the Alfognak Wilderness lodge, inside Duck Cape. The Randall family own the lodge and are very welcoming. This anchorage is a convenient jumping-off point to get across to the Kenai Peninsula and/or Seward. An alternative anchorage to that above is 58° 20'.51N, 152° 12'.21W. Anchor in 13m. thick mud, excellent holding. It is well protected from all directions.

### **Shuyak Strait (passage note)**

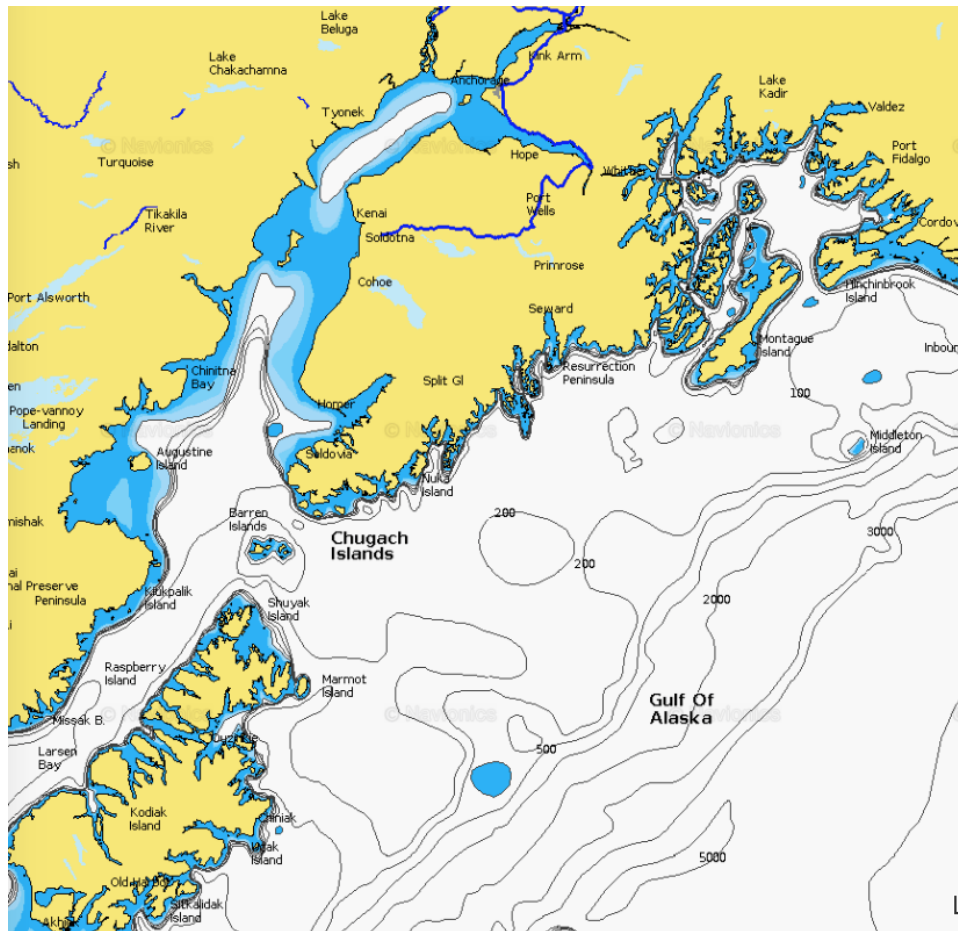
It is best to get to Cape Current Narrows at slack water. Use northern channel, close to the shore at 58°28'.15N 152°29'.21W. We were strongly advised NOT to try the southern channel.

**Andreon Bay** 58° 30'.3N 152° 25'W

The most northerly (but shallow) anchorage on Alfognak from which to cross to the Kenai Peninsula. Good protection from winds only between S and NW: the beach timber is everywhere. Anchor in mud in 3m off north shore of Big Fort Island. In a northerly blow, it is reportedly possible to squeeze inside Big Fort to a 3m pool at 58°30'.18 N 152°25'.6W. The rock charted as mid-channel, we were told, should be left to port.

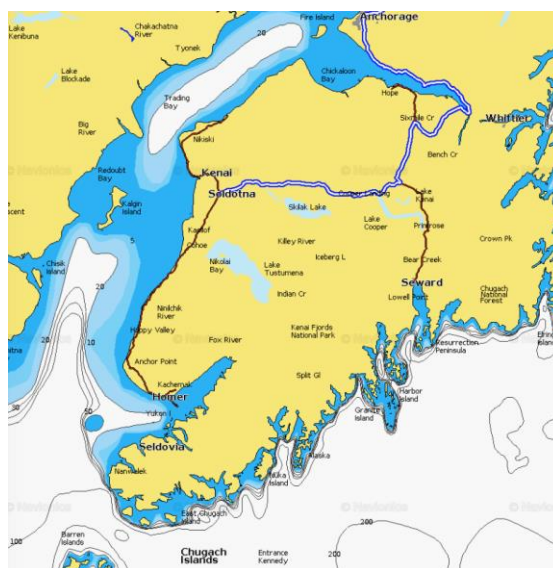
## Chapter 4.

### Kenai Peninsula and Prince William Sound



#### 4.1

#### Kenai Peninsula



The Kenai Peninsula is an attractive and mountainous region. There are many anchorages, but most are very deep. Anchorage can be reached by rail or road from Seward (or Whittier in Prince William Sound) as well as by boat. We have reports on some southern anchorages used when cruising between Kodiak and Prince William Sound.



## Harbours and Anchorages

### South and South- East Kenai Peninsula

#### **Chrome Bay** 59° 12'.6N 151° 48'.7 W

At the entrance to Port Chatham, convenient first stop from Alfognak. Anchor in 7m kelp and mud. If a major blow is threatened, Port Chatham offers good shelter.

#### **Qikutulig Bay** 59° 14'.2N 151°18'W

An attractive bay with better shelter at its head from winds and swell from the southerly quarter than the chart suggests. Anchor in 3m mud.

#### **Berger Bay** 59° 20'.5N 150° 44'.4W

Beautiful almost landlocked bay. Anchor in 6m rock and kelp.

Nearby West Arm has several anchorages (Shelter Cove 59° 31'.6N 150° 38'.2W, Quartz Bay 59° 31'N 150° 31'.7W, Surprise Bay 59° 31'.4N 150° 28'.9 W). There is an impressive 900ft cataract at the head of North Arm.

#### **Chance Cove** 59° 29'.2N 150° 18'.9W

A well protected lagoon just east of McArthur's Pass. Anchor in 14m mud.

#### **Tonsina Bay, Nuka Passage** 59° 18'.4N 150° 56'.7W

The Bay can be entered by either the north or south passage, though the south is narrow and rock-encumbered. The anchorage is well sheltered, though deep. It might be possible to stern tie to a tree. Holding is good in mud. Shallower water can be found in the little western cove 59°18.3N 150°56.9W.

#### **Home Cove** 59° 23'.8N 150° 42'.0W

This a well-protected anchorage and probably a good place to sit out bad weather. Holding is good in mud, 17m.

#### **Thumb Cove** 59° 31'.4N 150° 28'.9W

Well protected from northerlies, and lovely. Anchor on north shore in 12m shingle/mud.

#### **Midnight Cove, Moonlight Bay** 59° 30'.6N 150° 19'.9W

This an attractive anchorage which appears very protected but is subject to heavy williwaws from the surrounding heights. It is also very deep. The anchorage position is over a somewhat shallower section, but we were Bahamian moored with an anchor either side of the shallower part. It was secure, but not pleasant in an easterly gale. Holding was good in mud and sand, 26m. Lovely waterfall at head of bay and black bears ashore.

#### **300 yards off face of McCarty Glacier** 59° 44'.66N 150° 13'.54W

Very uncertain holding with a strong current, clear of grounded ice floes to E. Stupendous view of very active glacier. Hundreds of harbour seals hauled out on the ice flows.

#### **Northwest Fiord** 59° 50'N 150° 04'W

This is a beautiful fiord, with a moraine which can be crossed with care. The glacier above the moraine is very attractive and accessible. We felt it was as good as any in Glacier Bay.

#### **Taz Basin, Granite Island** 59° 39'.1N 149° 48'.9W

This is an anchorage only for very settled weather. The entrance is both very narrow and shallow. The entrance would be impassable with any westerly swell. Inside is a small basin surrounded by high trees. It is a fascinating and intriguing spot but not one for a long stay. The anchorage is extremely deep, 28m. A stern line to a tree is a virtual necessity, given the small size of the pool.

#### **McMullen Cove** 59° 46'.7N 149°46'.6W

An attractive fair-weather anchorage but in a bay with greater depths than charted, including on the 7 fathom shelf - the only place we could find sensible, but rapidly shelving depths.

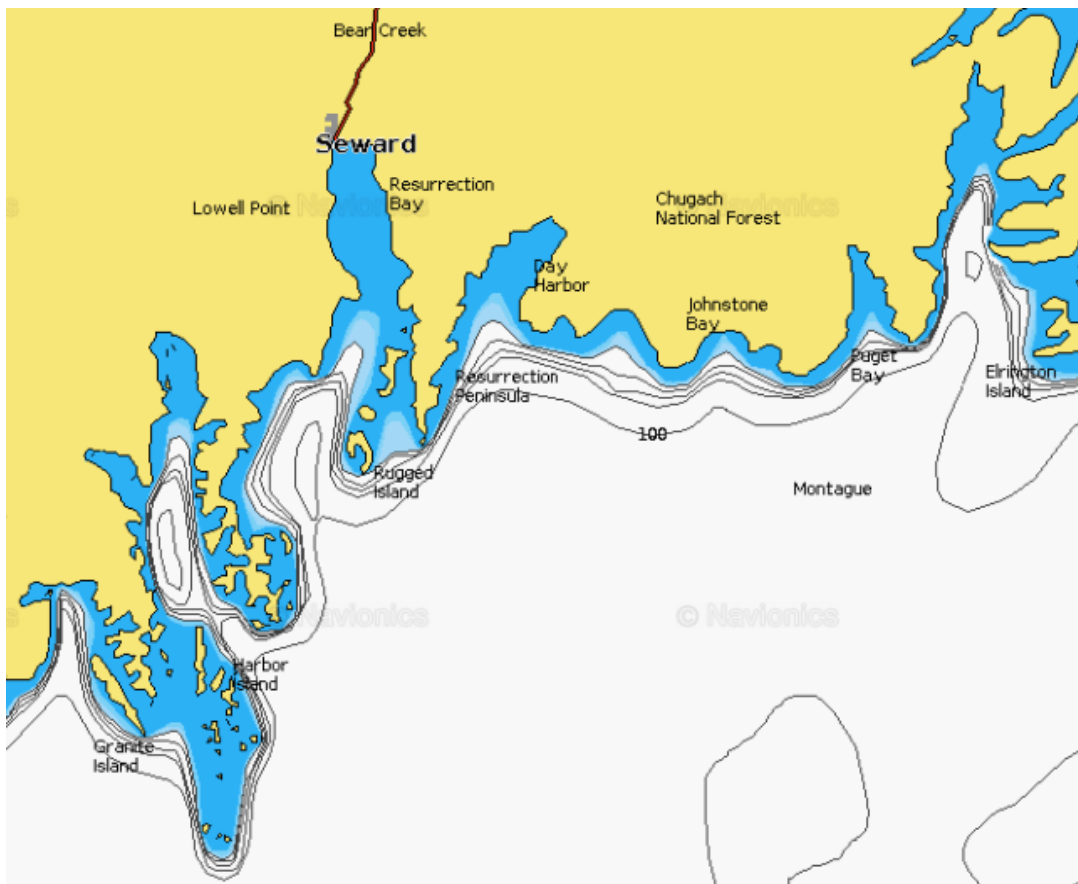
**Bulldog Cove**, Resurrection Bay 59° 53'.7N 149° 33'.5W

This is a pleasant anchorage not far from Seward, for use in settled weather. Holding is good in sand, 12m.

