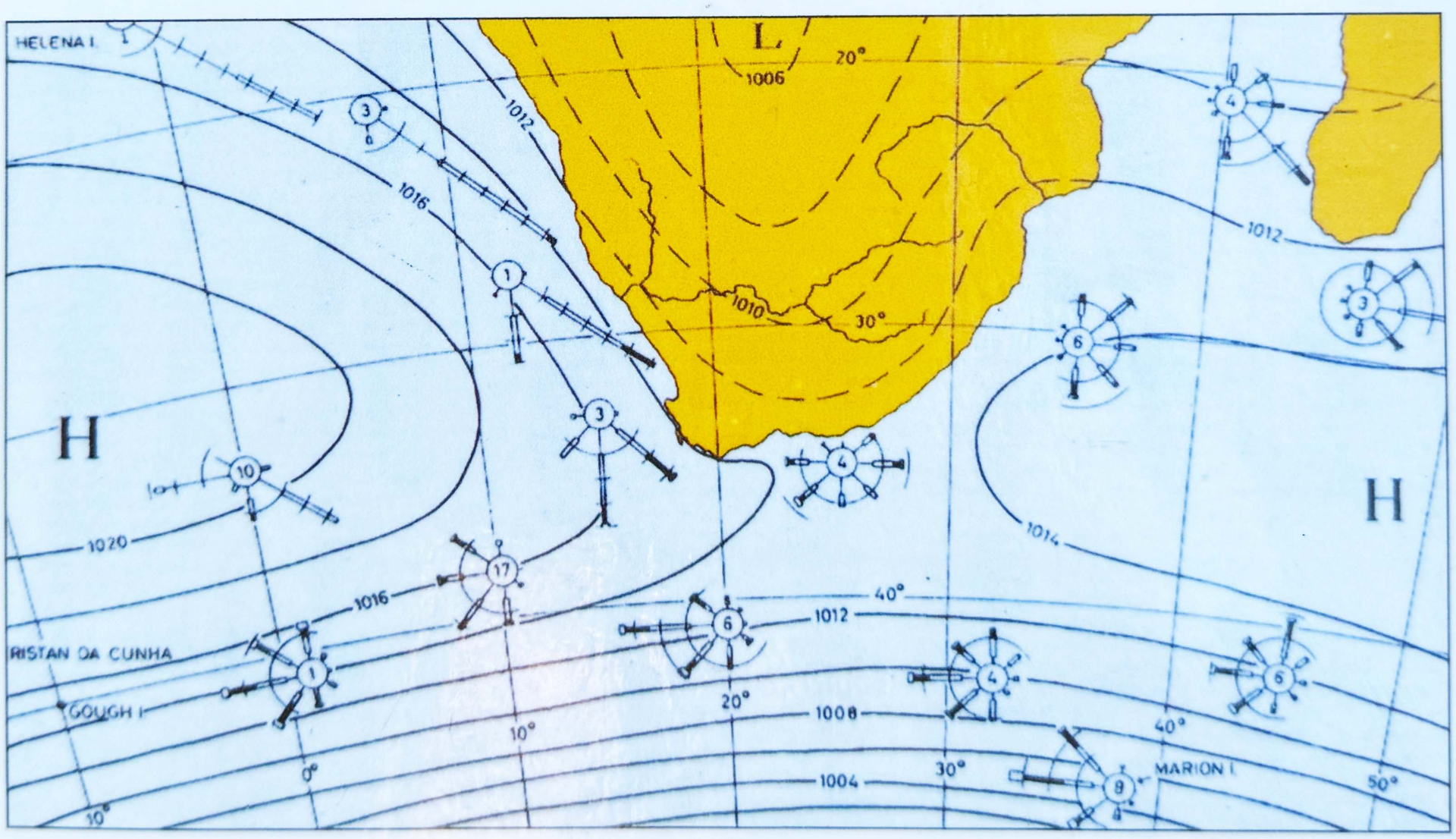
SOUTHERN AFRICAN CRUISING NOTES

(EAST TO WEST)



August 21, 2026

I was given this cruising guide by Captain Fatty and Carolyn Goodlander while visiting with them on their boat Ganesha in Singapore in 2025. I happened to be on a mooring ball near them so we visited and spun yarns.

They asked my route for the rest of my circumnavigation and soon Carolyn was digging through their shelves and pulled two self published cruising guides out and gave them to me. (Thank you Carolyn and Fatty!)

I have no intention of making free copies of other authors work which is still publicly available, so if you are able to make contact with the author, “Tony Herrick” of South Africa please send him a contribution. I will also remove these files from my google drive if it I find a digital copy online that is being sold by the Author.

This PDF is a collection of photos I took with my phone in the cockpit while at anchor at Nosy Mitsio in Madagascar, so it is not a high-quality scans but the information is readable and I wanted to make it available to all of those crossing the Indian Ocean and beyond this year and in the future.

Fair Winds,
James Frederick
SV Triteia
www.svtriteia.com

INTRODUCTION

The following passage guide is intended to assist the increasing number of cruisers and sailors sailing around the South African coast, from Richards Bay, and Durban, to Cape Town and beyond.

It was made possible, with the information and advice, from dozens of local and international sailors that have recently transited our shores (the names of the yachts and people that assisted, appear on the last page of this publication), of great assistance too, many thanks to the late Chris Bonnet of Offshore Sailing Academy here in Durban, who has been involved in sail training in South Africa for the last 25 years.

My appreciation is also extended to the Hydrographic Office of the S.A. Navy to reproduce extracts out of the official publications: Sailing Directions, List of Lights, Radio Signals and SAN Charts. However, this guide is not intended to be a substitute for the above publications, but will hopefully assist a stranger in making a safe passage along our shores.

Happy sailing,
Tony Herrick and Katherine Botha
"Cruising Connections", 4 Fenton Road, Durban, 4001, South Africa,
http://www.cruisingconnections.co.za
tony@cruisingconnections.co.za

Ninth Edition – August 2014

WARNING!

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in these Cruising Notes is as accurate as possible, readers are warned that details do change and the Editor, publisher or any person supplying information for these notes cannot accept responsibility for consequences of any error or omission contained in these notes.
Readers are advised to refer to all relevant official charts, publication and notices.

Telephone numbers throughout South Africa are slowly changing, for that reason, "Useful Contacts" are listed on a single page.

NB. All bearings given in the following notes are TRUE, from seaward.

GENERAL

The sailing route from Durban to Cape Town is governed by three major factors: -

- **The Agulhas Current**: This current is one of the great ocean currents running mainly from northeast to southwest following the two hundred meter contour of the continental shelf and seaward thereof, and dissipating over the Agulhas Bank south of Mossel Bay. Main axis of the current is on or near the two hundred meter line and can run up to 6 knots at it's fastest point. Further detail in the relevant sections.
- **The Variable weather patterns:** These patterns are governed by low and high-pressure systems moving across from the Atlantic Coast of South America and travelling eastwards up the eastern seaboard of the South African Coast.
- **Sheltered Harbours and Anchorages:** The third factor is the lack of sheltered harbours and anchorages, particularly between Durban and Port Elizabeth.

ABNORMAL WAVES

It is a known fact that giant waves occur on the South African Coast in the Agulhas current region, where southwesterly gales prevail against the southward flowing Agulhas current. Professor Mallory of Cape Town University analysed the record conditions that prevailed each time a number of ships were damaged by exceptional waves, and found that in all cases the dominant waves were always from the southwest. The weather patterns play a major part in that the most dangerous period occurs when cells of low pressure are moving along the coast in a northeasterly direction. These lows are a regular feature of the eastern seaboard area and it often happens that during their passage the wind can change from a near north-easterly gale to a south-westerly gale, sometimes in a matter of minutes. The southwest wind than reinforces the existing waves generated by a short choppy sea, which acts directly against the Agulhas current.

It is the interaction between the strong south westerly wind and the strong south flowing current which at times can reach 6 knots that creates monstrous freak waves, of which the chart warn; *"Abnormal waves of up to 20 metres in height, preceded by deep troughs may be encountered in the area between the edge of the continental shelf and twenty miles to seaward thereof."* The warning also describes the necessary evasive action to be taken under unfavourable conditions namely, to stay clear of the areas seaward of the edge of the continental shelf. In other words, move inshore, inside the two hundred meter line. This well established rule has given rise to the belief that the bottom topography plays a part in the generations of giant waves, but in fact this only plays an indirect role.

Please remember that the conditions along the southeast coast of South Africa are unique; the region can only be made safer through an understanding of the forces involved and by treating the seas with the respect they deserve, regardless of loss of time. "Do not have a deadline to meet at the other end".

(Reference is made to a research paper, viz., "Giant Wave - Anomalous Seas of the Agulhas Current" – by Ecxart H. Schumann, which can be viewed at "Cruising Connections" in Durban.

WEATHER RELATED SAILING CONSIDERATIONS

GENERAL

- The major wind belts around Southern Africa are influenced primarily by two high-pressure systems, namely the South Atlantic High (SAH) and the Indian Ocean High (IOH). These high-pressure systems from part of what is known as the 'Subtropical Ridge'. Because of the effect of the Coriolis force, the winds associated with such high pressure systems are deflected to the left in the southern hemisphere, and therefore blow around the highs in an anticlockwise direction. Such systems are also called 'anticyclones'. In contrast to the high-pressure systems, to the south there is a belt of low-pressure systems or 'cyclones', with associated winds blowing around the lows in a clockwise direction.
- The closer the isobars are to one another around such highs or lows, the greater the pressure gradient, and consequently the stronger the associated winds. Latitude also affects wind strength, with the winds being weaker closer to the poles for a given pressure gradient. However, because of the balance of forces in the two systems, anticyclones tend to be large, with the strongest winds near the perimeter and light variable winds near the centre. In contrast, for cyclones the strongest winds are associated with small, deep systems.
- Frictional effects at ground or sea level cause an imbalance between the pressure gradient and Coriolis force, with the result that the winds do not blow exactly parallel to the isobars. There is a net flow towards the low pressures, causing convergence in cyclones (lows) and divergence in anticyclones (highs). The result of this is an updraft at the centre of a low together with the possibility of cloud formation and rain, while the centre of a high will be cloud-free, drier and hotter.
- The air above particular regions may acquire reasonable uniform properties while passing over those regions. Temperature is one such property that can be used to identify air masses. But what are of importance are the rapid changes that can occur when one air mass is replaced by another at a particular place.

- Weather, in terms of clouds, rainfall, winds etc., results from the vertical upliftment of air. In particular, fronts occur when two air masses with substantially different temperatures meet. The denser air undercuts and forces the less dense air upwards. Cold fronts occur when, over a period of time, cold air replaces warm air at a particular place. Warm fronts occur when warm air replaces cold. Quite apart from temperature changes, abrupt changes in wind can also be expected with the passage of a front. Thus cirrus, altocumulus and stratocumulus clouds typically precede a cold front, with the possibility of cumulonimbus clouds bringing heavy rain. On the other hand, the clouds associated with warm fronts are cirrostratus, altostratus and nimbostratus.
- The duration of an individual frontal low is usually from three to five days. Cold fronts tend to travel faster than the associated warm fronts, and an occlusion occurs when they merge. In these conditions the warmer air rises above the surface, and the system decays rapidly.

TYPICAL SUMMER PATTERN

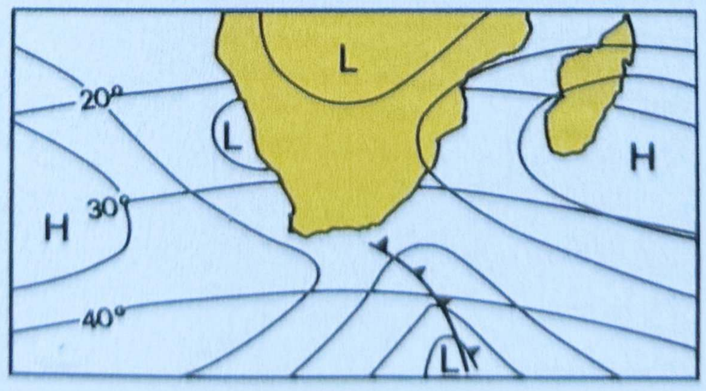


As shown on the synoptic chart above, the system is dominated by the two high-pressure areas, often punctuated by a series of coastal lows.

As the high pressure declines, it is common for the lows to travel rather quickly up the coast from the Cape, with strong too often gale force winds.

The weather patterns resulting from the global weather systems move continuously eastward, often with a southward component. There is considerable variation in this movement, but a sequential pattern in the passage of these systems over and to the south of the subcontinent is discernible in the different diagrams.

The top diagram shows the weather around Southern Africa dominated by the SAH and IOH, with a Low and associated cold front in the westerly belt to the southwest, while a weak coastal low has formed on the west coast.



The situation in summer is shown in the middle diagram with the front moving to the south of the subcontinent and the high also ridging in south of the Cape.

In the bottom diagram the front is moving over the east coast and clouds can extend far inland.



A daily synoptic chart and written forecast is available from the South African Weather bureau and is displayed at most yacht clubs and sailing schools. An extended forecast is also available and displayed at Cruising Connections, 4 Fenton Road, Durban. Extensive Southern African weather links are available on the "Cruising Connections" website under "Weather Centre"
http://www.cruisingconnections.co.za

Obviously nobody can guarantee the weather, but with a careful weather eye and a good barometer, a yacht should make a safe passage around the Cape.

Further detailed information is contained in the publication "South African Sailing Directions".

When to leave? See section 'Durban to East London'

RADIO WEATHER BULLETINS AND NAVIGATIONAL WARNINGS

VHF:

Prior to the weather bulletin an announcement is made on channel 16, and dependant on listeners vicinity, told to transfer to a working channel.

The main station is Cape Town Radio/ZSC giving:

a) Weather predictions at 1015 and 1815 UTC
b) Coastal weather reports at 1333 UTC

Navigational warnings usually follow these broadcasts.

- **Working Channels**

Durban Radio/ZSD		Port Elizabeth/ZSQ	
Kosi Bay	01	Port St. Johns	24
Sodwana	03	Mazeppa Bay	28
Cape St. Lucia	25	East London	26
Richard's Bay	28	Governorskop	83
Bluff (Durban)	26	Port Elizabeth	25 or 27
Port Shepstone	26	Kareedouw	24
Port Edward	27	Knysna	23

Cape Town Radio/ZSC			
Albertina	86	Saldanha Bay	27
Struisbaai	84	Elandsbaai	23
Pearly Beach	85	Doringbaai	87
Hermanus	04	Hondeklipbaai	25
Cape Town	26	Port Nolloth	01
Milnerton	25	Alexander Bay	04

Many FM Radio Stations in South Africa carry periodic coastal weather forecasts.

SOUTH AFRICAN MARITIME MOBILE HAM NET
Controller Graham ZS2ABK 11h30 UTC

HF (USB) on 14.316 MHz at 1130 UTC Daily

- Weather Forecasts and predictions operated by Graham from Bushman's River Mouth, Eastern Cape for all sea areas. Indian Ocean first then Atlantic Ocean. A Weather fax interpretation is usually given.

