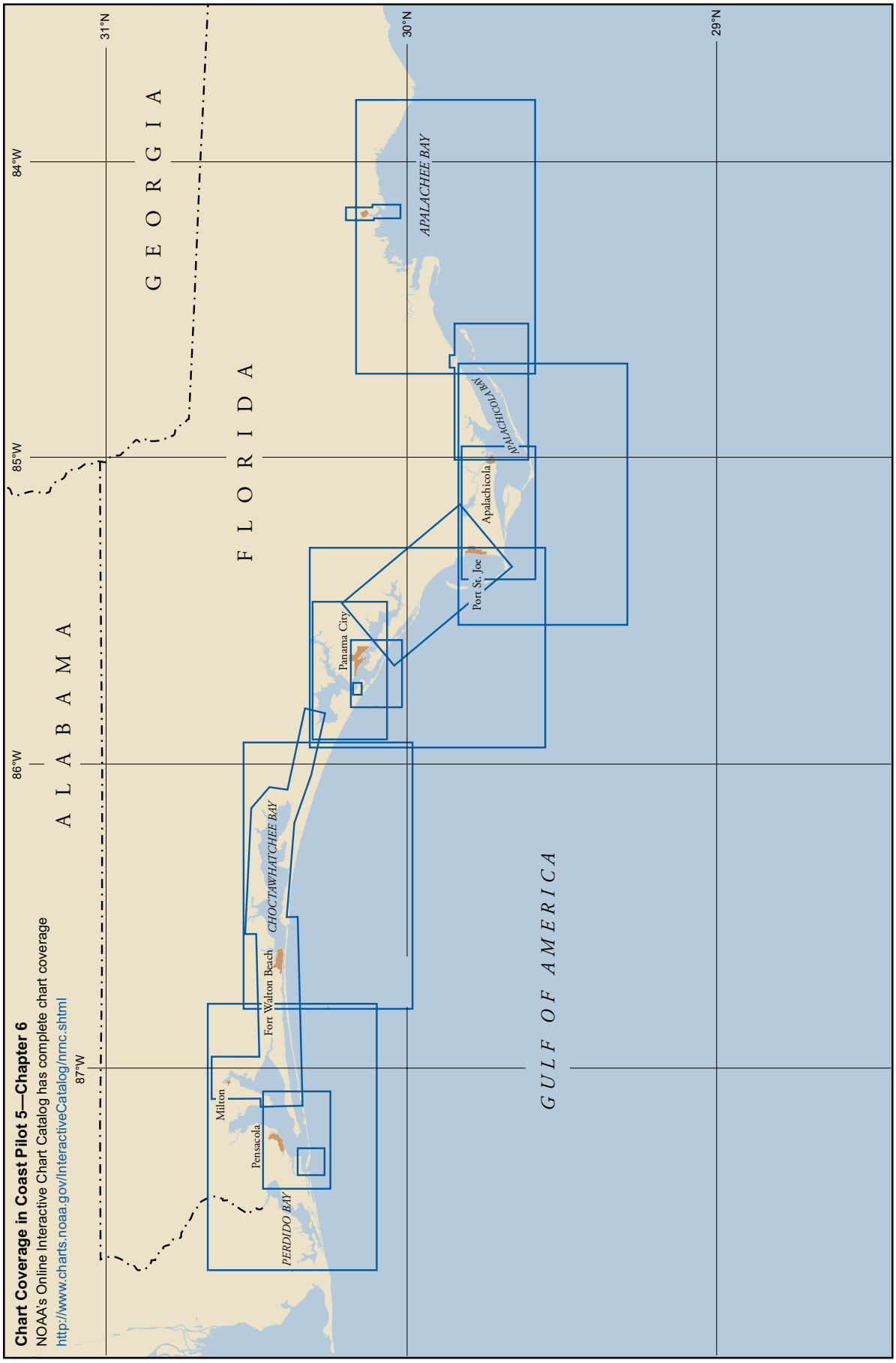
Chart Coverage in Coast Pilot 5—Chapter 6
NOAA's Online Interactive Chart Catalog has complete chart coverage
http://www.charts.noaa.gov/InteractiveCatalog/nrnc.shtml
31°N
30°N
29°N
84°W
85°W
86°W
87°W
GEORGIA
FLORIDA
ALABAMA
GULF OF AMERICA
APALACHEE BAY
APALACHICOLA BAY
CHOCTAWHATCHEE BAY
PERDIDO BAY
Apalachicola
Port St. Joe
Panama City
Fort Walton Beach
Pensacola
Milton

Apalachee Bay to Mobile Bay

(17)

METEOROLOGICAL TABLE – COASTAL AREA OFF PENSACOLA, FLORIDA
Between 27°N to 31°N and 86°W to 89°W

WEATHER ELEMENTS	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	YEARS OF RECORD
Wind > 33 knots [1]	1.3	1.2	0.7	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.6
Wave Height > 9 feet [1]	4.5	3.8	3.4	1.8	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.7	3.0	2.9	3.3	3.3	2.3
Visibility < 2 nautical miles [1]	1.7	1.4	2.2	1.0	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.9
Precipitation [1]	5.0	4.9	3.9	2.8	2.8	3.0	4.0	4.1	4.9	3.9	3.6	4.0	3.9
Temperature > 69° F	26.8	25.9	36.8	64.3	95.2	99.8	99.9	99.9	98.9	89.4	60.4	37.0	71.8
Mean Temperature (°F)	64.6	64.9	67.6	71.8	77.1	81.5	83.4	83.4	81.5	76.6	70.8	66.5	74.7
Temperature < 33° F [1]	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mean RH (%)	77	77	78	78	79	78	77	77	78	74	75	75	77
Overcast or Obscured [1]	27.2	25.5	22.1	15.6	12.4	10.1	11.4	11.5	16.5	13.8	17.5	22.0	16.8
Mean Cloud Cover (8ths)	4.8	4.6	4.3	3.7	3.6	3.7	4.1	4.2	4.4	3.9	4.1	4.6	4.2
Mean SLP (mbs)	1020	1019	1017	1017	1016	1016	1017	1016	1015	1016	1019	1020	1017
Ext. Max. SLP (mbs)	1042	1042	1040	1033	1034	1030	1031	1031	1026	1036	1033	1037	1042
Ext. Min. SLP (mbs)	996	989	991	995	999	1000	997	1002	993	989	995	995	989
Prevailing Wind Direction	N	SE	SE	SE	SE	SE	SE	E	E	E	E	E	E
Thunder and Lightning [1]	1.0	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.6	2.7	3.6	4.0	3.2	1.2	0.9	0.9	2.0

[1] Percentage Frequency

(1) This chapter describes the coasts of Florida and Alabama bordering the Gulf of America from Apalachee Bay to Mobile Bay and the numerous bodies of water emptying into the Gulf including Apalachee Bay, St. George Sound, Apalachicola Bay, St. Joseph Bay, St. Andrew Bay, Pensacola Bay and connecting tributaries. Also discussed are the ports of Port St. Joe, Panama City and Pensacola and other smaller ports and landings.

(2) The Intracoastal Waterway for this section of the coast is described in chapter 12.

(3)

COLREGS Demarcation Lines

(4) The lines established for this part of the coast are described in **33 CFR 80.805**, through **80.815**, chapter 2.

(5) The coast consists of a chain of generally narrow and wooded sand islands that trends southwest for about 40 miles from Apalachee Bay to Cape St. George, thence northwest for 95 miles to Choctawhatchee Bay and thence about 80 miles west and southwest to Mobile Bay.

(6) A **danger zone** for a guided missile test operations area extends well offshore between Apalachee Bay and Choctawhatchee Bay. (See **33 CFR 334.720**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(7)

Caution

(8) Mariners engaged in bottom dragging operations are advised that the area between 29°23.5'N. and 29°50.5'N. and from 86°36.5'W. to 86°48.0'W., has previously been used for emergency release of munitions, and unexploded munitions are lying on the bottom.

(9) From Apalachee Bay to St. Andrew Bay, the 10-fathom curve extends as much as 19 miles offshore; shoals with as little as 3 feet over them extend several miles from the east end of St. James Island, from Cape St. George and from Cape San Blas. From St. Andrew Bay to Pensacola Bay the 10-fathom curve is close inshore and the beach is steep-to. The 10-fathom curve gradually extends farther offshore beyond Pensacola Bay until off Mobile Bay where it is about 11 miles offshore.

(10) There are numerous fish havens along this section of the coast.

(11) The coral formation that characterizes the coast from the Florida Keys to Apalachee Bay begins to give way in the vicinity of Cape St. George and Cape San Blas to the sand formation to the west.

(12)

Weather

(13) Along the coast from Apalachee Bay to Mobile Bay, navigational weather hazards include tropical cyclones, thunderstorms and cold fronts. The tropical cyclone season generally runs from June through November. August and September have been the most likely months for a hurricane. During the past 100 years, some 26 hurricanes have crossed the coast between St. Marks and Mobile; 15 of these crossings occurred in August or September. There were some severe hurricanes in the early 1900s. In September 1975, Eloise generated 110-knot winds,

nearly 15 inches of rain and 12- to 16-foot tides along this coast.

(14) Thunderstorms develop on about 60 to 70 days annually along this coast. Most occur during the afternoon or evening hours from May through September on about 5 to 15 days per month; June, July and August are the most active months. Over open waters, thunderstorms are observed 3 to 5 percent of the time from June through September; they often occur at night.

(15) During the winter season, some 15 to 20 frontal systems dip into the area and bring adverse weather. As the cold front passes, a polar air mass follows, often bringing strong north winds and low temperatures. Gale-force winds blow about 1 to 3 percent of the time over open waters from September through February; autumn frequencies result from both tropical and extratropical systems. Waves of 8 feet or more are encountered 5 to 11 percent of the time and are most likely during January and February.

(16) Visibilities in this area are briefly restricted in showers and thunderstorms, while fog, which occurs throughout the year, varies from a summer minimum to a maximum in the colder months. There is a peak in March when warm southeasterlies blow across colder waters. Frequency and density of the fog increases when approaching the coast. Visibilities drop below 2 miles 1 to 2 percent of the time during February, March and April; fog is reported up to 6 percent of the time in March over open waters. Shore stations observe fog on about 4 to 7 days per month from December through April.

(18)

Apalachee Bay to Gamble Point

(19) **Apalachee Bay**, about 170 miles northwest of Tampa Bay, is formed by the bend in the coastline from a northwest to a southwest direction. Depths range from 6 to 20 feet with numerous shoals and rocks, some bare at low water. The bay is the approach to St. Marks River.

(20)

COLREGS Demarcation Lines

(21) The lines established for Apalachee Bay are described in **33 CFR 80.805**, chapter 2.

(22)

Danger zone

(23) An Air Force rocket-firing range has been established in the Gulf south of Apalachee Bay. (See **33 CFR 334.640**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(24) **Econfina River**, entering the east part of Apalachee Bay, is shallow and navigable by boats drawing about 2 feet at half tide or better; although lesser depths may be found during protracted periods of offshore winds. A private light marks the east side of the entrance to the river. The river channel is rocky and should be used only with local knowledge. **Econfina Landing**, on the west bank 2 miles above the mouth, has facilities for small craft. Gasoline, water, ice, a launching ramp and limited berthage are available. State Route 14 leads to the main coastal highway U.S. Route 98.

(25) **Aucilla River** flows into Apalachee Bay 4.5 miles northwest of Econfina River. The approach for a distance of 3 miles is a narrow winding channel that is difficult for strangers. A private light on **Gamble Point** marks the entrance to the river. The river above the mouth is reported to be poorly marked, fast-flowing and with depths of over 5 feet. It has been further reported that by giving the bends in the river a good berth, and by avoiding the rocks in the channel which are discernible by ripples, boats drawing 4 feet will have little difficulty. Local knowledge is advised.