**Seward**, Resurrection Bay 59° 58'N 149° 27'.5W

A major port for the area. Local yachtsmen are very willing and able to give advice to those using Seward as a jumping off point for a cruise in Prince William Sound. Seward is a long day sail from the entrances to Prince William Sound. There are a few anchorages, which may be used on the way in fair to moderate weather.

**Charts:** NOAA # 16682, 16680,16013



### Approach

Passage up Resurrection Bay is straight-forward as is entry to the Boat Harbour. Summer winds in the bay are generally predictable with a light northerly at night until mid-morning, followed by a southerly sea-breeze in the afternoon and early evening. The latter can reach 25 knots or more at times, but is generally less.

### Berthing

There is a large modern Boat Harbour, which has predominantly pleasure craft, though there are also fishing and tour boats. Berthing is initially on a transient dock (F), but harbour staff may assign a slip for longer stays if available. It is possible for a yacht to overwinter ashore here.



## Facilities

There are haul-out and hard-standing facilities as well as other marine services – including winter lay-up. (Excellent marine engineer Stacey tel 907 362 7646. Seward Heavy Engineering can supply a range of materials.) There is a fuel dock in the harbour as well as two petrol stations nearby. There is a small yacht club with good showers and rudimentary public showers in the same building as the harbour office. There are numerous fishing charter boats operating from the harbour as well as larger tour boats. A large Safeway supermarket is about 1.5km, from the harbour. There are two large hardware stores with some basic marine supplies. Free internet access is available at the library in town.

Seward is a town of about 3,000. It is a popular tourist and cruise ship destination, partly because it has good road and rail links to Anchorage, the largest city in Alaska (300,000 approx.). Seward has an interesting history and is named after the local Governor who negotiated the purchase of Alaska from the Russians. There is a lot of information on the Good Friday earthquake too. (Also, there was a major earthquake near Anchorage in November 2018.) There is a small but well organised and displayed museum which is worth a visit. There is also a marine centre built with money given by Exxon after 'the spill'. There is a great deal of information about the spill, the clearing up operation; as well as puffins, sea lions and seals. Take at least 2 hours to visit. Seward is also famous for the start of the Iditarod race. Nearby are the kennels where you can visit the huskies.

A free circular shuttle bus stops opposite the harbour office every 30 minutes. The train station is near the harbour. The train ride to Anchorage is reported to be very scenic. Although it takes twice as long as the bus it is reported to be well worth doing – despite the extra cost – provided the weather is good. Hire cars are available but are very expensive. The drive to Anchorage takes about 2.5 hours. West Marine has an outlet in Anchorage and will deliver free to Seward.

## Driftwood Bay 59°54.83N, 149°16.17W

Good anchorage out of the swell, and a useful stop coming or going to Seward to work the tides. It would be very subject to swell in E to NE winds. Anchor in 17m, light mud, good holding.

## Goat Harbour, Puget Bay 60° 00'.2N 148° 28'.7W

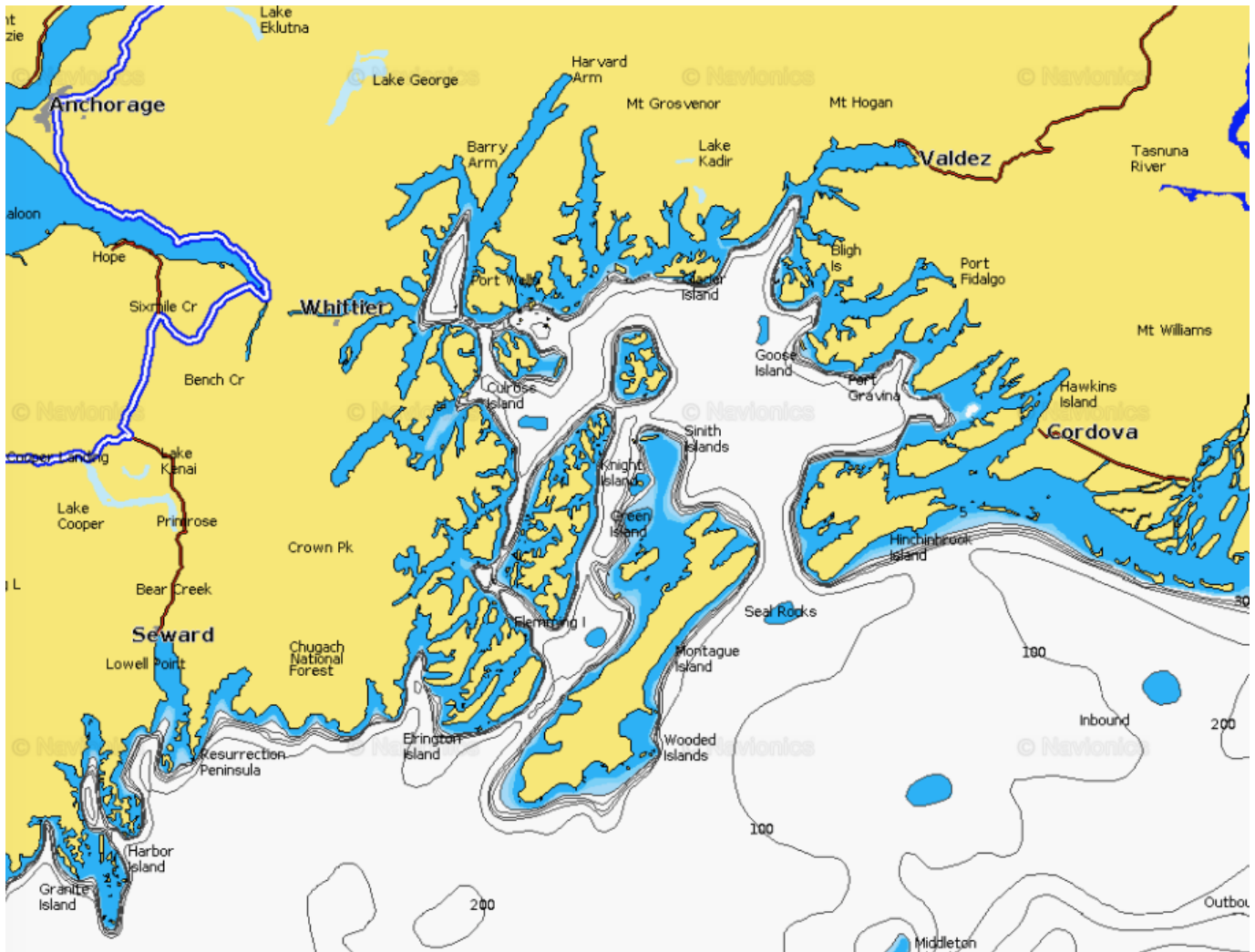
A convenient anchorage, well protected except from south through to west, if waiting for the tide through one of the Prince William Sound entrances. Good holding in mud/shell/kelp in 12 metres.

## 4.2

### Prince William Sound

NOAA chart 16700

Also see further reading, page 7, particularly *Lethcoe's Guide*.



### Prince William Sound

#### Introduction (largely *Sunstone*)

Prince William Sound is a great body of water (approximately 10,000 square miles) where one could spend a whole summer exploring the many beautiful islands, peninsulas and inlets. It is an outstanding cruising area with varied scenery, wonderful wildlife and scores of anchorages. There are many beautiful tidewater glaciers, though most have receded a good deal in recent years. There are many salmon streams. Sea otters, seals, sea lions, whales, Dall's porpoises, orcas and a wide variety of birds are all to be seen within the Sound.

There are three small towns in the Sound - Whittier, Valdez and Cordova. All have basic supplies and services. Whittier has easy road and rail access to Anchorage. Cordova has only ferry and air services. Valdez has ferry, air and road connections, though it is still quite isolated despite being a major oil trans-shipment port. Valdez is well known because of its association with the huge Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989. There are no vestiges of that spill remaining. Though wildlife was significantly impacted at the time, the general view seems to be that the creatures of the Sound have pretty much returned to their pre-spill levels. Certainly, anyone visiting the Sound for the first time would never guess that there had been a spill at all.

The Alaskan cruising season here is short and it pays to be moving south by late July and certainly by mid-August. The summer weather in the Sound is generally benign, though there are often extended periods of rain. From the sailing

point of view, this does mean a good deal of motoring as the winds are often very light. Many of the anchorages involve some challenging pilotage through rock-bound entrances. However, there is an excellent guide, which many would consider essential for a cruise of the Sound - Jim and Nancy Lethcoe's 'Cruising Guide to Prince William Sound'. The guide gives excellent coverage and detailed guidance on entry and anchoring positions for all the many coves and harbours. There is also extensive guidance on hiking opportunities, though we would caution that most of these are not on trails, but are wilderness treks requiring fitness, fortitude, patience, (probably a machete), and a willingness to face down bears if necessary! Because the Lethcoe guide is so comprehensive these notes give only basic descriptions of anchorages.

Most cruisers enter the Sound through one of its western passages. These all have strong tidal flows, but are generally not afflicted with overfalls or heavy wave action except in very strong wind against tide conditions. There are several anchorages in the Port Bainbridge area (59° 58N 148° 18W) to the west of the passages, in which it is possible to anchor while waiting for favourable conditions.

If approaching from Southeast Alaska, entrance to the Sound would be through Hinchinbrook Entrance between Montague and Hinchinbrook Islands. This entrance has a designated Fairway and Separation Zone for the large tankers which enter and leave for Valdez. Hinchinbrook Passage has dangerous overfalls.

