



Delaware-Maryland-Virginia Coast

(1) This chapter describes that section of the Delaware, Maryland and Virginia coastline extending from Cape Henlopen to Cape Charles and the Virginia Inside Passage. Included in the discussion are Roosevelt Inlet, the Delaware Bay entrance to the Lewes and Rehoboth Canal, Indian River Inlet, Assawoman Canal and Bay, Isle of Wight Bay, Ocean City Inlet, Chincoteague Bay and Inlet and the various inlets that lead through the barrier beach to the Virginia Inside Passage.

(2) Also described are the cities of Lewes, Rehoboth, Ocean City and Chincoteague and several of the smaller communities on these waterways.

(3) North Atlantic Right Whales

(4) Endangered North Atlantic right whales may occur within 30 miles of the Delaware, Maryland and Virginia coasts (peak season: October through November and February through May). (See **North Atlantic Right Whales**, indexed as such in chapter 3, for more information on right whales and recommended measures to avoid collisions.)

(5) All vessels 65 feet or greater in length overall (LOA.) and subject to the jurisdiction of the United States are restricted to speeds of 10 knots or less in a Seasonal Management Area existing around the Delaware Bay and the entrance to the Chesapeake Bay between November 1 and April 30. The areas are defined as the waters within a 20-nm radius of 38°52'27.4"N., 75°01'32.1"W. (Delaware Bay) and 37°00'36.9"N., 75°57'50.5"W. (Chesapeake Bay). (See **50 CFR 224.105** in chapter 2 for regulations, limitations and exceptions.)

(6) COLREGS Demarcation Lines

(7) The lines established for Delaware Bay and the inlets of the Delaware-Maryland-Virginia coast are described in **33 CFR 80.503** and **80.505**, chapter 2.

(8) Cape Henlopen to Cape Charles

(9) The coast extends southward for 21 miles from Cape Henlopen to the Delaware-Maryland boundary line, thence south-southwestward for 27 miles to the Maryland-Virginia boundary, and thence 63 miles to Cape Charles. The low sand beaches are backed by bays, rivers and creeks that are bordered by marsh and woodland. Broken ground fringes the coast, and depths of 36 feet or less are found as far as 12 miles from shore.

(10) Visible from seaward are the summer resorts of Rehoboth Beach, Bethany Beach, Dewey Beach and Ocean City, all within 30 miles of Cape Henlopen. The most prominent marks south of Ocean City are the light structures and the Coast Guard stations.

(11) The bays and connecting channels back of the barrier beaches form a continuous inside passage from Delaware Bay to Chesapeake Bay, but Assawoman Canal and Little Assawoman Bay are now navigable only for rowboats and outboards.

(12) There are no harbors of refuge for deep-draft vessels along this coast. The inlets are subject to frequent change, and their navigation requires local knowledge.

(13) Fishtrap

(14) **Fishtrap** areas along the coast from Cape Henlopen to Cape Charles have been established under Federal authority and are shown on the charts. Numerous pile remains of former traps are said to menace inshore navigation.

(15) Navigational aids

(16) Most of the navigable inlets are marked by buoys, but the channels shift and the buoys cannot always be depended upon to mark the best water. Breakers form on the shoals even in ordinary weather and are good marks. Some of the interior channels are marked by daybeacons and lights, but others are marked only by bush stakes. The channels through the flats can be followed best at low water when the flats are visible.

(17) Tides

(18) High and low waters occur at about the same time as at Sandy Hook. Levels in the inside waters are greatly affected by winds, westerly winds producing low water and easterly winds high water. In Assawoman, Isle of Wight, Sinepuxent and Chincoteague Bays, northerly and southerly winds drive the water to the ends of the bays. With strong winds of long duration, depths may be as much as 3 feet above or below the normal level.

(19) Current

(20) The currents have considerable velocity in the inlets and in the narrow channels connecting the inlets with adjacent bays and sounds. Velocities of as much as 3 knots may be encountered at times in places where the currents are strongest.

(21)

Weather

(22)

From Cape Henlopen to Cape Charles this coast is exposed to the rigors of the North Atlantic. Winter gales can be expected about 5 percent of the time while winds of 28 knots or more are twice as frequent. Strongest and most prevalent are those out of the northwest through north, averaging 18 to 20 knots. Wave heights of 10 feet (3 m) or more are encountered 8 to 12 percent of the time from December through March. Winter visibilities suffer from precipitation and fog; visibilities fall below 2 miles (3.2 km) about 3 percent of the time and below 0.5 mile (0.8 km) 1 to 2 percent of the time. Precipitation occurs about 8 percent of the time.