(26) **St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge** covers much of the coastal area between Aucilla River and Ochlockonee Bay, about 12 miles southwest of St. Marks River.

(27)

St. Marks River

(28) **St. Marks River** flows into the head of Apalachee Bay 83 miles northwest of Cedar Keys and 54 miles northeast of Cape St. George. The river is the approach to the town of **St. Marks** about 5.5 miles above the entrance. A power plant is about 0.5 mile above the town. Barges constitute the major traffic on the river.

(29)

Channels

(30) A dredged channel leads from deep water in Apalachee Bay to a turning basin at the town of St. Marks and continues to just above the power plant about 0.5 mile above the town. (See Notice to Mariners and latest edition of chart for controlling depths.) The channel is marked by a lighted range, lights, daybeacons and lighted and unlighted buoys. Numerous shoals are on both sides of the appraoch channel.

(31) A land cut, about 500 yards long, about 0.3 mile northwest of an abandoned light house, has been dredged from the east side of Spanish Hole for the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. A public launching ramp is available on the land cut.

(32)

Currents

(33) Prolonged winds from the north will cause tides to be 1 to 2 feet below predicted levels, and prolonged winds from the south will cause tides to be 1 to 2 feet above predicted levels. The tidal current in St. Marks River approach averages about 0.5 knot at strength. In the river the average is from 0.3 to 0.4 knot, although 2-knot currents have been reported. See the Tidal Current prediction service at *tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov* for specific information about times, directions, and velocities of the current at numerous locations throughout the area. Links to a user guide for this service can be found in chapter 1 of this book.

(34) **Wakulla River** enters St. Marks River 5 miles north of St. Marks Light. A draft of about 7 feet can be taken upriver for about 0.4 mile above the confluence,

and about 3 feet to just above U.S. Route 319 highway bridge, about 5 miles above St. Marks. At this point the river is closed to navigation by a 6-foot-high fence across the river that provides protection for a wildlife refuge. The channel is obstructed by grass, and local knowledge is needed to carry the best water.

(35) The **San Marcos De Apalache State Park and Monument** is on the point formed by the confluence of St. Marks and Wakulla Rivers. A private yacht club and a fish camp are on the east side of Wakulla River about 0.5 and 0.8 mile, respectively, above the confluence of the rivers. Berths, gasoline, a launching ramp and a forklift that can haul out craft to 25 feet for hull and engine repairs and covered wet and dry storage are available.

(36) A **no-wake idle speed** is enforced on St. Marks and Wakulla Rivers in the vicinity of all wharves and small-craft facilities.

(37)

Supplies

(38) Gasoline, diesel fuel, water, ice and marine supplies are available.

(39) An overhead power cable with a clearance of 65 feet crosses St. Marks River about 0.7 mile below the U.S. Highway 98 bridge.

(40)

Shell Point to Dog Island

(41) A beach resort is at **Shell Point** (30°03.4'N., 84°17.4'W.), about 5 miles west of St. Marks River. **Shell Point Light** (30°02'21"N., 84°17'41"W.), 17 feet above the water and shown from a pile with a green and white diamond-shaped daymark, marks the approach. A private sailboat marina is in the basin to the north. A concrete launching ramp is available. In 2010, the reported approach depth was 3 feet; local knowledge is advised.

(42) **Spring Creek**, 2 miles northwest of Shell Point, is entered through a narrow, winding and privately marked channel that leads between oyster bars to a small marina on the east side of the creek, about 0.5 mile above the entrance. Local knowledge is advised. Berths, gasoline, marine supplies and some engine repairs are available at the marina.

(43) **Panacea Harbor**, in **Dickerson Bay**, is about 11 miles southwest of St. Marks Light. A dredged channel leads from Apalachee Bay to the public wharf at the town of Panacea. The channel is marked by lights, buoys and daybeacons. Panacea is a summer resort and fishing center with a seafood processing plant in the harbor and several more in town. Gasoline and some supplies can be obtained in town.

(44) **Ochlockonee Bay**, on the west side of Apalachee Bay, is a shallow bay 5 miles long and a mile wide. The approach from Apalachee Bay is obstructed by shoals, which probably shift from time to time. The south half of the mouth is closed entirely by oyster bars. The entrance is between **Ochlockonee Point** on the north and **Bald Point** on the south. **Ochlockonee Bay Entrance Light OB** (29°56'03"N., 84°18'05"W.), 17 feet above the water and shown from a dolphin with a green square daymark, about 3 miles southeast of Ochlockonee Point, marks the approach to the bay. The mean range of tide is 2 feet.

(45) A narrow channel marked by private markers leads into the bay. In 1989, it was reported that craft drawing up to 6 feet experienced no trouble going to the facilities about 1.5 miles above the bridge.

(46) U.S. Route 98 highway bridge, about 2.3 miles west of the entrance to the bay, has a clearance of 35 feet. A launching ramp is at the south end of the bridge.

(47) About 1.5 miles west of the bridge on the north bank, there is a marina in a basin. In 1989, the reported controlling depth was 6 feet in the channel from the bay and in the basin. The channel is marked by private daybeacons. Berths, gasoline, water, ice, marine supplies and storage are available. There is a concrete launching ramp and a 7½-ton forklift that can haul out craft up to 25 feet for hull and engine repairs or dry open or covered storage.

(48) With local knowledge, a depth of 4 feet can be carried through **Buckhorn Creek** into **Sopchoppy River** to the fixed highway bridge about 7 miles from the bay. The bridge has a 33-foot channel span and clearance of 6 feet. The creek is little used.

(49) **Ochlockonee River**, emptying into the head of Ochlockonee Bay, leads west to the junction of Crooked River and then turns north and finally east. A depth of 5 feet, with local knowledge, can be found for 29 miles. U.S. Route 319 highway bridge about 6 miles above the mouth has a fixed span with a clearance of 10 feet. The river is little used. About 8 miles above the mouth, piling of a former railroad bridge is a hazard in the river. A launching ramp is available at a state park on the north side of the river, about 4.5 miles above the mouth.

(50) **Crooked River**, a narrow, crooked tidal stream 22 miles long, connects Ochlockonee River with Carrabelle River. Crooked River is completely blocked by trees and growth about 10 miles above the east mouth.

(51) **Ochlockonee Shoal**, lying about 8 miles southeast of Ochlockonee Point, has depths of 3 to 17 feet. Although the shoal is separated from St. James Island by lanes of moderate depths, there is no safe passage between the shoal and the island except for small craft. A lighted buoy is southeast of the shoal.

(52) There are three fish havens in Apalachee Bay. The first is about 2.2 miles 167° from Shell Point Light, the second about 4.6 miles 161° from St. Marks Light, and the third about 4.5 miles 108° from Ochlockonee Bay Entrance Light OB—the first two are unmarked and the third is marked by private buoys.

(53) **St. George Sound** and **Apalachicola Bay** are adjoining bodies of water, 40 miles long and 3 to 6 miles wide, separated from the Gulf by Dog, St. George, Little St. George and St. Vincent Islands. Both sound and bay are generally shallow with numerous oyster reefs and shoals dangerous to navigation. East Pass, West Pass and Government Cut are the principal entrances to the sound

and the bay from the Gulf, and thence into the towns of Carrabelle and Apalachicola.

(54)

COLREGS Demarcation Line

(55) The lines established for St. George Sound and Apalachicola Bay are described in **33 CFR 80.805**, chapter 2.

(56) **St. James Island** is the 20-mile-long portion of coast from **Lighthouse Point**, on the west side of Apalachee Bay, west to Carrabelle. The island is separated from the mainland by Ochlockonee Bay and by Ochlockonee, Crooked and Carrabelle Rivers.

(57) **South Shoal** extends south from the east end of St. James Island for about 6 miles. The sea breaks on portions of the shoal even in good weather. A lighted buoy marks the south end of the shoal.

(58) **Duer Channel**, unmarked and subject to frequent changes, lies at the east end of St. George Sound between South Shoal and Dog Island Reef. The channel is used occasionally by light-draft vessels with local knowledge but is difficult for strangers. There are several wrecks in the approach to the channel and on the east side. A buoy marks one of the wrecks in the middle of the approach.

(59) **Alligator Harbor**, a shallow body of water at the east end of St. George Sound, is formed by a long, narrow spit of land that extends west from Lighthouse Point to Peninsula Point. The harbor is entered from Duer Channel through a crooked privately dredged channel that leads from west of **Peninsula Point**, northwest to the vicinity of **Wilson Beach**, around the north end of **Bay Mouth Bar**, and thence southeast into the harbor. The channel is marked by a private light and daybeacons but is subject to continual change and extensive shoaling; local knowledge is advised. In 1982, a reported depth of 4½ feet was available in the channel. Good anchorage can be found in depths of 5 to 7 feet, hard sand bottom, north of Peninsula Point.

(60) A marina is in a small basin about 0.6 mile east of the point. Gasoline, diesel fuel, electricity, water, ice, marine supplies, storage facilities and a 40-ton mobile hoist that can handle craft up to 65 feet are available at the marina; hull and engine repairs can be made. The marina monitors VHF-FM channel 16 during working hours.

(61) Prominent at Alligator Harbor are the large green boat storage building and skeleton tower at the marina and the water tank at Southwest Cape, about 1.7 miles west of Lighthouse Point.

(62) **Dog Island Reef**, lying 5 to 6 miles offshore south of St. James Island, extends from a point about 5 miles west-southwest of Lighthouse Point to the east end of Dog Island. There are depths of 2 to 6 feet over a considerable part of the reef. Local fishermen sometimes enter St. George Sound through the shoal close to the eastern side of Dog Island. The reef is marked near its northeast extremity by a light.

(63) North of Dog Island Reef and about 4.5 miles west of Peninsula Point, a privately dredged and marked channel leads to a basin at Florida State University's Marine Laboratory; the channel had a reported controlling depth of 10 feet in 1982. The 180-foot concrete marginal wharf had a reported depth of 8 feet alongside.

(64) **Dog Island**, a narrow, sparsely wooded island over 5 miles long, is the first land sighted in approaching East Pass from the southeast. Several houses are on the island, and lodging is available. A channel leads to a small cove—**Tysons Harbor**—on the north side of the east end of the island. The channel is marked privately maintained pilings and had a reported depth of 5 feet in 1999. Water and limited berthage are available at a small marina in the cove.

(65)

Carrabelle Harbor

(66) **Carrabelle Harbor** is at the entrance to Carrabelle River, which flows into St. George Sound. The principal entrance to the harbor and the sound is through **East Pass** between Dog and St. George Islands, about 31 miles southwest of St. Marks Light. **Carrabelle** is a small town at the mouth of the river that has several seafood processing plants. The town is on the main coastal highway, U.S. Route 98, and a good road leads to the interior.

(67) **Carrabelle River** flows into St. George Sound 5 miles north-northeast of East Pass. River currents are rather strong on the ebb. A fixed highway bridge with a clearance of 40 feet crosses the river about 0.5 mile above the turning basin. Overhead power cables with clearances of 50 feet are at the bridge and about 2 miles above the bridge.

(68)

Prominent features

(69) Approaching East Pass from southeast on a clear day, the first objects to be seen are the sand dunes on Dog and St. George Island. On closer approach, the trees on the mainland can be seen over the islands and a few pine trees will be noticed near the west end of Dog Island. A water tower and several radio towers are also prominent.