## Harbours and Anchorages in Prince William Sound

*As received from our contributors; they are all covered well in Lethcoe.*

**Fox Farm,** Elrington Island Sound 59° 58'.0N 148° 09'.0W

This a well-protected anchorage and a convenient one for getting the tide up either Elrington or Prince of Wales Passages. Holding is good in sand and shingle.

**Crab Bay, Chenaga Village, Evans Island** 60°03.97N, 148°00.52W

Tie up on dock in small harbour, water on dock.

This is a worthwhile stop to visit the native community of Chenaga Village. There is a beautiful Russian Orthodox Church, it was locked when we were there, but has large glass doors allowing you to see the spectacular mosaic floor, done by a master from Greece.

They had had to shoot 8 black bears in summer 2018, which had been pestering the village.

**Hogg Bay,** 60° 04'.12N 148° 11'.34W

Anchored in 14m. rocky bottom?

Very pretty and well protected, we had a good walk ashore, lots of bear droppings and tracks but no sightings!

**Otter Cove,** Bainbridge Passage 60° 11'.20N 148° 07'.79W

The cove requires careful pilotage past the rocks guarding the entrance. There is adequate swinging room inside, but care is needed setting the anchor as holding is fair at best on a rocky bottom in 19m. Otter Cove lives up to its booking for wildlife viewing; we saw harbour seals, sea otters, bald eagles and a black bear on the beach. The cove is a convenient stop for those who have just made the tide in through Bainbridge Passage, as the remainder of the northern end of the Passage is less tidal than the narrower southern section. Humpback whales may be seen feeding in Knight Island Passage.

**Icy Bay,**

**Tiger Glacier and Tiger Bite** 60°12.15N, 148°21.08W

We had an increasingly slow trip up Icy Bay because of the ice, Nassau Bay was impenetrable (late August 2018)

Tiger Glacier was booming with ice crashing periodically into the sea. You can get close to the glacier, which is dramatic and well worth it.

Tiger Bite is a strange open anchorage, and in the morning, we were surrounded by ice! It moved freely and was not a problem!

**Jackpot Bay, Em'Urluq Bay, or Twenty Nine Fathom Hole**(Lethcoe) 60°21.63N, 148°12.62W

This very pretty bay has a tight entrance, but wide and easy once in the bay. We anchored near the stream at the NE of the bay and watched masses of salmon going upstream.

**Humpback Cove** 60°12'.45N 148°17'.3

During a southeasterly gale in the Sound there was no wind here.

**Seven Fathom Hole**, Jackpot Bay 60° 21'.8N 148° 13'.5W

This is a very well protected, land-locked anchorage with very good holding, 12m.

**Ewan Bay** 60° 23'.7N 148° 09'.1W

This is a well-protected anchorage tucked behind a small island, after some careful pilotage. The holding is only fair on a rocky bottom, 8m, with a stern line to a tree on the island. The primary attraction of the anchorage is the reversing tidal waterfall or 'skookum chuck' into the lagoon 0.5 nm north of the anchorage.

**Marsha Cove**, Knight Island 60° 20'.5N 147° 40'.7W

The bay is approached through a rock-bound entrance. Once inside there is very good protection. The anchorage above is in the small eastern bight of the Bay. Holding is moderate in mud and shingle, 13m.

**Snug Cove**, Knight Island 60° 15'.72N 147° 45'.93W

One of the favourite anchorages in Prince William Sound. The approach is deep and easy around a pair of wide doglegs. The anchorage gives very good shelter from all winds. Holding is fair in shingle with some mud, 12/19m. The surroundings are very attractive with high but not overwhelming cliffs and two large streams at the head, one of them teeming with salmon. There are scores of bald eagles, also both black bears and Harbour seals.

**West Arm**, Bay of Isles, Knight Island 60° 23'.09N 147° 44'.52W

The anchorage is very well protected, though winds from the east and west would probably blow fairly strongly down its length. The bottom is of even depth and has very good holding mud, 16m. There is a smaller tighter cove at the western end, which is fed by several streams, one of which runs down from a small lake. There are salmon in season and harbour seals.

**Disk Cove**, Disk Island 60° 29'.62N 147° 39'.89W

The cove is approached through a very narrow, rocky entrance which is partly over-hung by trees. The least depth seen on a fairly low tide was 4m. The cove is otherwise land-locked and gives good shelter. Holding is fair in shingle with some mud, 20m.

**Nellie's Rest** 60° 28'.4N 148° 19'.2W

This is formerly known as the Nellie Juan Anchorage and is not named on the chart. The cove is narrow and tight. However, holding is very good in mud and clay, 10m. This an excellent spot from which to explore the Nellie Juan Glacier, either by dinghy, entering over the moraine at higher tide or by bush-bashing around the lagoon. The latter is challenging!

**Deepwater Bay** 60° 29'.8N 148° 24'.0 W, to which you may be driven by the ferocity of the midges in nearby Nellie's Rest.

**West Twin Bay**, Perry Island 60° 42'.52N 147° 57'.52W

The anchorage is toward the small peninsula on the eastern shore well down the bay. This is one of three possible anchorages in the bay. Shelter is good except from the northwest. Holding is fair in shingle, 12m. One of the attractions of Perry Island is that it is generally considered bear-free, so that hiking is somewhat less constrained.

**Ziegler Cove** 60° 50'.1N 148° 19'.1W

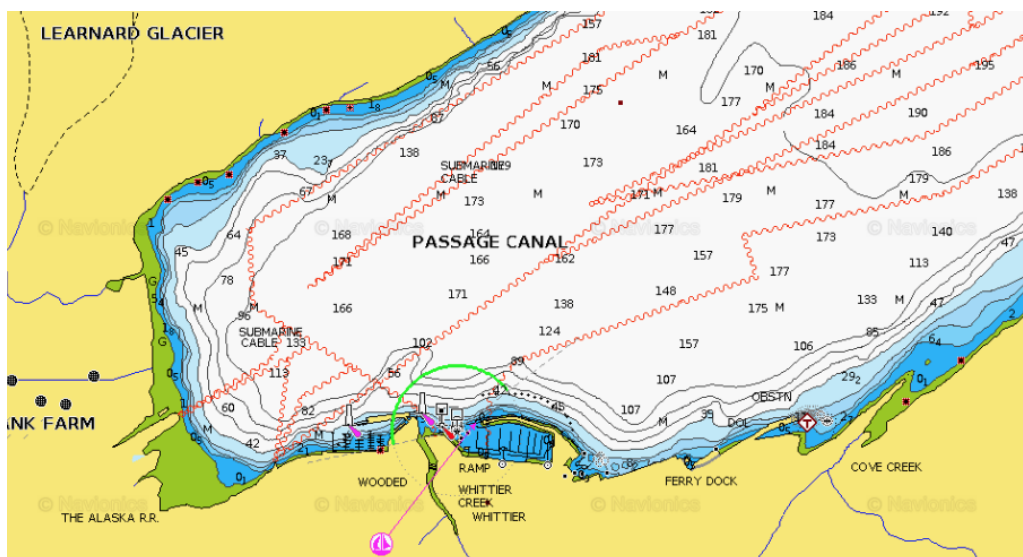
Good protection except from the south to southwest. Good holding in mud and clay, 17m. This is a convenient anchorage from which to explore the glaciers in Barry Arm or, for a very long-day, right up College Fjord.

**Whittier Boat Harbour** 60° 46'.8N 148° 41'.5W

The entrance to the Boat Harbour is just below the distinctive, grey building on the shore 'The Inn at Whittier' and just before the cruise ship terminal. The entrance is quite narrow with a sharp turn to port around a floating breakwater and leaving the fuel dock to starboard. The first dock, A, is the transient dock. However, if the harbour office is called on VHF 68 beforehand, they will try to assign a slip. Passage Canal is subject to strong, gusty winds, which may make the



approach difficult at times. During the salmon season the Boat Harbour is generally very full. There are very limited facilities ashore.



Whittier was originally built as a military base and its peculiar housing arrangements, with virtually all its 300 full-time residents living in a single high-rise block reflect this history. There are some basic supplies available. There are bus and train services to Anchorage. It may be possible to hire a car, but prior reservations may be needed. There are some tourist facilities and fishing charters. Whittier has a well-earned reputation for cloud and rain, but on a sunny day it is a very scenic.

**Surprise Cove** 60° 45'.63N 148° 23'.67W

The cove has a fairly narrow entrance which must be carefully identified. Approach to the anchorage above is easy. Holding is fair in shingle and some mud, 14m. The anchorage is attractively set in a natural amphitheatre. There are islets to explore to the south within the cove.

**Otter Cove** 60° 11'.2'N 148° 07'W

**Auk Bay** 60° 01'.0N 148° 26'W.

**Orca Cove** 60° 13'.9N 148° 15'W anchor in 15meters – good for watching black bears

**Serpentine Cove** 61° 04'.5N 148° 17'.7W

Best entered at half-tide or above, following Lethcoe's instructions precisely; there are magnificent glaciers close by.

**North Granite Bay, Esther Island Port Wells** 60° 53'.49N 148° 03'.76W

The cove is entered through a dogleg among rocks. Once inside, approach to the anchorage is straight-forward. Holding is fair on a shingley bottom, 18m. There is striking, high scenery around the cove, with some flatter stretches at the head for exploration on foot.

**Barry Arm** 61° 08'.8N 148° 08W

Barry Arm off Port Wells, just before College Fjord, is probably the most convenient and easiest access of the glacier-viewing spots in Prince William Sound. Though almost all the glaciers have receded significantly since our first visit in 2002, you can still get close enough to get a good sense of their scale, texture, sound and movement. Because there are few good anchorages near the glaciers, Barry Arm is conveniently close to anchorages further south.

**Esther Passage** 60° 53'.3N 147° 56'.3W

This winding and in places narrow passage east of Esther Island provides a useful short-cut to reach anchorages further east and south from Port Wells. The passage is well charted, generally deep and scenically attractive.

**Shoestring Cove** 60° 51'.5N 147° 57'.8 W, just off Esther Passage.

Beware the extensive rocky shelf close WNW of this position. Great surroundings.

**Papoose Cove, Squaw Bay** 60° 50'.21N 147° 50'.44W

Approach to the anchorage is easy, but avoid the shallower area at the head toward the cascade. Holding is fair in shingle and some mud, 12m.

**Cedar Bay head** 60°58'.5N 147°23'.8 W.

Very peaceful. The rock in the entrance channel is white and visible at least at half-tide. The rock in the entrance channel is white and visible at least at half tide

**Long Bay** 60° 59'.4N 147° 16'.5W

This anchorage is in the eastern bight of the west arm of the bay. Shelter is very good except perhaps from the south. Holding is very good in mud, 13m. There is a large salmon stream at the head where bears and bald eagles may be seen. This is a buggy anchorage when there is little wind.

