Chart Coverage in Coast Pilot 5—Chapter 5
NOAA's Online Interactive Chart Catalog has complete chart coverage
http://www.charts.noaa.gov/InteractiveCatalog/nrnc.shtml
84°30'W
84°W
83°30'W
83°W
82°30'W
30°N
29°30'N
29°N
28°30'N
28°N
27°30'N
APALACHEE BAY
F L O R I D A
STEINHATCHEE RIVER
DEADMAN BAY
SUWANNEE RIVER
Cedar Keys
WACCASASSA BAY
Crystal River
Bayport
New Port Richey
11411
G U L F O F M E X I C O
Tarpon Springs
Clearwater
11416
Tampa
St. Petersburg
TAMPA BAY
11415

Tampa Bay to Apalachee Bay

(1) This chapter describes the 170-mile Gulf coast of Florida from Tampa Bay to Apalachee Bay, the numerous rivers emptying into this section of the Gulf and the passes making from the Gulf to the Intracoastal Waterway. Also described are the deepwater ports of Tampa, Port Tampa, Port Sutton, St. Petersburg and Port Manatee and many smaller ports.

(2) The section of the Intracoastal Waterway from Tampa Bay to Anclote Anchorage passing through the waters described in this chapter and places along its route are discussed in chapter 12.

(3)

COLREGS Demarcation Lines

(4) The lines established for this part of the coast are described in **33 CFR 80.750** through **80.805**, chapter 2.

(5)

ENC - US3GC06M
Chart - 11400

(6) From Tampa Bay 35 miles north to Anclote Keys, the bottom is broken, and depths of 18 feet or less are sometimes found more than 4 miles offshore. The coast is bordered by a line of long narrow barrier islands that overlap at the ends. The Gulf sides of the islands are straight or gently curving sand beaches, backed by dense growth. Between the islands and the mainland is a chain of shallow bays and passages. Prominent north of Tampa Bay are water tanks and numerous tall buildings along the beaches, a large hotel in Clearwater and a water tank near the center of Clearwater Beach Island and an abandoned light structure.

(7) Two seasonal areas designed to protect Gulf reef fish are on and around the vicinity of **Florida Middle Ground**, about 95 miles northwest of the entrance to Tampa Bay. See **50 CFR 622.34**, not carried in this Coast Pilot.

(8) Between Anclote Keys and Cedar Keys, 60 miles to the north, the low coast is fringed with marsh broken by shallow rivers and creeks that can be entered only by small craft. Small keys and islets border the coast, and broken ground extends as much as 15 miles from shore. The bottom slopes gradually shoreward, but there are many rocks and shoals in the deeper water. Between Anclote Keys and Cedar Keys, a stack near the mouth of the Anclote River and four stacks near the mouth of the Crystal River are reported prominent.

(9) Bird guano racks, consisting of square platforms on piles about 20 feet above water, have been built on the outermost shoals between Tampa and Apalachee Bays; some have been destroyed in aerial gunnery practice, leaving broken piling, which constitutes a hazard. Not all of the racks are charted.

(10) Numerous fish havens, some marked by private buoys, extend as much as 10 miles offshore along this section of coast.

(11) The coast extends in a general northwest direction from Cedar Keys for about 75 miles to Apalachee Bay. The low marsh along the shoreline is 1 to 2 miles wide and is backed by pine forests. The coast is broken by several small rivers and creeks, some of which are navigable for drafts of 4 to 5 feet. The bottom is broken and irregular for a distance of about 10 miles from shore, and coral heads and reefs are numerous. This stretch of coast is frequented mostly by shrimpers and other fishermen, who can assist strangers to enter any of the rivers or creeks. The shoal water affords fair anchorage, with considerable protection from heavy seas, for light-draft boats.

(12)

Weather

(13) Along the coast from Tampa Bay to Apalachee Bay, tropical cyclones, thunderstorms, and cold fronts are the potential weather hazards. Within the June through November hurricane season, September is the most active month for tropical cyclones in the Atlantic Basin. However, June and October historically pose the greatest risk for storms in and around the eastern Gulf. Between 1950 and 2018, twenty-seven tropical storms or hurricanes have passed within 100 nm of Tarpon Springs, FL. They usually approach from the south or southwest but occasionally traverse westward across south Florida and move into the eastern Gulf. Tides have run 12 to 15 feet above normal, especially in the Florida “bight” of Apalachee Bay south through southwest. Tides have run 12 to 15 feet above normal, especially in the Florida “bight” of Apalachee Bay.

(14) Thunderstorms develop on about 50 to 85 days annually along this section of coast. They are most likely from May through September when they occur on 8 to 20 days per month; July and August are the most active months. The Tampa Bay and Apalachee Bay areas are the most active. Offshore thunderstorms are most frequent in the evening near dissipating inland thunderstorms and early morning as the land breeze develops off the coast. Thunderstorms can spring up quickly and generate strong gusty winds and may contain hail or even tornadoes or waterspouts. They can occur as isolated cells or as an organized squall line sometimes preceding a cold front.

(17)