  After this the Net transfers to 7.120 MHz (LSB) when local hams are contacted and the above may be repeated. Controller Sam ZS1SAM. The net also meets at 0630 UTC daily.

  To transmit on these frequencies a full amateur licence is required.

- Peri Peri Ham Net, operated by Roy in Durban. Weather at 1700 local time on 8101 MHz Mondays to Fridays.

MARINE COASTAL WEATHER BY TELEPHONE

The number for weather information is 083 123 0500. This information is supplied by the South African Weather Service. Follow the voice prompts.

Met services

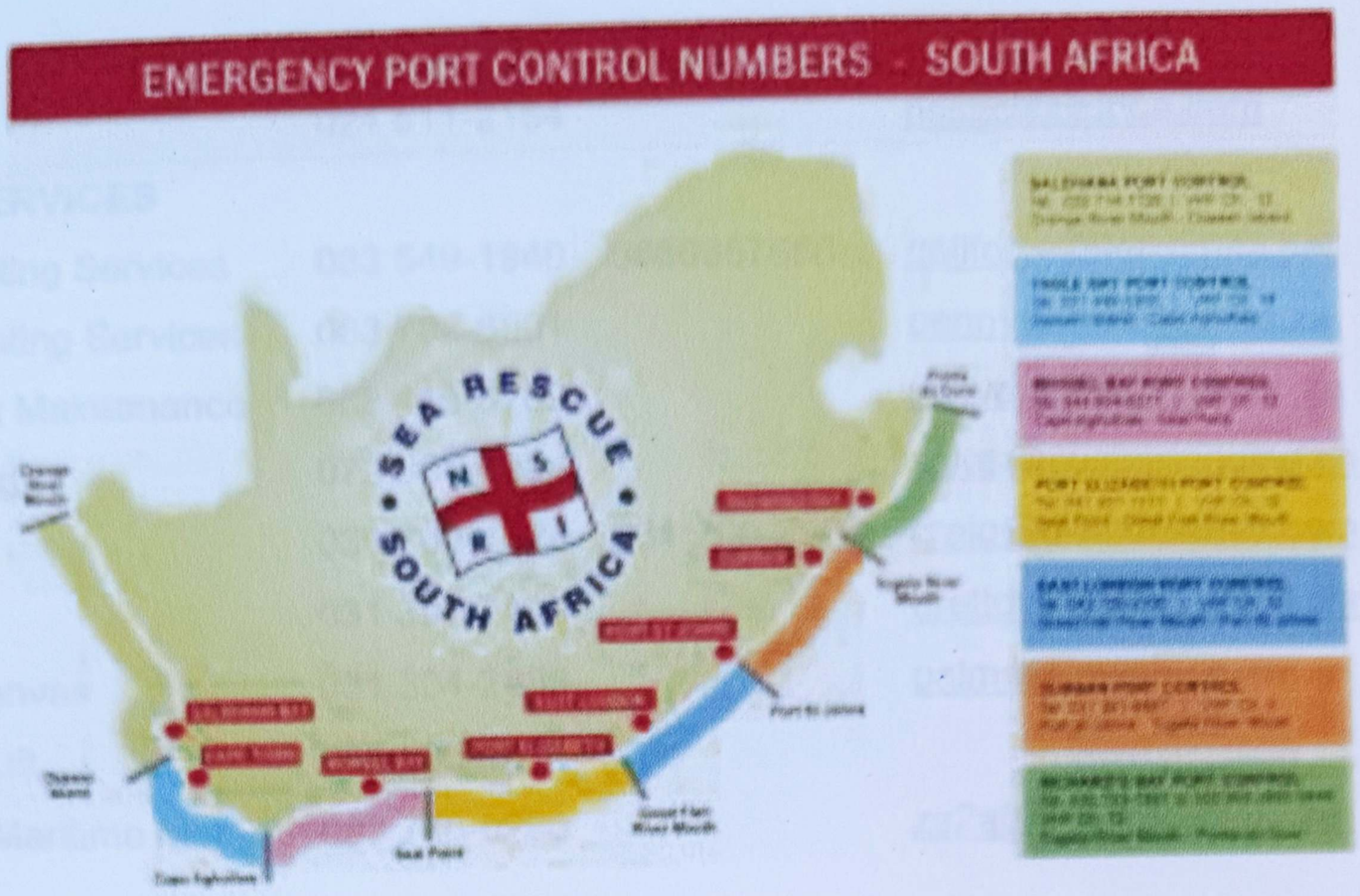
South African Maritime Mobile	083 756 0288
Durban Airport	082 233 8700
Port Elizabeth Airport	082 233 9700
Cape Town Airport	082 233 9900

Weatherfax transmissions are being broadcast from Cape Naval Radio ZSJ enquire locally for times and frequencies.

N.S.R.I

Below are the emergency telephone numbers to our Sea Rescue base station commanders:

Agulhas	Reinard Geldenhuys	082-990-5952
Bakoven	Bruce Davidson	082-990-5962
Durban	Clifford Ireland	082-990-5948
East London	Geoff McGregor	082-990-5972
Gordons Bay	Nigel Pepperell	072-448-8482
Hartbeespoort	Rodney Pitter	082-990-5961
Hermanus	Henk Henn	082-990-5967
Hout Bay	Lyall Pringle	082-990-5964
Knysna	Graeme Harding	082-990-5956
Kommetjie	Tom Coetzee	082-990-5979
Lamberts Bay	Leon De Gruchy	076 212 2355
Melkbosstrand	Rhine Barnes	082-990-5958
Mossel Bay	Andre Fraser	082-990-5954
Mykonos	Gerard Brune	082-990-5966
Plett	Deon Truter	082-990-5975
Port Alfred	Juan Pretorius	082-990-5971
Port Edward	Mick Banks	082-990-5951
Port Elizabeth	Ian Gray	082 990 0828
Port St Johns	John Costello	082-550-5430
Richards Bay	Cornel Du Toit	082-990-5949
Shelly Beach	Pete Coetzee	082-990-5950
Simons Town	Darren Zimmerman	082-990-5965
Still Bay	Rico Menezies	082-990-5978
St Francis Bay	Marc May	082-990-5969
Strandfontein	Mario Fredericks	082-990-6753
Table Bay	Patrick van Eyssen	082-990-5963
Vaal Dam	Dick Manten	083-626-5128
Wilderness	Hennie Niehaus	082-990-5955
Witsand	Attie Gunter	082-990-5957



SOME USEFUL CONTACTS	PHONE	FAX	E-MAIL
BOAT EQUIPMENT			
Richards Bay:			
Pro-Radio & Marine	035 788-0190	035 788-0190	proradio@lantic.net
Durban:			
Cruising Connections (used)	031 304-0108	031 304-0108	tony@cruisingconnections.co.za
Budget Marine	031 304-3563		chris@despy.org
Seaport Supply	031 304-1624	031 304-9243	info@seaport.co.za
Cape Town:			
Action Yachting	021 419-4835		
Central Boating	021 424-8026	021 424-2564	cboating@gem.co.za
Seaport Supply	021 510-6262	021 510-6267	info@seaport.co.za
CHARTS, BOOKS & GUIDES			
Durban:			
Cruising Connections	031 304-0108	031 304-0108	tony@cruisingconnections.co.za
Cape Town:			
Chartworld	021 419-8814	021 419-8816	
SAILS			
Durban:			
Texwise	031 332-3624	031 332-1606	nssadbn@iafrica.com
North Sails	031 301-3009	0866920838	sails@wol.co.za
Quantum	031 304-5504	031 304-5450	cmillar@quantumsail.co.za

Cape Town:

North Sails	021 511-2154		nssact@iafrica.com
YACHTING SERVICES			
Gailforce Yachting Services	083 549-1940	0866957666	gailforce@telkomsa.net
Complete Yachting Services	083 782-6501		penny@indexkzn.co.za
Bowman Yacht Maintenance	083 415-6799		rjbowman@xsinet.co.za
Custom Rigging	073 894-4034		sales@customrigging.co.za
G-Wind Spars	031 700-4525	031 700-2908	craig@gwindustries.com
Bow to Stern	031 307-7115		brettdevilliers@gmail.com
Undercover Canvas	031 304-2883		palms@mweb.co.za
Marina Yacht Lift	031 205-1814		
South African Maritime Mobile	083 756-0288		zs2abk@intekom.co.za

YACHT CLUBS/MARINAS

Tuzi Gazi Marina (Richard's Bay)	035 788 0031	035 788 0033	tuzigazi@iafrica.com
Zululand Yacht Club	035 788 0256	035 788-0254	officezlyc@zwn.co.za
Durban Marina	031 301 2176	031 305-4514	information@durbanmarina.co.za
Point Yacht Club (Dbn)	031 301 4787	031 305-1234	members@pyc.co.za
Royal Natal Yacht Club	031 301 5425	031 307-2590	club@rnyc.org.za
East London Yacht Club	043 722 2278	043 722 2278	
Algoa Bay Yacht Club	041 585 4058	041 586-0095	reception@abyc.org.za
Port. St. Francis	042 294 0191	042 294-0196	
Knysna Port Captain	044 382 7781		
Knysna Yacht Club	044 382 5724		kyc@kingsley.co.za
Mossel Bay Yacht Club	044 690 7100	044 691-3395	manager@mbybc.co.za
False Bay Yacht Club	021 786 1703		admin@fbyc.co.za
Hout Bay Yacht Club	021 790 3110	021 790-2585	hbyc.marina@gmail.com
Royal Cape Yacht Club	021 421 1354	021 421-6028	info@rcyc.co.za
V & A Waterfront	021 421 1103	021 418-9070	info@waterfront.co.za
Saldanha Bay Y.C.	022 714 0884	022 714 3555	sbyc@imaginet.co.za

Yacht clubs in Namibia

Luderitz Yacht Club	+ 264 6320 2754
Walvis Bay Yacht Club	+ 264 6420 3676

Buffalo River YC 043 731 1356
East London 1376
074.758.2940
084-700-7458

PONTA DO OURO TO RICHARDS BAY

CHARTS: SAN 134, 133 OR SAN 61 OR BA 2088, 2089

Ponto do Ouro is a small settlement in Mozambique close to the border with South Africa. The coastline extends roughly SW for 131 miles to Richards Bay Harbour entrance. The shoreline is mainly sandy with occasional rock outcrops and off lying reefs. Beyond the beach the vegetation is lush and heavily wooded. Within the coastal range the country is low and flat with a number of lagoons and swamps of which Lake St. Lucia is the largest. The Lebombo range of mountains, 40 miles inshore, starting near Cape St. Lucia and extending into Mozambique, may be seen on a clear day, as some peaks are over 700 m high.

Coastal settlements are few, as the largest towns are further inshore. The exception is St. Lucia, close to the mouth of the estuary.

DANGERS

When sailing close to the northern section of the coast at night or in foul weather, care with depth soundings should be taken owing to the existence of 3 gullies in the seabed, which are within 1½ miles off the shore. In the vicinity of these, soundings of more than 200 metres will be obtained giving a false indication of distance offshore. The positions of these are:

SW of Sodwana Point	- 27°29'S, 32°43'E
Off Mumba Hill	- 27°37'S, 32°40'E
Off Leven Point	- 27°55'S, 32°37'E

ADDITIONAL DANGERS

Reef- Kosi Bay	- 26°55'S, 32°53'E
Submerged reefs	- 27°24'S, 32°44'E
Shoal, coral	- 27°46'S, 32°38'E
Leadsman Shoal	- 27°50'S, 32°37'E
Leven Shoal	- 27°52'S, 32°36'E
Cape Vidal reefs	- 28°09'S, 32°34'E
Maphelana reef	- 28°24'S, 32°26'E
Nhlabane Rock	- 28°41'S, 32°16'E

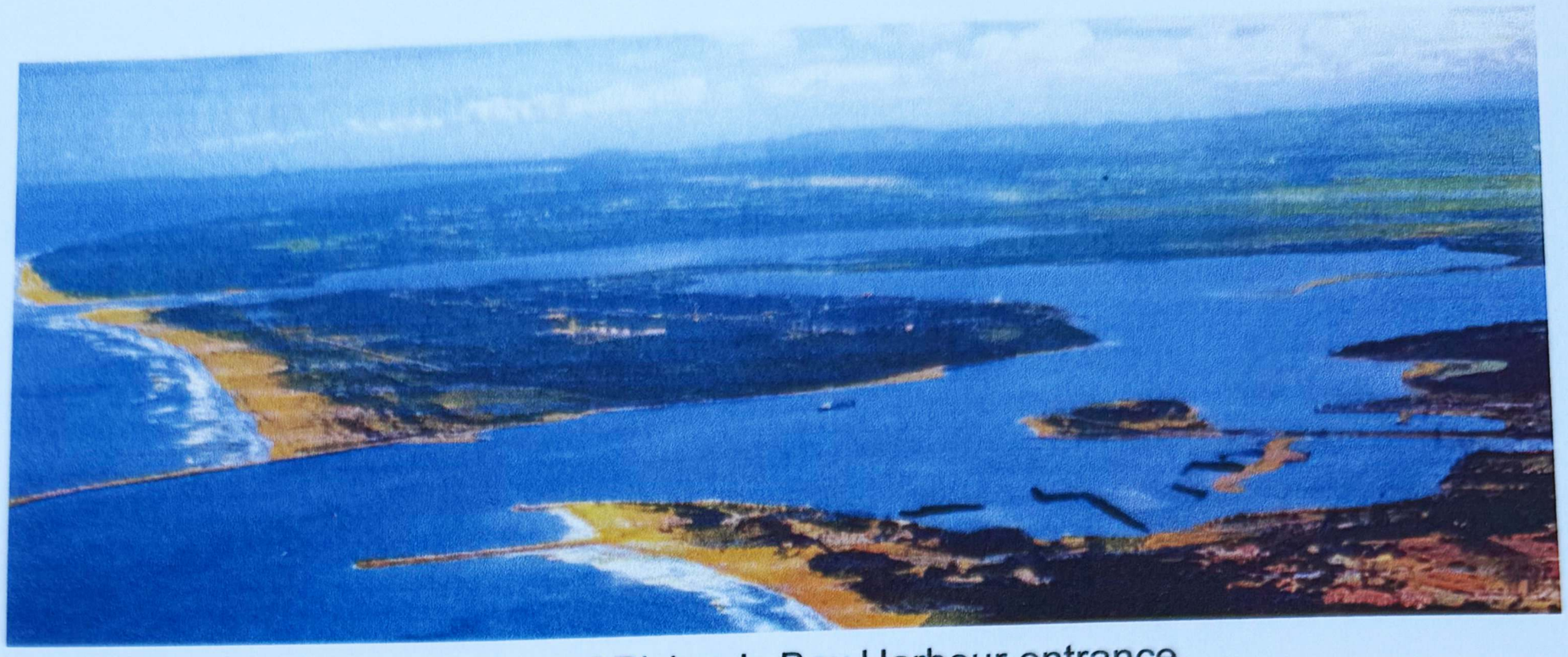
THE AGULHAS CURRENT

(For this section)

The continental shelf, as defined by the 200m contours, lies 3 miles or less offshore, except in the Kosi Bay area (5 miles) and the St. Lucia Estuary (6 miles). The Agulhas Current is strongest next to the shelf edge, attaining rates of 3-4 knots or more during the Autumn. Somewhat less is usually experienced during the Summer. A northerly counter current is often experienced about 1½ miles offshore.