**Columbia Bay and Glacier** 61° 00'.21N 147° 0'W Anchor 16m

Unfortunately, this outstanding feature of Prince William Sound is much diminished. It is still a huge glacier, but because it is now so far receded it is quite a trek to get anywhere near it. The description in the cruising guide of the reasons for its rapid recession is fascinating.

**Jade Harbour** 60° 58'.2N 146° 47'W anchor 10m clay— pretty bay nice view of Columbia Glacier

**Landlocked Bay** 60° 51'.0N 146° 32'.1W

**St. Matthews Bay, Port Gravina** 60° 46'.1N 146° 17'.1W

The anchorage has an easy approach and is well sheltered from most winds. It is very steep-sided, surrounded by cliffs and sheer slopes. Holding is good in mud, 13m.

**Comfort Cove, Port Gravina** 60° 42'.8N 146° 05'.5W

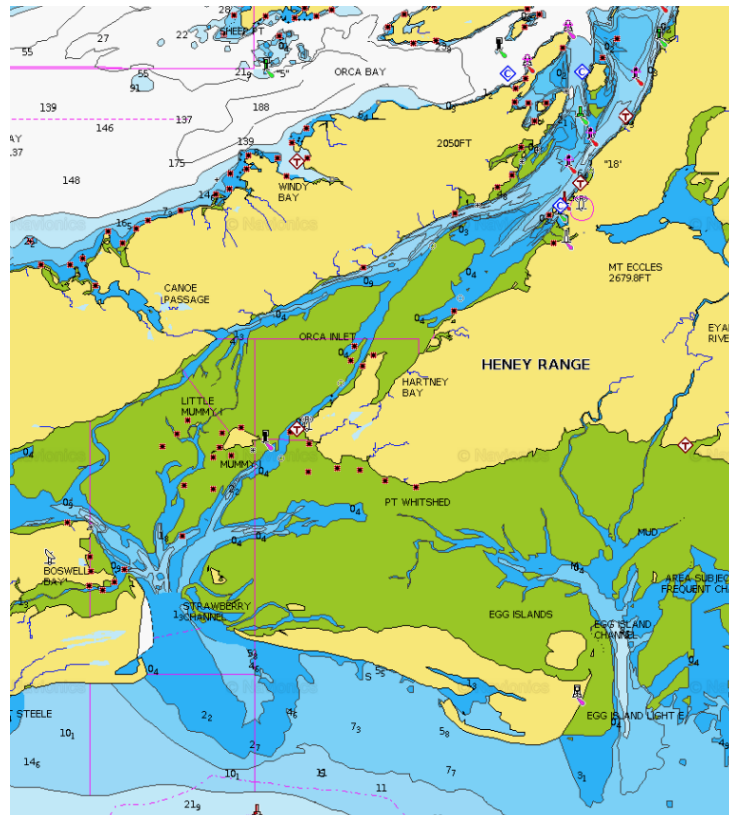
The entrance to the cove is narrow but clear. There is good shelter from most winds. Holding is good in mud, 12m.

**Olsen Bay, Port Gravina** 60° 44'.91N 146° 11'.57W This is a largish bay with a wide deep approach. Beyond the island the depths become fairly even, but shoal well before the head. The bay is sheltered from most winds except strong south to southwesterlies. Day breezes blow into the bay but fade at evening. Holding is very good in mud, 7m. There is a large salmon stream at the head. There are lots of harbour seals.

**Beartrap Bay, Port Gravina** 60 44'.85N 145 59'.28W

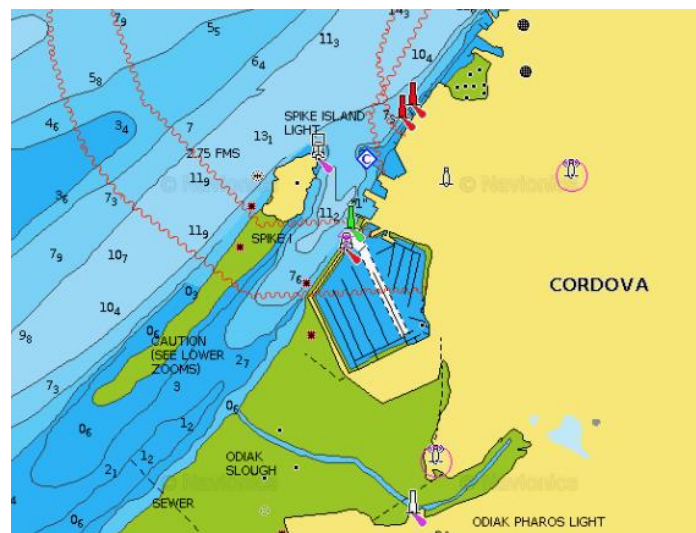
The approach looks wide but is restricted by a shoal to the south. There is then deep water until a shoal off the northern point of the narrower entrance passage. Anchorage is toward the further narrow entrance to Bear Paw Cove. The area to the south toward the Cascade and large salmon stream is shoal for some distance from the head. There is excellent shelter in this land-locked anchorage, though day breezes do come down the length of the bay. Holding is very good in mud, 12m. The salmon stream attracts wildlife of all kinds, as well as freshwater fishermen, as the stream extends some way up a valley. The anchorage is in a dramatic and scenic setting.

**Cordova** 60° 32'.6N 145° 45'.9W



Cordova is the most isolated of the Prince William Sound towns, as it has no road links to the rest of Alaska, only air and ferry services, which are considerably curtailed in winter. However, it is a major fishing port and very busy in the summer.

Approach to the Boat Harbour is through one of two channels from the northeast. The West Channel is quite shallow in parts but is well marked. G Dock is the transient dock, though the harbourmaster may assign a slip if available. Call on VHF 68. There is no fuel dock in the harbour, though there is one outside. There are showers at the harbour office. There is a well-stocked supermarket adjacent to the harbour and other smaller stores in the high street up the hill. Both the Napa store and the hardware store in town stock some marine supplies. Internet is available at the library and at one or two cafes.



Though the town is fairly rough-and-ready, a number of cruisers, particularly those with children, who have been welcomed at the local school, have been very happy wintering in Cordova. It often has very heavy snow in winter as well as strong winds.

**The Orca Channel** This leads to the Gulf of Alaska but should only be attempted in settled weather and with detailed local guidance or assistance. To quote from *Young Larry* – a steel gaff rigged yawl which had transited the North West Passage in 2010, laid up in Kodiak for the winter and then headed south through Alaska in 2011:

*“We really liked Cordova which is a fishing port and seemed like a smaller version of Kodiak. There are two routes from Cordova to the Gulf of Alaska. The recommended route is north through Prince William Sound but one can save 60 miles by going southwest through the Orca Strait. The problem is that the strait is shallow and one has to cross an uncharted bar at Strawberry Channel. Perhaps a little foolishly we elected to take the shorter route. We worked out we could get through the strait and arrive at the bar of Strawberry Channel just before high water. We arrived at the bar at HW-0.5h. This gave us half an hour to cross before we would have to turn back and find somewhere to anchor before retracing our steps next day. If we couldn’t make the five miles across the bar, the alternative route would be 100 miles. At the bar, we touched twice and had to retrace our route, motor a few metres to the north and try again. On the third attempt, and within minutes of high water, we successfully bumped our way over the bar and two and half miles of shallow water to the open sea”. (Their full report may be read in Roving Commissions 2011)*

**Garden Cove**, Port Etches 60° 20'.15N 146° 32'.53W

This cove is a convenient stop when entering or leaving Prince William Sound through the Hinchinbrook Passage. The anchorage is well sheltered from most winds. Holding is fair to good in 7m once the anchor is set. However, there is considerable kelp on the bottom over mud. Since the major oil spill, a tug and barge spill-response vessels are permanently moored in Port Etches near the anchorage.

**Sheep Bay head** 60° 41'.7N 145° 56'.6 W

**Windy Bay** 60° 22'.9N 146° 00'W Anchor in west or east indentations, depending on conditions. Windy Bay offers a great hike (4.5 hours) with splendid views down the Sound and Strawberry Entrance from the 2024ft peak south of it. Note: The bay can be windy.

### **Hinchinbrook Passage**

This entrance to Prince William Sound has strong tides and an uneven bottom, which produces overfalls and standing waves even in calm weather. In addition, there is a fairway for large vessels entering and leaving the Sound. The smoothest water may be found to be relatively close in to the eastern point and Cape Hinchinbook. In wind against tide conditions it is considered that this passage would be very dangerous.

# Addendum

(This is an extract from [RCCPF Cruising Notes on SE Alaska and British Columbia](#) (January 2018) and is included as an aid to initial planning for cruisers heading southwards. Chapter numbers have been retained for continuity)

## PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND TO VANCOUVER AND THE GULF ISLANDS



### Contents Chapters 5 & 6

Introduction

Ch 5. Southeast Alaska

Ch 6. British Columbia

Addendum to these Notes



## Introduction

*(Sunstone)*

### Gulf of Alaska Passage

In summer, if the northeast Pacific high is set in the Gulf, this should generally be an easy passage with moderate fair winds. However, if low pressure settles in the Gulf, persistent easterlies can make the passage in the Gulf of Alaska unpleasant. Close inshore there is often fog. In clear weather, there are spectacular views to be had of the coastal mountains, including Mount Fairweather, which rises over 4,000 m quite close to the coast. Approaching Cape Spencer there are also a number of tidewater glaciers. A few cruisers have entered Icy Bay and Lituya Bay. The former is well named and can have significant amounts of floating ice, as well as fog. The entrance to Lituya should only be attempted in settled weather at slack high water. Lituya is famous for the colossal wave which was generated by a huge landslide in the Bay. The wave washed 1,500 feet up a cliff in the Bay. The coast pilot warns that landslides are common.

Tides run very strongly in the entrance to Cross Sound at Cape Spencer and there are significant tidally generated waves even in calm weather. The entrance is wide, but the bottom is quite uneven and shallow in places. There is often fog in the morning. The natural first port of call in Cross Sound is Elfin Cove. Care is needed to avoid the areas of shoals among the islands in the approaches to Elfin.

### Formalities

With the large amount of small boat traffic that flows between Canada and Alaska, customs and immigration have been made quite easy, provided you have all your paperwork. Also see [www.noonsite.com](http://www.noonsite.com).

### Weather and Forecasts

This whole area is subject to very strong winds in the winter months with the summer weather being characterized by long spells of calm weather. Be prepared to motor a lot as the reality of this area is that to avoid the winds one tends to motor and make passages when there is little to no breeze.