METEOROLOGICAL TABLE – COASTAL AREA OFF APALACHICOLA, FLORIDA
Between 27°N to 30°N and 82°W to 86°W

WEATHER ELEMENTS	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	YEARS OF RECORD
Wind > 33 knots [1]	1.1	1.2	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	1.1	0.6	0.8	1.0	0.5
Wave Height > 9 feet [1]	5.0	3.5	2.3	0.8	0.1	0.4	0.8	0.3	2.0	2.3	3.0	3.1	1.8
Visibility < 2 nautical miles [1]	3.4	1.8	3.6	1.1	1.0	0.2	1.0	1.0	1.3	0.4	0.6	2.0	1.4
Precipitation [1]	4.8	3.6	3.0	1.4	1.8	3.9	4.3	4.5	5.7	3.1	3.1	3.6	3.6
Temperature > 69° F	23.8	25.3	37.9	70.3	94.5	100.0	99.9	99.7	99.5	93.3	66.9	33.7	74.0
Mean Temperature (°F)	63.2	65.5	68.1	72.5	77.1	81.1	83.4	83.2	82.1	77.4	71.8	66.1	75.2
Temperature < 33° F [1]	0.2	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 (%)	78	78	80	79	79	80	77	78	79	75	76	76	78
Overcast or Obscured [1]	23.6	22.7	18.4	16.2	8.2	15.7	10.7	11.8	15.9	13.1	15.3	18.0	15.5
Mean Cloud Cover (8^{ths})	4.5	4.4	4.0	3.6	3.4	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.5	3.9	4.0	4.2	4.1
Mean SLP (mbs)	1020	1019	1018	1017	1016	1016	1018	1016	1015	1016	1018	1020	1017
Ext. Max. SLP (mbs)	1040	1043	1033	1032	1030	1027	1032	1027	1027	1031	1030	1037	1043
Ext. Min. SLP (mbs)	992	1000	1000	998	1000	999	1004	1001	997	997	995	1000	992
Prevailing Wind Direction	N	E	SE	SE	E	E	SW	E	E	NE	NE	E	E
Thunder and Lightning [1]	1.7	1.6	1.6	0.7	1.2	3.8	5.4	5.5	6.4	1.4	0.6	0.9	2.7

[1] Percentage Frequency

(15) Cold fronts from the north occasionally reach these waters from fall through spring. At Tallahassee, temperatures drop below freezing on 30 days annually compared to 3 days at Tampa. The Gulf modifies the cold air masses quickly. Strong winds from these fronts or low-pressure systems that form in the Gulf of Mexico often result in winds in excess of 20 knots and occasionally gale-force winds (34 knots or more). Wave heights of 10 feet or more are also not uncommon behind these frontal systems.

(16) Visibilities are generally good along this section of coast. They may be briefly reduced to near zero in heavy showers or thunderstorms but during the winter and early spring, fog is usually the source of visibility restrictions. Sea fog is most common between December and early March, and severe fog events can last for several days with near zero visibility over a widespread area. The best chance for sea fog development is out ahead of a cold front when winds are south to southwest, air is warm/moist and water temperatures are cool.

(18)

Tampa Bay

(19) **Tampa Bay**, a large natural indentation about midway along the west coast of Florida, is one of the important harbors of the Gulf coast and is easily accessible day or night. The bay extends northeast for about 20 miles and is 6 to 7 miles wide. It is the approach to Manatee River, Boca Ciega Bay, Old Tampa Bay and Hillsborough Bay and to the cities of St. Petersburg, Port Tampa, East Tampa, Bradenton, Port Manatee and Tampa.

(21) The entrance to Tampa Bay, between Mullet Key on the north and Anna Maria Key on the south, is 4.5 miles wide and encompasses Egmont Channel and Southwest Channel, separated by Egmont Key. Egmont Channel, the main deepwater ship channel, has been dredged through shoals that extend about 6 miles west of the entrance. **Tampa Bay Lighted Buoy T** (27°35'19"N., 83°00'43"W.), 13.5 miles west of Egmont Key, marks the approach to the bay. Egmont channel is marked by high-intensity range lights showing fixed white lights by day and fixed green lights by night that are normally visible approaching Tampa Bay Lighted Buoy T from sea.

(22)

Prominent features

(23) **Egmont Key**, a low, sandy, and wooded island almost in the middle of the entrance to Tampa Bay, is about 1.6 miles long. **Egmont Key Light** (27°36'03"N., 82°45'38"W.), 85 feet above the water, is shown from a white tower on the north end of the key. A pilot station lookout tower near the center of the island and nearby buildings are conspicuous. A draft of about 15 feet can be taken to the small pier just inside the north end of the key.

(24) Old **Fort DeSoto** on the south end of **Mullet Key** and a tall water tank on St. Jean Key about 1.5 miles northeast of the fort stand out at the head of Egmont Channel. Also prominent to the north are the numerous tall hotel and apartment buildings and a church spire, a tall building on Maximo Point and farther north other numerous tanks and buildings along the beaches and at St. Petersburg and Gulfport.

(25)

Shipping safety fairways

(26) Vessels should approach the harbor through the Tampa Safety Fairway–see **33 CFR 166.100** through **166.200**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.

(27)

COLREGS Demarcation Lines

(28) The lines established for Tampa Bay and tributaries are described in **33 CFR 80.750**, chapter 2.

(20)

Entrance to Tampa Bay, Florida
Image courtesy of Fly Elite Helicopters (2005)

(29)

Tampa Bay navigation guidelines

(30) The Coast Guard Captain of the Port and the Tampa Bay Harbor Safety Committee recommend that the following guidelines regarding the movement of vessels in and out of port be adopted and practiced by pilots, masters and persons in charge of vessels.

(31) 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.

(32) a. Ship draft of 39 feet plus the tide to a maximum of 41 feet at higher conditions of tide is considered reasonable in and out of Tampa Bay.

(33) b. During periods of restricted visibility, vessels should not commence an inbound, shift or outbound transit during periods where visibility is less than one nautical mile due to fog or inclement weather. (See **33 CFR 165.782**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(34) c. Whenever possible, vessel movement arrangements should be made via landline through the local agents. If time is of the essence, arrangements may be made via radiotelephone.

(35) d. When arranging a movement between a vessel in port and a vessel that has not yet entered the port (at the sea buoy), a general rule of precedence is that, under normal circumstances, outbound vessels have priority with the following exceptions:

(36) 1. Within the port area incoming and outgoing vessels restricted by tide should split time, with no more than two vessels trying to make the tide.

(37) 2. If a vessel having priority is unable to clear the berth or enter the port within 30 minutes of the time agreed upon, that vessel loses priority.

(38) 3. All meeting and passing situations should be made at the safest possible locations, with due regard to the size of the vessels, width of the channel and existing conditions. Both vessels should adjust speed to accomplish this safely. Vessels least affected by existing conditions (current and winds) should give way to the other. Light-draft vessels should give way to deep-draft vessels if conditions permit.

(39) 4. When one vessel is underway inbound and the other vessel is safely moored at berth, the vessel at the berth should remain alongside if no safe passing area can be agreed on.

(40)

Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service, Tampa Bay

(41) The Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service (CVTS) is a partnership between the U.S. Coast Guard and the Tampa Port Authority. The operational portion of the CVTS, the Vessel Traffic Center (VTC), located at the Tampa Port

Authority Security Operations Center, is manned 24 hours a day by Coast Guard and Port Authority personnel.