MAJOR LIGHTS.

Name	Position	Char.	Ht. (m)	Range (M)	Remarks
Ponta do Ouro	26°51.4'S 32°53.3'E	Fl(3)W.10s	114	13	Wh. House
Jesser Point	27°32.7'S 32°40.7'E	Fl(4)W.40s	61	25	Wh/Red tower
Cape Vidal	28°08.9'S 32°33.2'E	Fl.W.10s	65	25	Yel/Red tower
Cape St. Lucia	28°30.9'S 32°24.0'E	Fl(2)W.10s	113	24	Bl/Wh. Tower
Richards Bay	28°46.5'S 32°07.7'E	Fl(3)W.15s	72	25	Wh. Square tower
R. Bay Harbour Entrance	28°48.9'S 32°05.9'E	Fl.W.3s	16	6	Red/Wh. tower
R. Bay Channel Leading Lights 290°15'					
Front	28°47.5'S 32°02.2'E	Oc(2)R.6s F.R. (day)	55		
Rear – 1550m from front.		Oc(2)W.6s F.W.(day)	73		



Aerial view of Richards Bay Harbour entrance.

RICHARD'S BAY TO DURBAN

CHARTS: SAN 132, 135 or SAN 61 or BA 2088]
DISTANCE: 85 miles

The coast south of Richard's Bay mainly consists of long stretches of white sandy beaches with occasional cliffs and rock outcrops. Settlements again are few, apart from the ones at river mouths – Tugela being the largest. South of the Tugela River, the coastline is steep to, flattening out as one approaches the Port of "Durban. The last 15 miles or so are more increasingly built up. At night the loom of the city lights can be seen from 40 miles away. There are no anchorages worth considering between Richard's Bay and Durban.

DANGERS

Durnford Point, a rounded point some five miles southwest of Richard's Bay, is fringed with reefs for 2 ½ miles either side and extend seaward for about 3 miles. Depths are very irregular, varying from four to twenty metres. Vessels should give this area a wide berth, especially at night or in rough conditions. The area is marked with buoys.

ADDITIONAL DANGERS

Shoal Water – Durnford Point	28°54'S, 32°02'E
Tenedos Shoal	28°57'S, 31°51'E
Rocky Patches	28°58'S, 31°47'E
Glenton Reef	29°00'S, 31°44'E
Shoal Water NE of Tugela River Mouth	29°13'S, 31°31'E
Spoil Ground (disused)	29°51'S, 31°03'E
Rocky and foul areas.	29°50'S, 31°06'E

THE AGULHAS CURRENT
(for this section)

The strongest part of this current is in the vicinity of the 200m depth contour and normally attains its greatest rate during February to April. Occasionally rates of up to 6 knots have been observed. Onshore sets should be guarded against especially in the vicinity of Durnford Point after a long period of southerly winds. A weak northerly counter current may be felt close inshore. The 200m depth contour varies in distance from shore, from a few miles n the North to 15 miles off Durnford Point and 20 miles off Tugela, but only about 5 miles off the Durban breakwater.
In summer a northerly counter current may be experienced between 2 and 4 miles offshore.

MAJOR LIGHTS

Name	Position	Char.	Ht. (m)	Range (M)	Remarks
Durnford	28°55.0'S 31°55.0'E	Fl(3+1) W.40s	49	18	
Tugela	29°13.3'S 31°30.3'E	Fl(4)30s	36	23	
Umhlanga Rocks	29°43.7'S 31°05.3'E	Fl(3)W.20s	25	24	
Ships anchorage Beacon	29°48.8'S 31°02.3'E	Q.W. F.W.(day)	16	5	
Durban	29°51.4'S 31°01.3'E	Fl.W.7s	145	25	
DURBAN HARBOUR					
North Pier	29°52.0'S 31°03.6'E	Fl.G.3s	9	6	
South Breakwater	29°51.9'S 31°03.9'E	Fl(2)W.5s	9	6	
Channel leading lights 215°30'					
Front	29°53.1'S 31°02.8'E	Iso.R.2s	22	12	
Rear – 1040m from front		Oc.W.4s	44	14	



Durban Harbour

ARRIVAL IN DURBAN

During the day Durban is easily identified, but the coastal resorts north of Durban could raise expectations of an early landfall. Keep your eyes open for the Umhlanga Rocks lighthouse (GpFl (3) W20sec) and bear in mind this is about 8M northeast of Durban. Be careful not to confuse this with the Cooper light (F1 W 10sec), which is about 4M southwest of Durban. About 1.5M north of the harbour mouth is the Anchorage Beacon that is a narrow beam Fixed White. (Note: the red lights on the Dish Aerials (Conspic) above Umhlanga are usually visible long before Umhlanga Rocks lighthouse comes into view).

The harbour entrance is marked with lights on the North Pier (F1 G 3 sec) and South Breakwater (GpFL (2) W 5 sec). On the top of the Bluff, on the south side of the channel, is the Signal Tower, which controls shipping movements into and out of the harbour. Contact the Signal Tower in advance by radio and warn them of your arrival. Request permission to enter when approaching the entrance. The Signal Tower keeps listening watch on VHF channel 16. To establish radio contact with the Signal Tower call 'Durban Port Contorl on VHF channel 9'.

Note: there are 2 radio stations associated with Durban Harbour:

- Durban Port Control – situated in the Signal Tower and controls shipping into and out of Durban.
- Durban Radio – situated in Pinetown, 16 km inland and handles radiophone calls, puts out weather reports and will relay messages to Durban Harbour Radio if necessary.

Lights on top of the Signal Tower are used to warn approaching vessels of shipping movements through the entrance channel.

NO LIGHT	Channel clear for use.
RED LIGHT	Ship leaving harbour KEEP CLEAR
GREEN LIGHT	Ship entering port. OF ENTRANCE
FLASHING RED	Harbour entrance closed to shipping

These lights may be put on some time before the ship enters the channel. Please wait until the channel is clear and the light is out before proceeding. ALWAYS call 'Durban Port Control' on channel 9 for permission to proceed through the channel.

Passage down the channel is marked by a pair of leading lights: White (Occ 4 sec 44m 14M) over Red (Iso 2 sec 22mm 12M). at night these lights can be difficult to identify due to the numerous other lights in the vicinity.

Foreign yachts may be met at the end of the channel by the South African Police Coast Patrol, (usually very helpful) which will escort the yacht to a holding area. Alternatively, Durban Port Control may advise you to proceed to the Marina.

On arrival, visitors may raft up in the Visitors Area, close to the Royal Natal Yacht Club beyond Café Fish, which is the building on the yacht mole, with the blue roof. Contact the Durban Marina office for clearance and registration. For a possible marina berth contact the Durban Marina office. They control 350 pontoon moorings and over 200 swinging moorings.

The onus is on you to contact the following departments within twenty-four hours of your arrival:

- Customs
- Immigration
- Port Health
- Port Liaison Officer.

Help with formalities and forms are available from Durban Marina, Point Yacht Club or Royal Natal Yacht Club.

Arrivals from a Foreign Port

Phone Immigration and they will come to the boat and clear it in. Skipper and crew must report to the Customs and Immigration offices with the boat's papers, passports and crew list.

Departing Durban

A flight plan must be completed and taken to Port Control office, (in Durban this is on the 2nd Floor, Room 219, at 45 Bay Terrace).

The skipper must call immigration 3 hours before departure and they will come to the boat. Once visitors have a favourable window to leave Port and head to their next Port of Call, Durban Marina requires the visiting yacht to complete the flight plan document, applicable Customs document, settle any outstanding rental fees, be advised of any Port Taxes to be paid to Port Authority, and return security access cards.

PLEASE NOTE: The Port Authority office is NOT open on weekends and Public Holidays, therefore clearing out should be done on the Friday morning prior to leaving the Durban to travel to the next Port.

Durban Marina – International Jetty on the right. Harbour entrance towards the top left.



Obtain a copy of "Welcome to Durban – a Sailor's Guide". This free booklet lists the vast majority of marine related businesses, offering services to yachts, as well as information relating to facilities in Durban. Obtainable from Cruising Connections or Durban Marina.

WHEN TO LEAVE
(If sailing towards Cape Town)

DURBAN TO EAST LONDON

CHART: SAN 128 TO 131 OR SAN 59 & 60 OR BA 2087 & 2086
DISTANCE: 255 miles

The trip from Durban to East London is two hundred and fifty-five miles with absolutely no possibility of a safe 'bolt-hole' or shelter the entire way. Therefore, dependent on the size of our yacht, at least two or three days of favourable weather are imperative. It is suggested to leave Durban at the tail end of a southwesterly blow when the barometer has topped out, preferably at about 1020millibars. The barometer is, in fact, an invaluable forecasting tool along this coastline for predicting weather conditions and in particular, the advent of southwesterly gales. So clear customs, Immigration etc., at the beginning of a southwesterly, which will normally blow from thirty-six to forty-eight hours.

Leaving Durban, sail about 3 miles seaward of the two hundred meter contours soon as possible, as this is where the south flowing current will be strongest. It also means that in the event of you not reaching East London before another south-westerly, you can duck inshore very quickly and avoid being caught in the middle of the current with a possibility of severe wave conditions developing. You will find that on average the two hundred meter contour will give you a distance offshore between Durban and East London of approximately 12 miles. It also means that at night you will be in range of lighthouses, and secondly, most northbound shipping will be further inshore of you.

Please note that if the wind should change to a south-westerly, it is imperative to more inshore as close as possible. Dramatic reduction in wave height will be experienced and if you are in luck the wind will have a more westerly tendency and you will obtain a slight lee close inshore, particularly at night.

The coast between Durban and a few miles south of Port Edward (approximately 90 miles) contains an almost unbroken ribbon of coastal resorts and urban development. Between these, and further inland, are lush sugar cane plantations, rolling hills and pine forests. The shoreline consists of white beaches with stretches of rock outcrops and ledges, none of which extend further than a mile offshore, with the exception of Protea reef and Aliwal Shoal (see Danger Section). A few miles SW of Port Edward is the brightly lit and conspicuous Wild Coast Sun Hotel. From here continuing roughly SW the coastline has a far more rugged appearance. Sandy beaches still prevail, however, rock outcrops and sunken reefs often extend a few miles seaward.

Start approach to East London from abreast of Cape Morgan lighthouse (assuming that you are in the strength of the Agulhas current about 10 miles off), set course to East London breakwater. Be aware that the current is sometimes very strong.

Note: "Port St. Johns and Port Shepstone" are not ports and are considered unsafe anchorages in almost any condition.

DANGERS

Illovo Spit	30°09'S, 30°52'E
5,4m Shoal	30°10'S, 30°50'E
Aliwal Shoal Area	30°16'S, 30°50'E
Protea Banks Area	30°50'S, 30°28'E
Mzimvubu River Bar	31°38'S, 29°33'E
Ubombo Head, reef	31°53'S, 29°16'E
Whale Rock, reef/shoal	31°57'S, 29°13'E
Hole-in-the-Wall, rocks	32°03'S, 29°06'E
Submerged reef	32°11'S, 28°59'E
Submerged reef	32°13'S, 28°56'E
Mazeppa Bank, 22m	32°29'S, 28°42'E
Cape Morgan, foul ground,	32°43'S, 28°21'E
Reef Point, sub. Rocks	32°51'S, 28°07'E
Gonubie Point, heavy surf	32°57'S, 28°02'E
Nahoon Point, rocky point	33°00'S, 27°57'E

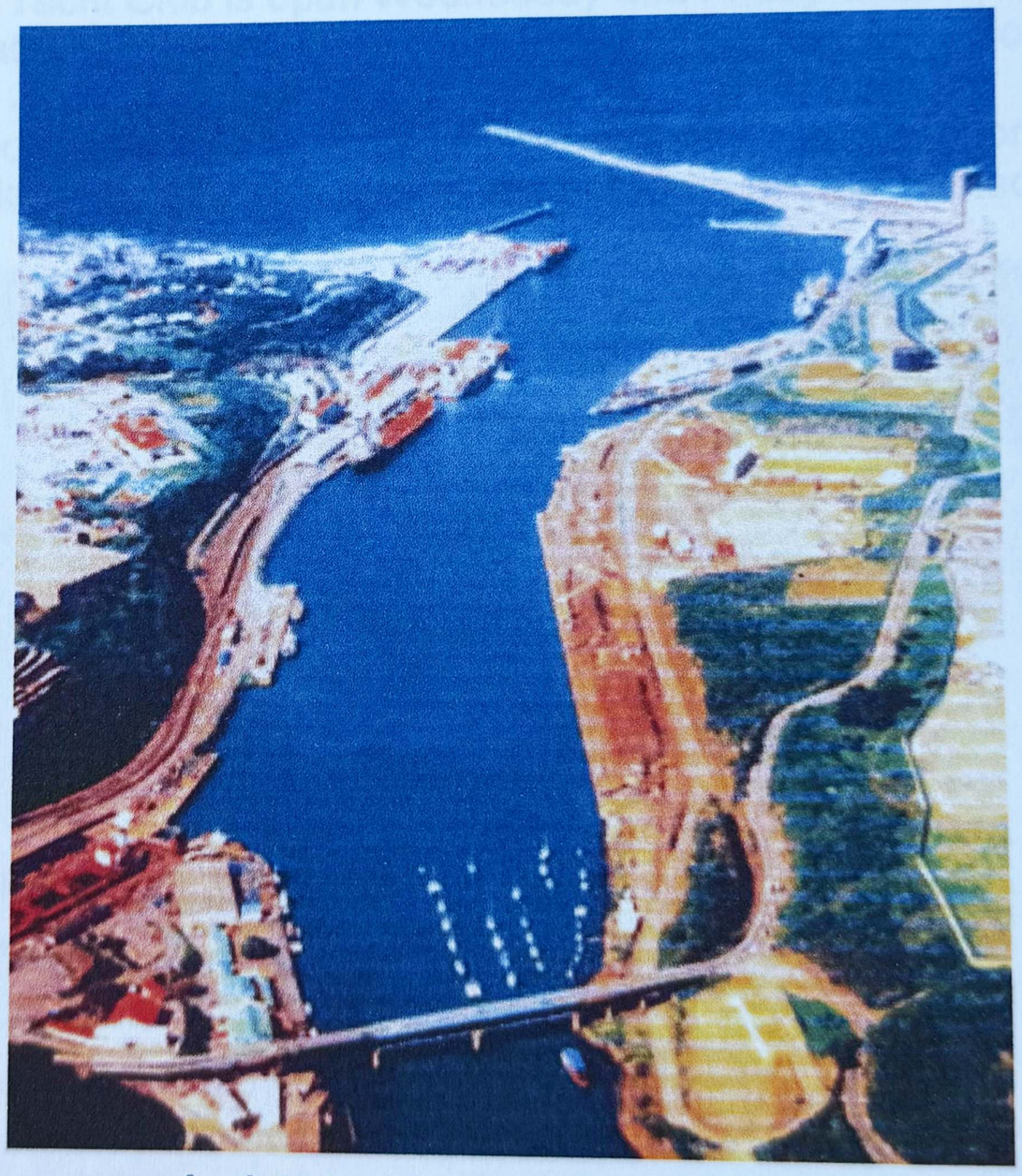
AGULHAS CURRENT
(for this section)