Marine forecasts are available throughout Alaska. In the Inside Passage there are continuous weather broadcasts on the VHF weather channels. Further out in the Gulf of Alaska and North Western Alaska the weather is broadcast at various time throughout the day on HF 4125 MHz.

### Anchorage

There are thousands of anchorages in Alaska, most of them in places untouched by civilization. It is a strong maritime area and there are many small boats about but the area is so vast that often many days can go by without sighting another vessel.

### Public Floats in Southeast Alaska

In many of the most frequented bays and harbours in Southeast Alaska there are public floats or docks at which to tie up rather than having to anchor. The public floats are maintained by the State and are free. Some floats are docks connected to the shore, others are not. Many of these floats are in bays or harbours where there is no village or any inhabitants other than bears. However, most towns also have a public float, sometimes in addition to a boat harbour run by the municipality, at which there are charges.

### Alaskan Coast Charts and Pilots

**The NOAA Alaskan Coast Pilots** provide excellent and detailed information about almost every useable anchorage on the Alaskan coast. The pilot is down-loadable free from the NOAA site, though some may prefer to buy a paper copy as the down-loaded version is difficult to 'flip' or browse through.

Note too that all NOAA charts are freely down-loadable in electronic format from the NOAA site.



## Sailing Directions, B.C. Coast, Northern Portion. Canadian Hydrographic Service.

### Canada Chart Book 3313

Nanaimo Maps and Charts (tel. 250 754 2513 Email [nanmaps@island.net](mailto:nanmaps@island.net) has all charts in stock all the time.

Canadian tide table are considered to be essential.

Canadian Hydrographic service web-site [www.charts.gc.ca](http://www.charts.gc.ca)

**CAUTION.** The West Coast has not been fully surveyed. The Canadian Hydrographic office is converting its Vertical Datum to meters from fathoms and Horizontal Datum from NAD27 to NAD83 (WGS 84 equivalent). In the latter case, differences of up to 100 meters arise between the two datum when GPS is used.

### Publications.

**Charlie's Charts. North to Alaska.** 2008 Charles E Wood. Good for planning and inside passage making with quite a fair number of ports and anchorages. Crucial portions such as the transit of passes and the passage of Cape Caution are given particular attention with guidelines for timing and recommended routes. Details of weather services for Canada and Alaska are included. Available in UK via Imray, Laurie, Norie and Wilson.

**North Coast of British Columbia.** Douglass, Fine Edge Publications.

**Exploring the Inside passage to Alaska. Don Douglass and Reanne Hemingway-Douglass.** Fine Edge Productions ISBN 0-9386655-33-2. This includes many more anchorages than Charlie's Charts. Also see below for further reading.

**A Guide to Queen Charlotte Islands.** Neil Carey. Raincoast Books, Vancouver. (Not a pilot but boat orientated and all the way round.)

*(Note by Editor: Some of the American pilot books have been compiled over many years of experience but much of this may have been gained in shallow draft motor boats. Not all their advice can necessarily be followed by a skipper of a deep draft yacht – as always, skippers beware.)*

### Logs and Blogs

2017 *Cosmic Dancer's* logs may be viewed at [www.cosmic-dancer.com](http://www.cosmic-dancer.com)

2004 *Jura* - Auke Bay, Glacier Bay, Sitka.

2004 *Jura* - Truck to Ancortes and north to Prince Rupert

2001 *Brown Bear* - Queen Charlotte Islands

2000 *Gollywobbler* - Truck to Ancortes and north to Glacier Bay

2000 *Duet* – Around Vancouver Island and south to San Francisco

1991 *Juno II* – Truck to Everett north, inside and then Kodiak, Sitka and return.

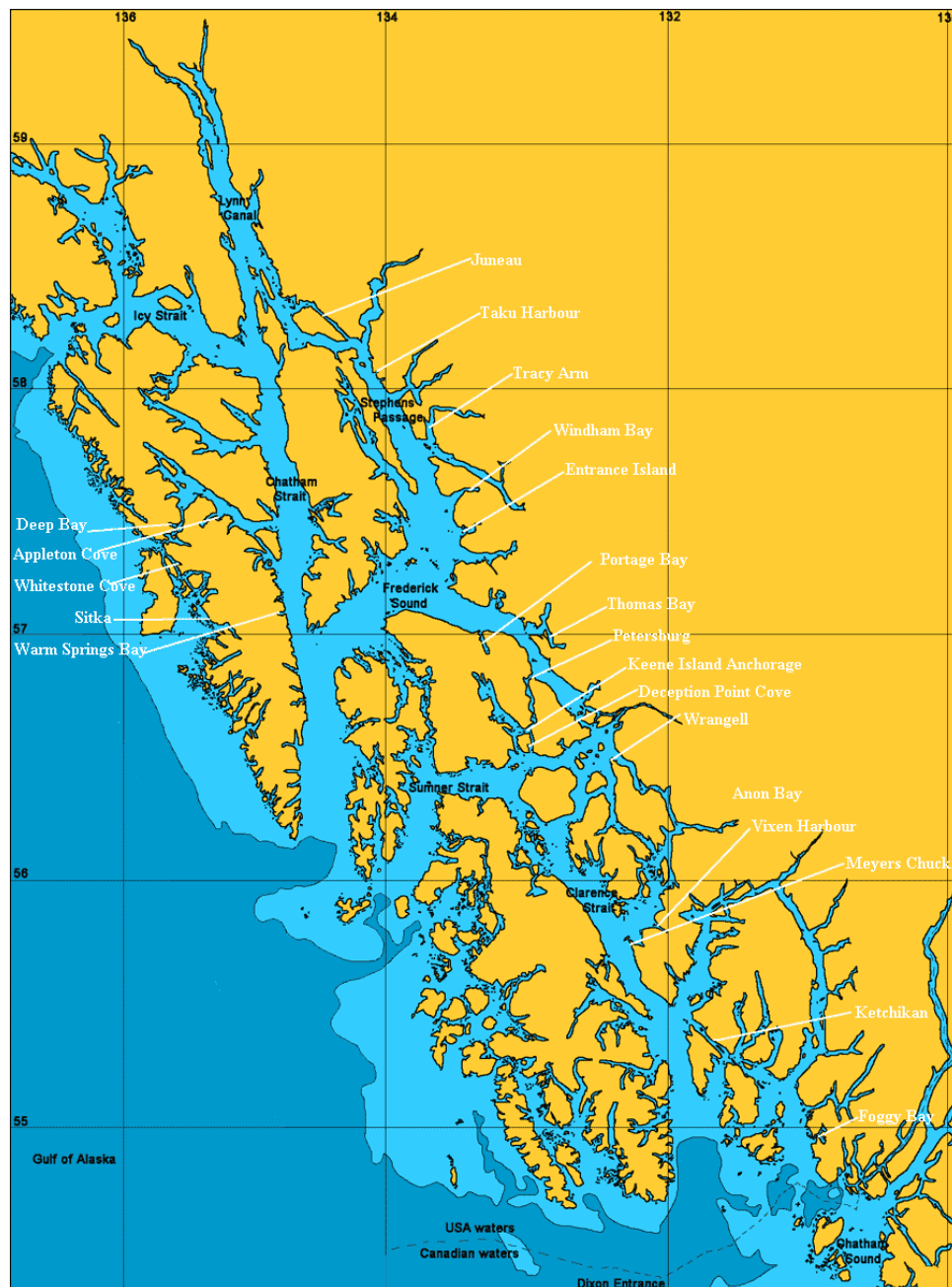
### Guide to Further Reading

Our contributors recommend that anyone intending to cruise Southeast Alaska and British Columbia, obtains a copy of the most recent edition of '*Exploring the Inside Passage to Alaska; A Cruising Guide from the San Juan Islands to Glacier Bay*', by Don Douglass & Reanne Hemingway-Douglass – also '*Proven Cruising Routes Seattle to Ketchikan*.' These cruising guides gives excellent detailed guidance not only on most of the accessible anchorages among the hundreds in the area, it also gives guidance to many of the intricate passages. The only caveat we offer in its use is that the research was undertaken in a relatively shallow draft motor yacht and some of the anchoring depths suggested are optimistic! Waggoners Cruising Guide has also been highly recommended.

There are other guides by the Douglasses, published by *Fine Edge* and available through Amazon, which cover the same area, but in somewhat greater detail. 'Exploring Southeast Alaska, Dixon Entrance to Skagway' (2007) is particularly useful. All are readily available in North America.

## Chapter 5. (This is an extract from [RCCPF Cruising Notes on SE Alaska and British Columbia](#))

### Southeast Alaska



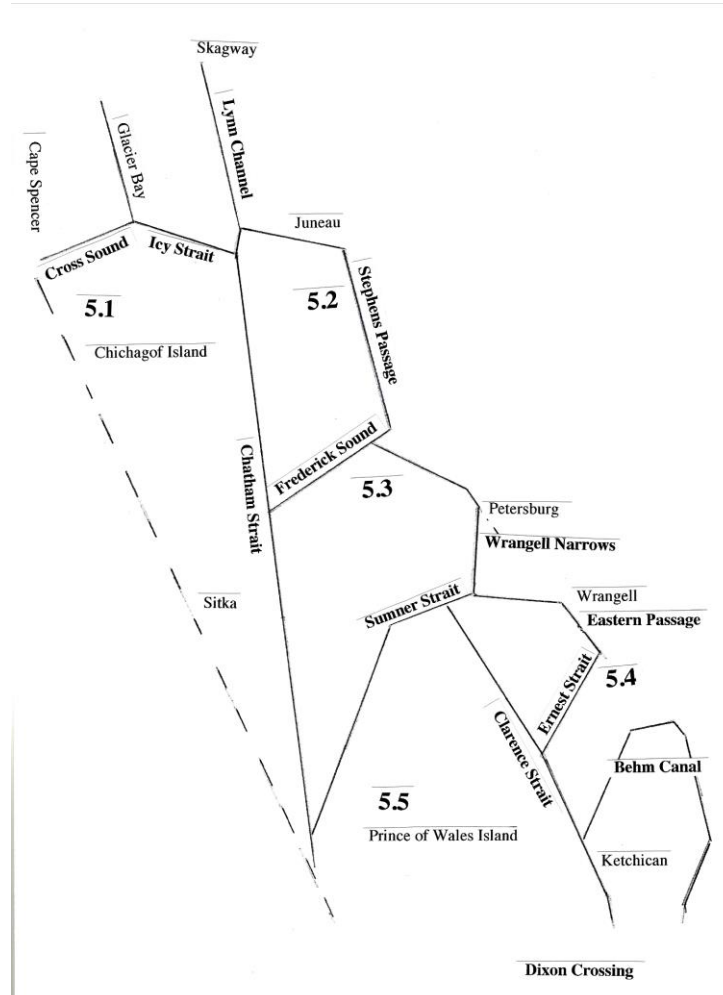
#### Southeast Alaska

- 5. Overall Plan south from Cape Spencer
- 5.1 Chichagof and Baranof Islands - Sitka
- 5.2 Inner Passages from Cape Spencer
- 5.3 Southeast of Frederick Sound
- 5.4 East and South of Clarence Strait
- 5.5 Prince of Wales Island

## Overview of main inside routes chapter 5

After rounding Cape Spencer and entering Cross Sound, Chichagof Island (**Section 5.1**) lies to the south (with Baranof Island and Sitka further south). Glacier Bay, with its dramatic scenery and humpback whales, sweeps to the north from Icy Strait. Note that access to Glacier Bay is strictly controlled by the National Park Service and a permit to enter is required – see [www.nps.gov/giba](http://www.nps.gov/giba). Icy Strait continues until it swings south as Chatham Strait or north to the Lynn Canal, for Skagway, or on towards Juneau – (**Section 5.2**). Stephens Passage leads south from there to Frederick Sound.