(42) The CVTS primary function is to coordinate safe and efficient vessel movement and to prevent marine accidents and waterway incidents in Tampa Bay and also the associated loss of life and damage to property and the environment. This is accomplished by coordinating vessel movements through the collection, verification, organization and dissemination of information.

(43) Contact the CVTS by telephone at 813–241–1886 or 813–242–1600; FAX 813–241–1810.

(44) The CVTS monitors VHF-FM channels 16, 13 and 12; works on channel 12.

(45) Voice calls are "Tampa Traffic" or "WHX-362."

(46)

Required Reports to CVTS Tampa Bay

(47) **Sailing Plan INBOUND**

(48) Fifteen minutes from approaching the Tampa RACON "T" buoy when inbound for Tampa Bay, check in with the CVTS on VHS-FM Channel 12 and report the following:

(49) Vessel name, current position, destination, length/beam/deepest draft, estimated time at the Sunshine Skyway Bridge, alongside berth time. Tug with tows should indicate if the barge is in the notch, on the head or on the wire and if they will make a transition during transit.

(50) **Sailing Plan SHIFTING**

(51) Fifteen minutes prior to getting underway from a berth to shift to another berth or Port in Tampa Bay, check in with CVTS and report the following:

(52) Vessel name, location, destination, length/beam/deepest draft and alongside new berth time.

(53) **Sailing Plan OUTBOUND**

(54) Fifteen minutes prior to getting underway from a berth bound for sea, check in with CVTS and report the following:

(55) Vessel name, location, destination, length/beam/deepest draft, estimated time at the Sunshine Skyway Bridge and all clear passing the Tampa "T" buoy. Tug with tows should indicate if the barge is in the notch, on the head, or on the wire and if they will make a transition during transit.

(56)

Channels

(57) A federal project provides for a main channel with depths of 45 feet in the entrance from the Gulf, thence 43 feet to Tampa and 34 feet to Port Tampa. (See Notice to Mariners and latest editions of charts for controlling depths.)

(58) **Egmont Channel**, the main ship channel, extends between Mullet Key and Egmont Key and is used by all deep-draft vessels entering Tampa Bay. A lighted **083°** range and lighted buoys mark the dredged cut over the bar.

(59) The main ship channel continues through Mullet Key Channel and dredged cuts leading up the bay through Tampa Bay, Hillsborough Bay, and Old Tampa Bay to Port Manatee, Big Bend, Alafia River, Port Sutton, Tampa, Port Tampa and Weedon Island. The channels are marked by lighted ranges and lighted and unlighted buoys.

(60) **Southwest Channel**, a natural passage on the south side of Egmont Key, had a controlling depth of about 14 feet but is subject to shoaling. The approach is marked by a lighted bell buoy, and the channel by a light, a bell buoy and a buoy. **Passage Key**, on the south side of Southwest Channel, is a low sand island about 0.3 mile long and showing about 4 feet above high water. The key is barren and is used as a bird refuge. The breakers and shoal areas in and around Passage Key are to be avoided due to unexploded ordnance reported in 2020. **Passage Key Inlet**, between Passage Key and Anna Maria Key, has a controlling depth of about 9 feet in an unmarked shifting channel.

(61)

Measured course

(62) Four measured nautical mile courses, each connected to the other and forming a square, are on the northwest side of Tampa Bay channel about 7 miles northeast of Sunshine Skyway. The range for the southeasterly and northwesterly courses is **037.7°-217.7°**, and the range for northeasterly and southwesterly courses is **127.7°-307.7°**. The range markers are square white daymarks with black letters and orange reflective borders on piles.

(63)

Anchorages

(64) **Vessels with good ground tackle should anchor in the Tampa Anchorages, north of the Tampa Safety Fairway leading to Egmont Channel**. (See **33 CFR 166.100** through **166.200**, chapter 2.)

(65) Explosives and quarantine anchorages are east of Mullet Key, northeast of Papys Point, and south of Interbay Peninsula. (See **33 CFR 110.1** and **110.193**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(66)

Dangers

(67) Shoal areas extend 5 miles seaward from Egmont Key. The shoals consist of several small lumps with depths of 11 to 18 feet. Unmarked spoil areas with reported depths of 10 feet or less border the dredged cuts of the main ship channel in Tampa Bay and the channels in Old Tampa Bay. Caution should be observed particularly at the entrances to the side channels leading to Port Manatee, Alafia River and Port Sutton.

(68) Local weather during the thunderstorm season is unpredictable, and intense winds can develop suddenly. Before entering or departing the port, mariners should obtain local weather forecasts, maintain a close watch on the weather and ensure that light vessels are properly ballasted during the transit.

(69)

Regulated navigation areas

(70) **Security zones** have been established around Cruise Ships and vessels carrying Especially Hazardous Cargos. See **33 CFR 165.1**through **165.33** and **165.703**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.

(71) **Regulated navigation areas** have been established in the entrance and all other navigable waters of Tampa Bay, Hillsborough Bay, Old Tampa Bay and tributaries herein—see **33 CFR 165.1** through **165.13**, and **165.753**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.

(72)

Caution

(73) A number of close calls and dangerous situations have occurred involving small recreational vessels impeding larger commercial vessels as they navigate the main channel span of the **Sunshine Skyway Bridge**. These vessels are only able to transit through the main channel span of the bridge and are restricted in their movements due to the larger dimensions. Large vessels may appear to move slowly due to their size but actually transit at speeds in excess of 12 knots, requiring a great distance in which to maneuver or stop. Rule 9b of the Navigation Rules states that vessels of less than 20 meters in length or a sailing vessel shall not impede the passage of a vessel which can safely navigate only within a narrow channel or fairway—see N**avigation Rules** after Chapter 14**.**

(74)

Bridges

(75) **The Sunshine Skyway**(Interstate 275/U.S. Route 19) crosses lower Tampa Bay from Maximo Point to Terra Ceia Island. It is a landfilled causeway for the greater part of its length with bridge spans over the channels that it crosses. The high-level 500-foot fixed span has a clearance of 180 feet over the main ship channel in the middle of the bay. The clearances of the other bridge spans are given in the description of the channels that they cross.