(70)

Channels

(71) A channel, marked by lighted and unlighted buoys, leads from the Gulf of America through East Pass and around the west end of Dog Island towards Carrabelle River. Near Carrabelle River Light 15, a dredged channel continues northward and through the river entrance to a turning basin at the town of Carrabelle. From the turning basin, the channel continues for 3 miles to the confluence of New and Crooked Rivers. (See Notice to Mariners and the latest edition of the chart for controlling depths.) The dredged part of the channel is marked with lights, buoys and daybeacons.

(72) A few wrecks with depths that are unknown are on the east side of the channel through East Pass. In heavy seas, deep-draft vessels should stay in depths of 30 to 40 feet until Carrabelle Channel Lighted Buoy 2 is picked

up. In 1969, a submerged object, covered 15 feet, was reported in the vicinity of the buoy.

(73)

Anchorages

(74) Vessels may anchor in St. George Sound behind the west end of Dog Island in depths of about 20 feet and to the northwest of the east end of St. George Island in depths of 18 to 20 feet. At these anchorages, vessels with good ground tackle can safely ride out any gale except a hurricane. Small boats can anchor closer inshore behind the hook at the east end of St. George Island or at various points in the sound where depths are suitable.

(75)

Currents

(76) The tidal currents are strong at East Pass and Carrabelle, sometimes having a velocity of 3 to 4 knots, and ordinarily at least 1 knot. They usually set across the shoals at an angle with the channel, and great care should be taken not to be set toward the shoals on either hand. See the Tidal Current prediction service at *tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov* for specific information about times, directions, and velocities of the current at numerous locations throughout the area. Links to a user guide for this service can be found in chapter 1 of this book.

(77)

Pilotage

(78) Arrangements can be made for local fishing guides to pilot yachts from Carrabelle to Tampa and other coast ports.

(79)

Small-craft facilities

(80) Pump-out stations are offered at the facilities at Carrabelle.

(81)

St. George Island to Cape San Blas Shoals

(82) **St. George Island** and **Little St. George Island**, the south boundary of Apalachicola Bay, extend about 24 miles west from East Pass. The islands are densely wooded except the east end of St. George Island, which is a low and barren spit.

(83) A marked channel leads to the town of **Eastpoint**, 1 mile northeast of **Cat Point**. Detached breakwaters parallel the east and west arms of the channel. Gasoline in cans, groceries, ice, a launching ramp and some marine supplies are available on St. George Island from a store at the southwest end of the causeway. Gasoline, diesel fuel and limited marine supplies are available at the wharves at Eastpoint. There are seafood packing plants and numerous fish piers at Eastpoint.

(84) **Bulkhead Shoal**, which extends from Cat Point south to Bulkhead Point on St. George Island, marks the dividing line between St. George Sound and Apalachicola Bay. The Intracoastal Waterway has been dredged through this shoal.

(85) **West Pass** enters Apalachicola Bay between **Sand Island**, the northwest tip of Little St. George Island, and **St. Vincent Island**. The pass is the west approach to Apalachicola Bay and the town of Apalachicola.

(86) **Apalachicola** is on the north shore of Apalachicola Bay at the mouth of the Apalachicola River. The principal industries are fishing and oystering. Waterborne commerce consists of petroleum products, chemicals, fertilizer products, sand, gravel, cement, liquid and dry sulfur, grain, feeds and logs. The port is the gateway for the extensive river systems of the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers. The Intracoastal Waterway enters Apalachicola River, passes the town and then continues west through Jackson River—see chapter 12. The town has several historic buildings, a museum and a hospital.

(87)

Prominent features

(88) From inside West Pass on the approach to Apalachicola, a water tank, several microwave and radio towers and the highway bridges are prominent.

(89)

Dangers

(90) A fan-shaped test firing area projects southward from Little St. George Island, between Government Cut and West Pass. (See **33 CFR 334.650**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(91)

Channels

(92) The main entrance to Apalachicola Bay is through **Government Cut** (also known as **Bob Sikes Pass**), a dredged cut between St. George and Little St. George Islands from the Gulf into the bay. The entrance to the cut is protected by twin jetties and the channel is marked by lighted buoys.

(93) In 1992, a dangerous wreck that uncovers was reported 1.0 mile southeast of the entrance buoys in about 29°35'14.4"N., 84°56'42.6"W.

(94) The channel from the Gulf through West Pass is entered through a bar channel. The passage from inside the pass to Apalachicola is via a channel, marked by lights and a daybeacon, that leads southeast along the north side of the west end of Little St. George Island to Lower Anchorage and Horseshoe Cove. The route continues, unmarked, northeasterly across Apalachicola Bay to the Intracoastal Waterway and on to Apalachicola. Mariners should use caution when transiting West Pass. The bar channel is subject to frequent shoaling. Once inside the pass, depths of about 9 feet can be carried to Apalachicola.

(95) A swash channel, used considerably by local fishermen, lies between **East Bank** and Sand Island. The channel has a depth of about 3 feet and is passable in all but severe weather. Government Cut and the West Pass channels join the Intracoastal Waterway about 3.5 miles south of Apalachicola.

(96) **Two Mile Channel**, on the south side of Apalachicola, is a dredged channel leading north for 1.2 miles from

the bay to a lateral channel running east and west and parallelling the shore. The east channel connects with the Intracoastal Waterway at Two Mile Channel Light TM. An entrance light, buoys and daybeacons mark the channels.

(97) **Scipio Creek Channel**, a dredged channel, leads from the river off Apalachicola to a municipal boat basin in **Scipio Creek**.

(98)

Anchorages

(99) Vessels may anchor anywhere in **Upper Anchorage** in Apalachicola Bay where depths are suitable. Good anchorage in depths of 12 to 15 feet may be found in **Lower Anchorage**, east of Sand Island. Another good anchorage is about 1 mile south of the turn in the channel leading to Apalachicola.

(100)

Dangers

(101) A **restricted area** of **Tyndall Air Force Base** is close west of Government Cut. (See **33 CFR 334.660**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(102) **Cape St. George Shoal** extends 11 miles south from **Cape St. George**, the southwest tip of Little St. George Island. The shoal consists of several detached spots with moderate depths between them. Shoals extend more than 3 miles offshore at West Pass.

(103)

Currents

(104) At West Pass and at Cat Point, the currents are influenced by the winds and by freshets and at times are very strong, especially the ebb; at flood they are generally weak. A velocity of 3 knots has been observed in West Pass channel in about 29°37'10"N., 85°09'18"W. The ebb current runs out through West Pass and divides, part going to the south over the breakers and part following the deeper water to the bar, the latter being the stronger.

(105) In Apalachicola River, the current is principally ebb. With strong winds from the north and east there will be little or no flood current or even slack water, and the height of the water in the bay and river will be reduced a foot or more. The tides meet somewhat to the west of Bulkhead Shoal, the ebb current flowing east through the cut.

(106)

Weather

(107) The climate of Apalachicola is typical of that experienced along most of the coast of the north Gulf of America, which tends to moderate temperatures, resulting in a subtropical regime. The annual average temperature at Apalachicola is 68.4°F. The average maximum is 76.2° and the average minimum is 60.1°F. Winter weather often comes from the continent, therefore there are wide temperature variations on occasion. January is the coolest month with an average high of 60.9°F and an average low of 44.3°F. The coolest temperature on record at Apalachicola is 9°F, recorded in January 1985. An average of ten days each year records a minimum below freezing, and below-freezing temperatures have occurred in each month, November through March. Summer temperatures are more uniform. High temperatures reach 90°F or more on 37 days annually, 40 to 50 days less than more inland locations. July and August are the warmest months, each have average temperatures of 81.6°F. The warmest temperature on record is 99°F, recorded in August 1986.

(108) Rainfall results from summer showers and thunderstorms, tropical cyclones and winter cold fronts. The average annual rainfall for Apalachicola is 57.64 inches; 40% of this falls in the three-month period July, August and September. July is the wettest month averaging 8.24 inches and April the driest, averaging 2.95 inches. Thunderstorms develop on 10 to 17 days per month during June through September and have resulted in brief, heavy rains and strong, gusty winds.

(109) Winter weather is usually mild but interspersed with brief cold spells. Snow has fallen on rare occasions but usually melts as it falls. Only twice has snow accumulated enough to be measured; the greatest was 0.4 inch, recorded in January 1977. Strong winds are most likely in winter, but gales are rare.

(110) The National Weather Service maintains an office at the airport. **Barometers** may be compared there or by telephone.

(111)

Pilotage

(112) Pilots are not available, but local fishing guides can be hired as pilots for the adjacent waters and the Gulf.

(113) There is a public hospital in Apalachicola.

(114) **Agricultural quarantine** officials are stationed in Pensacola. (See Appendix A for address.)

(115) **Apalachicola River**, formed by the junction of Flint and Chattahoochee Rivers, flows south for about 98 miles into the north part of Apalachicola Bay. The Intracoastal Waterway extends through the lower part of Apalachicola River, branching west through **Jackson River** at its confluence with Apalachicola River about 5 miles above the latter's mouth. (See chapter 12.) A federal project provides for a 9-foot channel in Apalachicola River from Jackson River to Chattahoochee River. (For detailed channel information and minimum depths as reported by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), use NOAA Electronic Navigational Charts. Surveys and channel condition reports are available through a USACE hydrographic survey website listed in Appendix A.) The channel is marked by daybeacons and unlighted buoys.

(116) Bridge and overhead cable information for structures crossing the Intracoastal Waterway in the vicinity of Apalachicola can be found in the table *Structures across the Intracoastal Waterway (Statute Mile 376.2E to 125E)*, chapter 12.

(117) North and south of the John Gorrie Memorial Bridge are numerous private docks with small-craft berths. The municipal pier and basin are about 300 yards south of the bridge. Berths and a launching ramp are available.

In 1982, the pier had a reported depth of about 3 feet alongside the outer face, with 5 feet reported in the basin.

(118)

Small-craft facilities

(119) There are several small-craft facilities at Apalachicola. There are fish piers on Two Mile Channel.

(120)

Communications

(121) The town is served by the freight service of the Apalachicola Northern Railroad Company, and the main coastal highway U.S. Route 98 passes through the town.

(122) **Chattahoochee River**, about 365 miles long, rises in northeast Georgia and flows generally southwest and south to a confluence with Flint River and Apalachicola River at the southwest corner of the state. A federal project provides for a 9-foot channel from the confluence with Flint and Apalachicola Rivers to Columbus, GA, a distance of 142 miles. (For detailed channel information and minimum depths as reported by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), use NOAA Electronic Navigational Charts. Surveys and channel condition reports are available through a USACE hydrographic survey website listed in Appendix A.)

(123) There are three dams and navigation locks that are 450 feet long and 82 feet wide and have a minimum depth of 13 feet over the sills. **Jim Woodruff Dam and Lock**, on the Apalachicola River about 93 miles above the mouth, is 0.5 mile below the confluence of the three rivers. **George W. Andrews (Columbia) Dam and Lock** is about 40 miles above the confluence. **Walter F. George Lock and Dam** is about 65 miles above the confluence. Operating hours of the locks are as follows: Woodruff Lock, 24 hours; Andrews Lock, 24 hours; and George Lock, 0800 to 1600. There are a general cargo wharf and an oil terminal and a public ramp at Columbia, AL, about 43 miles above the confluence, and a marginal masonry general cargo wharf at Columbus, GA.

(124) **Flint River**, about 287 miles long, rises in central Georgia, flows generally southeastward to **Albany, GA**, thence southwest to its confluence with Apalachiola and Chattahoochee Rivers, about 25 miles below **Bainbridge, GA.** There is a public concrete general cargo wharf and an oil terminal at Bainbridge. There is a private wharf with railroad siding at **Chattahoochee, FL**, a few miles below Jim Woodruff Dam. The wharf is used mainly for handling of sand and gravel. There are recreation and small-craft facilities on the three rivers.