Frederick Sound gives access to Chatham Strait, and then south to open sea, but much inside traffic heads southeast towards Petersburg and the Wrangell Narrows (**Section 5.3**) and on east through Sumner Strait to Wrangell; from there (**Section 5.4**) route via Eastern Passage and Ernest Strait to join Clarence Strait. An alternative is to continue west on through Sumner Strait and (**Section 5.5**) down the west coast of Prince of Wales Island. Yachts heading to British Columbia will clear out of USA at Ketchikan.



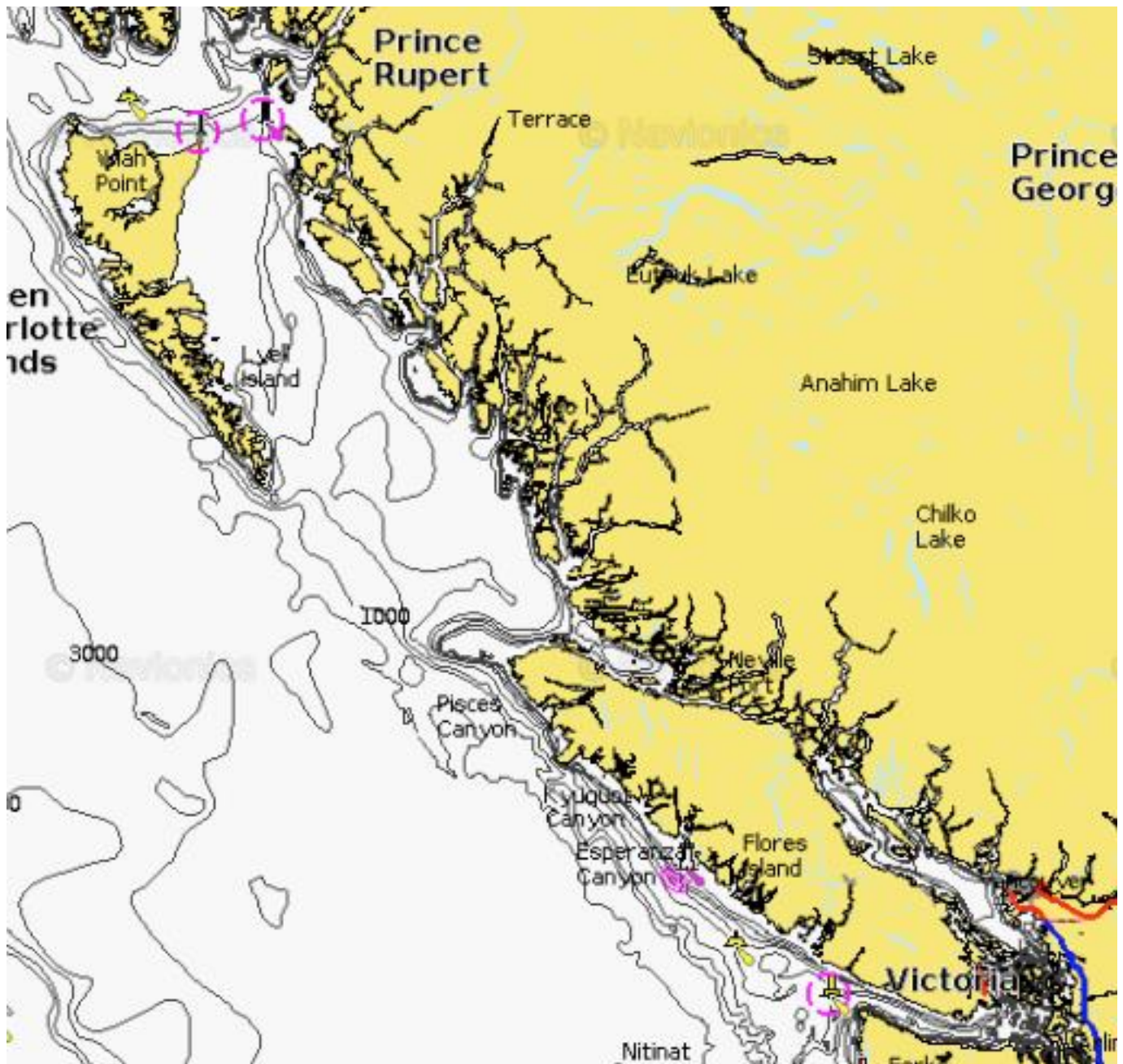
**Ketchikan** 55° 21'N 131° 40'W

**General.** Port of entry (used by most vessels sailing the inside passage.) Customs and immigration are at the Harbour Masters office in Bay Harbour. The Harbour Master is available on VHF channel 73. Customs is available by phone 24 hours a day on 907-225-2254. This is a busy place in the summer and most things are available. It is also very wet and rains, on average, 236 days per year with October being the wettest month. Excellent air/ferry connections make this an ideal place for crew changing. The town is very tourist/cruise ship orientated

## Chapter 6.

(This is an extract from [RCCPF Cruising Notes on SE Alaska and British Columbia](#))

### British Columbia, Canada



#### Dixon Entrance Crossing and Prince Rupert

- 6.1 Inside Passages from Prince Rupert
- 6.2 Queen Charlotte Islands
- 6.3 Inside Vancouver Island
- 6.4 Outside Vancouver Island



## Dixon Entrance Crossing

*(Sunstone)*

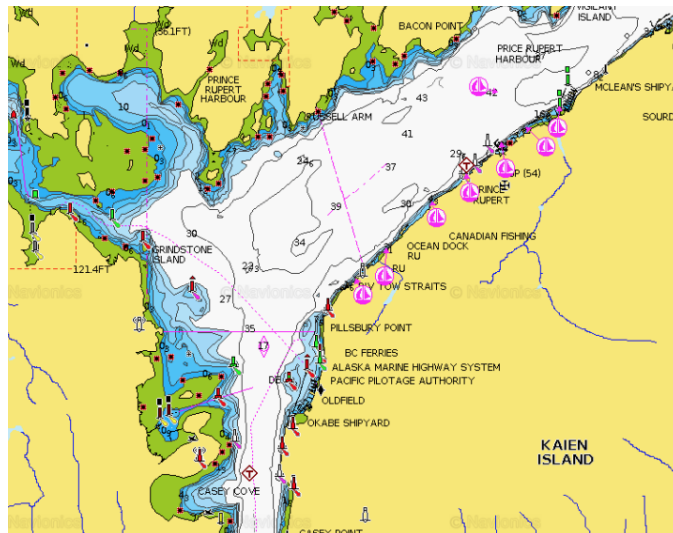
Cruising guides, and many local sailors, view the Dixon Entrance crossing with trepidation. It is certainly open to the full force of any bad weather from the Gulf of Alaska and westerlies are funnelled between the land masses to the north and south, while easterlies come down Portland Inlet. Tides are fairly strong and irregular in direction. Having said all that, the English Channel and Brittany coasts can pose greater challenges for cruisers. Unless time presses, it is usually possible to plan for a pleasant crossing with fair winds and, in fact, the Dixon Entrance may give one of the few opportunities for Inside Passage cruisers to have a nice day sail to relieve the constant motoring. Daylight crossing of the Dixon Entrance is virtually essential as the area is littered with drifting logs for which a very sharp look-out must be kept.

To check into Canada foreign vessels must go to Prince Rupert. The distance from Alaskan anchorages to Prince Rupert is great enough that it is a very long day sail. Most cruisers coming down the Inside Passage from Ketchikan stop at Foggy Bay before continuing to Prince Rupert. Vessels crossing from the west, either Tlevak Sound or Clarence Strait can usually make the crossing in daylight, but may if necessary stop at Judd Harbour, Duke Island (54° 56'N 131° 20'W). The most direct route into Prince Rupert is via Venn Passage.

**Venn Passage, BC** 54° 19'.75 N 130° 25'.24 W

Venn Passage is an interesting and useful shortcut if transiting between Prince Rupert and Dixon Entrance. It is winding, narrow, and shallow in places, but is both well marked and charted, and regularly used by local boats, though it requires careful pilotage of some tight turns. Some larger yachts might prefer to take the longer route to the south of Digby Island.