The edge of the continental shelf (200m) lies about 5 miles off Durban's south breakwater and continues SW between 5 and 3 miles offshore, widening to roughly 13 miles off East London. The current is usually strongest at the sea side of the shelf edge with an average rate of 3 knots. Off East London the current is normally at its strongest often attaining rates of 6 knots. After southwesterly gales, onshore sets may be encountered, especially in the south of this region. A weak northerly counter current may be experienced close inshore, Mariners are strongly warned of the danger that exists of ABNORMAL WAVES (see separate section)

MAJOR LIGHTS

Name	Position	Char.	Ht. (m)	Range (M)	Remarks
Cooper	29°56.1'S 31°00.3'E	Fl.W.10s	133	26	Red/Wh. Tower Red Lanternhouse
Oil Terminal	30°00.5'S 30°58.4'E	Fl.W.3s		5	Single Buoy – 310m floating hoses
Green Point	30°15.0'S 30°46.8'E	Fl(2)W.15s	86	30	Red/Wh. Tower
Ifafa Beach	30°27.8'S 30°39.1'E	Fl(3)W.30s	35	19	Wh. Triangle on tower
Port Shepstone	30°44.5'S 30°27.5'E	Fl.W.6s	24	26	Bl/Wh. Check tower Wh. lanternhouse
North Sand Bluff	31°03.4'S 30°13.5'E	Fl(2)W.10s	38	24	Square on tower Red Lanternhouse
South Sand Bluff	31°19.6'S 29°57.7'E	Fl.W.10s	82	16	Wh. Circle on tower
Cape Hermes	31°38.1'S 29°33.2'E	Fl.W.3s	55	21	8-sided tower Wh. Lanternhouse
Mbashe Point	32°14.4'S 28°54.9'E	Fl(2+1)W.20s	47	28	Wh/Red tower
Cape Morgan	32°42.4'S 28°21.9'E	Fl(2)W.10s	61	24	Square on tower Yel/Bl. Bands
Nahoon Point	32°59.9'S 27°56.7'E	Fl.W.3s	69	8	Wh/Red tower
EAST LONDON					
East Breakwater	33°01.6'S 27°55.1'E	Q.G.	11	2	Wh. Tower

Name	Position	Char.	Ht. (m)	Range (M)	Remarks
South Breakwater	33°01.6'S 27°55.5'E	Oc.R.2s	16	10	Wh. Tower
Fog Signal		Horn Mo(Q)30s			
East London Leading Lights	249°45'				
Front	33°01.7'S 27°54.9'E	F.R.	22		Wh. Triangle on tower
Rear 273m from front	33°01.8'S 27°54.9'E	Oc.W.3s	38		Yel. Diamond on grain elevator gantry



Aerial view East London Harbour

ARRIVAL AT EAST LONDON

East London is situated at the mouth of the Buffalo River and is South Africa's only true river port. Approaching from the northeast, craft are advised to give Nahoon Point a wide berth, as a rocky bank extends over half a mile eastward and southward of this point. The South Breakwater of the port is often hard to see as it is low. All craft must call East London Port Control on VHF channel 16 for permission to enter.

Visiting yachts raft up at 'Latimers Landing', just before the overhead bridge, on the north bank of the river.

Please be advised that at the time of writing, Latimers Landing is being re-built and is impractical to raft up there, and this seems to be the case for the next 6 months or so. The alternative would be as advised by Port Control to raft up at the pilots station on the north bank, or to anchor (or pick up a mooring buoy) opposite the yacht club on the south bank.

The Buffalo River Yacht Club is open Wednesday and Friday to Sunday. There is a bar and a restaurant at the Quayside. Diesel, water and electricity are also available.

Supermarkets, shops, medical facilities in the town centre are a short distance away. The "Bosun's Locker" at Latimer's Landing can help with marine related matters.



Latimer's Landing East London

EAST LONDON TO PORT ELIZABETH

CHART: SAN 127, 126 OR SAN 58 OR BA 2085
DISTANCE: 134 miles

The coastline runs roughly SW in the North to almost westerly closer to Port Elizabeth. In the northern area the beach is mostly sandy, backed by high ground with rounded, grassy hills. The coastline is rugged in areas with grassy plains intersected by ravines further south. The shores of Algoa Bay, between Woody Cape and Cape Recife, are flatter and generally sandy. The city of Port Elizabeth lies at the western end of the bay. A number of rivers are open to the sea in this area. After rain, or when the rivers are in spate, a strong current carries topsoil some distance seaward. It is suggested that boats heading for Port Elizabeth keep to the seaward side of Bird Island and surrounding rocks – at least a 2 mile berth should be given. Note also the rocky foul ground, Riy Bank, 10 miles east of Cape Recife and Dispatch Rock, 2 miles offshore between Cape Recife and Port Elizabeth.

The positions of these three DANGERS are:

Bird Island	33°50'S, 26°17'E
Riy Bank	34°00'S, 25°52'E
Dispatch or Roman Rock	33°59'S, 25°42'E

Note on Bird Islands: Approx. 33 miles ENE of Port Elizabeth (chart SAN 1025, or BA 2085) there are three recognized anchorages in the vicinity of these islands, but all would be considered unsafe in severe weather. Great care should be taken in the approach to this group, as there are many surrounding rocks. The best anchorage in the group, to offer shelter in SW winds, is in STAG BAY, to the east of the group. It is clearly marked on the chart.

ADDITIONAL DANGERS
(mainly not more than 1 mile offshore)

Rock awash	33°08'S, 27°43'E
Submerged reefs (Christmas Rock Area)	33°12'S, 27°39'E
Submerged rocks, (Kayser's Beach)	33°13'S, 27°37'E
Submerged reefs (Keiskamma area)	33°20'S, 27°26'E
Madagascar Reef	33°23'S, 27°21'E
Submerged reefs (Mtati River)	33°25'S, 27°16'E
Rocky ground (Stalwart Point)	33°28'S, 27°13'E

2.7m rock (Waterloo Bay)	33°29'S, 27°10'E
Foul ground (Great Fish River)	33°30'S, 27°09'E
Rock drying 1.5m	33°31'S, 27°08'E
Great Fish Point, rock awash	33°32'S, 27°07'E
Riet Point reefs	33°35'S, 27°01'E
Port Alfred reefs & shoals	33°36'S, 26°55'E
Kenton-on-Sea reefs	33°41'S, 26°42'E
Rocky ledge (Cannon Rocks)	33°45'S, 26°35'E
Foul Ground (Cape Padrone)	33°46'S, 26°28'E
East Reef	33°52'S, 26°17'E
Doddington Rock	33°51.5'S, 26°16.5'E
West Rock	33°51'S, 26°15.5'E
North Patch	33°49.5'S, 26°17'E
Reef (Woody Cape)	33°46'S, 26°21'E

Note: "PORT ALFRED" is not a deepwater port and is considered an unsafe anchorage in almost any conditions. However, there is a Marina development in the river mouth but the bar is shallow and the entrance is fringed with reefs. The bar can only be negotiated by shallow draught boats, and then only in ideal conditions. Latest information should be sought via VHF, before attempting to enter.

THE AGULHAS CURRENT

(For this section)

As in previous sections, the greatest strength of the current is close to the edge of the continental shelf (200m), which increases in distance offshore from 13 miles south of East London to between 12 and 25 miles in the south. As the distance offshore increases, the current decreases somewhat. Off Port Elizabeth, the westerly current drops to a few knots. Closer inshore a counter current, mainly following the coastline, is more pronounced especially in the Algoa Bay area. Yachts on the southbound run would normally keep in the current, but when a fresh NE wind is blowing and the barometer is falling, the probability exists that a fresh to strong SW wind is on its way and a move closer inshore would be prudent. See separate section on 'ABNORMAL WAVES'.

MAJOR LIGHTS

Name	Position	Char.	Ht. (m)	Range (M)	Remarks
Hood Point	33°02'S 27°53.9'E	Fl(4)W.40 s	55	28	Wh/Red tower
Great Fish Point	33°31.2'S 27°06.5'E	Fl.W.10s	85	30	Wh/Bl. Striped 8-side tower, Red dome
Bird Island	33°50.5'S 26°17.3'E	Fl(2)W.20 s	30	27	Red/Wh. Tower, W. cross on N & S sides
Deal (Port Elizabeth)	33°54.9'S 25°36.9'E	Fl.W.10s	28	24	Square on tower, Red lanternhouse
Dispatch Buoy (Roman Rock)	33°58.8'S 25°41.9'E	Q(3)W.10 s			East Cardinal pillar buoy
Cape Recife	34°01.7'S 25°42.1'E	Fl.W.21s F.W.29s	28	29	Wh/Bl. 8-sided tower, Red dome R 162° - 190°(28°) W 190 - 162°(332°)
Port Elizabeth Harbour					
South Breakwater	33°57.2'S 25°38.6'E	Fl.(2)R.6s	16	13	Wh. Tower
Fog Signal		Horn Mo(Q)30s			
Western Quay (outer)	33°57.3'S 25°38.3'E	Fl(3)G.5s	16	8	Metal pole (10)
Western Quay (inner)	33°57.5'S 25°38.5'E	F.G.	9	2	Wh. pole (3)
Harbour leading light	167°45'			12	
Direct light	33°57.8'S 25°38.7'E	Dir.WRG.	37		Tower

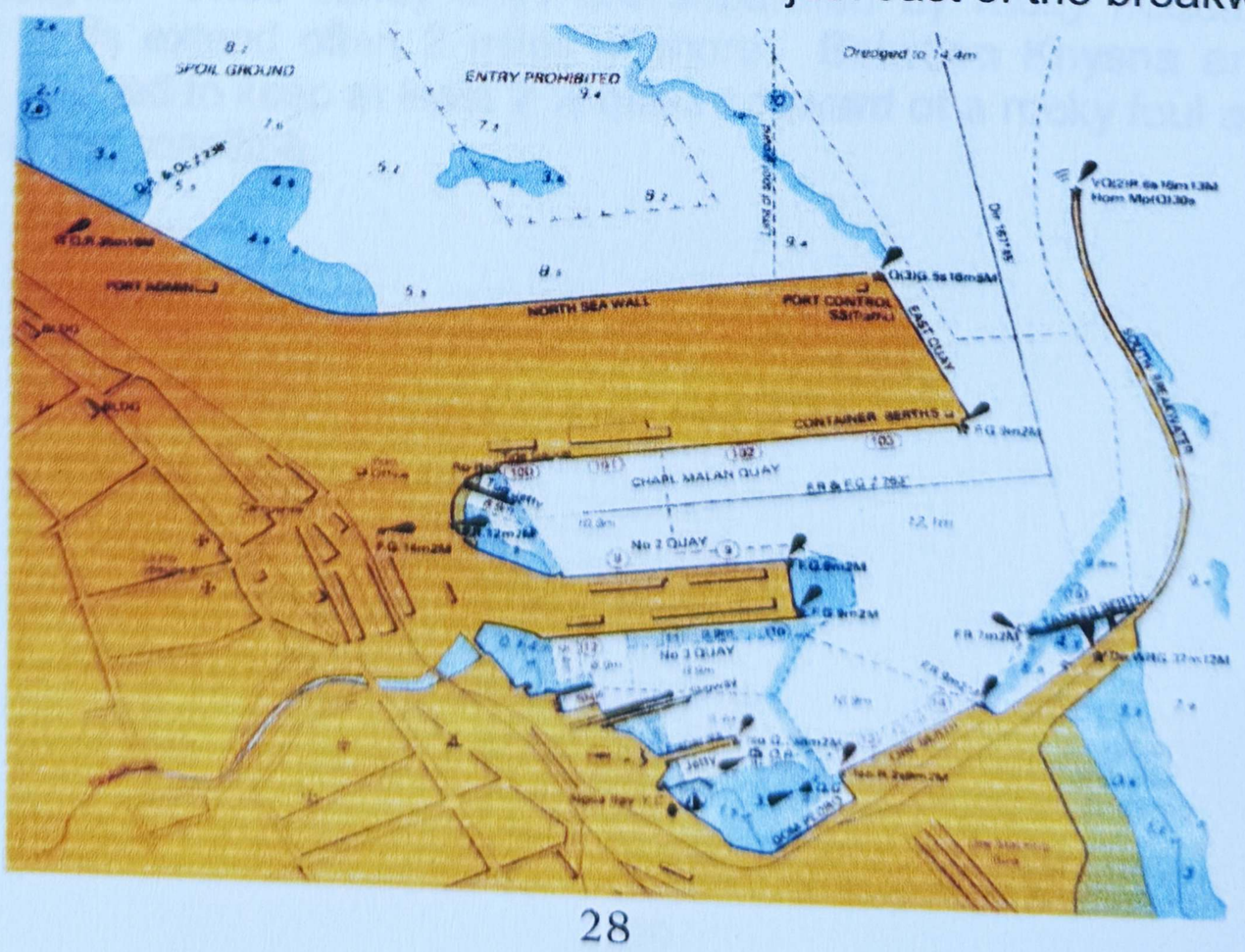


Aerial view of Bird Island

ARRIVAL AT PORT ELIZABETH

An almost direct approach can be made from the east, passing either side of the extensive Riy Bank. The seas break heavily over this bank after south-westerly gales. If passing south of this bank, keep to the seaward side of Dispatch rock (Roman Rock). The safe-water buoy (Iso 2sec RW) is approximately 2 ½ miles east of the breakwater. A good landmark is the Port Control tower on the North Sea wall of the harbour entrance. Shape a course to the north of this, to pass north of the South Breakwater head, then alter course to follow the leading line into the harbour. At night the leading lights show white (See Lights Section).

Call up Port Elizabeth Port Control (VHF Ch.12) when about 15 minutes sailing time from the harbour. Port control will direct you to the yacht basin. Be prepared to wait if there are shipping movements – best to heave-to just east of the breakwater.



Strong south-westerly winds are frequent. If unable to enter harbour under these conditions, good sheltered holding ground in soundings of 15 meters will be found between the approach Channel and Roman Rock. There is no shelter outside of the harbour during easterly gales.

A rubber floating boom, which is low and difficult to see, especially at night, protects the Yacht Club, in the south of the harbour. There is a flashing port and starboard light on either end. Course to clear should be set to portside.

The Algoa Bay Yacht Club offers limited walk-on moorings. It is advisable to phone the yacht club from your previous port to reserve a berth. The ABYC offers the usual facilities, has an excellent bar and restaurant and a braai (barbecue) area. Port Elizabeth is known as the 'friendly city' and the yacht club is no exception. Visitors are welcome.

The city centre is some distance away, but generally a lift by car into town is easily arranged. There is a well stocked yacht chandlery, 'Star Marine' in the city. If you need equipment or just want to browse, phone them and they will be happy to fetch you from the yacht club.