(23)

Spring brings milder conditions. Gales and wind speeds of 28 knots or more occur about one-half as frequently as they did in winter. Directions are variable, but south and southwest winds are most frequent by April. Waves of 10 feet (3 m) or more become increasingly less frequent; by May they are encountered less than 3 percent of the time. However, warm air blowing over still cold water brings fog. Visibilities of less than 0.5 mile (0.8 km) occur about 3 percent of the time; about one-half that for visibilities less than 2 miles (3.2 km). Precipitation occurs about 6 percent of the time.

(24)

Summer, except for the threat of thunderstorms and a rare tropical cyclone, brings good sailing weather. Winds are out of the south and southwest about one-half of the time; westerlies and northeasterlies are also common. Strong winds are unlikely outside of thunderstorms, tropical cyclones and an occasional frontal passage. Poor visibilities are also uncommon, and waves of 10 feet (3 m) or more occur 1 to 2 percent of the time. Precipitation is encountered about 4 percent of the time and about one-half of the time is in the form of thunderstorms. Thunderstorms are most likely from May through September and often occur during the late night and early morning hours at sea. In squall lines winds can reach hurricane force in gusts.

(25)

With autumn comes more of a threat of both tropical and extra tropical storms, variable, strong winds and rough seas. Tropical cyclones are a threat throughout the fall, but particularly in September and October when recurving storms tend to brush this coast on occasion. Extra tropical storms pick up in October and are partially responsible for the increase in northerlies and northwesterlies. Winds out of the east, southwest and northwest are also common. In October, gales occur about 2 percent of the time compared to winds of 28 knots or more, which are encountered about 6 percent of the time. Wave heights of 10 feet (3 m) or more are generated 7 to 8 percent of the time during autumn. At sea visibilities remain good; less than 0.5 mile (0.8 km) less than 1 percent of the time, while less than 2 miles (3.2 km) about 2 percent of the time. Precipitation falls about 5 percent of the time.

(26)

Ice

(27)

The inside waters north of Chincoteague Bay occasionally are closed by ice during ordinary winters. The tributary waters south of the bay are closed during severe winters but remain so only for short periods. The principal inlets are rarely closed and are used by local boats throughout the winter.

(28)

During the ice navigation season, the inside waters of Maryland, described in this chapter, are a **regulated navigation area**. (See **33 CFR 165.10, 165.33 and 165.503**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(29)

Roosevelt Inlet to Assawoman Canal

(30)

Cape Henlopen, on the southwest side of the entrance to Delaware Bay, is described in chapter 6.

(31)

Roosevelt Inlet, 3 miles west of Cape Henlopen, is the Delaware Bay entrance to the Lewes and Rehoboth Canal and to Broadkill River. The inlet is protected by jetties that are awash at low water; each jetty is marked by a light on its outer end. The channel is marked by the jetty lights and a **213°** lighted range. In Roosevelt Inlet, the current velocity is about 0.9 knot. Gasoline and diesel fuel can be obtained at a yacht club on the northeast side of the inlet.

(32)

Broadkill River is entered by way of an inside passage that extends northwestward for 2 miles from the Roosevelt Inlet jetties to the old mouth of the river; the river then extends 9 miles westward to the town of **Milton**.

(33)

Overhead power cables at the entrance to the Broadkill River, just north of the Coast Guard station, have a clearance of 50 feet. Twin fixed highway bridges over Broadkill River have a clearance of 18 feet. The overhead power cable just northwestward of the bridges has a clearance of 64 feet. Above the bridges, the river has numerous snags and much floating debris.

(34)

The **Lewes and Rehoboth Canal** is a tidal waterway that extends southeastward and southward for 8 miles from Roosevelt Inlet to Rehoboth Bay. The canal passes northeastward of Lewes and westward of Rehoboth Beach; the entrance to Rehoboth Bay is between marked, submerged, stone jetties a mile southwest of Dewey Beach. The posted **speed limit** is 4 miles per hour in the canal.

(35)

Lewes, 1.7 miles inside Roosevelt Inlet, has rail connections and is the southern terminal for the Cape May-Lewes ferry.

(36)

Several small-craft facilities are in the vicinity of the first and second bridges at Lewes. Gasoline, diesel fuel, berths, and marine supplies can be obtained, and hull and engine repairs can be made. A 70-foot marine railway and a 25-ton mobile hoist are available.

(38)

A yacht club at which slips, gasoline and some marine supplies are available is in a basin on the east side of the canal 4 miles southeastward of Lewes.