(125) Navigation charts for the Apalachicola, Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers System are available from the Mobile Corps of Engineers Office. (See Appendix A for address.)

(126) **Note:** Mariners are required by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to contact Panama City area office by telephone (904–785–5881) for controlling depths and river channel conditions before entering the Apalachicola, Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers system. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in the Corps of Engineers refusing to permit completion of passage by any tow in violation.

(127) **St. Vincent Sound** is a shallow and unimportant extension of Apalachicola Bay at its northwest end. The sound can be entered from east through Apalachicola Bay or from the west through **Indian Pass**, a narrow, shifting, unmarked channel. Strangers should not attempt the pass, which is shallow and used only by local fishing vessels.

(128) **Cape San Blas**, 16.5 miles west-northwest of Cape St. George, is low and wooded.

(129) **Cape San Blas Shoals**, with depths of 13 feet or less, extend 4 miles south from the cape. Depths of 22 to 28 feet are found 10 miles south and southwest of the cape; these waters should be avoided by all except light-draft vessels.

(130) With a fresh breeze from any quarter south of east and northwest, rough water may be expected at the cape and a breaking sea may run far offshore. Between December and March, fog is frequently encountered off Cape San Blas.

(131) A swash channel marked by two buoys crosses the shoals about 2 miles south of Cape San Blas. Although local craft use this channel on a smooth sea, strangers should not. West of Cape San Blas, a half mile offshore, is the foundation of a former lighthouse that is covered 5 feet.

(132)

Danger zone

(133) A **danger zone** of an air-to-air firing practice range is in the Gulf south and west of Apalachicola. (See **33 CFR 334.670**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(134)

St. Joseph Bay to Crooked Island

(135) **St. Joseph Bay**, which extends about 12 miles north of Cape San Blas, is separated from the Gulf by **St. Joseph Peninsula (St. Joseph Spit)**, a long, narrow strip of land and sand hills, wooded in places, that curves north-northwest from the cape. St. Joseph Bay, recognized as one of the best harbors on the Gulf, is easily entered by vessels with drafts to 25 feet except during periods of very severe weather such as hurricanes. **St. Joseph Bay Entrance Lighted Buoy 2** marks the entrance.

(136) **Port St. Joe** is a town on the east shore of St. Joseph Bay. Fishing vessels occasionally unload their catch at a fish processing plant in the port. Port St. Joe is in the eastern time zone.

(137)

Prominent features

(138) Several water tanks are conspicuous at a closer distance inshore.

(139) Vessels should approach the harbor within the **Port St. Joe Safety Fairway**. (See **33 CFR 166.100** through **166.200**, chapter 2.)

(140) In 1982, a sunken wreck was reported in the safety fairway in about 29°50.2'N., 85°41.6'W.

(141) Several fish havens are on the north and south sides and in the Safety Fairway. Minimum depths of the fish havens are 57 feet in the fairway, 20 feet on the north side of the fairway and 34 feet on the south side.

(142)

COLREGS Demarcation Lines

(143) The lines established for St. Joseph Bay are described in **33 CFR 80.810**, chapter 2.

(144)

Channels

(145) From the Gulf, a dredged channel leads across 18-foot shoals and around St. Joseph Point, thence south and southeast to a turning basin at Port St. Joe—see Notice to Mariners and latest editions of the charts for controlling depths. A shoal tends to build east from the extremity of St. Joseph Point into the west side of the entrance channel. It is the recommendation of the local pilots that vessels intending to transit to Port St. Joe should request advice on the maximum allowable draft from their local agents or pilots. The dredged channel is marked by lighted ranges and lighted and unlighted buoys. An obstruction with a least depth of 28 feet and a rock with a least depth of 29 feet are between Lighted Buoy 17 and Buoy 18; caution is advised.

(146) A swash channel with a depth of about 14 feet follows the shore along **St. Joseph Peninsula** to **St. Joseph Point** at a distance of 0.2 mile. The channel is subject to frequent changes and should be used only with local knowledge.

(147) **Gulf County Canal** provides a connection between St. Joseph Bay and the Intracoastal Waterway. For detailed channel information and minimum depths as reported by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), use NOAA Electronic Navigational Charts. Surveys and channel condition reports are available through a USACE hydrographic survey website listed in Appendix A. The entrance to the canal is crossed by a fixed bridge with a clearance of 75 feet. Overhead power cables crossing the canal at Highland View and about 1.4 miles above the mouth have a minimum clearance of 85 feet.

(148)

Anchorages

(149) Vessels should anchor in Port St. Joe Anchorages, north and south of the Safety Fairway leading to the entrance channel. (See **33 CFR 166.100** through **166.200**, chapter 2.) Depths of 24 to 37 feet with hard sand or hard mud bottom are available throughout most of the interior part of the bay. The south third of the bay, a shelf along the sides, and several spoil areas along the entrance channel and along the east side of St. Joseph Peninsula are shoal. **Explosives anchorages** are in St. Joseph Bay—see **33 CFR 110.1** and **110.193a**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.

(150)

Currents

(151) Strong and erratic crosscurrents are reported at the entrance to St. Joseph Bay northeast of St. Joseph Point. These currents are reported to be particularly strong during the ebb. **Caution** is advised when entering the bay.

(152)

Pilotage, Port St. Joe

(153) Pilotage is compulsory for all foreign vessels and U.S. vessels under register in foreign trade if drawing more than 7 feet of water. Pilotage is optional for U.S. coastwise vessels that have on board a pilot licensed by the federal government. A pilot station is no longer maintained at Port St. Joe. Vessels desiring a pilot should request one through the ships' agent or by contacting the Panama City Pilots. See Pilotage, Panama City, in this chapter. Vessels will be required to proceed to the Panama City pilot station to embark or disembark a pilot in the vicinity of 30°05'N., 85°46.4'W. Procedures for requesting pilots are further described under Panama City pilotage.

(154)

Towage

(155) Tugs are obtained from Panama City when required.

(156)

Quarantine, customs, immigration and agricultural quarantine

(157) (See chapter 3, Vessel Arrival Inspections, and Appendix A for addresses.)

(158) **Quarantine** is enforced in accordance with regulations of the U.S. Public Health Service. (See Public Health Service, chapter 1.) A hospital is in the city.

(159) Vessels bound for Port St. Joe notify the customs officer at Panama City of their arrival. Port St. Joe is a **customs port of entry**. The Deputy Collector of Customs at Panama City usually comes to the vessel at the first opportunity. The records for St. Joe are maintained at Panama City.

(160)

Harbor regulations

(161) There are no formal printed harbor regulations. The Port St. Joe Port Authority has jurisdiction over the port. The **harbormaster** can be reached by telephone (904–227–1319). A **speed limit** of 4 mph is posted in the harbor.

(162)

Supplies

(163) Bunker C is available on an emergency basis. Diesel fuel, provisions, water and limited marine supplies are available.

(164)

Repairs

(165) There are no facilities for making major repairs or drydocking deep-draft vessels at Port St. Joe; the nearest facilities are at Mobile. Above- and below-the-waterline repairs can be made to small vessels. A marine railway in the basin on the north side of the Gulf County Canal can haul out craft to 85 feet for complete repairs.

(166)

Small-craft facilities

(167) A boat basin on the north bank of the Gulf County Canal just northeast of the highway bridge provides berths, gasoline, diesel fuel, water, ice and marine supplies.

(168)

Communications

(169) Port St. Joe is served by a Class II railroad and is on the main coastal highway, U.S. Route 98.

(170) **Bell Shoal** is the broken ground northwest of the entrance channel making off from St. Andrew Point, 6.5 miles northwest of St. Joseph Point.

(171) **Mexico Beach** is a small resort community about 4.5 miles north of St. Joseph Point. A privately marked channel leads to **Salt Creek**; the entrance is subject to shoaling and should not be attempted without local knowledge. In 2009, the reported depth inside the creek was 5 feet. U.S. Route 98 highway bridge, on the east branch of the creek about 0.3 mile above the entrance, has a fixed span with a reported clearance of 13 feet. Several marinas are on the east branch. Berths with electricity, gasoline, diesel fuel, water, ice, pump-out station, launching ramps, wet storage and marine supplies are available; a 10-ton forklift can haul out craft to 26 feet for storage or hull and engine repairs. A no-wake **speed limit** is enforced on Salt Creek.

(172) **Crooked Island** is a narrow island extending 7 miles northwest from St. Andrew Point. The island encloses **St. Andrew Sound**, a shallow, unimportant body of water.

(173) A **restricted area** of a drone launch corridor extends through St. Andrew Sound into the Gulf of America. (See **33 CFR 334.770**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(174)

St. Andrews Bay

(175) **St. Andrew Bay**, a narrow irregularly shaped harbor, lies 30 miles northwest of Cape San Blas. Excellent anchorage and protection during hurricanes can be found in this nearly landlocked harbor and its tributary inlets, West, North and East Bays. A ship channel, protected by jetties, in a land cut through **Shell Island**, forms a passage from the Gulf to St. Andrew Bay.

(176) **Panama City** is the seat of Bay County. One of the largest papermills in the world is at **Bay Harbor**, east of Panama City proper. Waterborne commerce consists mainly of general cargo, paper and petroleum products, shell, steel and iron products, marine supplies, chemicals, fertilizers and small amounts of fish.

(177)

Time

(178) Panama City is in the central time zone.

(179)

Prominent features

(180) On the approach from seaward, the shoreline appearance is radically different on the east side of the ship channel where it appears as a low unbroken line of woods and the west side of the ship channel where it appears as a succession of beach homes and condominiums, some as tall as 30 stories. This construction is of varying density from the ship channel at St. Andrew Bay to the east side of the entrance to Choctawhatchee Bay at Destin. It is most dense along the Panama City Beach areas to Phillips Inlet and at Destin. A large condominium apartment building 2.5 miles northwest of the channel entrance is prominent. The condominium is reported to be a good radar target at more than 32 miles. The dredged cut will not show unless the vessel is on or near the line of the cut. The first landmarks to be seen are the smoke and tall stacks of the papermill at Bay Harbor and two 130-foot water tanks at **Tyndall Air Force Base**, about 5 miles south-southeast of the stacks. An aerolight is atop the east tank. Next seen is the Municipal Auditorium at the Panama City Marina.

(181) **St. Andrew Bay Entrance Lighted Buoy SA** (30°05'30"N., 85°46'26"W.) about 2.2 miles southwest of the entrance to the dredged channel, marks the approach.

(182) **Vessels should approach the harbor through the prescribed Safety Fairways.** (See **33 CFR 166.100** through **166.200**, chapter 2.)

(183)

COLREGS Demarcation Lines

(184) The lines established for St. Andrew Bay are described in **33 CFR 80.810**, chapter 2.

(185)

Navigation Guidelines, St. Andrews Bay

(186) The increased size and draft of vessels entering the bay has resulted in increased navigational problems. Based upon reported marine casualties to vessels and after consultation between local marine interests and regulatory agencies, including the Coast Guard Captain of the Port, the following general guidelines have been developed to enhance safe navigation.

(187) It is recommended that all vessels, particularly those that must navigate in the channel because of draft restraints, strictly adhere to them. Nothing in these guidelines shall supersede or alter any applicable laws or regulations. In construing and complying with these guidelines, regard shall be had to all dangers to navigation and collision and to any special circumstances, including the limitations of the vessels involved, which may make a departure from the guidelines necessary to avoid immediate danger.