(76)

Currents

(77) A strong offshore wind sometimes lowers the water surface at Tampa and in the dredged channels as much as 4 feet and retards the time of high water by as much as 3 hours. A continued southwest wind raises the water by nearly the same amount and advances the time of high water by as much as 1 hour.

(78) Daily tidal current predictions for Tampa Bay Entrance are available from the Tidal Current prediction service at *tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov*. There is a large daily inequality in the ebb, and velocities of 2 knots or more may be expected at the strength of the greater ebb of the day in Egmont Channel, Passage Key Inlet and off Port Tampa. Flood velocities seldom exceed 2 knots. Winds have considerable effect in modifying the tidal current. Actual real-time information on wind direction and velocity, tidal height and current direction and velocity at several locations on Tampa Bay may be obtained 24 hours a day by calling PORTS (Physical Oceanographic Real Time System) at 866–827–6787 or online at *https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/ports.html*.

(79) At a location 6.7 miles west of Egmont Key Light, the tidal current is rotary, turning clockwise, and has considerable daily inequality. The strengths of the greater floods and ebbs set north and south, respectively. Four days of current observations at this location during a period of moderate north winds indicated a resultant nontidal current of 0.4 knot setting south.

(80)

Weather

(81) Mild winters and warm summers characterize the maritime subtropical climate of Tampa Bay. The outstanding summer feature is the thunderstorms, which occur on an average of 86 days, mostly in the late afternoons or evenings during June, July, August and September. These showers often help cool things off as Tampa records 86 days annually with readings of 90°F or more.

(82) The average annual temperature at Tampa is 73.1°F. The average annual maximum is 81.4°F while the average annual minimum is 64.8°F. July and August are the warmest months with an average temperature of 82.6°F, and January is the coolest month with an average temperature of 61.3°F. The warmest temperature on record at Tampa is 99°F recorded in June 1985, and the coolest temperature on record is 18°F recorded in December 1962. Every month except December through February has had a maximum of 90°F, while each month November through March has had temperatures below freezing. Only about three days each winter season see temperatures below freezing.

(83) The average annual precipitation at Tampa is 46.30 inches (1,176.02 mm). August is the wettest month averaging nearly 8 inches (203 mm), while November is the driest month averaging less than two inches (51 m). Greater than 40% of the average annual precipitation falls during the summer months of June, July and August. The greatest precipitation event in 24 hours occurred in May 1979 when 11.45 inches (290.8 mm) fell. Snow has fallen in each month, December through March, but the greatest 24-hour snowfall is less than one inch.

(84) While tropical cyclones are likely from June through November, the Tampa Bay area seems most vulnerable in June and October, although this region has been one of the least active hurricane spots along the west coast. There is about 1 chance in 20 that a hurricane will strike the Tampa Bay area in any given year. The worst storm to strike the area occurred in September 1848. It drove tides 15 feet above mean low water and was followed less than 3 weeks later by another storm that produced 10-foot tides. The 1921 Tarpon Springs hurricane brought extensive damage to the Tampa Bay region, and the Labor Day hurricane of 1935 brought 5-minute winds of 64 knots to the area. Numerous other tropical cyclones have

impacted the region recently with the most notable being Hermine in 2016, Irma in 2017 and Michael in 2018.

(85) Cold fronts may bring one or two freezes per winter to the area, although snowfall is negligible and below-freezing temperatures are rare. These fronts may produce showers and strong, gusty winds; gales remain infrequent. The flat terrain aids in the formation of nighttime ground fogs during the cool-weather season. They form on about 3 to 6 nights per month in winter but usually dissipate during the morning hours.

(86) The local National Weather Service office is at in Ruskin, FL; barometers may be compared there or by telephone. NWS Ruskin is responsible for the 60 nautical miles of coastal waters between Bonita Beach to Suwannee River while NWS Tallahassee covers to the north. (See Appendix A for address.)

(87)

Pilotage, Tampa Bay

(88) Pilotage is compulsory for all foreign vessels drawing 7 feet or more. It is optional for U.S. vessels sailing coastwise under license and enrollment that have on board a pilot licensed by the federal government. Pilotage is available from Tampa Bay Pilots.

(89)

Tampa Bay Pilots
1825 Sahlman Drive
Tampa, Florida 33605
Telephone 813–247–3737
Fax 813–247–4425
Email *dispatch@tampabaypilots.com*

(90) The pilot station, on Egmont Key, monitors channels 16, 10, 12 and 13—call KAW-767. The pilot office monitors VHF-FM channel 10—call KAW-763. Pilot boats *Tampa* and *Manatee* are 53 feet long with black hull and grey superstructure. Pilot boat *Egmont* is 60 feet long with black hull and white superstructure.

(91) Arriving vessels should contact Pilot Dispatch 24 hours before arrival with the following information—International gross tonnage, LOA, beam, deep draft, name of local agent. Contact pilot station on VHF-FM channel 16 four hours prior to arrival and one hour prior to arrival at the Tampa Bay Lighted Buoy T. Additional instructions will be given upon radio contact. If instructed to anchor, please keep 24-hour watch on VHF-FM channels 12 and 13. Some weather conditions may require alternative boarding arrangements, such as making a lee north of Egmont Channel or boarding inside of Egmont Key. The pilot boat will provide specific boarding instructions to inbound vessels.

(92) Pilots board vessels day and night, usually in Egmont Channel between Egmont Channel Lighted Buoys 9 and 10. Boarding speed will be a safe speed as directed, depending upon weather conditions. Pilot ladder should be rigged 2.5 meters (8 feet) above the water and rigged according to SOLAS and IMCO specifications. All vessels should be ballasted to ensure that propeller and rudder are submerged and that visibility over bow is sufficient.

(93)

Towage

(94) The Port of Tampa has two towing companies with tugs up to 6,700 hp. Some tugs are equipped for firefighting. Large vessels usually require at least two tugs. Arrangements for tugs are usually made in advance by ships' agents.

(95) The Port of Tampa is a **customs port of entry.**

(96)

Quarantine, customs, immigration and agricultural quarantine

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

(98) Quarantine is enforced in accordance with regulations of the U.S. Public Health Service. (See Public Health Service, chapter 1.) Vessels are usually boarded at their berths. Tampa has several public and private hospitals with ample facilities.