(37)

Structures across the Lewes and Rehoboth Canal

Name	Type	Location	Clearances (feet)		Information
			Horizontal	Vertical*	
Overhead cable	power	38°46'33"N., 75°08'18"W.		68	
Savannah Road bridge	bascule	38°46'32"N., 75°08'16"W.	70	15	Note 1
Overhead cable	power	38°46'25"N., 75°08'04"W.		68	
Railroad bridge	swing	38°46'25"N., 75°08'01"W.	46	10	Span is kept in the open position
U.S. Route 9 bridge	fixed	38°46'23"N., 75°07'58"W.	46	35	
State Route 1 Alternate bridge	bascule	38°42'52"N., 75°05'35"W.	49	16	Note 1
Overhead cables	power	38°42'50"N., 75°05'36"W.		55	
Overhead cables	power	38°42'33"N., 75°05'37"W.		55	
State Route 1 bridge	fixed	38°42'32"N., 75°05'35"W.	100	35	
Overhead cables	power	38°42'29"N., 75°05'38"W.		55	

* Clearances are referenced to Mean High Water
 Note 1 – See **33 CFR 117.1** through **117.59** and **117.239**, chapter 2, for drawbridge regulations.
 The bridges over the canal restrict the normal flow of water and produce very strong currents—small craft should transit these areas with caution.

(39) **Rehoboth Bay** has depths of 1 to 7 feet. The 5-mile route down Rehoboth Bay from the Lewes and Rehoboth Canal to Indian River Bay is marked by lighted and unlighted buoys. Gasoline, some supplies and slips are available at the northeast end of Rehoboth Bay at **Dewey Beach**.

(40) **Love Creek**, at the northwest corner of Rehoboth Bay, is navigable for small craft to a milldam about 4 miles above the mouth. An unmarked, privately dredged channel leads from Rehoboth Bay 3 miles above the mouth of the creek. In 2000, the channel had a reported centerline controlling depth of 2 feet. The fixed highway bridge 2.3 miles above the mouth has an 18-foot channel span with a clearance of 7 feet. Above the bridge are berthing facilities in depths of 1 to 2 feet.

(41) **Herring Creek**, at the southwest corner of Rehoboth Bay, has depths of 3 to 5 feet to the forks 2 miles above the mouth, thence 1 to 3 feet for 0.5 mile in Burton Prong and 3 to 5 feet for 1 mile in Hopkins Prong. The creek, partially marked by private daybeacons, is little used except by local residents.

(42) **Indian River Inlet**, 12 miles south of Cape Henlopen, is the first opening in the barrier beach south of Delaware Bay. The entrance is marked by buoys, and a light is on the end of the south jetty. **Indian River Inlet Coast Guard Station** is on the north side 0.5 mile inside the inlet. The fixed highway bridge over the inlet has a clearance of 45 feet. An overhead power cable with a clearance of 66 feet crosses the inlet about 100 yards westward of the bridge.

(43) A channel leads from Indian River Inlet through Indian River Bay and up Indian River to Millsboro, 12 miles above the inlet. The channel from the entrance to Buoy 20 in Indian River Bay is subject to continual change due to severe shoaling. The channel is marked by uncharted buoys that are frequently shifted to mark the best water. The channel to Millsboro is marked by daybeacons and seasonal buoys.

(44)

Current

(45)

The current velocity is about 2 knots; caution is necessary, because the buoys sometimes tow under.

(46)

Supplies

(47)

Gasoline, diesel fuel, slips and some marine supplies are available in the small-boat basin on the north side, 0.8 mile inside Indian River Inlet, and at a marina on the south side 0.9 mile inside the inlet. Hull and engine repairs can be made at both facilities. The boat basin has a 10-ton lift and the marina a 25-ton lift.

(48)

Anchorage

(49)

Indian River Bay, a shallow lagoon with depths of 1 to 6 feet, extends for about 5 miles west of Indian River Inlet, then becomes **Indian River**, which is navigable for an additional 7 miles to Millsboro. Overhead power cables with a least clearance of 61 feet crosses Indian River about 2.9 miles above the mouth of the river. The 5-mile route down the bay from Rehoboth Bay to Assawoman Canal is marked by seasonal buoys and daybeacons; the controlling depth is about 2 feet.

(50)

Millsboro, on the south side of Indian River at the head of navigation, has a town bulkhead; gasoline and some supplies are available. About 100 yards below the causeway at Millsboro, there is an overhead power cable with a clearance of 43 feet. The town has railroad-freight service.

(51)

The State of Delaware has established State-leased clam and oyster grounds, which extend westward from a line connecting Lingo Point (38°36'24"N., 75°09'24"W.) and Ellis Point (38°35'36"N., 75°08'06"W.) to the mouth of Indian River and just inside the mouth of Pepper Creek. Mariners are advised to use caution when navigating outside the marked channel in this area because of numerous unlighted stakes, wood spar buoys and other dangerous markers.

(52) **Pepper Creek**, on the south side of Indian River Bay near its western end, has a dredged channel marked by daybeacons extending for 3 miles above the entrance. A clam plant is at the upper end of the creek. Gasoline and slips are available 2 miles above the entrance.