PORT ELIZABETH TO MOSSEL BAY

CHARTS: SAN 125, 124, 123, OR SAN 57 OR BA 2085, 2084
DISTANCE: 175 miles

The two areas to be avoided after exiting the Port are Dispatch Rocks (Roman Rocks), (keep to seaward side), and Cape Recife. Dangerous reefs, rocks and wrecks, litter the area from up to almost two miles seaward in all directions. Care should be taken to avoid being caught in an inshore flow of current into Shelly Bay and all bays further westward. Between rocky Cape Recife and Cape St. Francis, the coastline flattens out to wide sandy shores. To the north the mountains provide a prominent backdrop. A westward to Mossel Bay, the narrow strip of coastal plain is backed by a series of mountain ranges. Wide sandy bays are separated by rocky headlands, off which submerged reefs extend often 2 miles offshore. Between Knysna and Mossel Bay, vessels are advised to keep at least 2 ½ miles seaward of a rocky foul area. The winds tend to follow the coastline.

Ports or possible anchorages:

PORT ST. FRANCIS:
(chart SAN SC 9)

Forty miles west of Port Elizabeth is a residential Marina development on the NE side of Cape St. Francis. Visiting yachts are welcome. Prior reservation is urged, as there is limited space. Contact harbour master on VHF Ch. 16 – refer chart SAN SC 9. There is reported to be good anchoring in sand in the vicinity of the marina, but not in strong easterly winds.



Port St. Francis. (Since this photo was taken there are many more craft in the harbour.)

PLETTENBERG BAY
(Chart SAN 1022)

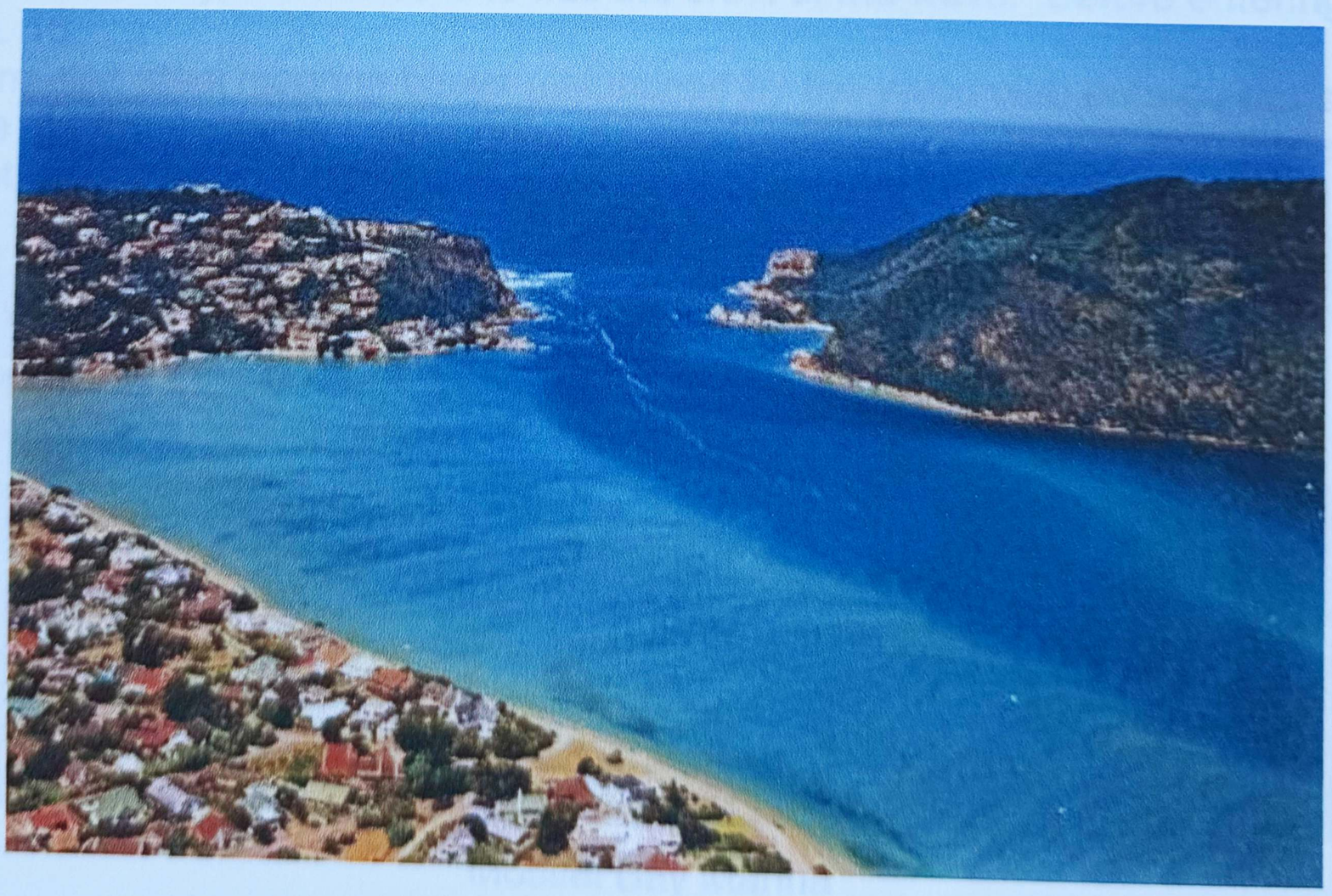
This Bay offers good anchorage in sand, except in Southeast gales. Landing through the surf is often difficult. On the rocks of Beacon Island is a modern Hotel of the same name.

KNYSNA LAGOON
(Chart SAN 1021)

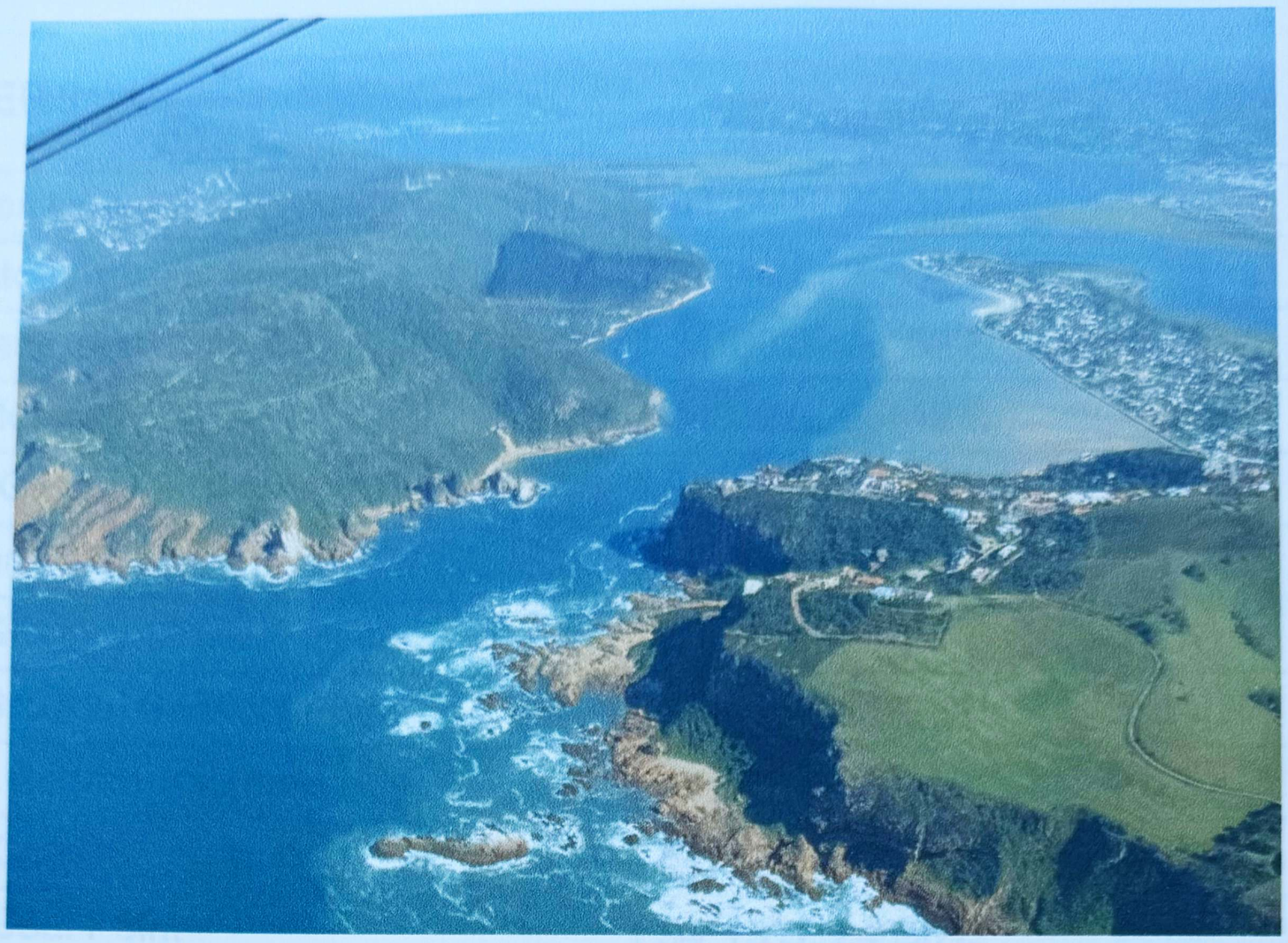
Knysna is considered to be one of the most relaxing and beautiful ports of call on the Southern Cape coast. The entry is made between the Eastern and Western heads, two steep and rocky headlands. Emu Rock with a least depth of 1.2m over it and over which the sea does not always break, lies near the centre of the entrance. The chart is essential. Favour the south side of the entrance. Do not attempt to enter the Knysna heads in flood or ebb tide, ads the current fan run up to 7 knots. One hour before high tide is the best time. Do not attempt to enter after a strong south-westerly blow, when heavy ground swells prevail, as these swells will break across the entrance. Whilst in Port Elizabeth, phone the National Sea Rescue Institute, or harbour master (see contact numbers section) to assess conditions. Often if the NSRI (National Sea Rescue Institute) knows of your coming they may send a boat out to guide you through. Before entering, daylight only, call up on VHF Ch. 16.

An extract from a letter written by the Knysna Yacht Club re approach (written 1999)

"A safe entry point is 34°05'S and 23°03'57E. the water depth at this point is 20m. the leading line takes a yacht on a course of 006° true, and it is important not to deviate from this line, even when in very close proximity to rocks on the portside. When well into the entrance, aim for a point roughly 30 metres to the west of the front leading light beacon. Turn to port and follow the port hand shoreline. It is best to follow the mid channel markers (red and white stripes) closely. Keep this course until abreast of the microwave tower on top of eth hill (portside), then turn to starboard and keep to the leading marks on the hillside below the tower. This course leads to Thesens Jetty. Carry on northwards to the yacht club, tie up to the club's floating jetty and report to the manager". There is a commercial marina just off the yacht club.



Knysna Lagoon

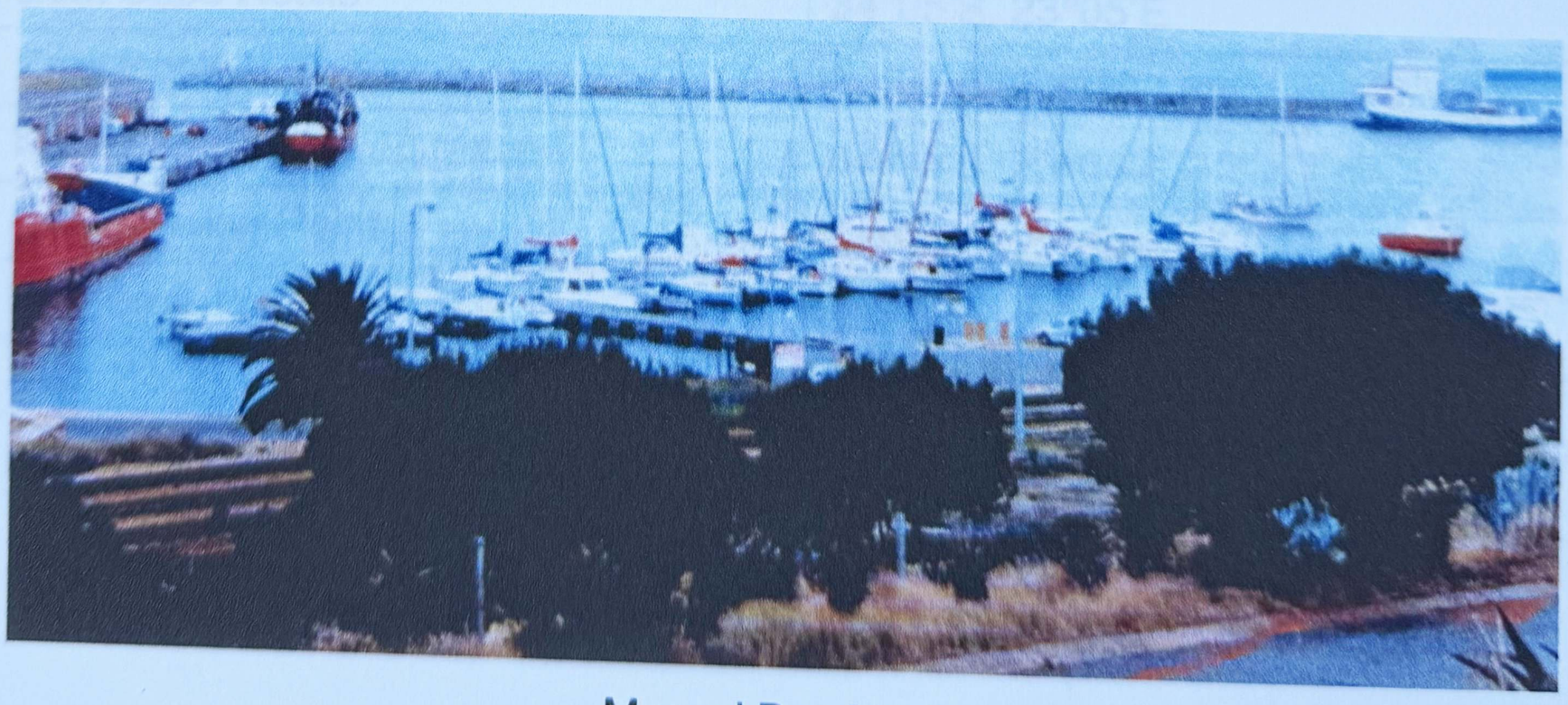


Knysna Heads

MOSSEL BAY
(Chart SAN 1020)

An attractive town, with a small fishing harbour. Within the harbour there is a small yacht marina. Entry is difficult in late afternoon as one is looking towards the setting sun. if entering in a strong to gale force southerly, steer well clear of the East Breakwater, as a SE swell surges towards the breakwater. If the swell is big, and breaks occasionally, the advice is to ride the crest of the wave. Before entering, call on VHF Ch. 16.

There are also steel mooring buoys maintained by the yacht club outside the starboard entrance to the harbour. Anchoring in sand near these buoys is reported to be excellent.