(99)

Coast Guard

(100) A **Sector Office** is in St. Petersburg. (See Appendix A for address.)

(101)

Harbor regulations

(102) The Port of Tampa is under the direction of the Tampa Port Authority and includes Tampa proper, Port Tampa, Big Bend and the mouth of the Alafia River. The Authority is composed of a seven-member board appointed by the Governor of Florida. The board appoints a Port Manager to administer the regulations established by the Authority. The Authority publishes an Operations Manual, a Port Directory and a Terminal Map that includes additional port information. (Address: 1101 Channelside Drive, Tampa, FL 33602; telephone 813–905–5045). There is a **harbormaster**; telephone 813–241–1886.

(103)

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Chart - 11415

(104) **Mullet Key**, on the north side of the entrance to Tampa Bay, is low and wooded. The fishing pier on the southeast side of the key has a depth of about 10 feet at the face. A large pile of rocks, covered 2 feet, is to the north and nearly in line with the face of the pier. These rocks are a danger for vessels landing with a strong flood current but are usually marked by tide rips except at slack water.

(105) Old Fort DeSoto and a concrete and shell tower, about 25 feet high, at the south end of the key, and a water tank on St. Jean Key are conspicuous. **Fort DeSoto Park** includes Mullet Key, **St. Jean Key, St. Christopher Key**and **Madelaine Key**, which are connected with the mainland by the Pinellas Bayway. An 800-foot-long T-head fishing pier with a pavilion and a toll house on it extends into the Gulf from in front of the fort; two private, fixed red lights mark the end of the pier. The park has

picnic areas, restrooms, bathhouses, surfaced launching ramps and several large parking areas.

(106) **Manatee River** empties into the south side of Tampa Bay just east of Anna Maria Sound. The river width varies from 0.5 mile to nearly 1 mile for about 10 miles above the mouth, thence from 80 to 600 feet for some 8 miles to Rye. The river is well protected from all directions and affords good storm anchorage for small boats.

(107) In Manatee River, a channel with several dredged sections leads from the entrance to Mitchellville Bridge at Rye, 18.6 miles above the mouth. In 1995, the centerline controlling depths were 6½ feet to Daybeacon 31 near Rocky Bluff, then 4 feet to the highway (I-75) bridge. Snags and debris obstruct the river above Rocky Bluff. A light marks the entrance, and the channel is marked by lights and daybeacons as far as Ellenton.

(108) A fish haven, marked by two private daybeacons, is on the north side of the river off Emerson Point.

(109) **Bradenton**, a winter resort on the south side of the river 4.5 miles above the mouth, is the seat of Manatee County and the largest town on the river. Bradenton has a large municipal pier close west of the first highway (U.S. Route 41) bridge with berthing space for larger vessels along the end and numerous berths for small craft inside the pier head. In 2011, the reported approach and alongside depth was 9 feet. Gasoline, diesel fuel, electricity, water, ice, a pump-out station, wet storage and marine supplies are available. Engine and electronic repairs can be made.

(110) The town has numerous stores, several hotels and a hospital. The Sarasota-Bradenton Municipal Airport is about 6 miles south of the city. Local guides can be obtained as pilots.

(111) The National Park, **DeSota National Memorial**, is on the south side of the river entrance at **DeSoto Point**. A marina and boatyard are in a basin protected by a concrete pier about 0.5 mile west of the point. Berths, electricity, water, storage, a pump-out station and a 35-ton lift are available. Hull, engine and electronic repairs can be made.

(112) Three bridges cross Manatee River at Bradenton. The first, U.S. Route 41 fixed highway bridge close east of the municipal pier, has a clearance of 41 feet. The second bridge across the river, the Seaboard System Railroad (SCL) bridge 500 yards above the highway bridge, has a bascule span with a clearance of 5 feet. (See **33 CFR 117.1** through **117.59** and **117.300**, chapter 2, for drawbridge regulations.) The third, U.S. Route 301 highway bridge about 500 yards above the railroad bridge, has a fixed span with a clearance of 40 feet.

(113) **Emerson Point** is on the north bank at the entrance to the river at the west end of **Snead Island**. **McKay Point** is on the south shore of the island about 1.5 miles east of Emerson Point. A marina and boatyard in a protected privately dredged basin on the east side of McKay Point has electricity, water and storage available. Hull, engine and electronic repairs can be made; lift to 40 tons. In 2003, 5 feet was reported in the privately marked approach channel and basin.

(114) A **special anchorage** is on the north side of the river just east of the entrance to the marina and boatyard on McKay Point. (See **33 CFR 110.1** and **110.74a**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(115) A dredged cutoff channel at the east end of Snead Island leads into Terra Ceia Bay from Manatee River. Daybeacons mark each end of the cutoff channel. In 2000, a reported depth of 4 feet was available in the cut north into Terra Ceia Bay. Gasoline is available at several facilities along the cutoff. A highway bridge over the cutoff has a 33-foot fixed span with a clearance of 13 feet. Overhead power and telephone cables crossing close northeast of the bridge have a clearance of 32 feet.

(116) A marina is in the lagoon east of the cutoff (27°31.5'N., 82°36.5'W.). The privately marked entrance channel had a reported controlling depth of 5 feet in 2003. Water, storage, a launching ramp and a 40-ton lift are available. Hull and engine repairs can made.

(117) **Palmetto** is on the opposite side of Manatee River from Bradenton. **Ellenton** is on the north bank of the river, 2 miles above the Seaboard System Railroad bridge. All three towns have rail and highway connections to all parts of the state and there are several marinas in the area.

(118) There is a small marina in a small basin at **Rocky Bluff**, about 1.5 miles east of Ellenton. In 1982, a reported depth of about 2½ feet could be carried to the facility. Gasoline, berths, a launching ramp, provisions and water are available. Interstate Route 75 twin fixed highway bridges with a clearance of 40 feet cross the river at Rocky Bluff. An overhead power cable with a clearance of 49 feet crosses the river at Rocky Bluff.