(53) Most of the piers and facilities on the north side of Indian River are private.

(54) **White Creek** is on the south side of Indian River Bay 1.5 miles back of the outer beach. A channel, marked by daybeacons, passes through the bay and creek to Assawoman Canal and **Ocean View**. Gasoline and some supplies are available at Ocean View.

(55) **Assawoman Canal** is a 3-mile land cut that connects White Creek with the north end of Little Assawoman Bay. Logs were reported to obstruct the channel at several points. Three fixed highway bridges over the canal have a minimum width of 14 feet and clearance of 4 feet. The power cables over the canal have a minimum clearance of 28 feet.

(56)

Little Assawoman Bay to Chincoteague

(57) **Little Assawoman Bay**, behind the barrier beach of **Fenwick Island** is 3 miles long. The bay, marked by private daybeacons, has depths of 2 to 4 feet but in some areas shoals to bare.

(58) **Fenwick Island Light** (38°27'06"N., 75°03'18"W.), 83 feet above the water, is shown from a white tower, about 0.3 mile back of the beach. The tower, just north of the Delaware-Maryland boundary line, is 9 miles south of Indian River Inlet and 21 miles south of Cape Henlopen.

(59) **Fenwick Shoal**, about 5.5 miles eastward of the northern end of Fenwick Island, has a least depth of 16 feet; however, two wrecks on the shoal have a least depth of 11 feet. A lighted buoy marks the southwest end of the shoal.

(60) **Isle of Wight Shoal**, about 8.5 miles northeastward of Ocean City Inlet, has a depth of 19 feet. A 26-foot shoal is about midway between Isle of Wight Shoal and Fenwick Shoal.

(61) A narrow thoroughfare links the southern end of Little Assawoman Bay with Assawoman Bay; the controlling depth is about 2 feet. It is navigable by small boats with local knowledge. The fixed highway bridge near the north end of the thoroughfare has a width of 37 feet and a clearance of 11 feet.

(62) **Assawoman Bay** and **Isle of Wight Bay** form a continuous lagoon that extends from close southward of Little Assawoman Bay to Ocean City. The bays have depths of 4 to 6 feet along their western sides and are frequented by boats from Ocean City.

(63) The State Route 90 fixed highway bridge with a clearance of 35 feet crosses Isle of Wight Bay between Isle of Wight and Fenwick Island.

(64) **Ocean City Inlet** (38°19.4'N., 75°05.2'W.), between Fenwick Island and Assateague Island, is 29 miles south of Cape Henlopen and is the only break in the barrier

beach between Indian River Inlet and Chincoteague Inlet. The entrance is between stone jetties, but the north jetty and the outer end of the south jetty are covered at high water. A 200-foot-long fishing pier is 0.2 mile north of the north jetty.

(65)

No-discharge Zone

(66)

The State of Maryland, with the approval of the Environmental Protection Agency, has established a No-Discharge Zone (NDZ) in the northern Coastal Bays. The NDZ includes the waters of the Ocean City Inlet, Ocean City commercial fish harbor (Swordfish Basin), Isle of Wight Bay and Assawoman Bay. The area covered is defined as follows: Ocean City Inlet – west of a line beginning at a point at or near the east end of the north Ocean City Inlet jetty at 38°19'27.0"N., 75°05'05.5"W., then running approximately 248° to a point at or near the east end of the south Ocean City Inlet jetty at 38°19'20.7"N., 75°05'24.9"W.; and Sinepuxent Bay – north of a line beginning at a point at or near the shore of the southeast entrance of the Ocean City commercial fish harbor (Swordfish Basin) at 38°19'37.0"N., 75°06'06.0"W., then running approximately 110° to a point at or near the shore at the northwest tip of Assateague Island at 38°19'32.0"N., 75°05'49.0"W.; and Maryland-Delaware line – south of the Maryland-Delaware line beginning at a point at or near the east side of Assawoman Bay at 38°27'04.5"N., 75°04'11.2"W., then running approximately 270° to a point at or near the west side of Assawoman Bay at 38°27'04.4"N., 75°05'09.3"W.

(67)

Within the NDZ, discharge of sewage, whether treated or untreated, from all vessels is prohibited. Outside the NDZ, discharge of sewage is regulated by **40 CFR 140** (see chapter 2).

(68)

Coast Guard

(69)

Ocean City Coast Guard Station is 0.6 mile inside the inlet on the southwest side of Ocean City.

(70)

Little Gull Bank, 2.5 miles southeastward of Ocean City Inlet, has a least depth of 18 feet. **Great Gull Bank**, 5 miles southeastward of the inlet, has a least depth of 19 feet.