(188) The dredged cut between the jetties that leads to natural deep water within the Bay is subject to shoaling and the project depth presently authorized is not always available. The local pilots recommend that vessels intending to call Panama City should request advice from their local agents or the pilots as to the maximum draft that can be safely handled at that time.

(189) Due to the constant shoaling that tends to restrict the width of the dredged cut available for large vessels, as well as the strong currents which run through the cut, one way traffic is required for all large vessels transiting the entrance channel.

(190) Vessels towed on a hawser that must enter or leave through the dredged cut and, due to draft or size, are required to navigate in the main channel should exercise particular care that they at all times have the tow under control and are able to navigate in their channel half width if necessary and stop if required. To ensure this capability it is recommended that they not transit the cut with a strong fair tide and employ assist tugs if necessary.

(191) Large numbers of recreational boats frequent the entrance channel, particularly on weekends and holidays. Additionally sailing regattas sponsored by the local yacht club may, at times, be in St. Andrews Bay. Local shipping agents are familiar with these activities and normally request assistance from the Coast Guard and other local law enforcement agencies in monitoring this recreational activity to minimize conflicts with commercial shipping. However, large vessels must keep a sharp lookout for such boats and be prepared to warn them by appropriate signals if they should obstruct the channel.

(192) All vessels entering from sea and bound for facilities located in St. Andrews Bay will, for a time, be navigating in the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW), which has considerable tug and barge traffic. To ensure they are aware of traffic in their vicinity, all vessels transiting St. Andrew Bay, which are confined to the marked channels or otherwise restricted in their movements, are encouraged to give the following Security Calls on VHF-FM Channels 16 and 13.

(193) Inbound vessels should, as a minimum, give a security call via VHF Channel or Channel 16 at least 15 minutes before passing St. Andrews Bay Entrance Lighted Buoy 1 and another call approaching St. Andrews Bay Entrance Lighted Buoy 15A before encountering traffic in the ICW.

(194) Outbound vessels should give a similar security call at least 15 minutes before getting underway and again approaching Lighted Buoy 15A.

(195) Tugs, barges and other large vessels traversing the ICW should give similar security calls when approaching the Hathaway Bridge eastbound and when passing the DuPont Bridge westbound. An additional call should be made as these vessels approach Lighted Buoy 15A.

(196) Security Calls should provide the following information as a minimum; name and call sign of vessel, if engaged in towing, present location or ETA at the sea buoy or either of the bridges as appropriate, direction of movement and destination or intentions. The above reporting points are the minimum recommended, and additional calls may be prudent under existing circumstances.

(197) Large vessels attempting to dock at the Panama City Port Authority West Berth at Dyers Point with a strong breeze from northeast through southeast and a strong flood tide have frequently grounded on the small island just to the west of the berth. This is a particular problem during the winter months. Vessels going to this berth under these conditions should employ additional tugs. If this is not considered to provide an acceptable level of safety, they should delay until slack water or an ebb tide, which will tend to hold them off the island.

(198) Ship owners and Masters are advised that oil spill clean-up contractor services, including containment and clean-up equipment, are available in Panama City. Information concerning contracting for these services may be obtained by contacting local shipping agents, the Panama City Port Authority, the U.S. Coast Guard or the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

(199)

Channels

(200) The main entrance to St. Andrew Bay is through a jettied entrance cut through Shell Island. Federal project depths are 38 feet to a point just inside the jetties, about 1.2 miles from the channel entrance, thence 36 feet to the bay. For detailed channel information and minimum depths as reported by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), use NOAA Electronic Navigational Charts. Surveys and channel condition reports are available through a USACE hydrographic survey website listed in Appendix A. The entrance channel is marked by a **052.6°** lighted range and lighted buoys.

(201) Submerged jetties extend channelward from the northwest and southeast harbor entrance points. The northwest submerged jetty is unmarked and the southeast submerged jetty is marked by a lighted buoy. Mariners are cautioned to keep within the buoyed channel while navigating the land cut through Shell Island.

(202) The entrance southeast of Shell Island is not marked, has shoaled to bare and is considered unsafe for navigation.

(203) Two fish havens are in the safety fairway about 2.5 and 5.4 miles southwest of the entrance.

(204)

Anchorages

(205) Vessels should anchor in the Panama City Anchorage, east of the Safety Fairway. (See **33 CFR 166.100** through **166.200**, chapter 2.) Vessels awaiting berths, or who desire to anchor for short periods of time, normally anchor in the vicinity of St. Andrew Bay Entrance Lighted Buoy SA well clear of inbound or outbound traffic. In addition, excellent anchorage can be found almost anywhere in the bay where the depth is suitable. The usual anchorage for large vessels is to the west of **Redfish Point** in depths of 35 to 40 feet.

(206)

Dangers

(207) Danger zones for small arms firing ranges are southeast of the entrance to St. Andrew Bay. (See **33 CFR 334.680**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(208)

Currents

(209) The strong ebb current sets outward through the dredged cut and causes heavy tide rips if the wind is south and of moderate strength. With a south or west breeze, small vessels bound in or out should endeavor to reach the entrance during flood current.

(210)

Weather

(211) Panama City has a pleasant subtropical climate that is occasionally interrupted by cold air outbreaks in winter and thunderstorms in summer. There is also a threat of a tropical cyclone from June through November. Thunderstorms, which can occur in any month, are most likely in June, July and August when they occur on an average of 10 to 14 days per month. Peak wind gusts have been close to 70 knots in August and September. In September 1975, Eloise, generating estimated 110-knot winds, became the first hurricane of the 20th century to hit this area. A 98-foot tower 13 miles off Panama City measured 80-knot winds with 135-knot gusts while high water marks reached 18.2 feet above mean sea level in some areas. Fog is most likely late at night and during early morning hours from November through April, when visibilities drop below 0.5 mile on 5 to 8 days per month.

(212)

Pilotage, Panama City

(213) Pilotage is compulsory for foreign vessels and U.S. vessels under register in foreign trade if drawing 7 feet or more of water. Pilotage is optional for U.S. coastwise vessels that have on board a pilot licensed by the federal government. Pilotage is available from the St. Andrew Bay Pilots Association, LLC, P.O. Box 1389, Panama City, FL 32402-1389, telephone 850–785–2524 (office), 781–738–1825, or 850–832–7418. Pilots do not have a 24-hour manned VHF-FM radio station. Pilots may be arranged by telephone or through ships' agents. The pilots request ETA information 24 hours prior to arrival, if possible. Pilots board vessels seaward of the sea buoy in the vicinity of 30°05.0'N., 85°46.4'W and disembark vessels after clearing channel entrance Lighted Buoys 1 and 2. The primary pilot boat is a 47-foot vessel, and at times an alternate 30-foot vessel will be used. Depending upon circumstances, the vessel's speed should be adjusted as requested by the pilot and the pilot ladder rigged on the lee side 1 meter above the water. The boats monitor VHF-FM channels 14 and 16 one hour before a vessel is expected. Channel 14 is used as a working frequency for tugs and port facilities.

(214)

Towage

(215) Tugs up to 3,600 hp are available. Requests for tug service are best made through the ships' agent, but may also be contacted over VHF-FM channel 16 or by telephone (850–624–0895).

(216)

Quarantine, customs, immigration and agricultural quarantine

(217) (See chapter 3, Vessel Arrival Inspections, and Appendix A for addresses.)

(218) **Quarantine** is enforced in accordance with the regulations of the U.S. Public Health Service. (See Public Health Service, chapter 1.)

(219) Panama City is a **customs port of entry.**

(220)

Coast Guard

(221) **Panama City Coast Guard Station** is on **Alligator Bayou**, opposite Dyers Point. The bayou is within a **restricted area**. (See **33 CFR 334.760**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(222)

Supplies

(223) Diesel fuel and Bunker C can be supplied by truck to vessels at their berths. Water and marine supplies are available.

(224)

Repairs

(225) There are no facilities for making major repairs or drydocking deep-draft vessels at Panama City; the nearest facilities are at Mobile. There are machine shops in the city, and above- and below-the-waterline repairs can be made to small vessels. The largest marine railway can handle vessels up to 150 feet long and 250 tons.

(226)

Small-craft facilities

(227) There are large municipal yacht basins at the head of the main ship channel in Panama City and in St. Andrew. Other small-craft facilities are on Watson and Massalina Bayous, Lake Ware and at the Hathaway Bridge near Dyers Point and in Grand Lagoon.

(228)

Communications

(229) Panama City is served by The Bay Line Railroad and has bus connections to all points. Panama City International Airport is about 4 miles northwest of the center of the city. Maritime radio service is through the Mobile Marine Operator (WLO).

(230) **Watson Bayou** is an irregularly shaped body of water that extends north from St. Andrew Bay. There are several piers for light-draft vessels. Over the east arm, near **Millville**, is a railroad bridge with a 26-foot fixed span and a clearance of 13 feet. A fixed highway bridge is close east of the railroad bridge. Several oil terminals, served by barges, are on the bayou. U.S. Route 98 highway bridge crossing the bayou, about 1.2 miles above the entrance, has a 35-foot fixed span with a clearance of 9 feet. There are two marinas east of the bridge. Welding and machinery repairs are available nearby. The channel is unmarked.

(231) A yacht club in **Bunkers Cove**, between Bunker Point and Town Point, has berths and marine services for members and guests.

(232) In **Massalina Bayou**, north of Bunkers Point, are many landings for small craft. Several marinas can provide berthing, gasoline, some marine supplies and a marine railway that can haul out vessels to 74 feet for hull and engine repairs. A submerged jetty is on the northwest side of the entrance. A light marks the entrance to the bayou. In 1982, it was reported that a depth of about 8 feet could be carried through the mouth of the bayou, thence depths of 5 to 10 feet were available to the Fourth

Street highway bridge about 0.4 mile above the entrance. The bridge has a 28-foot fixed span with a clearance of 6 feet. Beach Drive Highway Bridge (Tarpon Dock bascule bridge) over the entrance has a 40-foot bascule span with a clearance of 7 feet. (See **33 CFR 117.1** through **117.49** and **117.301** chapter 2, for drawbridge regulations.) The bridgetender monitors VHF-FM channel 9, 24 hours every day; telephone 904–872–3169.

(233) About 400 yards northwest of Massalina Bayou is the Municipal Pier and Yacht Basin. In 1982, depths along the face of the inner fuel area were reported to be about 9 feet. It is protected by small jetties from wind and seas from the southwest through the northwest. Another municipally owned long pier and yacht basin at St. Andrew north of **Buena Vista Point** is used as a public landing for sport fishermen.

(234) **Grand Lagoon** extends about 5 miles northwest from just within the dredged entrance to St. Andrew Bay. A dredged channel leads into the lagoon from St. Andrew Bay to a point about 0.4 mile east of State Highway 392 Bridge, thence branches to serve facilities of both the north and south shores; these branches are connected by a channel parallel to the highway bridge. The channel is marked by lights and daybeacons. A fixed highway bridge crosses the lagoon with a vertical clearance of 18 feet. An overhead cable close west of the bridge has an authorized clearance of 36 feet. Marinas near the highway bridge provide gasoline, diesel fuel, berths, electricity, water, ice and marine supplies. A 30-ton mobile hoist can haul out craft for complete repairs and storage.

(235) A privately marked channel, with a reported controlling depth of 5 feet in 1985, branches north from the dredged entrance channel to a yacht club marina; the marina has berths and other services for members and transients.

(236) **East Bay** an arm of St. Andrew Bay extends in a general east-southeast direction for about 18 miles. The several small towns on East Bay are of little commercial importance.