(119) Manatee Memorial Hospital is a large white building in **Manatee** on the south bank of the river east of Bradenton. There is a large seafood packing and canning plant at Manatee.

(120) **Braden River** empties into Manatee River about 2 miles above the upper highway bridge at Bradenton. In 1972, the river had a reported controlling depth of 1 foot to a point about 2 miles above the highway bridge. There are several shoal areas, but the channel is marked with private daybeacons to about 1 mile above the highway bridge. State Route 64 highway bridge over Braden River has a 45-foot fixed span with a clearance of 10 feet over the marked channel. Overhead power cables 0.1 mile and 0.6 mile above the bridge have clearances of 32 and 31 feet, respectively.

(121) **Terra Ceia Bay**, just north of Manatee River on the southeast side of Tampa Bay, may be entered from Manatee River through the cutoff between Snead Island and the mainland.

(122) The other entrance to Terra Ceia Bay from Tampa Bay is the narrow and generally crooked channel between Snead Island and **Rattlesnake Key**. The entrance is marked by a light and the channel to the bay is marked by daybeacons. The channel has a reported depth of about 4 feet; local knowledge is advised. The U.S. Route

19 (State Route 55) bridge crossing the head of the bay has a fixed span with a horizontal clearance of 46 feet and a vertical clearance of 8 feet. Overhead power and telephone cables close southwest of the bridge have a least clearance of 29 feet.

(123) There is a boat ramp at the head of **Bishop Harbor**, about 7 miles northeast of the entrance to Manatee River.

(124) **Port Manatee** (27°38.0'N., 82°33.7'W.), owned by the Manatee County Port Authority, is a deepwater terminal on the southeast side of Tampa Bay, about 10 miles above Egmont Key. The terminal is reached through a dredged channel that leads southeast from the main ship channel about 4 miles northeast of the Sunshine Skyway Bridge to a turning basin at Port Manatee. A federal project provides for a depth of 40 feet in the channel and turning basin. The channel is marked by a **127.9°** lighted range and lighted buoys.

(125)

Towage

(126) Tugs to 6,000 hp are based at Port Manatee. Larger tugs to 6,700 hp are based at Tampa.

(127)

ENCs - US5FL12M, US4FL12M, US5FL09M
Chart - 11416

(128) **Hillsborough Bay**, the northeast arm of Tampa Bay, is 8 miles long and 4 to 5 miles wide. A federal project provides for depths of 43 feet in the channels leading through Hillsborough 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 main ship channel follows a dredged cut up the middle of the bay to Tampa. Spoil banks border the east side of the channel for most of its length. Good anchorage is available for shallow-draft vessels in the central part of the bay west of the main channel.

(129) At the turn in the main ship channel southeast of Gadsden Point, Big Bend Channel leads east to a turning basin at **Big Bend**. East of the turning basin, the channel continues into Port Redwing, with Tampa Port Authority facilities on the north side and a chemical plant on the south side. South from the turning basin the channel leads to a power plant wharf. Coal for power plant consumption is unloaded from vessels at the wharf. The channel is marked by lights, lighted ranges, lighted and unlighted buoys and daybeacons.

(130) Two miles north from the sharp turn in the main channel, Alafia River channel leads east to **Alafia River**. Federal project depth for the channel is 32 feet from the ship channel in Hillsborough Bay to and including the turning basin at **East Tampa**, the site of a large chemical plant, on the north side of Alafia River 0.5 mile above the mouth. The channel is well marked and is subject to frequent shoaling. Check with Tampa Bay pilots for current allowable drafts. (See Notice to Mariners and latest editions of charts for controlling depths.)

(131) A draft of about 3 feet can be taken for about 8 miles up Alafia River at high water with local knowledge. A highway bridge, about 1 mile above the mouth of the river, has a 44-foot fixed span with a clearance of 28 feet; the nearby overhead power cables have a clearance of 33 feet. The railroad bridge just above the highway bridge has a 40-foot swing span with a clearance of 6 feet. (See **33 CFR 117.1** through **117.49**, chapter 2, for drawbridge regulations.) The minimum clearance of the overhead power and telephone cables crossing the river above these bridges is 31 feet. Twin fixed highway bridges 2.8 miles above the entrance have a clearance of 28 feet. A fixed highway bridge about 4.0 miles above the entrance has a clearance of 14 feet.

(132)

Manatees

(133) Regulated speed zones for the protection of manatees are in the lower mile of Alafia River and in the approach to the river from the main channel through Hillsborough Bay. (See Manatees, chapter 3.)

(134) Small-craft facilities on the Alafia River include a boatyard on the south side of the river about 0.2 mile east of the railroad bridge that has a 5-ton crane and another marina on the south side of the river about 1.8 miles above the railroad bridge. These facilities can provide berths, gasoline, water, ice, launching ramps and hull and engine repairs.

(135) The boat basin for **MacDill Air Force Base** on the west side of Hillsborough Bay about 2 miles north of **Gadsden Point** (27°49.3'N., 82°28.5'W.), is entered through a dredged channel. In 1999, a controlling depth of 7 feet (13 feet at midchannel) was reported in the channel and a controlling depth of 6 feet was reported in the basin.

(136) The MacDill AFB marina, about 0.5 mile west of Gadsden Point, is entered from Tampa Bay through a privately marked channel. In 1987, the channel had a reported depth of 7 feet.

(137) **Port Sutton** is on the east side of Hillsborough Bay just north of **Pendola Point** (27°54.0'N., 82°26.0'W.). A dredged channel leads northeast from the main ship channel to a turning basin and slip at Port Sutton, the site of large power, chemical and cement plants and a scrap metal wharf. The stack atop the powerplant is floodlighted at night.

(138) A federal project provides for depths of 43 feet in the Port Sutton Entrance Channel and Port Sutton Turning Basin and 34 feet in Port Sutton Terminal Channel. (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 **054.1°-234.1°** lighted range, lights and lighted buoys.

(143)

(139) **East Bay** is on the east side of **Hookers Point** immediately north of Port Sutton. A dredged channel leads north from Port Sutton channel to a dredged basin. The Tampa Port Authority is developing port facilities on the west side and the northeast side of the bay.

(140) A federal project provides for depths of 43 feet in East Bay Channel and East Bay Turning Basin and 34 feet in Upper East 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.)