(71)

Ocean City, that part of Fenwick Island barrier beach in Maryland, is a large summer resort visited by many small boats and is a shipping point for a large amount of seafood. Numerous water tanks and numerous high-rise condominiums are prominent along the beach of this resort. A large, cylindrical water tank, about 1.5 miles west of Ocean City Inlet, is prominent and is a good landmark while entering the inlet.

(72)

Ocean City Inlet is subject to continual change. The north jetty at the entrance is marked by a light and a mariner radio activated sound signal, initiated by keying the microphone five times on VHF-FM channel 83A. The channel through the inlet is marked by lighted buoys. During the summer months fishing vessels anchor at the entrance to the inlet near the north and south jetties.

Within the inlet a strong ebb current exists. Caution is advised when entering and transiting the inlet.

- (73) The channel to Isle of Wight Bay is marked by lights, daybeacons, lighted and unlighted buoys.

- (74) The U.S. Route 50 highway bridge over Isle of Wight Bay from the mainland to Ocean City, 0.9 mile above the entrance jetties, has a bascule span with a clearance of 18 feet. The bridgetender monitors VHF–FM channel 16 and works on channels 13 and 68; call sign KYU–698. (See **33 CFR 117.1** through **117.59** and **117.559**, chapter 2, for drawbridge regulations.) Pile remains of an abandoned highway bridge are 0.2 mile south of the bridge.

- (75) There are numerous privately owned pile and timber piers and bulkhead wharves on the inner side of Ocean City. The **Commercial Fish Harbor**, on the mainland side 1 mile directly back of the inlet, has a 1,000-foot public bulkhead landing and several private bulkhead wharves open to the public for transaction of business with the owners.

(76)

Small-craft facilities

- (77) There are several small-craft facilities at Ocean City and in Commercial Fish Harbor. Gasoline, diesel fuel, water, berths and marine supplies can be obtained at most of the facilities, and hull and engine repairs can be made at some.

- (78) **Sinepuxent Bay**, narrow and mostly shoal, and **Chincoteague Bay**, with depths of 4 to 7 feet along its western side but shoal along its eastern side, are behind **Assateague Island** and provide a 30-mile inside route for small boats from Ocean City to Chincoteague. The bays are used by fishing and pleasure boats. The Maryland-Virginia boundary line is marked by white and orange buoys worded *MD/VA*.

- (79) A dredged channel extends 12 miles south through Sinepuxent Bay to open water in Chincoteague Bay. The route here continues through a natural channel in Chincoteague Bay to Chincoteague, Virginia. The channels are well marked by lights, daybeacons and lighted and unlighted buoys. Sinepuxent Bay channel is subject to frequent shoaling and lesser than charted depths may be encountered. A submerged rock is at the entrance to Sinepuxent Bay in about 38°19'34"N., 75°05'54"W.

- (80) The State Route 611 fixed highway and pedestrian bridge across Sinepuxent Bay has a clearance of 35 feet. Submerged pilings from a former overhead cable cross the bay in the vicinity of Sinepuxent Bay Channel Buoys 27A and 28.

- (81) **Public Landing** (38°08'54"N., 75°17'12"W.), on the mainland side of Chincoteague Bay 15 miles from Ocean City Inlet, has a public wharf, private landings and fish piers; all have depths of about 4 feet alongside. A highway leads westward from the landing to **Snow Hill** on Pocomoke River. A small-boat basin with depths of 3 feet and a launching ramp is entered just north of the piers.

- (82) A marina at the entrance to **Tanhouse Creek**, 1 mile south of Public Landing, has gasoline, diesel fuel, and an 8-ton mobile hoist for hauling out boats for minor hull and engine repairs. The entrance to the creek is marked by a light.

- (83) **George Island Landing** is a small town on the mainland 0.8 mile northward of **Purnell Point** (38°01'42"N., 75°21'36"W.). The public wharf at the town is reached from the southward from Chincoteague Bay through a private channel marked by lights and daybeacons.

- (84) **Greenbackville**, 1.5 miles southwestward of Purnell Point, is a village on the mainland side of Chincoteague Bay just south of the Maryland-Virginia boundary line and 4 miles north of Chincoteague. Jetties at the entrance to the harbor are marked by lights; lighted buoys here mark wrecks near the entrance channel.

- (85) A dredged channel, marked by lighted and unlighted buoys and a light, 4.5 miles south of Purnell Point, is usually used to reach Chincoteague from Chincoteague Bay. Other passages between Chincoteague Bay and Chincoteague Inlet through marshy islands west of Chincoteague Island are used only by small boats with local knowledge. Depths through these passages range from 1 to 6 feet.