(237) **West Bay**, the northwest arm of St. Andrew Bay, is generally free from dangers except for several oyster bars with depths of 5 to 8 feet over them. A small island, created by the dredging of the new Port Authority Terminal, is off Dyers Point; the island is marked by a light.

(238) **Panama City Beach**, **Long Beach Resort**, **Edgewater Gulf Beach**, **Florida Beach**, **Gulf Beach Resort** and **Laguna Beach** are sections of the residential and resort areas. **St. Andrews State Park** is on both sides of the dredged cut of the main ship channel in St. Andrew Bay entrance.

(239) The route of the Intracoastal Waterway is through East Bay, St. Andrew Bay and West Bay. East Bay, West Bay and North Bay are discussed in chapter 12 in connection with the waterway.

(240) From St. Andrew Bay west for 85 miles to Pensacola Bay, the shoreline is a gently curving sand beach, unbroken except at the entrance to Choctawhatchee Bay, 44 miles west of St. Andrew Bay entrance. Except at the entrances to the bays, the beach is steep-to and can be approached closely. Depths of less than 30 feet are rarely over 0.3 mile offshore. For this reason, the sea rolls in with undiminished strength and breaks heavily on the shore when driven by south winds. Small craft bound west from St. Andrew Bay should use the Intracoastal Waterway.

(241)

Top Bluff

(242) **Topsail Bluff**, a slightly elevated knoll, is about 10 miles east of the entrance to Choctawhatchee Bay and can be seen for several miles.

(243) The **danger zones** of aerial gunnery and bombing ranges are in Choctawhatchee Bay. (See **334.700**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.) The **danger zone** of a guided missiles test operations area is in the Gulf south of Choctawhatchee Bay. (See **33 CFR 334.720**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(244)

Choctawhatchee Bay Entrance to Destin Harbor

(245) **Choctawhatchee Bay Entrance**, **East Pass**, about 44 miles west-northwest of St. Andrew Bay entrance, extends into the west part of Choctawhatchee Bay between Moreno Point and Santa Rosa Island and is protected by two jetties. The jetties are marked by a light off their seaward ends. **Choctawhatchee Bay Entrance Lighted Buoy CB** (30°22'14"N., 86°30'56"W.), about 0.5 mile off the entrance to the channel, marks the approach. To carry the best depths, mariners should be guided by the color of the water. Passage should not be attempted in rough weather. Local knowledge is advised. (For detailed channel information and minimum depths as reported by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), use NOAA Electronic Navigational Charts. Surveys and channel condition reports are available through a USACE hydrographic survey website listed in Appendix A.) The channel south of the bridge is subject to frequent changes and shoals rapidly between dredgings. Buoys are frequently shifted to mark best water. The channel is marked by lights, buoys and daybeacons.

(246) From close offshore the entrance is easily identified by U.S. Route 98 fixed highway bridges crossing the channel just inside the east end of Santa Rosa Island. The parallel bridges have a least clearance of 49 feet.

(247) **Choctawhatchee Bay**, about 25 miles long, extends nearly parallel with the coast and separated from it by a strip of land varying in width from 0.3 to 4 miles. Depths in the bay decrease gradually from west to east with 18 to 43 feet in the west two-thirds, except near the shores, and 8 to 16 feet in the east third. Traffic in Choctawhatchee Bay consists principally of travel along the Intracoastal Waterway and oil deliveries to Freeport. There are good highway connections to Pensacola and Panama City on both the north and south shores of the bay.

(248) U.S. Route 331 highway causeway over the bay at **Wheeler Point** has a fixed span at the Intracoastal Waterway channel with a clearance of 66 feet.

(249) **Choctawhatchee River** empties into the east end of Choctawhatchee Bay. **Cypress River**,**Indian River**and **Mitchell River** are branch outlets north of the main river. The mouth of Choctawhatchee River is very shallow, and boats generally enter through Cypress River. A rectangular area of exposed piling, about 1.2 miles long and 0.5 mile wide just off the mouths of the several rivers in this system, is used as a radar target range by Eglin Air Force Base. Cypress River entrance, marked by a light, has a controlling depth of about 6 feet. The river extends 1.5 miles inland to a junction with Choctawhatchee River. **Black Creek**, with depths of 8 feet inside but bars of about 1-foot depth blocking the entrance, leads to the village of **Black Creek.** Berths, electricity, gasoline, a launching ramp, water, ice and wet storage are available at a small fish camp on the west bank of the creek about 1.6 miles above its mouth. Outboard engine repairs are available nearby.

(250) **Freeport**, a small town on **Fourmile Creek**, which empties into **LaGrange Bayou**, is a distribution point for petroleum products, grain and molasses, which are brought in by barge.

(251) A dredged channel leads from Choctawhatchee Bay to a turning basin at the head of navigation just south of the fixed highway bridge at Freeport. The channel is marked with lights and daybeacons. The bridge at Freeport has a fixed 18-foot span with a clearance of 5 feet. An overhead power cable with a clearance of 24 feet crosses the channel close east of the bridge.

(252) Access channels have been dug through the spoil banks to a channel along the east bank as far as **Ramsey Branch**. Depths of about 1½ feet were reported in these channels in 1997. A small marina on Ramsey Branch provides temporary bulkhead tie-up, limited marine supplies and outboard engine repairs.

(253) There are numerous private piers and fish piers on LaGrange Bayou and Fourmile Creek. Gasoline and some marine supplies can be obtained at stores and service stations on U.S. Route 331 and State Route 20 in Freeport. A small shipyard at the head of LaGrange Bayou on Fourmile Creek has a marine railway that can handle craft to 120 feet for hull and engine repairs.

(254) **Basin Bayou** is a landlocked lake about 5 miles west of LaGrange Bayou. State Route 20 highway bridge across the narrow entrance has a 15-foot fixed span with a clearance of 4 feet. A paved launching ramp is near the bridge. The launching ramp is accessible at high water only.

(255) **Rocky Bayou**, about 10 miles west of Basin Bayou, has depths of 10 to 20 feet and affords good anchorage for small craft. The entrance to the bayou is marked on the west side by a light. A channel about 0.9 mile above the entrance to the bayou leads southeast to a marina in **Ward Cove**. The channel is marked by a private buoy and had a reported controlling depth of 8 feet in 2006. Gasoline, diesel fuel, berths with electricity, water, ice, a launching ramp, pump-out station and marine supplies are available. Hull and engine repairs can be made.

(256) **Boggy Bayou**, about 1.5 miles west of Rocky Bayou, leads to two towns on the bayou. The entrance to the bayou is marked by lights and daybeacons. In 1993, shoaling reportedly extended into the channel east of Light 9 in about 30°30'18"N., 86°29'04"W. **Niceville**, at the head of the bayou, has a hospital, an oil terminal with a wharf and many private piers.

(257) **Valparaiso** is a small town on the west bank of the bayou at the intersection of the bayou with **Toms Bayou**. There is a public park with a launching ramp on the point.

(258) A fixed highway bridge across Toms Bayou is under construction (2019). The overhead power and TV cables close west of the bridge have a clearance of 38 feet.

(259) A **restricted area** has been designated in **Weekley Bayou**, an arm of Boggy Bayou. (See **33 CFR 334.740**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(260) **Eglin Air Force Base** covers the northwest shore of Choctawhatchee Bay from Boggy Bayou to Garnier Bayou. The tanks and buildings at the base are conspicuous.

(261) **Bens Lake** is about 1.7 miles northeast of **Black Point.**

(262) **Joes Bayou**, 2 miles northeast of the bay entrance, is entered through a channel marked by daybeacons. The bayou affords good anchorage for small craft.

(263) **Garnier Bayou** and **Cinco Bayou** have a common entrance at the northwest corner of Choctawhatchee Bay, and each has depths of 7 feet or more and excellent anchorage against bad weather. State Route 85 highway crossing Garnier Bayou, about 0.5 mile above the entrance, has a fixed span with a clearance of 19 feet. A large marina is in a protected basin on the east shore about 0.3 mile south of the bridge at **Shalimar**. A tall cylindrical water tank, which resembles a stack near the marina, is prominent. Berths, electricity, gasoline, diesel fuel, water, ice, a launching ramp and pump-out station are available. A 35-ton lift is available for hull, engine and electronic repairs. In 2006, 8 feet was reported in the basin.

(264) A yacht club on **Smack Point**, on the south side of the entrance to Cinco Bayou, has berths and other services for members and guests.

(265) State Route 85 fixed highway bridge crossing Cinco Bayou, about 0.5 mile west of the entrance, has a clearance of 19 feet.

(266) **Restricted areas** are at the head of Garnier Bayou and the head of Poquito Bayou, on the east side of Garnier Bayou. (See **33 CFR 334.742** and **334.744**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(267) **Fort Walton Beach**, at the west end of Choctawhatchee Bay, is on the Intracoastal Waterway, which is described in chapter 12.

(268) **Destin** is a small fishing village and resort on **Moreno Point**. There are several marinas in **Destin Harbor (Old Pass Lagoon)**, a lagoon behind the spit on

the east side of the entrance to East Pass, Choctawhatchee Bay Entrance. There is reported to be excellent anchorage in **Old Pass Lagoon** along the south shore. Gasoline, diesel fuel, berths, electricity, water, ice, pump-out station, launching ramp, wet and dry storage and marine supplies are available. Local fishing guides can be hired as pilots for the bay and the waters of the Gulf. Numerous charter boats moor along the north side of the lagoon, and a few moor on the bay side of Destin close north of the bridge.

(269) A marina is on Santa Rosa Island about 3 miles west of the highway bridge over East Pass, Choctawhatchee Bay Entrance. There is a mobile hoist that can handle craft to 15 tons for hull and engine repairs or storage. Berths, electricity and water are available. There is a fuel dock at the south end of the bridge over The Narrows to Fort Walton Beach. Gasoline and diesel fuel are available.

(270)

Coast Guard Station

(271) **Destin Coast Guard Station** is on Santa Rosa Island, about 0.5 mile west-southwest of the highway bridge over East Pass. A **restricted area** has been established in the waters around the Coast Guard Station. (See **33 CFR 334.746**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(272)

Santa Rosa Sound

(273) **Santa Rosa Sound** and its east continuation, **The Narrows**, parallel the coast between Choctawhatchee Bay and Pensacola Bay and are separated from the Gulf by **Santa Rosa Island**, a narrow strip of beach. Santa Rosa Sound and The Narrows have a combined length of 33 miles and a width varying from 1.8 miles in the widest part of the sound to 200 yards in the narrowest part. The west part of the sound has a depth of 15 feet or more; the central part and The Narrows have been dredged where necessary to provide a channel for the Intracoastal Waterway. The Narrows and Santa Rosa Sound are discussed further in chapter 12 in connection with the waterway.

(274)

Danger zones

(275) The **danger zones** of two Air Force proving grounds have been established in Santa Rosa Sound, The Narrows and the Gulf. (See **33 CFR 334.710** and **334.730**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(276) Unexploded ordnance lies on the bottom a mile offshore from Santa Rosa Island, about 8 miles west of Choctawhatchee Bay Entrance.

(277) Santa Rosa Island and the east part of Perdido Key, west of the entrance to Pensacola Bay, are part of **Gulf Islands National Seashore** and subject to the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service.

(278)

Pensacola

(279) **Pensacola Bay** lies 110 miles west-northwest of Cape San Blas and 125 miles northeast of South Pass, Mississippi River. The bay, about 12.5 miles in length, has depths of 20 to 50 feet and affords excellent shelter and anchorage; it is frequently used as a harbor of refuge. The bay is the approach to several towns and the city of Pensacola; to Escambia and East Bays, extending north and east, respectively, from its east end; to Blackwater Bay and Blackwater River north of East Bay; and to Santa Rosa Sound.