(141) **McKay Bay**, about 1.3 miles north of Port Sutton, is a shallow bay about 1 mile wide and 1.5 miles long. The 22nd Street highway causeway across the bay entrance has twin fixed spans with clearances of 40 feet. Overhead power and telephone cables close north of the causeway have clearances of 32 feet. About 0.3 mile north of the bridge is an overhead power cable with a clearance of 40 feet.

(142) **Tampa** is an important manufacturing, shipping and distribution center at the head of Tampa Bay. It has an expanding economy and sizable phosphate and manufacturing industries. There is considerable foreign and domestic trade in shipments of phosphate rock, petroleum, liquid sulfur, cement, chemicals, grain, scrap iron, machinery, general cargo and refrigerated and containerized cargo. The University of South Florida is at the north end of the city, and the University of Tampa is on the west bank of the Hillsborough River in the city.

(145)

Channels

(146) The main ship channel leads into Tampa Harbor along the east side of **Davis Islands**. The channel divides off the south end of **Harbour (Seddon) Island; Seddon Channel** continues northwest to a turning basin at the mouth of Hillsborough River, and **Sparkman Channel** leads north to the **Ybor Turning Basin** at the end of **Ybor Channel. Garrison Channel**, an east-west channel between Harbour Island and the Tampa waterfront, connects the two turning basins.

(147) A federal project provides for depths of 34 feet for the main ship channel, Sparkman and Ybor Channels and Ybor Turning Basin and 12 feet for Seddon Channel. (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.) Garrison Channel has been de-authorized as a federally maintained navigation project and shoaling has been reported throughout the western portion of the channel.

(148) A fixed highway bridge about midlength of Garrison Channel has a clearance of 10 feet. Another fixed highway

(144)

bridge near the west end of the channel has a clearance of 10 feet.

(149) A **barge anchorage** is close off the southeast side of Davis Islands. (See **33 CFR 110.1** and **110.193 (a)(5)**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(150) Only small boats can pass around the north end of Davis Islands. Two fixed highway bridges, about 100 yards apart, connect the north end of the islands with Tampa to the west; minimum width is 34 feet, minimum clearance is 9 feet.

(151) A **no-wake speed zone** is enforced in the area between the southern tip of Harbour Island and Platt Street bridge.

(152) Information on anchorages, tides, currents, pilotage, towage, quarantine, customs, immigration, agricultural quarantine and harbor regulations can be found at the beginning of this chapter under general information for Tampa Bay.

(153)

Supplies

(154) All grades and types of bunkers are available via barge and truck. Martin Product Services, Port Consolidated, Palmdale Oil Company, SSI Petroleum, Tropic Oil and World Fuel Services are the primary providers of bunkering services. Arrangements can be made through local agents. Water is available at most of the piers. Marine supplies and provisions are available in any quantity.

(155)

Repairs

(156) The Port of Tampa has facilities for making all types of hull and engine repairs to vessels of all sizes. Several companies operate waterfront facilities at the port for the repair and conversion of ocean-going vessels, tugs, barges and small vessels. The largest shipyard, on the east side of Sparkman Channel, has a graving dock that is 907 feet long at the bottom, 150 feet wide and 22 feet deep over the sill. The largest floating drydocks have 12,000 ton capacity. Machine, foundry, carpenter and electric shops, outfitting wharves and cranes up to 250 tons are available at shipyards at Tampa.

(157) In addition, a number of firms without waterfront facilities engage in marine repair work. These companies maintain shops and portable equipment for making above-the-waterline repairs and for installing equipment, gear and machinery on all types of craft at their berths.

(158)

Communications

(159) Tampa is served by a Class I Railroad. Regular scheduled steamship service is maintained between Tampa and foreign ports and Caribbean and West Indies ports. Several major airlines provide frequent scheduled service between Tampa International Airport, at the west end of the city, and domestic and overseas points. There is bus and trucking service to all points.

(160)

Small-craft facilities

(161) Small-craft facilities in Tampa are limited. The municipal boat landing is on the east side of the entrance to Hillsborough River. The Majorie Park Yacht Basin on Davis Islands, on the west side of Seddon Channel, has gasoline, diesel fuel, water, electricity, open berths for boats up to 85 feet and a pumpout facility. The basin has depths of about 7 feet. A launching ramp is nearby on the southern end of Davis Islands.

(162) **Hillsborough River** flows south through the city of Tampa into the turning basin at the north end of Seddon Channel. Daymarkers mark the channel for a short distance to the northwest side of North Boulevard Bridge. The stream is narrow above Tampa and relatively deep. The head of navigation is the dam at Sulphur Springs, 8 miles above the mouth.

(163) The Platt Street Bridge, at the mouth of the Hillsborough River, has a bascule span with a clearance of 15 feet. About 0.1 mile above the mouth are twin fixed bridges with a clearance of 40 feet, and bascule bridges adjacent to the north with a clearance of 15 feet. The bascule bridge at Kennedy Boulevard, 0.35 mile above the mouth, has a clearance of 11 feet. About 0.65 mile above the mouth are bascule bridges with a clearance of 7 feet. About 0.9 mile above the mouth is a bascule bridge with a clearance of 12 feet. About 1.0 mile above the mouth, the expressway twin fixed bridges have a clearance of 39 feet at the center, and the North Boulevard fixed highway bridge, about 1.3 above the mouth, has a clearance of 40 feet. Various lift bridges cross the Hillsborough River north of the North Boulevard highway bridge. (See **33 CFR 117.1** through **117.59** and **117.291**, chapter 2, for drawbridge regulations.)

(164) **Old Tampa Bay**, the northwest arm of Tampa Bay, is separated from Hillsborough Bay by Interbay Peninsula. Old Tampa Bay is 12 miles long and ranges in width from 2.5 miles at the entrance, to 6 miles; about three-fourths of the bay area has depths ranging from 6 to 17 feet. A branch of the main ship channel leads through the shoals at the entrance to Old Tampa Bay to the wharves and turning basin at Port Tampa. A federal project provides for a depth of 34 feet to and including the turning basin. (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 well marked by buoys and lighted ranges. Spoil banks border the east side of the north-south reaches of the channel; several spoil islands 5 to 10 feet high are just south of Port Tampa.