**Prince Rupert** 54° 19'.3N 130° 19'.2W



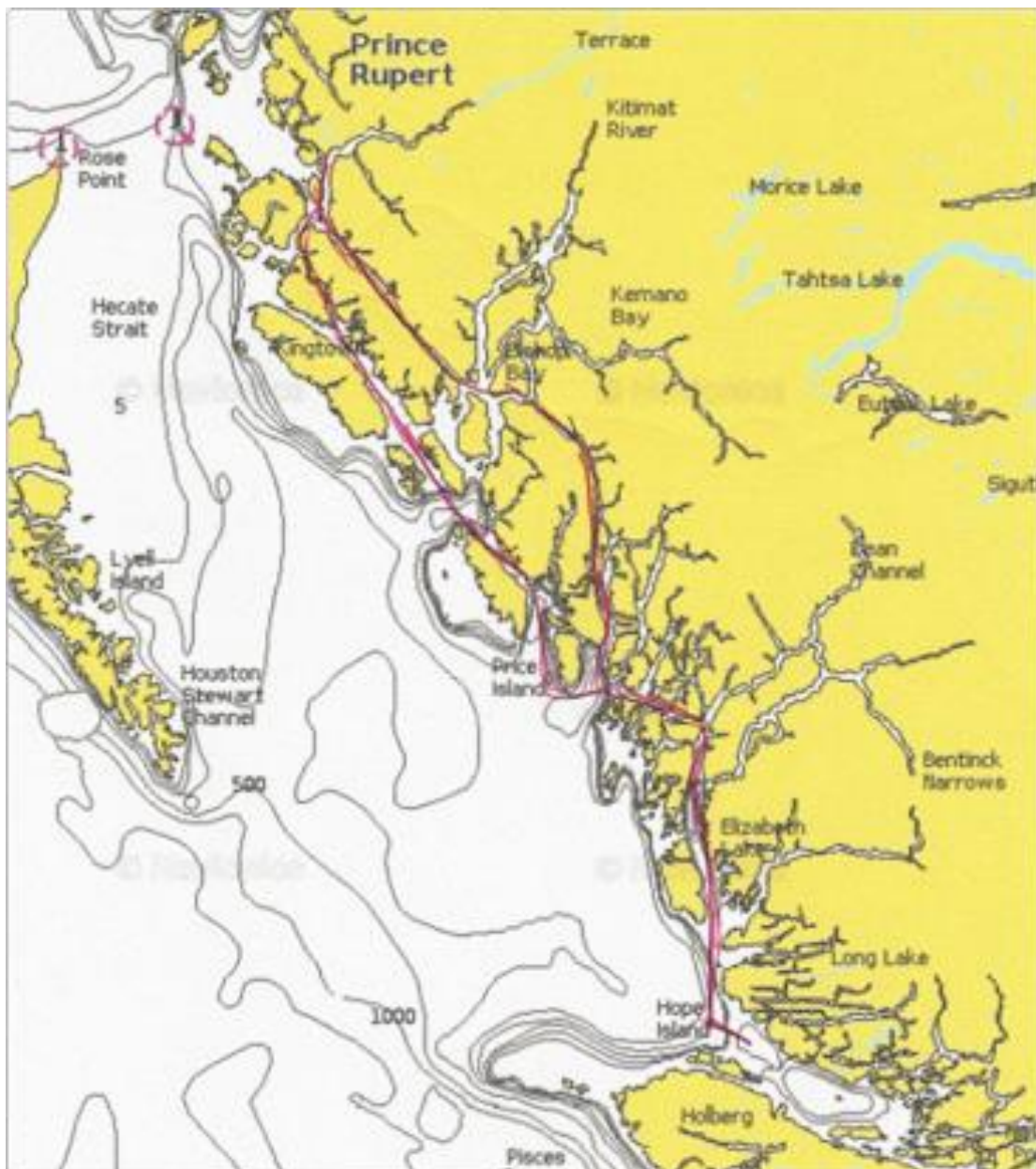
Though there is a boat harbour further north, it gives preference to commercial craft during the summer. The usual berthing for visitors is at the Prince Rupert Rowing and Yacht Club at Cow Bay. Customs clearance is usually by public phone near the Club, though officers may opt to visit the boat. Canada is quite strict about the limits for importation of alcohol. The Club's docks are convenient to the town. There are showers in the office. The fuel dock is immediately north of the Club docks. Propane bottles can be filled about .5 km. down the road. Internet and wifi link are available at the Club. There is a variety of marine services available close to the Club docks but no indication of haul-out facilities.

A large supermarket and a liquor store are about 1 km towards the centre of town. The laundromat is some distance further. Close to the supermarket is the Museum of Northern BC, which is orientated mostly to the culture, history and artefacts of the First Nations peoples of the area. The North Pacific Cannery Village Museum is located about 20 km south of Prince Rupert and has interesting tours around the preserved and reconstructed cannery. Cruise ships visit Prince Rupert in the summer and when they do the town can be quite busy.

## 6.1

### Inside Passage South from Prince Rupert (Sunstone)

The most usual and probably quickest route south is via Grenville Channel, Fraser Reach and Princess Royal Channel or Graham Reach and Finlayson Channel; narrow, steep channels with dramatic scenery. (This route is well shown on Google Earth – zoom in.) There is a more western route via Ogden, Petrel and Principe Channels, followed by Estevan Sound and Laredo Channel. After sliding east through some narrow passages, the western route re-joins the east in Finlayson Channel (to southeast of Price Island). After this, there are only minor alternatives in the route into Queen Charlotte Sound until one chooses whether to go inside or outside Vancouver Island. The more western route tends to be less crowded, with lower hills and more varied scenery, though it is a little longer. There is some challenging pilotage of the narrow channels to return to the main route.



*Charlies Charts, Douglass, and Waggoner's cruising guide are reported as being much appreciated by cruisers.*



## 6.2

# Queen Charlotte Islands

The Queen Charlotte Islands are the western most islands of British Columbia, some 55 miles across the Hecate Strait from the main North Coast. A group of deeply indented islands, they afford excellent cruising opportunities with generally good anchorages and few other yachts.



## Weather

Local advice restricts cruising to June-August. Winds are mostly SE-NW. Strong winds and gales (less common in summer), mostly from SE. *Sunstone* did not experience summer prevalence of NW winds referred to in some publications but with time in hand were able to wait for favourable winds. It is wet and quite cold. Generally, there are a lot of calm patches, especially night and morning. Continuous weather forecasts on WX channels, 21B (international 21) and SSB 2054 KHz at 0005, 0605, 1205 and 1805 local time.

## How to get there.

**South** from the Alaska Panhandle: you have to clear customs and immigration in Prince Rupert (if you are not from USA with Canpass clearance). **North/West** from West Coast Vancouver Island or **via the Inside Passage** (Section 6.1). Crew change is possible (but flights are expensive).

## 6.3

(This is an extract from [RCCPF Cruising Notes on SE Alaska and British Columbia](#))

## Inside Vancouver Island

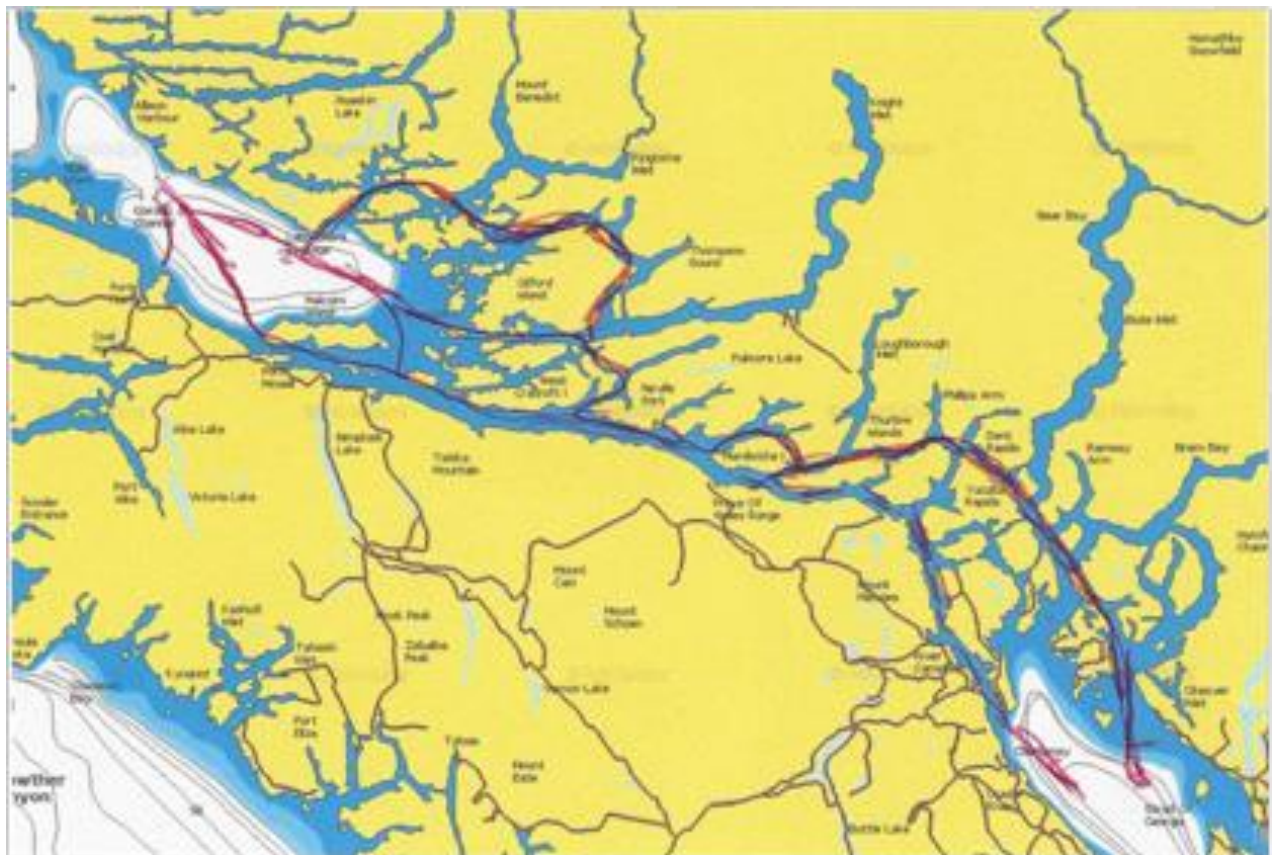
(Introduction by *Sunstone*)

In Queen Charlotte Sound one must make a decision for heading south either inside (this section) or outside Vancouver Island (Section 6.4). The advantage, but also the challenge, of the outside route is that there is much more sailing, often in moderate to strong winds, particularly in the afternoons when day breezes pick up. Many of the anchorages on the west coast are some way up inlets away from the outer coast. Morning fog can be a problem. There are relatively few places for pit stops, for fuel or stores, until some way south down the coast. This lack of development does mean, however, that there are far fewer boats than inside.

On the Inside Passage, there are many more harbours and anchorages to explore and there are numerous places to pick up fuel or stores. However, there are relatively few opportunities for sailing once one leaves Port Hardy. Tides also run very strongly in many of the narrows, which must be negotiated, and there is often morning fog. During the summer months, areas such as the Broughtons and Desolation Sound can be very busy.

## Inside Routes and Johnstone Strait

Parts of Johnstone Strait have very strong and turbulent tides. Passage of the narrower parts of the Strait requires careful timing, which is complicated by the lack of well-placed and sheltered stopping places. It is not possible to avoid the Race Passage narrows section of the Strait. However, by going north, into Cordero Channel, it is possible to avoid the Ripple Rock narrows (50° 07'.8N 125° 21'.3W) where the tide runs most strongly with very heavy overfalls, whirlpools and turbulence. Many smaller craft take the Cordero Channel route.