Mossel Bay Marina

DANGERS

Sunken Wrecks	33°56'S, 25°39'E
Dispatch (Roman Rocks)	33°59'S, 25°42'E
Riy Bank	34°00'S, 25°52'E
Thunderbolt Reef	34°02'S, 25°42'E
Reef, Chelsea Point	24°03'S, 25°38'E
Holland Reef	34°02'S, 25°29'E
Foul Ground, Classen Point	34°02'S, 25°26'E
Foul Ground, Seekoei Point	34°05'S, 24°55'E
Rocky Bottom, Kromme Bay	34°09'S, 24°06'E
Reef, Cape St. Francis	34°12'S, 24°52'E
Reef, Seal Point	34°13'S, 24°50'E
Reef, Thys Point	34°12'S, 24°43'E
Reef, Klippen Point	34°11'S, 24°36'E
Foul Ground off Klasie River	34°07'S, 24°24'E
Foul Ground off Eerste River	34°05'S, 24°12'E
23,5m bank off Storms River	34°03'S, 23°53'E
Rocks off Beacon Island	34°04'S, 23°23'E
Whale Rock – Cape Seal	34°07'S, 23°25'E
Rocks awash	34°06'S, 23°13'E
East Cape Rocks	34°05'S, 23°05'E
Emu Rock	34°04.8'S, 23°03.6'E
Rocks off Knysna entrance	34°05'S, 23°04'E
Reef, Walker Point	34°06'S, 22°59'E
Foul area	34°05'S, 22°50'E
Sub. Rocks – Gericke Point	34°02'S, 22°46'E
Blinder Rock – Cape St. Blaize	34°11'S, 22°10'E

THE AGULHAS CURRENT
(For this section)

This current flows roughly WSW parallel to the coast. The strongest flow is close to the 200m line. The flow in the north often results in inshore sets into bays, which may be strong, usually heralding the advent of a SW buster. (see 'ABNORMAL WAVES' section).

Westward of Longitude 24°E, the Agulhas Current continues in a generally westward direction spreading out over the Agulhas bank, and weakening to a rate of ½ to 1 knot.

The north edge of this current has a tendency to set towards the land, increasing during and after gales, and constitutes a dangerous element in the navigation of this stretch of coast.

An inshore easterly counter current may be experienced anything up to 6 miles offshore.

MAJOR LIGHTS

Name	Position	Char.	Ht. (m)	Range (M)	Remarks
Algoa Bay Dispatch Buoy (Roman rock)	33°58.8'S 25°41.9'E	Q(3)W.10s			E. Cardinal pillar buoy
Cape Recife	34°01.7'S 25°42.1'E	Fl.W.21s F.W.29s	28	29	Wh/Bl.8-sided tower, red dome R 162° - 190° (28°) W 190° - 162° (332°)
Fog Signal (above)		Horn Mo (B) 30s			
PORT ST. FRANCIS					
North Breakwater	34°11.0'S 24°51.1'E	Q.G.	6.5	2	Green Pole
South Breakwater	34°10.9'S 24°51.1'E	Q.R.	8	2	Red Pole
Seal Point	34°12.5'S 24°50.1'E	Fl.W.5s	36	28	Wh. round masonry tower
Fog Signal (above)		Horn Mo(C)30s			
Cape Seal	34°06.4'S 23°24.3'E	Fl(2)W.30s	144	15	Yel. Circle on Wh. lattice tower
Cape St. Blaize	34°11.2'S 22°09.5'E	Fl(2)W.15s	73	25	Wh. square tower

Name	Position	Char.	Ht. (m)	Range (M)	Remarks
MOSSEL BAY HARBOUR					
Breakwater	34°10.5'S 22°08.9'E	Q.R.	12	6	Wh. lattice tower
Vincent Jetty	34°10.6'S 22°08.9'E	F.R.	14	4	Column
No.4 Quay NE corner (outer)	34°10.6'S 22°08.8'E	Fl.G.3s	13	4	Column with vertical strip light

MOSSEL BAY TO CAPE AGULHAS

CHARTS: SAN 122, 121, or SAN 57 or BA 2083J
DISTANCE: 120 miles

There are several anchorages en route, which will be noted later in this section.

Between Mossel Bay and Cape Agulhas there are numerous rocky headlands with underwater reefs extending up to two miles offshore. The narrow strip of coastal plain is backed by majestic mountain ranges, flattening out as one approaches Cape Agulhas, with occasional small coastal ranges and sand dunes.

It is very unwise if conditions are not favourable to try and sail round Cape Agulhas. It is far better to sit it out at anchor and go around safely and comfortably with a southeast wind when it arrives. There is often an inshore current towards the land at Cape Infanta and Cape Agulhas, and all the anchorages are open to a southerly gale, becoming unsafe immediately and should be vacated at once. The southeaster is a favourable wind all the way to Cape Point.

Note: Approximately 35 miles to the south of Mossel Bay is an oil platform with much vessel movement between it and both Mossel Bay and the bay further west (Vleesbaai). A further oilfield exists (Oribi oilfield), approximately 45 miles south of Stilbaai.

Possible anchorages shown on most large scale charts:

Vleesbaai;
Stilbaai (small fishing 'harbour');
St. Sebastian Bay;
Struis Bay (small fishing 'harbour'). The anchorage is reported good, in sand, approximately a ½ mile east of the 'harbour' in about 8m of water. The bay offers good protection in South Westerly winds. It is important to approach this anchorage from the east of southeast to avoid the shoal ground on the S and SW side of Struis Bay light. There is a wreck on the edge of the shoal ground, with parts exposed in rough weather, shown on most charts.

DANGERS

Blinder Rock, Cape St. Blaize	34°11'S, 22°10'E
Foul ground, Kanon Point	34°20'S, 21°55'E
Reef, Morris Point	34°24'S, 21°26'E
Rocky patch, Cape Barracouta	34°27'S, 21°18'E
The Blinder, Cape Infanta	34°28'S, 20°53'E
Martha'a Reef	34°35'S, 20°25'E
Miles Barton & Atlas Reefs	34°38'S, 20°20'E
Arniston Rocks	34°40'S, 20°15'E
Bulldog (Saxon) Reef	34°42'S, 20°15'E
Northumberland Point – Shoal Water	34°50'S, 20°07'E
Alphard Banks	35°02'S, 20°52'E

THE AGULHAS CURRENT

(For this section).

The current has generally weakened to ½ to 1 knot, spreading out over the Agulhas bank. An inshore easterly current follows the trend of the coast. There are reports of in-draughts into bays and towards land.

MAJOR LIGHTS

Name	Position	Char.	Ht. (m)	Range (M)	Remarks
Cape. St. Blaize	34°11.2'S 22°09.5'E	Fl.(2)W.15s	73	25	Wh. square tower
ORIBI OILFIELD					
F A platform Subsidiary light::	34°58.2'S 22°10.2'E	Mo(U)W.15s Mo(U)R.15s	32	15	Gas Platform
Signal		Horn Mo(U) 30s			
Ystervark Point	34°23.6'S 21°43.7'E	Fl.W.10s	51	24	Square on tower Bl/Yel. Bands
Stilbaai Harbour Jetty	34°23.1'S 21°25.6'E	ISO.R.2s	4	5	Column
Cape Infanta	34°28.3'S 20°50.8'E	Fl(3)W.20s	53	24	Square on tower Red lanternhouse
Struis Bay Harbour South Breakwater	34°47.9'S 20°03.6'E	Fl.W.2s	6	5	Wh. kiosk with red bands
Cape Agulhas	34°49.8'S 20°00.6'E	Fl.W.5s	31	30	Red round tower, Wh. band Wh. lanternhouse

CAPE AGULHAS TO CAPE TOWN

CHARTS: SAN 120, 119, or SAN 56 or BA 2083, 2082
DISTANCE: 125 miles.

The coastline around Cape Agulhas is low, with occasional small coastal ranges, increasing in height towards Danger Point and Cape Hangklip. The shoreline is mostly rocky with low reefs or rocks extending more than one mile to seaward, off most of the major headlands, viz., Cape Agulhas, Quoin Point, Danger Point, Cape Hangklip, Cape Point, Olifantsbos, Slangkop, Duikerpunt (North of Hout Bay) and Seapoint. Many of these are invisible in fine weather, but break badly in rough weather. Keep well clear of the south-westerly reefs and 'Bellows Rock' off Cape Point, as well as the coastline north off Hout Bay to Green Point.

West of Cape Agulhas there are a few harbours and anchorages that may provide shelter. (Noted below)

A point to remember! Because of the topography of Table Mountain, the Cape Flats and the Hottentots Holland Mountains … if a strong southeaster is blowing (and this is the prevalent wind in the summer season), there is a funnel effect over the Flats from False Bay out across Table Bay. Winds can quickly get up to over 40 knots. The best advice is to hug the coast as close as one can from Green Point onwards. As soon as the rocks off Hout Bay are passed, and 'Green Point' light comes into view, start closing the coast and pass Green Point light at a safe distance off.

There are a number of small fishing harbours on the coast westward of Cape Agulhas, and there is considerable fishing activity from vessels offshore.

East of danger point is a possible anchorage, often used by fishing vessels in strong southerly gales. Note the islands and rocks to the east. The position is shown on chart SAN 120 and BA 2083.

Gansbaai, north of Danger Point, is a busy fishing craft harbour and could provide shelter. The approaches to Gansbaai are fraught with dangers, and local advice via VHF radio from either a fishing vessel or Fisheries Control should be sought before entry. However, in strong southerly gales this would not be recommended. (Chart SAN 120)

Hermanus, in Walker Bay, another busy fishing harbour, tries to discourage yachts, except in emergencies, as in storms there is a heavy surge. The harbour is situated at the SW end of the town, and the 286 metre South Breakwater encloses the small harbour. Advice via VHF radio should be sought before entry. See photo on following page.

Pringle Bay, north of Cape Hangklip, is an anchorage also used by fishing craft to ride out storms.

Hout Bay, a harbour run by the department of Seafisheries has a yacht marina, an active yacht club and welcomes visitors. (See chart SAN 1015)
False Bay, Hout Bay and Cape Town follow in further sections.

DANGERS
(mostly more than 1 mile offshore)

Foul area, Cape Agulhas	34°51'S, 20°00'E
Abnormal waves, Sandknoll Point	34°49'S, 19°50'E
Foul area, east of Quoin Point	34°49'S, 19°44'E
Quoin Point shoals	34°48'S, 19°38'E
Two rocky shoals	34°43'S, 19°32'E
Foul ground, Dyer Island	34°41'S, 19°25'E
Birkenhead Rock	34°39'S, 19°17'E
Reef, Romansbaai	34°36'S, 19°20'E
Rocky ledges, Gansbaai	34°35'S, 19°21'E
Rocky shoals, Stanford's Cove	34°34'S, 19°21'E
Foul ground, Cape Hangklip	34°23'S, 18°50'E
Rocky Bank	34°25'S, 18°36'E
Inner passage, Cape Point	34°22'S, 18°30'E
Anvil Rock	34°22'S, 18°31'E
Bellows Rock	34°23.5'S, 18°29.5'E
South West Reefs	34°22'S, 18°28'E
Rocky Bank, Hoek van Bobbejaan	34°19'S, 18°20.5'E
13.6m shoal	34°14'S, 18°21.5'E
Rocky shoals, Die Eiland	34°11'S, 18°20'E
Foul ground, Slangkop Point	34°08'S, 18°19'E
Foul ground, York Point	34°03.5'S, 18°21'E
Vulcan Rock complex	34°04'S, 18°19'E
Foul ground, Duiker Point	34°02.5'S, 18°18'E
Foul ground, Oude Schip	34°01.5'S, 18°18.5'E
Logies Rock	34°00'S, 18°20'E
Rocks, Hottentotshuisie Bay	33°59'S, 18°20'E
North and South Lion's Paws	33°56'S, 18°22'E
Saunder's Rocks	33°55.5's, 18°22.5'E
Submerged rock, Sea Point	33°55'S, 18°23'E
Foul ground, Green Point	33°54'S, 18°24'E
Foul ground, Mouille Point	33°54'S, 18°25'E



Plan view of Hermanus Harbour

MAJOR LIGHTS:

Name	Position	Char.	Ht(m)	Range (M)	Remarks
Cape Agulhas	34°49.8'S 20°00.6'E	Fl.W.5s	31	30	Red/Wh. tower Wh. lanternhouse
Quoin Point	34°46.8'S 19°38.4'E	Fl(2)W.10s	34	11 16	Diamond on tower Red/Wh. bands
Hermanus South Breakwater	34°26.1'S 19°13.8'E	Fl.R.3s	8	8	Wh. square tower
Danger Point Fog Signal	34°37.8'S 19°18.1'E	LFi(3)W.40s Horn Mo(D)15s	45	27	Wh. 8-sided tower Wh. lanternhouse Red dome
Cape Hangklip	34°23.2'S 18°49.7'E	Fl.W.10s	34	25	W. round tower, Bl. Band, red lant/hse
Cape Point	34°21.4'S 18°30'E	Fl.(2+1)W.30s F.R.	87 77	32 15	Sq. tower, Wh. lanternhouse Base of same tower
Slangkop Point	34°09.0'S 18°19.2'E	Fl(4)W.30s	41	30	Wh. tower
Hout Bay North Mole	34°03.0'S 18°21.0'E	Fl.G.2s	6	2	Yellow hut

Name	Position	Char.	Ht(m)	Range (M)	Remarks
South Mole	34°03.1'S 18°21.1'E	Fl.W.3s	6	4	Yellow hut
Granger Bay North Breakwater	33°53.9'S 18°25.0'E	Q.G.	9	5	Pole with Green/Wh. bands
South Breakwater	33°54.0'S 18°24.9'E	Q.R.	7	5	Pole with Green/Wh. bands
Green Point	33°54.1'S 18°24.0'E	Fl.W.10s	20	25	Wh. sq. tower, Red diag. Stripes, Wh. dome
CAPE TOWN HARBOUR					
Breakwater	33°53.9'S 18°26.1'E	Fl.G.2s	14	5	Metal tower
Leading Lights	198°30'				
Front	33°54.9'S 18°25.9'E	Q.R.	43	13	Grey mast
Rear	33°55.3'S 18°25.8'E	Oc.3s	79	19	N. side of Civic Centre Bldg.
Fog Signal		Horn Mo(G)30s			