(86)

Structures across Chincoteague Channels				
Name	Type	Location	Clearances (feet)	
			Horizontal	Vertical*
Route 175 bridge	fixed	Mosquito Creek	33	10
Overhead cable	power	Mosquito Creek		31
Route 175 bridge	fixed	Cockle Creek	33	13
Overhead cable	power	Cockle Creek		33
Route 175 bridge	fixed	Queen Sound	33	13
Overhead cable	power	Queen Sound		33
Route 175 bridge	fixed	Wire Narrows	40	10
Overhead cable	power	Wire Narrows		25
Route 175 bridge	fixed	Black Narrows	33	6
Overhead cable	power	Black Narrows		27**
Route 175 bridge	bascule	Chincoteague Channel	60	15
Note 1				
* Clearances are referenced to Mean High Water				
** Reported clearance				
Note 1 – See 33 CFR 117.1 through 117.49 and 117.1005 , chapter 2, for drawbridge regulations.				

- (87) **Assateague Light** (37°54'40"N., 75°21'22"W.), 154 feet above the water, is shown from a 142-foot red and white horizontally banded conical tower 3 miles from the south end of Assateague Island. The light stands well above the surrounding trees.

(88) **Winter Quarter Shoal**, 11 miles east-northeast of Assateague Light has a least depth of 13 feet with obstructions to 12 feet. During periods of high winds and seas, breakers have been observed over the shoal.

(89) **Blackfish Bank**, about 6 miles eastward of the south end of Assateague Island, has depths of 15 to 21 feet along its 5-mile length. A 26-foot shoal is 2.5 miles east of the bank. Coasting vessels seeking protection from westerly weather pass westward of Blackfish Bank.

(90) **Chincoteague Shoals**, extending about 3 miles east and south of the lower end of Assateague Island, has a least depth of 8 feet near **Turners Lump**. A lighted buoy marks the south end of the shoals. Breakers have been observed over the shoaler areas when winds are southerly.

(91) **Chincoteague Inlet**, between Assateague Island and Wallops Island, is 30 miles south-southwestward from Ocean City Inlet. The marked channel through the inlet to **Chincoteague Channel** is subject to frequent change; the buoys are shifted with changing conditions. Breakers are evident on either side of the channel. A sunken wreck is about 0.4 mile southwest of Fishing Point in 37°51'54"N., 75°24'04"W. Caution is advised when navigating the inlet.

(92) Assateague Light and the lookout tower on the southern tip of Assateague Island are good marks for approaching Chincoteague Inlet.

(93) **Fishing Point**, the hook-shaped sandspit forming the south side of **Toms Cove**, is continually making out to the westward, requiring caution when in the vicinity.

(94) **Chincoteague**, occupying most of **Chincoteague Island**, is between the mainland and the south end of Assateague Island. The town is principally a shellfish and fishing center, but pleasure craft operate from here during the summer. The wharves and piers along the waterfront have depths of 3 to 10 feet alongside. There are small-craft facilities at Chincoteague that can provide gasoline, diesel fuel, water, berths and limited marine supplies. Hull and engine repairs can be made; a 40-ton marine railway at Chincoteague can handle craft up to 80 feet. A boat basin is at the extreme southwest end of Chincoteague Island.

(95) **Coast Guard**

(96) **Chincoteague Coast Guard Station** is on the east side of Chincoteague Channel, 0.3 mile south of the highway bridge.

(97) **Chincoteague Inlet to Machipango River**

(98) The 35-mile stretch of coast between Chincoteague Inlet and Great Machipongo Inlet is formed by six islands of about equal length. The islands are separated from each other by narrow inlets and from the mainland by marsh and flats through which are numerous sloughs and channels. **Wallops Island**, northernmost of the six, is on the southwest side of Chincoteague Inlet.

(99) **Danger zone**

(100) A **danger zone** extends for about 5 miles off the coast of Wallops Island and covers the area just southwest of the entrance to Chincoteague Inlet. (See **33 CFR 334.130**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(101) **Assawoman Inlet**, the ocean entrance between **Wallops Island** and **Assawoman Island**, is very shallow and is not used. **Gargathy Inlet**, the ocean inlet separating Assawoman Island and **Metompkin Islands**, is not used.

(102) **Metompkin Inlet**, the ocean entrance between Metompkin Islands and **Cedar Island**, is used by some small local fishing and oyster boats. The changeable entrance channel is unmarked and should not be entered without local knowledge.

(103) **Porpoise Banks**, 10 miles offshore from Metompkin Inlet, have irregular bottom with depths of 34 to 40 feet.

(104) **Wachapreague Inlet**, between Cedar Island and **Parramore Island**, is 20 miles south-southwestward of Chincoteague Inlet. The entrance is marked by a lighted whistle buoy and the channel by a lights and daybeacons that are shifted in position with changing channel conditions. The inlet is used by many fishing boats and by some boats seeking shelter but should only be entered with local knowledge.

(105) **Anchorage**

(106) The best anchorage is in **Horseshoe Lead**, southwest of the entrance, where there are depths of 20 to 30 feet west of the middle ground.