*Charlies Charts, Douglass, and Waggoner's cruising guide are reported as being much appreciated by cruisers.*

## 6.4 (This is an extract from [RCCPF Cruising Notes on SE Alaska and British Columbia](#))

### Outside Vancouver Island

**General.** This is a wonderful cruising area that can take from as little as a month to circumnavigate the whole of Vancouver Island to three months or more exploring in depth. The anchorages range from the cosmopolitan to the isolated. The inside waters, i.e. the eastern side of the island (section 6.3) are protected from the worst of the winds although a nasty chop can build in the straits Charlotte, Johnston and Georgia.

Many of the anchorages on the west coast are some way up inlets away from the outer coast. They are all protected. It is easy to penetrate deep into the sounds and not to be aware of the Pacific Ocean 'out there' at all. Morning fog can be a problem. The west coast can be a rugged place and facilities on this coast are limited. There are relatively few places for pit stops, for fuel or stores, until some way south down the coast. This lack of development does mean, however, that there are far fewer boats than inside.

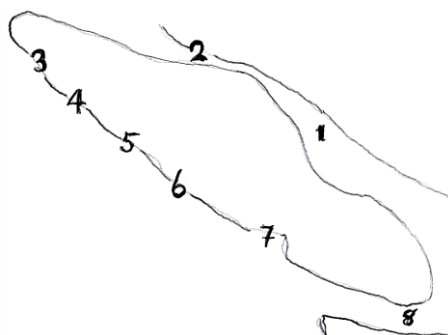


#### Routing

The prevailing wind is northwest so an anti-clockwise circumnavigation is the recommended route if starting from the south. The Primary Cruising areas are:

1. Desolation Sound
2. Johnston Strait
3. Quatsino Sound
4. Kyuquot Sound
5. Nootka Sound
6. Clayoquot Sound
7. Barkley Sound
8. Juan de Fuca Strait

Areas 1 & 2 are covered in section 6.3



## **Time to Cruise** Mid-April to October

**April.** It will be cold! You can expect some storms at this time of year but as they are well forecast in advance on VHF continuous marine forecasts, Wx Ch: 1,2,3 & 21; they should not be a problem.

**May – July.** The wind is predominately north west. Fog is always a possibility.

**August** – fog

**September** – still foggy and watch out for the autumnal gales

**October** – the risk of bad weather increases.

**Publications:** See page 7 and consult Amazon for what is obtainable outside North America - Also:

Charts: - All marinas and marine hardware shops stock charts, even in the most remote places

Canadian tide tables – a must for going up the inside of Vancouver Island and Juan de Fuca Strait.

Waggoner Cruising Guide – Puget Sound – San Juan Islands, Gulf Islands – Inside passage North to Prince Rupert, B.C. Hale [www.waggonerguide.com](http://www.waggonerguide.com)

Exploring Puget Sound & British Columbia – Olympia – Queen Charlotte sound. The historical reference atlas by Stephen Hilson. (highly recommended)

Exploring Alaska & British Columbia – Skagway to Barkley sound. Stephen Hilson.

Canadian Hydrographic Service. PO Box 6000.Sidney, BC Canada V8L 4 BL  
[www.ios.bc.ca/ios/chs](http://www.ios.bc.ca/ios/chs). Email: [chartsales@ios.bc.ca](mailto:chartsales@ios.bc.ca)

Armchair Sailor: 2110 Westlake Ave N., Seattle WA 98109. Email: [armchair@wolffenet.com](mailto:armchair@wolffenet.com)  
[www.ArmchairSailorSeattle.com](http://www.ArmchairSailorSeattle.com)

Recommended reading – anything about Captain James Cook, George Vancouver and don't sail without Jonathan Raban's Passage to Juneau.

## **Fishing permits**

Permits are required by law and are available from most hardware shops, marinas and the like.

## **Some passage making notes if heading south**

There is no need to clear out of Canada before heading down to USA.

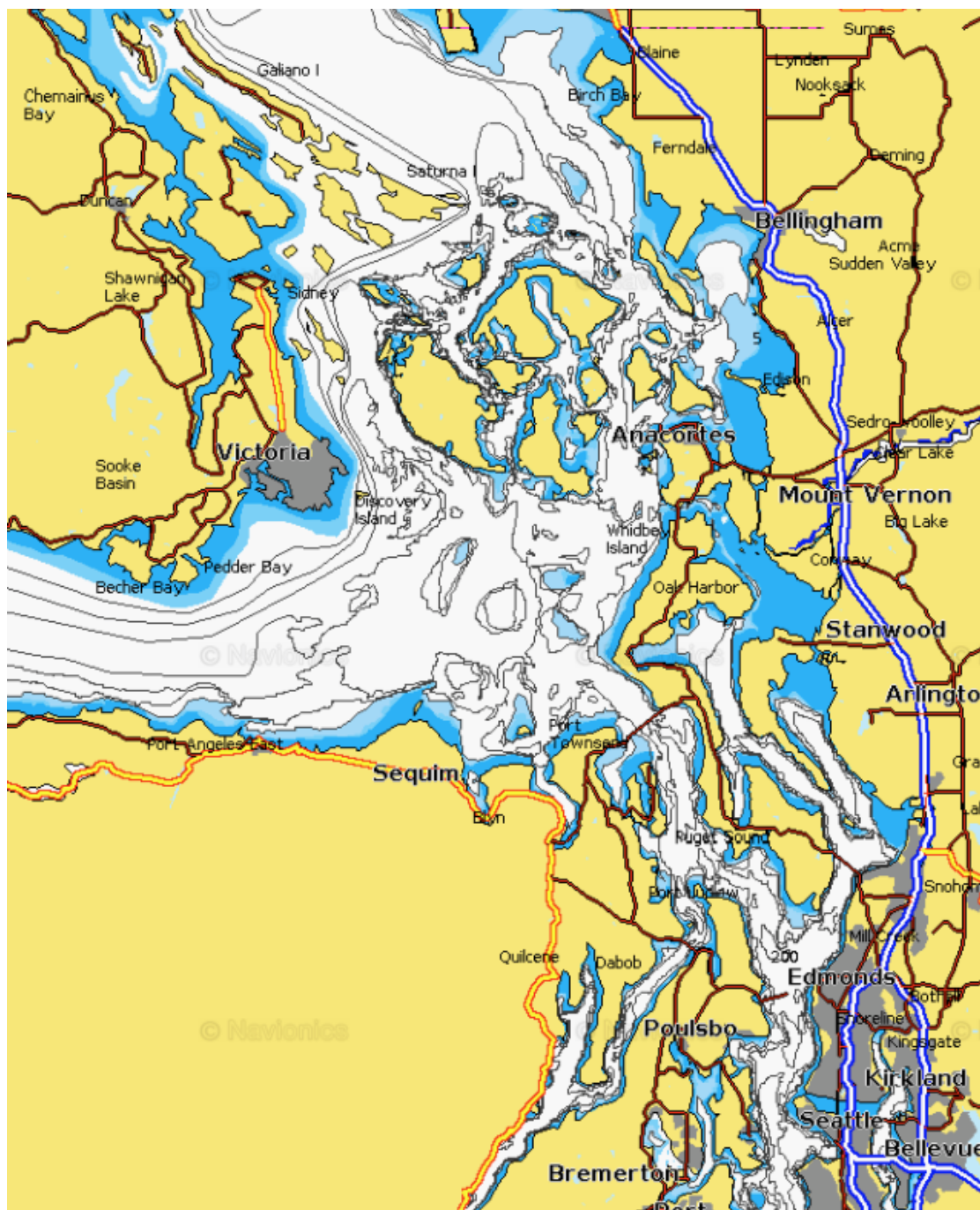
If heading south some 780nm for San Francisco, Barkley Sound (48° 53'N 125°15'W on the lower SW side of Vancouver island) is a good jumping off place. La Perouse bank is notorious for a nasty, uncomfortable seas. Once off-shore, the fog clears and the wind will increase in strength. The strength of the wind will be determined by the pressure and position of the North Pacific High. It is recommended to keep at least 100 miles off shore. You will be in deeper water and mostly clear of the active fishing fleet. *Sunstone* sailed down to San Francisco at the beginning of August and the NW'lys were at their strongest with constant 30+ knots and gusts of 45 knots. Some advise that October is a good month to make that passage when the strong winds are down.



## Addendum to Cruising Notes

(This is an extract from [RCCPF Cruising Notes on SE Alaska and British Columbia](#))

*Publications for cruising SE Alaska, British Columbia and the Gulf islands - including A Cruising Guide to Puget Sound and the San Juan Islands - are readily available in North America via normal outlets such as West Marine. They are difficult to obtain in Europe (www.lmray.com hold limited stock) though some are obtainable through www.amazon.co.uk. A search might include 'books yachting gulf douglass'.*



## Trucking a yacht across USA/Canada

*These notes are by Clive Woodman who, in 2017, trucked his boat to West Coast USA before exploring northwards to Alaska. His feedback from that cruise is included in the update of the main document above.*

If you wish to get from the US east coast to west coast, or vice versa, then trucking a yacht overland is a reasonably affordable alternative to the long passage via Panama or a NW passage attempt. Many US and Canadian yachts do the trip each year from both directions and there is no shortage of trucking companies specialising in this.

Based on our experiences of trucking a 38ft yacht from Lake Superior to Seattle in 2017 we would offer the following general advice:

Cross border trucking from US to Canada or vice versa, appears to be very problematic and we didn't find anyone prepared to do it for an affordable price. You are well advised to stick to one side of the border or the other when crossing.

In 2017 quoted prices for a crossing on the US side of the border were on average 20-30% lower than on the Canadian side.

Height of boat is a significant issue on the east coast of the US where there are many more low bridges than on the west. If you have a deep draught vessel then you may need to remove stanchions, push pit, pulpit, wheel, and in extremis even the keel, to meet height restrictions. If height is an issue then you can reduce costs by heading into the Great Lakes first and trucking from Lake Michigan, Superior or Ontario where the height constraints, and distance to be traversed, are less onerous than on the east coast. Furthermore, the trip into the lakes is an extremely worthwhile cruising destination in its own right, irrespective of whether you enter by the Hudson or St Lawrence Rivers.

When choosing a trucking company, it pays to consult the boatyard from where you will be departing and arriving to get recommendations. The relationship between trucking company and boatyard is critical to the process and things will go a lot more smoothly if you choose a combination that are used to working with one another.

If heading across to the Pacific North West then Anacortes or Seattle appear to be the preferred destinations. Heading in the opposite direction, boats seem to get trucked to most of the major east coast yachting destinations.

Preparing a yacht for a long transcontinental road crossing is at least as time consuming, if not more so, than preparing for a trans ocean passage and this needs to be factored into the planning. Most yards will do the work for you, but it is time consuming rather than technical work, and if budget is an issue then you will probably wish to do much of the work yourself as most yards will bill the work by the hour.