(280) Vessels approaching Pensacola Bay by day can verify their positions by the appearance of the land. For 40 miles east of the entrance, Santa Rosa Island presents a white sand beach and low white sand hills with scattered clumps of trees and bushes; back of this on the mainland are thick woods. For 40 miles west of the entrance, the shore is low and thickly wooded nearly to the water, showing no breaks and very few hillocks. Soundings will indicate whether a vessel is east or west of the entrance; the 10-fathom curve approaches the coast much more closely east of the entrance. Depths of 10 fathoms less than 3 miles off the beach indicate the vessel is east of the entrance.

(281) At night or in thick weather it is well for a vessel uncertain of her position to stay in depths of at least 12 fathoms until the light is sighted or the position is otherwise determined.

(282) **Pensacola**, 7 miles above the entrance to Pensacola Bay, is a commercial city and the site of a U.S. Naval Air Station. The port has good facilities for coastwise and foreign shipping. Primary inbound shipments include aggregate, cement, oil and gas pipeline equipment. Primary outbound shipments include lumber, paper, steel, wind turbine components, oil and gas submarine pipeline equipment.

(283)

Prominent features

(284) **Pensacola Light** (30°20'46"N., 87°18'29"W.), 191 feet above the water and shown from a 171-foot conical brick tower, lower third white, upper two-thirds black, on the shore north of the entrance, is the principal mark for the entrance.

(285) **Fort Pickens**, on the east point of the entrance, is a part of Gulf Islands National Seashore. The buildings of the park ranger station 2.5 miles east of the entrance, two spherical elevated tanks 8.6 and 10.8 miles east, and a 220-foot water tank about 26.5 miles east of the entrance are prominent when coming from the east. The span of the Perdido Pass highway bridge 13 miles west of the entrance, and the buildings at Gulf Beach 6.5 miles west, are conspicuous when coming from the west. The wreck of the old battleship MASSACHUSETTS on the south end of Caucus Shoal, west of the entrance, is visible but cannot be seen for any distance offshore; the wreck

is marked by a lighted bell buoy. The buildings, tanks, towers and other features of the naval air station on the neck south of Warrington can be seen over Santa Rosa Island from the south.

(286) In Pensacola, the large water tank, a church steeple, the radio mast atop the telephone building, the Seville Building, the highest building in town which has a small square elevator house on top, and a large green 11-story building about 3.3 miles west of the Municipal Pier can be identified from offshore. At night the numerous radio towers with occulting red lights on top and the aviation lights are easily seen.

(287) **Vessels should approach the harbor through the prescribed Safety Fairways.** (See **33 CFR 166.100** through **166.200**, chapter 2.)

(288) In 1984, an obstruction was reported in the coastwise safety fairway about 5 miles southeast of Caucus Channel entrance in about 30°14'20"N., 87°12'00"W. Several other submerged obstructions are in the fairway about 3.5 miles south of the channel entrance.

(289)

COLREGS Demarcation Lines

(290) The lines established for Pensacola Bay are described in **33 CFR 80.810**, chapter 2.

(291)

Channels

(292) The 0.6-mile-wide entrance to Pensacola Bay is through **Caucus Channel**, a dredged cut through shoals that extends 1.5 miles seaward from the entrance.

(293) **Bay Channel** extends northeast for about 4 miles to two parallel channels. The two channels, **West Channel** and **East Channel**, lead north to **Inner Harbor Channel** and along the wharves at Pensacola.

(294) **Bayou Chico Channel** is a dredged channel that leads from the bay to a turning basin about 1 mile above the entrance to the bayou. In 2007, an unmarked obstruction was reported on the channel edge at about 30°23'59.3"N., 87°14'32.8"W.; extreme caution is advised.

(295) The channels are well marked by lighted range, lights, daybeacons and lighted and unlighted buoys. For detailed channel information and minimum depths as reported by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), use NOAA Electronic Navigational Charts. Surveys and channel condition reports are available through a USACE hydrographic survey website listed in Appendix A.

(296)

Anchorages

(297) **Vessels should anchor in the Pensacola Anchorage, East of the Safety Fairways**. (See **33 CFR 166.100** through **166.200**, chapter 2.) In addition, good anchorage can be found in any part of the bay except south of the naval air station. Inside Pensacola Bay, the usual anchorage is off the city of Pensacola where the holding ground is good.

(298)

Dangers

(299) **East Bank** and **Middle Ground** form an extensive shoal area that extends 1.6 miles south from the west end of Santa Rosa Island. **Caucus Shoal**, with depths of 2 to 18 feet, extends 1.5 miles south from the west side of the entrance. Because of shoaling on the east side of the entrance, large vessels are advised to navigate as close as possible to the range line.

(300) A naval **restricted area**, a **restricted area** and a seaplane **restricted area** are in Pensacola Bay. (See **33 CFR 334.775**, **334.778** and **334.780**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(301)

Currents

(302) The diurnal velocity of the tidal current in Pensacola Bay Entrance in midchannel is about 1.7 knots at strength, although currents of up to 8 knots have been reported in the entrance and up to 5 knots at the Pensacola Naval Air Station pier.

(303) In Caucus Cut, for 2 hours at the strongest of the ebb, the normal current has a velocity of 2 to 2.5 knots, setting southeast somewhat across the channel in the vicinity of Fort Pickens. The flood has less velocity and sets along the channels. The flood has greater velocity following a norther than at other times. See the Tidal Current prediction service at *tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov* for specific information about times, directions, and velocities of the current at numerous locations throughout the area. Links to a user guide for this service can be found in chapter 1 of this book.

(304)

Weather

(305) Pensacola is situated in latitude 30°25'N., longitude 87°13'W., on a somewhat hilly, sandy slope that borders Pensacola Bay, an expanse of deep water several miles in width, which in turn is separated from the Gulf of America by a long, narrow island that forms a natural breakwater for the harbor. Elevations in the city range from a few feet above sea level to more than 100 feet in portions of the residential sections, and most of the city is well above storm tides.

(306) The hurricane season extends from late May into early November when there is about a 1 in 10 chance of hurricane-force winds at Pensacola. An average of one tropical storm or hurricane passes within 180 miles of Pensacola each year. Since 1950, 18 tropical storms have come within 50 miles of Pensacola including hurricane Ivan in September 2004. Ivan made landfall about 25 miles west of Pensacola in Gulf shores, Alabama. The storm caused extensive wind and surge-induced damage and loss of life throughout the area. Peak wind gusts of 93 knots and a storm surge of over 10 feet were measured in Pensacola. In a recent 56-year period, 22 of the 61 tropical cyclones that passed within this distance generated hurricane-force winds. September is the most likely month for a tropical cyclone. The principal threat

is from storms moving in from the southeast, south and southwest. The port of Pensacola is vulnerable to strong winds from the southeast through southwest while Escambia and Blackwater Bays are vulnerable to winds from north or south. Strong winds do pose a wind wave problem at all deepwater berths because of the large expanse of open water in greater Pensacola Bay, which encompasses East, Blackwater, Escambia and Pensacola Bays. It is protected from ocean waves by the sand barrier islands of Perdido Key and Santa Rosa Islands; these barriers are breached only during a severe storm surge. While storm tides of up to 10 feet above mean sea level have occurred in the past, it has been estimated that 100-year storm tides could reach 13.5 feet in Blackwater and Escambia Bays.

(307) The location of Pensacola in the hurricane belt and the absence of sheltered facilities and anchorages renders Pensacola Bay a poor hurricane haven. Large vessels are advised to leave the area well ahead of the storm's arrival. Small craft, if they cannot be taken out of the water, should seek shelter in the many bayous, sloughs, creeks and rivers that border the greater Pensacola Bay.

(308) Because of Pensacola's nearness to the Gulf of America, it benefits from its moderating effect, which tempers the cold northers of winter and provides cool sea breezes during summer afternoons.

(309) While 90°F temperatures occur about 61 times each year, readings of 100°F or more are observed on about 18 days each summer. Winter temperatures fall below freezing on about 15 days also. These freezes are brought by cold fronts that are often accompanied by strong, gusty winds and rain or, on rare occasions, snow. The average annual temperature at Pensacola is 68.2°F with an average high of 76.9°F and an average low of 59°F. July is the warmest month averaging 82.4°F and January the coolest averaging 52.4°F. The warmest temperature on record at Pensacola is 106°F, recorded in July 1980, and the coolest temperature on record is 5°F, recorded in January 1985. Each month May through August has had temperatures in excess of 100°F, while each month April through October has had temperatures in excess of 90°F. Each month November through March has had temperatures below freezing. Precipitation is moderate averaging 63.64 inches year. July is the wettest month averaging 7.67 inches, and November is the driest averaging 3.85 inches. A third of the annual rainfall occurs during the summer months of June, July and August. The greatest 24-hour rainfall occurred in March 1979 when 11.1 inches fell. Snowfall is light, averaging less than one inch annually. The greatest 24-hour snowfall on record is 2.3 inches, recorded in March 1954. Wind gusts have reached 50 to 60 knots and, on occasion, gone higher in fronts or winter storms. Approaching the port, winds climb to 17 knots or more about 7 to 9 percent of the time from November through April; September is also a likely month for strong winds. Summer winds are usually light and strengthen in thunderstorms or tropical cyclones. While thunderstorms may occur in any month, they are most likely from May through September when they develop on about 5 to 15 days per month; July and August is the most active period. Fog is most likely during winter and spring when visibilities fall below 0.5 mile on 4 to 7 days per month. At other times visibilities are reduced briefly in heavy showers.

(310) The National Weather Service maintains an office in Pensacola. **Barometers** may be compared there. (See Appendix A for address.)

(311)

Pilotage, Pensacola

(312) Pilotage is compulsory for all foreign vessels and U.S. vessels under register in foreign trade if drawing over 7 feet. Pilotage is optional for coastwise U.S. vessels that have on board a licensed federal pilot. Pilotage is available from Pensacola Pilots, LLC—901 S. Old Corry Field Rd. Box 4435—Pensacola, FL 32507. Pilots do not have a 24-hour manned VHF-FM radio station. Pilots can be reached via telephone at 540-848-4524. Pilotage may be arranged by telephone or through ships' agents. The pilots request ETA information 24 hours prior to arrival, if possible. Pilots board vessels seaward of Pensacola Bay Entrance Lighted Buoys 1 and 2. The 34-foot pilot boat, *Nora M*, has a black hull and white house with orange rib collars. The pilot ladder should be rigged on the lee side, 1 meter from the water; boarding speed is 5 knots. Pilots monitor VHF-FM channels 14 and 16 one hour before scheduled boarding. VHF-FM channel 14 is the normal working frequency for tugs and port operations.

(313)

Towage

(314) Two tugs of 2,600 and 3,000 hp are available with 24-hour notice. It is best to make tug arrangements utilizing an agent; however, Portside Marine & Towing can be contacted directly at 850-438-3648.

(315)

Quarantine, customs, immigration and agricultural quarantine

(316) (See chapter 3, Vessel Arrival Inspections, and Appendix A for addresses.)

(317) **Quarantine** is enforced in accordance with the regulations of the U.S. Public Health Service. (See Public Health Service, chapter 1.) There are several hospitals in Pensacola.

(318) Pensacola is a **customs port of entry.**

(319)

Coast Guard

(320) **Pensacola Coast Guard Station** is about 1 mile east of Pensacola Light; telephone 850-453-8282.