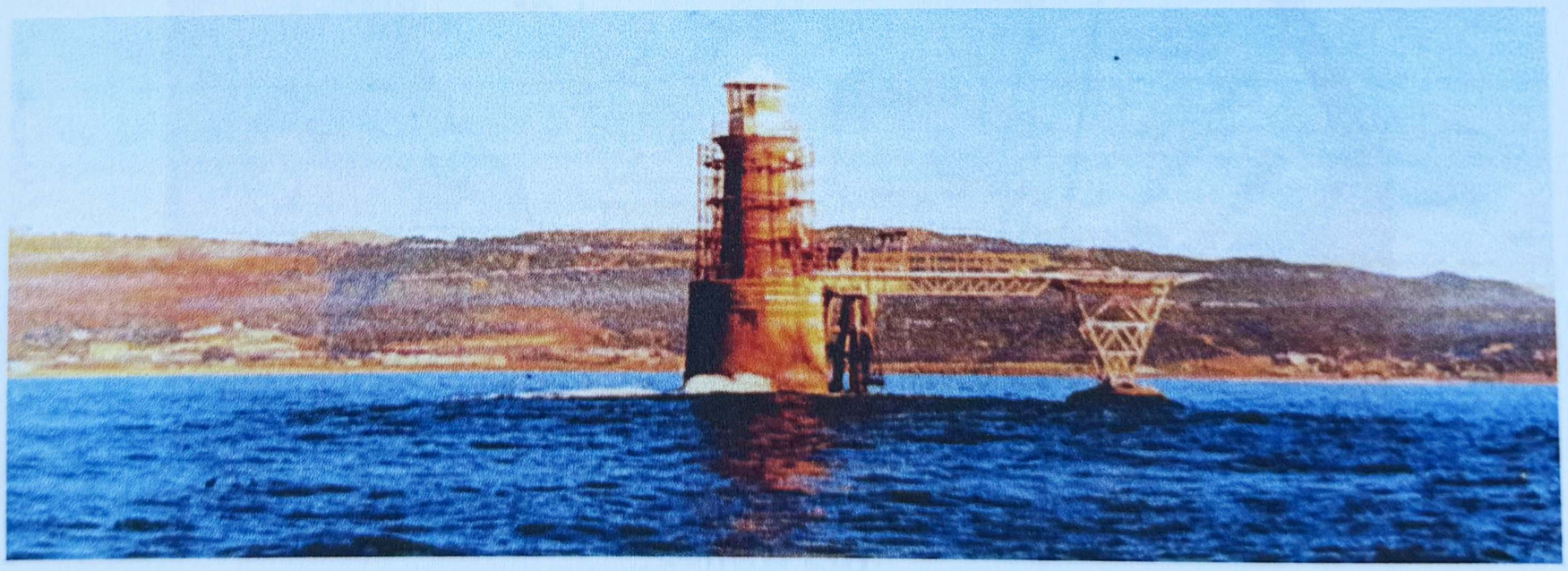
FALSE BAY

Charts SAN 1016 or BA 636

The foregoing section was written for those not intending to enter False Bay, but to round Cape Point and head north. However, a rather delightful stopover exists in False Bay – the False Bay Yacht Club. After rounding Cape Hangklip, and almost direct approach can be made for Simons Bay. However, there are two main dangers within the Bay, Whittle Rock and Roman Rocks, as well as a number of dangers closer to the South African Naval dockyard (see 'dangers' section). There is also a marina in Gordons Bay in the northeast of False Bay.

DANGERS

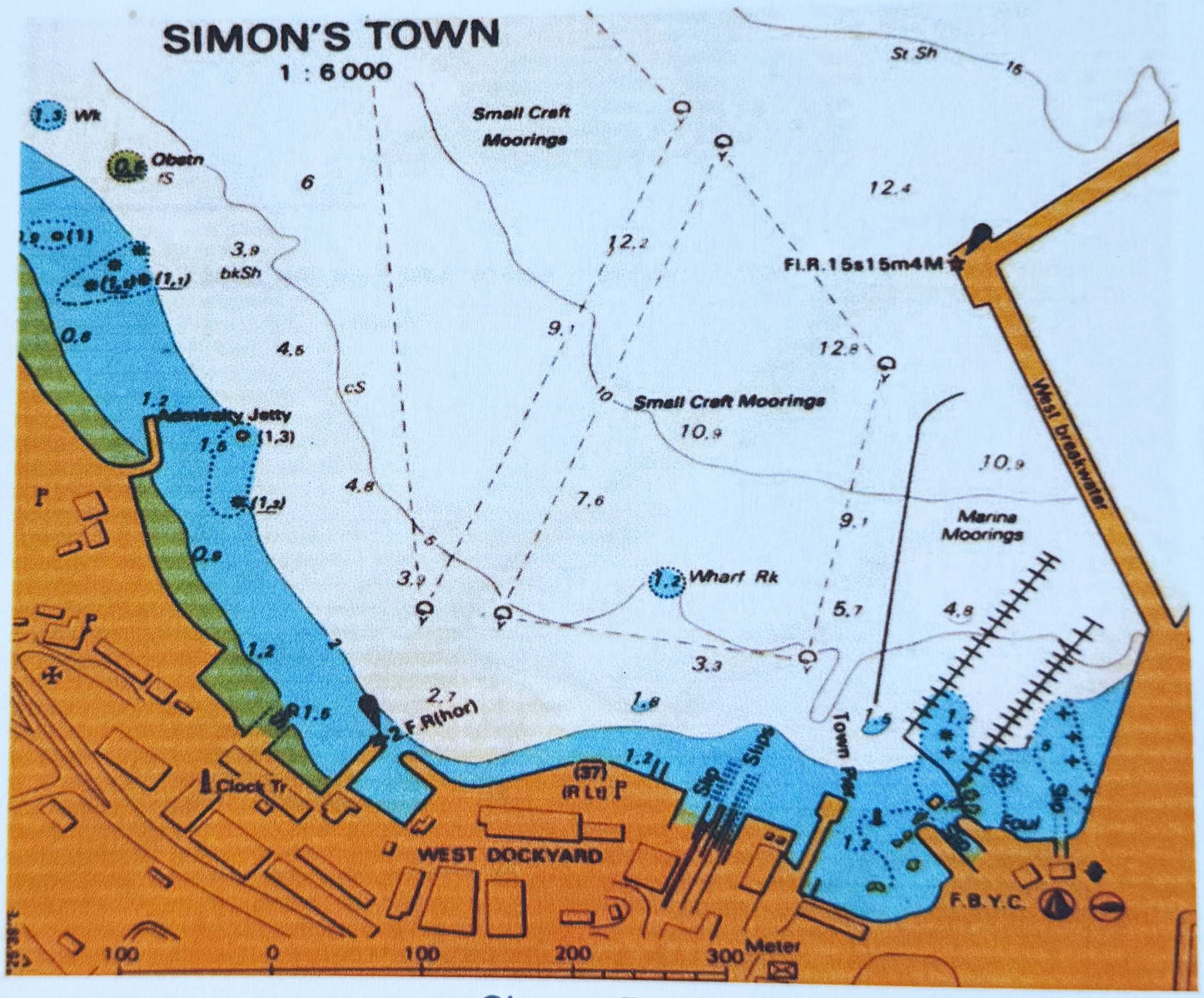
Cape Hangklop to Simonstown	
Foul ground, Cape Hangklip	34°23'S, 18°50'E
Whittle Rock	34°14.8'S, 18°33.6'E
Roman Rocks	34°10.9'S, 18°27.6'E
Dangers, Simons Bay	34°11.5'S, 18°26'E
Simonstown to Cape Point	
Phoenix Shoal & Nimrod Rock	34°11.4'S, 18°26.9'E
Rocky Patch	34°11.8'S, 18°27.5'E
Maidstone Rock & rocky banks	34°11.6'S, 18°27.5'E
Rambler Rock	34°11'S, 18°28'E
Castor Rock & detached shoals	34°10.7'S, 18°27.6'E
Roman Rocks	34°10.9'S, 18°27.6'E
Bakoven Rock	34°14.1'S, 18°29'E
Castle Rock	34°14.3'S, 18°29'E
Whittle Rock	34°14.8'S, 18°33.6'E
Partridge Point Reef	34°15.5'S, 18°29'E
Batsata Rock	34°16.5'S, 18°29'E
Rocky Bank	34°25'S, 18°36'E
Inner Passage, Cape Point	34°22'S, 18°30'E



Roman Rocks Light (undergoing maintenance), Simon's Town to left of picture.

MAJOR LIGHTS

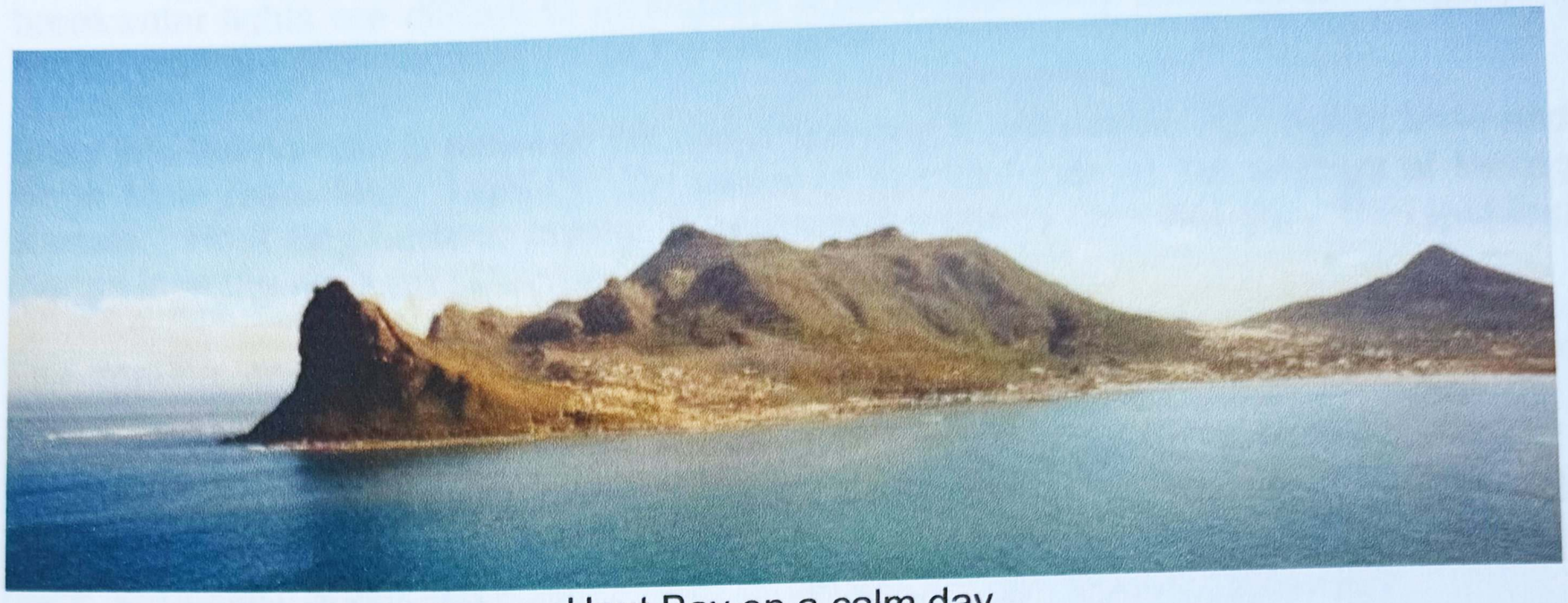
Name	Position	Char.	Ht. (m)	Range (M)	Remarks
Cape Hangklip to Simonstown					
Cape Hangklip	34°23.2'S 18°49.7'E	Fl.W.10s	34	25	Wh. tower/Bl. Bands Red lanternhouse
Whittle Rock Buoy	34°14.8'S 18°34.2'E	Q.(3)W.10 s			E.Cardinal pillar buoy
Roman Rocks	34°10.9'S 18°27.7'E	Fl.W.6s	17	20	Wh.round tower, Wh. lanernhouse
Simonstown dock-yard, N. Spur	34°11.1'S 18°26.3'E	Fl.(3)W.7s	14	15	Wh. column, Red lanternhouse



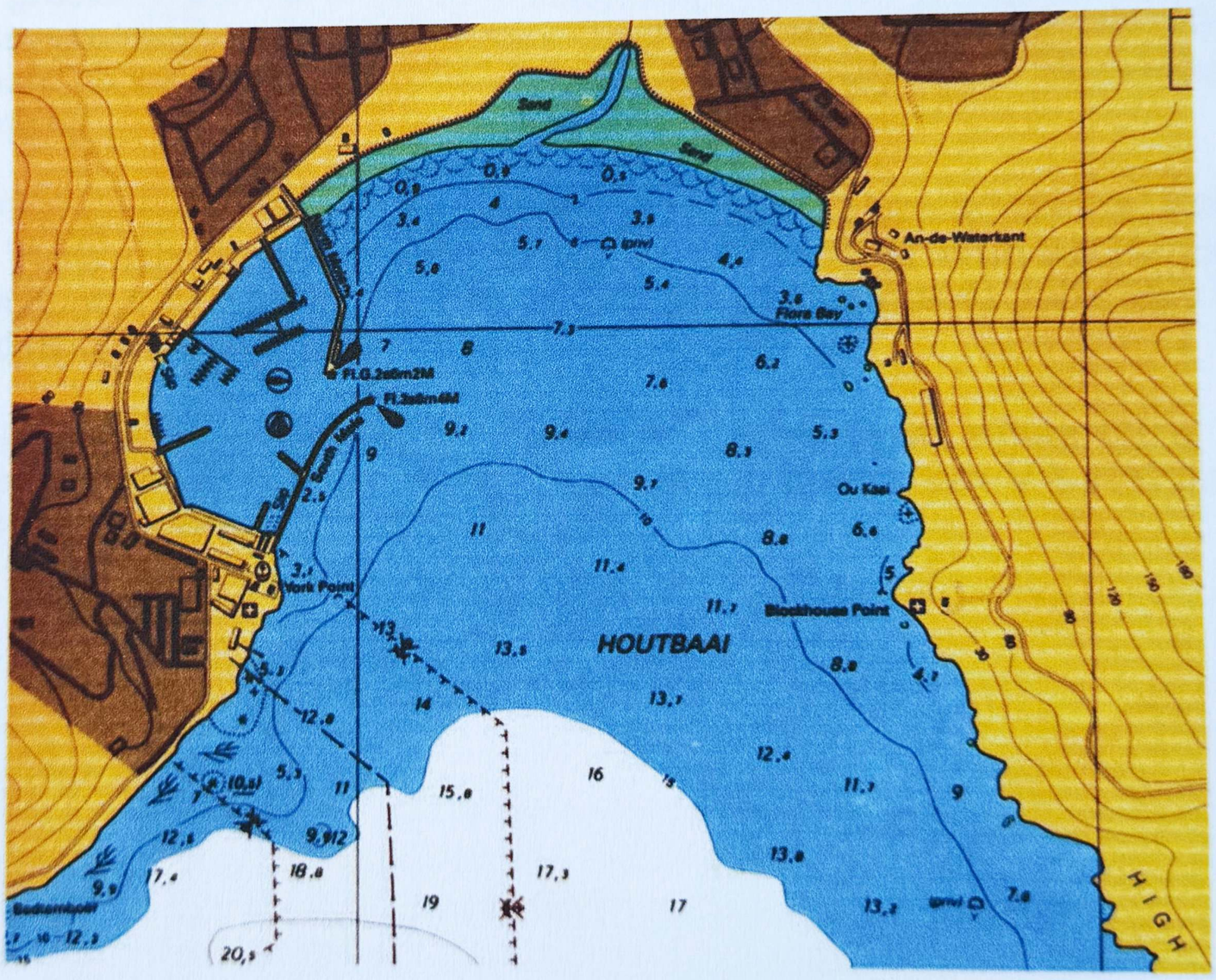
Simons Bay.

False Bay Yacht Club occupies the area to the south and west of the East Dockyard's west breakwater. The club operates a slipway and a walk-on marina and has recently added a third Pontoon. All berthing space comes under the control of the SA Navy and administered through the False Bay Yacht Club.