(107) **Coast Guard Station**

(108) **Wachapreague Coast Guard Station** is about 4.0 miles west-northwest of Wachapreague Inlet in the town of Wachapreague.

(109) **Parramore Banks** extend about 8 miles offshore from Wachapreague Inlet. The area has an irregular bottom with depths ranging from 22 to 40 feet. A large fish haven, with a minimum depth of 15 feet, is on the banks 2.6 miles east-southeast of Wachapreague Inlet. Another fish haven, with a minimum depth of 30 feet, is east of the banks.

(110) **Wachapreague**, a town on the mainland about 4 miles west-northwest of Wachapreague Inlet, is an oystering and fishing center and a base for some pleasure boats during the summer. The town can be reached through **Hummock Channel** and **Wachapreague Channel**, which are both well marked by lights, lighted buoys and daybeacons. Gasoline, diesel fuel, transient berths and some marine supplies are available at the waterfront. Hull and engine repairs can be made, with the largest marine railway being 50 feet.

(111) **Quinby Inlet**, the ocean entrance between Parramore Island and Hog Island, has a fan of breakers across the bar at the entrance. Buoys marking the channel through

the inlet are frequently shifted in position and not charted. The inlet should not be used without local knowledge.

- (112) **Quinby** is a village on the mainland about 6 miles north-northwest of Quinby Inlet. A channel to the village follows **Sandy Island Channel** to **Upshur Bay**, thence through a slough in the mudflats to a dredged channel leading to a basin that has a public landing with a pump-out station available. The channel is well marked with lights, buoys and daybeacons. A no-wake **speed limit** is enforced.

- (113) **Great Machipongo Inlet** leads between Hog Island and **Cobb Island** to Great Machipongo Channel. Shoals on either side of the entrance are marked by breakers at all times; the bar breaks only in heavy weather. The inlet is marked by buoys that are shifted in position with changing channel conditions.

- (114) **Great Machipongo Channel** extends northwestward through Hog Island Bay from the inlet to the mainland where it continues as **Machipongo River**. **Willis Wharf**, on the west bank of **Parting Creek** 1 mile above the junction with Machipongo River, is a base for shellfish and fishing boats. A public launching ramp is available and a marine railway can handle craft up to 60 feet.

- (115) A state-owned boat harbor is just below Willis Wharf on the west side of Parting Creek. An area with about 41 slips available for commercial fishing boats. The harbor has electricity, water and a launching ramp.

(116)

Sand Shoal Inlet to Smith Island Inlet

- (117) **Sand Shoal Inlet**, the ocean entrance between Cobb Island and **Wreck Island**, may be entered through three channels. **Northeast Channel** leads along the south end of Cobb Island, **Southeast Channel** and **South Channel** just east of Wreck Island. The bar over Southeast Channel breaks in heavy weather. These channels are subject to continual change and stangers should seek local knowledge before transiting through the inlet.

(118)

Anchorage

- (119) A good fair-weather anchorage is in **Loon Channel** just east of **Little Cobb Island** for boats able to cross the 3-foot entrance bar.

- (120) **Sand Shoal Channel**, marked by lights and daybeacons, extends westward from Sand Shoal Inlet for 6 miles where it joins a marked dredged channel leading to the wharves and public bulkhead at **Oyster** on the mainland. Public piers and a launching ramp are on the northern side of the basin. Numerous wrecks are reported near these facilities; caution is advised. Oyster is the shipping point for large amounts of clams and oysters.

- (121) **Ship Shoal Inlet**, the ocean entrance between Ship Shoal Island and **Myrtle Island**, is shallow and unmarked; it is used only by local oyster boats. There is deep water back of the inlet, but the channels to the inside passages are shallow and tortuous.

(122)

Danger zone

- (123) The **danger zone** of a bombing and gunnery range is centered on Myrtle Island, 6 miles northeastward of Cape Charles Light. (See **33 CFR 334.330**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

- (124) **Little Inlet**, between Myrtle Island and Smith Island, is shallow and is little used. Small boats can connect with the inside passage at high water.

- (125) **Cape Charles** and the islands on the north side of the entrance to Chesapeake Bay are described in chapter 9.

- (126) **Smith Island Inlet**, between Smith Island and Fishermans Island, is fairly wide, but the narrow, changeable channel lies between sandbars and breakers. The inlet is used by many local boats with drafts of 3 to 4 feet, but it is unmarked and should not be used by strangers. The controlling depth over the bar is said to be 1.5 feet.