(321)

Harbor regulations

(322) The City of Pensacola, Department of Marine Operations, establishes regulations governing the piers under the control of the Port of Pensacola. The **Port Director** is the manager of the Port of Pensacola and has an office at Port of Pensacola Building No. 1.

(325)

Facilities at Port of Pensacola, Florida

Name	Location	Berthing Space (feet)	Depths* (feet)	Deck Height (feet)	Purpose	Owned/ Operated by:
Port of Pensacola Berth 1	30°24'11"N., 87°12'41"W.	540	35	11	• Shipment of frozen foods (chicken) • Receipt of crude oil • Receipt and shipment of asphalt and liquid sulphur	City of Pensacola/Hady Enterprises; Coastal Fuels Marketing Inc.; and Freeport Sulphur Co.
Port of Pensacola Berth 2	30°24'06"N., 87°12'40"W.	400	35	11	• Receipt and shipment of conventional general cargo, lumber, steel, paper products, scrap metal and asphalt • Receipt of crude oil	City of Pensacola/ Port of Pensacola and Coastal Fuels Marketing Inc.
Port of Pensacola Berths 3 and 5	30°24'05"N., 87°12'35"W.	850	35	11	• Receipt and shipment of conventional general cargo, bagged food, lumber, steel, paper products, scrap metal, and asphalt • Receipt of crude oil	City of Pensacola/ Port of Pensacola and Coastal Fuels Marketing Inc.
Port of Pensacola Berth 6	30°24'06"N., 87°12'26"W.	580	35	11	Receipt and shipment of conventional and general cargo and paper products	City of Pensacola/Port of Pensacola
U.S. Naval Air Station	30°20'42"N., 87°15'54"W.	N/A	25 to 34	8 to 15	Naval activities	U.S. Government

* The depths given above are reported. For information on the latest depths contact the port authorities or the private operators.

(323)

Bridges

(324) The Pensacola Bay bridge spanning the entrance to the bay between Gulf Breeze and Pensacola is under construction (2017).

(326)

Supplies

(327) Bunker fuel is available at Port of Pensacola, Berth No. 1. Water, gasoline, diesel fuel and marine supplies are available.

(328)

Repairs

(329) Facilities at Port of Pensacola are available for making repairs to hull and machinery. Woodworking, machine and steel fabrication shops are available for almost any type of repairs. A mobile 25-ton crane is available. Above-the-waterline repairs are made anywhere in the port area.

(330)

Small-craft facilities

(331) Limited transient berths, gasoline, diesel fuel, water, ice, electricity, pump-out station, wet and dry storage and marine supplies are available in Bayou Chico. Hull, engine and electronic repairs can be made. Mobile hoists to 50 tons are available. (See Repairs for largest facility.) Additional facilities along the Intracoastal Waterway southeast and southwest of Pensacola are discussed in chapter 12.

(332)

Communications

(333) Pensacola is a seaport terminal for freight service on one Class I railroad. Sailings are made to ports throughout the world.

(334) The Pensacola Regional Airport is in the northeast part of the city.

(335) **Bayou Chico**, an inlet in the southwest part of the city, extends about 1.1 miles west from the Pensacola Bay where it divides into a north arm and a southwest arm. Bayou Chico Channel, a dredged channel in the bayou, is discussed earlier in this chapter under Channels. Waterborne commerce on the bayou includes petroleum products, shell, rafted logs, stone and crushed rock, gravel and sand and trailers on barges. An overhead power cable crosses the bayou 0.25 mile above the mouth with a clearance of 88 feet. The Barrancas Avenue highway bridge, 0.5 mile above the mouth, has a fixed span with a clearance of 65 feet. A fixed bridge with a clearance of 14 feet crosses the bayou about 1.6 miles above the mouth. Pensacola Yacht Club and basin is on the north side of the entrance to the bayou, and an oil-handling berth is on the south side. There are several marinas, two boatyards, a shipyard and shell, sand and gravel plants on the bayou.

(336) **Bayou Texar** joins the bay just east of the highway causeway to Town Point. The entrance to the bayou is marked by a light and a daybeacon. A channel, marked by private piles, leads to a marina on the east side of the bayou about 0.6 mile above the entrance. In 1982, the channel had a reported controlling depth of 2½ feet. Gasoline, water and outboard engine repairs are available at the marina. Two fixed bridges cross the bayou. The CSX Railroad bridge at the mouth has a 44-foot fixed span with a clearance of 13 feet. The U.S. Route 90 highway bridge, about 0.5 mile upstream, has a fixed span with a clearance of 13 feet.

(337) **Warrington** is a suburb of Pensacola on **Bayou Grande**, which is 3 miles southwest of the center of the city. The bayou entrance channel is marked by a private light and private daybeacons and is reported privately maintained to a depth of 6 feet. In 1999, severe shoaling was reported in the channel entrance in about 30°22'30"N., 87°15'48"W.

(354)

Perdido Pass, Florida
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (2013)

(338) Admiral Murray fixed highway bridge, crossing Bayou Grande about 0.2 mile west of **Jones Point**, has a clearance of 14 feet. A marina, about 2.6 miles above the bridge on the north side of Bayou Grande, has berths, gasoline, a launching ramp, ice, dry storage and a 10-ton lift available for engine repairs.

(339)

Escambia Bay to Milton

(340) **Escambia Bay** extends 9 miles north from Pensacola Bay. About 5 miles above its mouth the bay is crossed by a fixed railroad bridge with a clearance of 50 feet. The twin spans of Interstate Route 10 highway bridge cross the bay about 0.3 mile south of the railroad fixed bridge and have a clearance of 65 feet. The depths in the bay shoal gradually from 15 feet at the mouth to 7 feet in the upper reaches. A dredged channel, marked by lights and daybeacons, leads through the bay to about 6.1 miles above the mouth of Escambia River.

(341) North of **Devils Point** are shoals and submerged obstructions along the west shore of Escambia Bay. This shore should not be approached closer than 0.5 mile. Above the bridge draw, in line with Escambia River, are a 5-foot shoal and a pile awash at low water. These are outside the dredged channel.

(342) **Escambia River**, which flows into Escambia Bay from northwest, extends north for 48 miles to the Alabama State line, where it is known as the **Conecuh River**. The twin highway bridges about 1.5 miles above the mouth have fixed spans with a clearance of 42 feet. There is a nylon fiber plant and some commerce in cypress logs and petroleum on this river, the latter barged to a power plant about 2 miles above the bridge.

(343) Overhead power cables crossing the river 1.7 and 2.3 miles above the bridge have minimum clearance of 60 feet. There are fish camps along the highway bridge on the Escambia and White Rivers that have fuel, berths, launching ramps and some marine supplies.

(344) **East Bay**, an east extension of Pensacola Bay, is entered by way of a passage 1 mile wide between the shoals off **Garcon Point** and **Redfish Point**. A highway bridge over the entrance to East Bay between Hernandez Point and Redfish Point has a fixed span with a clearance of 65 feet. Depths in the bay vary from 8 to 13 feet, with several small scattered shoals of 6 feet or less. The channel through the bay is marked.

(345) **Blackwater River** empties into **Blackwater Bay**, the north arm of East Bay. The channel is marked by lights, daybeacons and buoys to the town of Milton.

(346) Numerous wrecks, submerged piling and other obstructions constitute hazards in Blackwater River. **Wright Basin** and **Marquis Basin** are filled with such obstructions. Twin fixed highway bridges with clearances of 45 feet cross the river at Shields Point.

(347) **Milton** is a small town about 4 miles above the mouth of Blackwater River. There is some barge traffic in grains, soybeans and petroleum products. Berthage is available at the town wharf above the bridges with depths of 10 to 15 feet reported alongside in 1982. The Seaboard System Railroad (L&N) bridge crossing the river at Milton has a swing span with a clearance of 4 feet. (See **33 CFR 117.1** through **117.59** and **117.271**, chapter 2, for drawbridge regulations.) U.S. Route 90/State Route 10 fixed bridge with a clearance of 16 feet crosses about 0.2 mile above the railroad bridge. A marina in the small cove just above the highway bridge can provide berths, water, electricity, outboard engine repairs and marine supplies. Launching ramps are nearby. A small marina for Navy personnel is about 1 mile above the bridge on the east side of the river. Gasoline is available in an emergency.

(348) The coast between Pensacola Bay and Mobile Bay has numerous high-rise buildings along the beach. No single structure stands out as a significant landmark. Depths of 5 fathoms or less extend as much as 4 miles offshore between the two bays.

(349)

Big Lagoon to Old River

(350) **Big Lagoon**, which extends west from Pensacola Bay, is about 5 miles long and from 0.2 to 1 mile in width. The lagoon is separated from the Gulf by a narrow strip of sand beach and is the route of the Intracoastal Waterway, which is discussed in chapter 12.

(351) **Perdido Bay**, an irregularly shaped body of water, is 13 miles west of Pensacola Bay entrance and 26 miles east of Mobile Bay entrance. Depths of 6 to 20 feet are found in the bay and in **Perdido River**, the latter being the river that serves as a boundary between the states of Florida and Alabama. **Arnica Bay** and **Bay La Launch** connect Perdido Bay with **Wolf Bay** on the west. Bayou St. John and Perdido Pass connect the bay with the Gulf to the south.

(352) The highway causeway over Perdido Bay at **Cummings Point** has a fixed span with a clearance of 39 feet.

(353) **Perdido Pass**, extending between **Florida Point** and **Alabama Point**, is easily distinguished from offshore by State Route 182 highway bridge across its entrance with two openings. The fixed span over Perdido Pass Channel has a clearance of 54 feet. The fixed span over Cotton Bayou Channel has a clearance of 41 feet. The dredged entrance channel leads from the Gulf through Perdido Pass to a fork at the highway bridge; thence into two channels, one leading north into **Terry Cove** and **Johnson Cove** and the other leading east into **Bayou St. John**. A crossover channel connects the east and the west channels north of the highway bridge. The entrance to the pass is protected by a jetty on the west and east side. Over half of the east jetty is submerged about 1 to 3 feet at low tide; extreme caution is advised. Numerous sunken wrecks are in the approach to the pass. The channels are well marked; a lighted buoy off the entrance marks the approach.

(355)

COLREGS Demarcation Lines

(356) The lines established for Perdido Pass are described in **33 CFR 80.810**, chapter 2.

(357) The Intracoastal Waterway in the lower part of Perdido Bay is reached from Perdido Pass via a marked channel through Bayou St. John. Shoaling to 3 feet was reported between Daybeacons 6 and 8. An overhead power cable with a clearance of 59 feet crosses the channel leading to Terry Cove and Johnson Cove, about 0.4 mile from State Route 182 fixed bridge. In 2007, the overhead power cable was reported to be no longer present. Several small-craft facilities are in the coves and **Cotton Bayou**, on the west side of Perdido Pass 0.7 mile above the entrance.

(358) **Old River** enters Perdido Pass from east between Florida Point and **Ono Island**. In 1982, a reported depth of 5 feet could be carried through the river with local knowledge. The Florida-Alabama state boundary passes through Old River. A fixed highway bridge with a clearance of 24 feet crosses Old River about 1 mile east of Perdido Pass.

(359)

Little Lagoon

(360) **Little Lagoon** is a shallow body of water about 6 miles long and 0.5 mile wide lying just back of the beach between Perdido and Mobile Bays. An opening, protected by jetties, 15 miles east of Mobile Point connects the lagoon with the Gulf. In 1985, it was reported that the east jetty has partially collapsed and about 40 feet of the seaward end covers at low water. In 1985, the reported controlling depth through the opening was 1½ feet. A footbridge, a fixed highway bridge and a pipeline with a least clearance of 7½ feet cross the opening.