HOUT BAY



Hout Bay on a calm day



Sketch plan of Hout Bay

The harbour of Hout Bay, between Cape Point and Cape Town, is considered by many cruisers to be an ideal stop over. It is the largest fishing port in the Republic, controlled by the Department of Seafisheries. From the south a direct approach can be made to the middle of the bay, from a point about a half mile to seaward of Chapman's Point (note that the rocks extend off this point).

A night entry into Hout Bay is not recommended without local knowledge, as the weak breakwater lights are difficult to distinguish against the many other lights. Brightly lit fishing craft are often moored inside the two moles.

Entry into the harbour is between the two 370m long breakwaters, viz., South Mole and North Mole (see "Major Lights"). Be aware of busy periods in the sailings of fishing vessels. Hout Bay harbour master is contacted on VHF Channel 16. The yachting marina is at the northern side of the harbour.

The marina can take vessels up to 15 metres and has water and electricity on pontoons. There is 24-hour security.

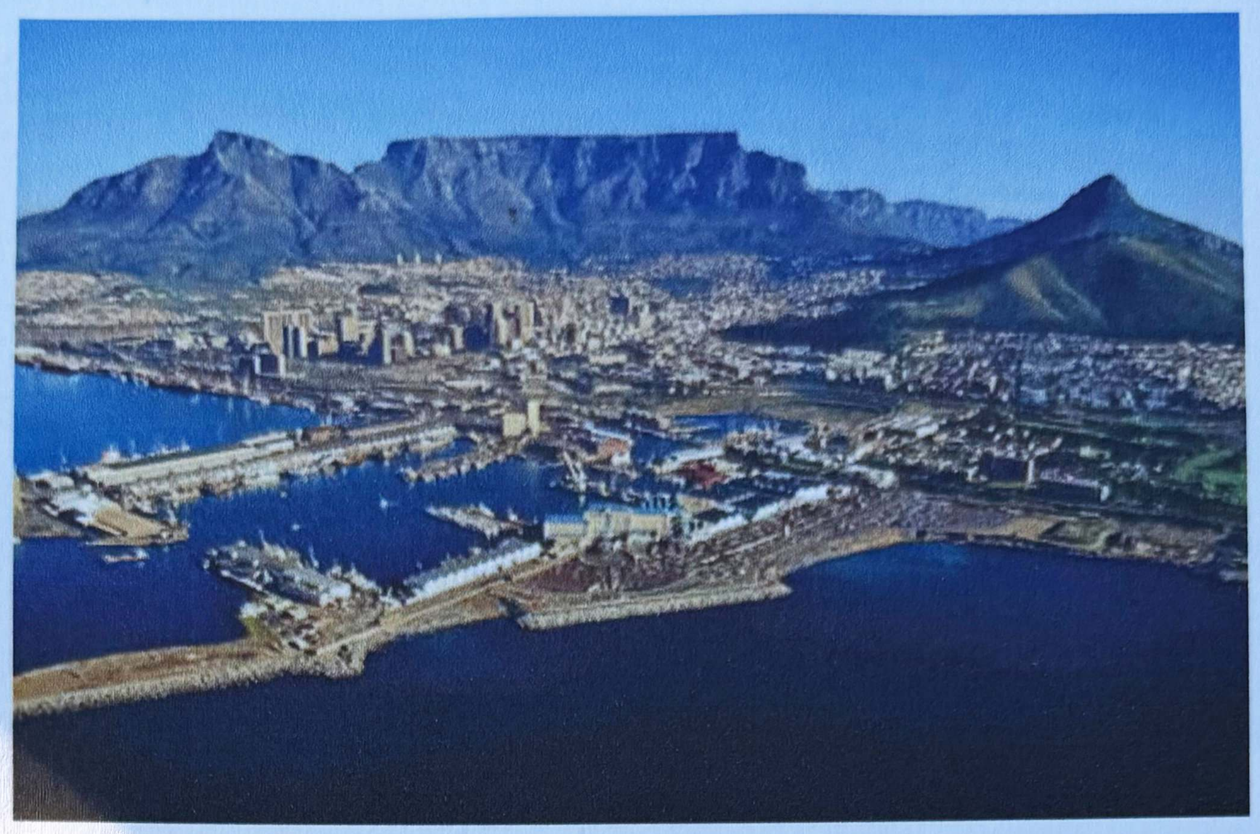
The Hout Bay Yacht Club building is outside the harbour and offers most yacht club facilities. Visitors are welcome. It is advised to make an advanced reservation for a berth, especially during the summer cruising season. (see "Useful Contacts")

The course from Cape Point to Table Bay in a fresh to strong south easterly wind changes gradually from a broad to a close reach and the strongest winds, off the mountains, are likely to be experienced when one nears the turn into Table Bay, coming hard on the wind. The wind strength can be judged by the clouds pouring off the mountains.

If Cape Point is rounded in these conditions and at such a time of day that would bring you into Table Bay after noon, one would be well advised to make for Hout Bay. Alternatively, you could heave-to, wait, and so time your arrival in Table Bay for dawn when it could be much calmer!

An alternative would be to head for Victoria and Alfred Dock, where there is a new marina next to the Cape Grace Hotel. To get in you have to call V & A Control (VHF Ch. 71) for the Bascule Bridge to be lifted.

ARRIVAL AT CAPE TOWN

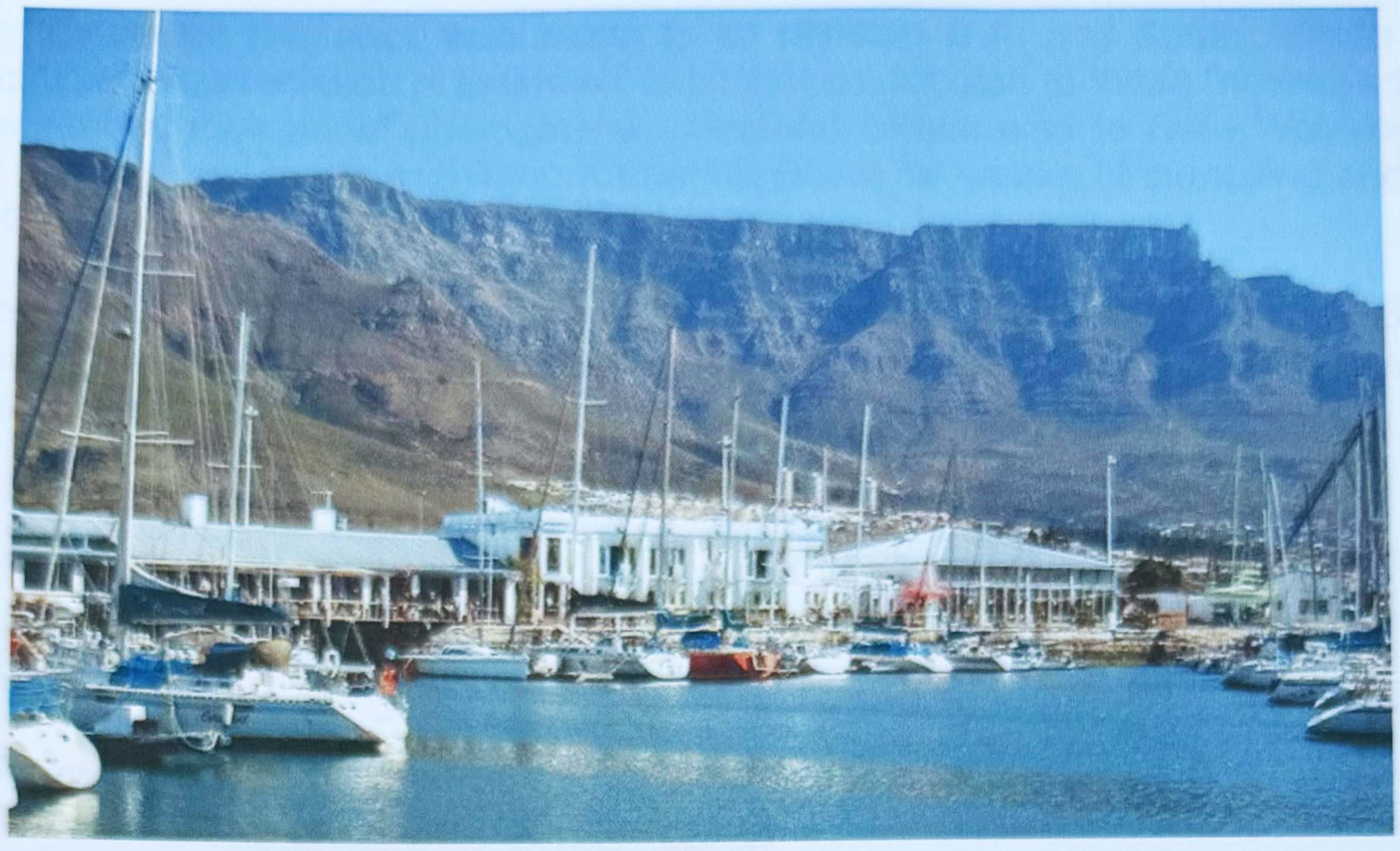


Aerial view of V&A Waterfront

Cape Town is one of South Africa's oldest settlements and the harbour below Table Mountain is visited by all manner of vessels. A "traffic separation scheme" has been introduced (shown on most charts), and craft are advised to monitor VHF Channel 14, for shipping movements. If one intends to enter or cross a lane, Cape Town Port Control (VHF Ch. 14) should be consulted.

On approach to the harbour, radio Cape Town Port Control (VHF Ch.14) to request permission to enter. The harbour entrance is clear and well lit. Follow a course of about 200° through the outer harbour, turning to port once inside Duncan Dock. The yacht basin (Royal Cape Yacht Club) is in the southeasterly corner. Once inside turn to starboard and tie up at the floating fuel dock, to be advised of a mooring. The first two piers at the entrance are reserved for visitors and if unoccupied, may be taken advantage of.

The yacht club can assist with customs and immigration formalities. Facilities at the club include showers, toilets, fuel, ice, bar, restaurant, 24 hour security, small chandlery, etc. A new marina constructed in the rejuvenated Victoria and Alfred dock also offers berths to visiting yachts. It is advised to enquire in advance regarding space and costs (see 'Useful Contacts'). Cape Town itself is about a 20-minute walk from the RCYC.



Royal Cape Yacht Club

NOTES

Note: Extensive reference was made to all relevant B.A. and South African Marine publications. Appreciation is extended to all that contributed to these "notes", and to Art Publishers for their aerial photographs. Grateful thanks also to Billie Washington for proof reading, and to my assistant, Katherine Botha for weeks of compiling and editing this set of notes.

Any comments or suggestions, which could be included in a future set of "Southern African Cruising Notes" would be appreciated. Please feel free to e-mail me with any further queries you may have on this route.

Fair Winds

Tony Herrick

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The West Coast of Southern Africa

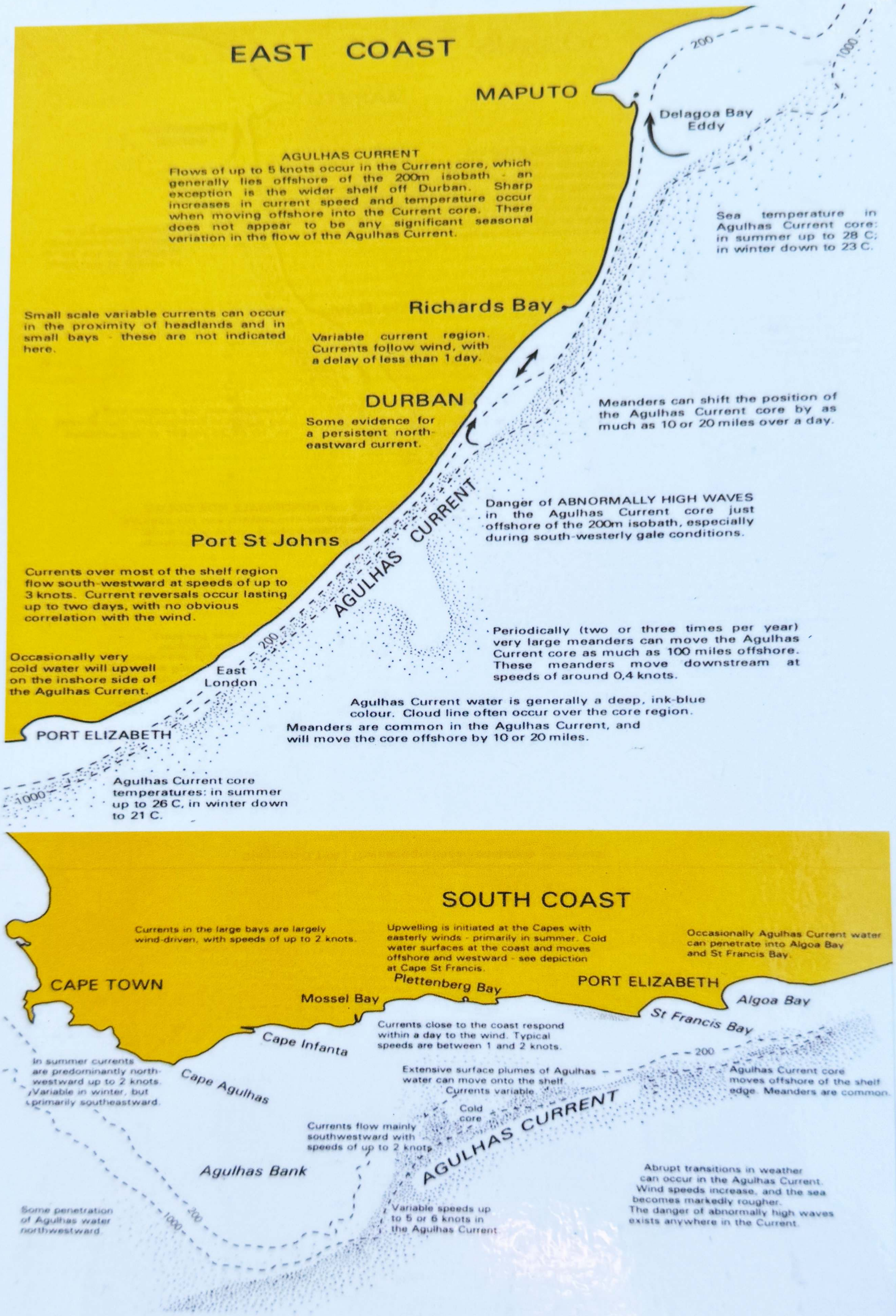
Cape Town to Walvis Bay is available in a separate booklet – "Cape to Caribbean". Including St. Helena, and Ascension Islands, Fernando Do Noronho, and Brazil from Salvador, North.

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"CRUISING CONNECTIONS"
(For NEW & USED charts, chart kits, guides, pilots, courtesy flags & marine publications for the Indian Ocean, Pacific, Atlantic & Med., - shipped and couriered all over the world.)

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ANALYSIS OF THE AGULHAS CURRENT FROM RICHARDS BAY TO CAPE TOWN BY COURTESY OF THE HYDROGRAPHIC OFFICE