(127)

Virginia Inside Passage to Magothy Bay

- (128) **Virginia Inside Passage** is between the barrier beach along the Atlantic Ocean on the east and the Virginia portion of the mainland peninsula on the west. The passage extends 74 miles from the south end of Chincoteague Bay through creeks, thorofares, marshy cuts and bays to enter Chesapeake Bay at Cape Charles. The route is marked with lights and daybeacons that have daymarks with white reflector borders to distinguish them from aids to navigation marking other waterways. Buoys are temporarily established from time to time to mark destroyed aids or critical places.

- (129) The Federal project depth is 6 feet for the waterway. Maintenance dredging is performed to provide a 6-foot controlling depth, but due to continuous shoaling 3 feet or less may be found in places, particularly inside the ocean inlets. The overhead clearance is limited only by the 40-foot fixed bridge across Cat Creek, 8 miles southward of Chincoteague; the 50-foot clearance of the power cable over Longboat Creek inshore from Metompkin Inlet, 22 miles southward of Chincoteague; and the 40-foot fixed bridge at Cape Charles.

(130)

Tides

- (131) The mean range of tide varies in the inlets along the Virginia coast; greater fluctuations in the water level in the inside waters are caused by high winds and storms.

(132)

Supplies

- (133) Gasoline, diesel fuel and some marine supplies are available at Wachapreague, 29 miles south of Chincoteague; at Quinby, 33 miles south of Chincoteague; at Willis Wharf, 37 miles south of Chincoteague; and at Oyster, 60 miles south of Chincoteague and 12 miles north of Cape Charles. Hull and engine repairs can be made at Wachapreague.

- (134) From Chincoteague, the Virginia Inside Passage follows Chincoteague Channel across Chincoteague Inlet to **Walker Point**, thence through **Ballast Narrows**, **Island Hole Narrows**, the dredged cut in **Bogues Bay** and **Cat Creek** to the sloughs marked by lights and daybeacons back of Assawoman Inlet, 10 miles southwestward of Chincoteague. The fixed highway bridge over Cat Creek has a clearance of 40 feet. The overhead power cable just north of the bridge has a clearance of 60 feet.
- (135) From 1 mile back of Assawoman Inlet, the inside passage continues through **Northam Narrows**, thence through dredged cuts in **Kegotank Bay** and back of Gargathy Inlet to **Wire Passage**, 15 miles southwestward of Chincoteague.
- (136) From Gargathy Inlet, the inside passage goes through Wire Passage into a dredged cut in **Metompkin Bay** and enters Folly Creek westward of Metompkin Inlet. A dredged channel extends about 0.8 mile up **Parkers Creek** from Virginia Inside Passage Light 80. The channel is marked by a lights and daybeacons. **Folly Creek**, which leads westward from the south end of Metompkin Bay, has a depth of 1 foot to the landing at its head, 3 miles above the mouth. A launching ramp and a pier are on the south side of Folly Creek about 1 mile west of Light 87.
- (137) The passage continues through a dredged cut from Folly Creek into **Longboat Creek**, which has a power cable over its northern part with a clearance of 50 feet, thence through cuts in **Cedar Island Bay**, **Teagles Ditch** and **Burtons Bay** into Wachapreague Channel, which leads to Wachapreague, 29 miles southward of Chincoteague. Supplies and repair facilities are available at Wachapreague. (Refer to previous description in this chapter.)
- (138) From Wachapreague Channel, the passage continues through a cut in **Bradford Bay**, a part of **Millstone Creek**, a cut in **Swash Bay**, a part of **The Swash**, and **Little Sloop Channel** to Sandy Island Channel, 3 miles inside Quinby Inlet and 36 miles southward of Chincoteague.
- (139) The passage southward of Quinby Inlet follows **Sloop Channel** and a dredged cut into **Cunjer Channel**, thence westward in **North Channel** at the north end of **Hog Island Bay** to Great Machipongo Channel, 43 miles southward of Chincoteague.
- (140) After passing through Great Machipongo Channel to a point 2 miles inside Great Machipongo Inlet, the route goes westward through **Gull Marsh Channel**, thence southwestward through a natural channel and cut in **Outlet Bay** and **Spidercrab Bay** to **Eckichy Channel**, thence southeastward to Sand Shoal Channel, 1.5 miles inside Sand Shoal Inlet, 56 miles southward of Chincoteague.
- (141) From inside of Sand Shoal Inlet, the passage continues westward through Sand Shoal Channel and southward through **Mockhorn Channel** to Magothy Bay.
- (142) **Magothy Bay**, which extends southward from Mockhorn Channel to Smith Island Inlet, is shallow except in the well-marked inside passage that passes through the bay to Cape Charles. **Magotha** is a village on the west side of the bay 3.5 miles northwestward of Cape Charles Light.
- (143) From the southern part of Magothy Bay, the passage continues southwestward through a dredged cut across Cape Charles into the deep water in Chesapeake Bay. The fixed highway bridge over the passage from Cape Charles to Fishermans Island has a clearance of 40 feet.