(165) A swash channel from Port Tampa parallels the southwest shore of Interbay Peninsula at a distance of about 0.6 mile. The channel is marked by daybeacons and has a controlling depth of 7 to 8 feet.

(166) A **danger zone** of a small-arms firing range of **MacDill Air Force Base** is on the southwest shore of **Interbay Peninsula**. (See **33 CFR 334.630**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(167) A privately dredged channel extends from the south end of Port Tampa (Cut K) Channel northwest to a turning basin at the power plant at Weedon Island. In 1998, the reported controlling depth was 30 feet in the channel and the basin. The channel is marked by a private lighted range and lighted buoys. A slip at the plant has a controlling depth of 32 feet.

(168) An **explosives anchorage** is about 0.6 mile north of the junction of the Port Tampa Channel and the channel to the powerplant at Weedon Island. (See **33 CFR 110.1** and **110.193 (a)(3)**, and **(b)(2)**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(169) **Port Tampa** is an important shipping terminus on the east shore of Old Tampa Bay just inside the entrance. The elevators, oil tanks, and the long slip are conspicuous from Tampa Bay as are two high radio towers near the west end of Gandy Bridge Causeway and the stacks of the powerplant on Weedon Island. The terminal facilities at Port Tampa are at the entrance and along both sides of a long dredged slip.

(170) **Gandy Highway Bridge** (U.S. Route 92), crossing Old Tampa Bay about 1.5 miles north of Port Tampa, has three fixed spans with a clearance of 43 feet through the opening about 1 mile west of the Interbay Peninsula shore. A bicycle trail and fishing pier parallel the highway bridge.

(171) In 1980, numerous submerged pilings were reported about 0.2 mile south of the east end of the bridge. Caution should be exercised in the area.

(172) Private daybeacons mark the channel leading to basins at the east end of Gandy Highway Bridge at **Rattlesnake**. In 1999, the channel on the north side of the bridge had a reported controlling depth of 6 feet to the basin.

(173) A private light and daybeacons mark the channel leading along the south side of the east end of Gandy Bridge approach. In 1982, there was reported to be 17 feet in the channel.

(174) **South Gandy Channel** leads along the south side of the fill at the west end of Gandy Bridge to **Snug Harbor**, where small craft can find good anchorage from storms. Open and covered berths with electricity and open and covered storage are available at several marinas. A full-service boatyard is available with wet and dry slips to 85 feet; 88-ton lift. Gasoline, water, ice and marine supplies are available. The controlling depth in South Gandy Channel to the marinas is about 7 feet.

(175) The approach to South Gandy Channel is from south, between shoals that can be avoided with a little care. When about 100 yards from the outer end of the highway fill, turn west and steer parallel with the fill, following the channel markers.

(176) Along the east shore of Old Tampa Bay, north of Gandy Bridge, are several small craft basins; most are privately marked and maintained.

(177) The W. Howard Frankland Bridge (Interstate Route 275) and Causeway crosses Old Tampa Bay about 3 miles north of Gandy Bridge from just north of Beach Park to just south of Big Island on the west shore. The bridge across the main channel has a fixed span with a clearance of 44 feet. Two other bridges in the causeway crossing the south end of **Big Island Gap** have 44-foot fixed spans with a clearance of 6 feet.

(178) The twin fixed spans of the 49th Street highway bridge cross the west end of Old Tampa Bay and have a clearance of 47 feet.

(179) **Courtney Campbell Parkway** (State Route 60) crosses Old Tampa Bay about 6 miles above Gandy Bridge. This is a causeway, mostly fill, with a total length of 8 miles. The causeway has two twin fixed navigation spans. The main span, near the center of the causeway, has a clearance of 40 feet. The second span, near the west end of the causeway, has a 35-foot span with a vertical clearance of 10 feet.

(180) **Safety Harbor** is a health resort town on the northwest shore of Old Tampa Bay 2 miles north of the Courtney Campbell Parkway. A draft of 8 feet can be taken to within 0.5 miles of the town landing.

(181) In 1990, a reported depth of about 5 feet could be taken to the small basin on the south side of the large waterfront fill 1.6 miles north of the Courtney Campbell Parkway; depths of 4 feet were reported in the basin. Berths with water, electricity, and a public boat ramp are available.

(182) At the head of Old Tampa Bay about 1 mile north of the town of Safety Harbor is the entrance to a large bight also known as Safety Harbor. A draft of 6 feet can be taken into the bight. An overhead power cable crossing the bight entrance from Booth Point to Philippe Point has a clearance of 98 feet. The town of **Oldsmar** is on the northeast shore of the bight.

(183)

ENCs - US5FL12M, US4FL12M, US5FL09M, US-5FL11M, US5FL17M
Charts - 11416, 11415, 11411

(184) **St. Petersburg**, a large winter resort city, is on the west side of Tampa Bay. Major highways connect the city with all parts of the state. A city hospital and several private hospitals are in St. Petersburg. Supplies available include gasoline, diesel fuel, water, ice and marine supplies. Charter boats and guides are avialable. The St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport is north of the city, and the Albert Whitted Municipal Airport is on the east waterfront at the center of the city.

(185)

Prominent features

(186) The large Municipal Auditorium and the baseball stadium on the east waterfront south of the yacht basins, several large office buildings and hotels, radio towers and tanks are all prominent.

(187)

Channels

(188) Point Pinellas channel extends north for about 5.5 miles from deep water in lower Tampa Bay to an entrance channel leading west to basins at the Port of St. Petersburg and **Bayboro Harbor**. In 2008, the controlling depths were 19 feet in Point Pinellas channel, thence 21 feet in the entrance channel to the turning basin at the Port of St. Petersburg with depths of 21 to 23 feet in the basin, except for shoaling in the southeast corner near Light 10, thence 15 feet to the basin at Bayboro Harbor with 10 to 12 feet available in the basin, except for lesser depths along the south edge. 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.

(189) A draft of 22 feet can be taken to the Port of St. Petersburg by following the main ship channel in Tampa Bay through the west reach leading to Port Tampa then turning southwest into the natural deepwater area extending to the Port of St. Petersburg entrance channel. The channels are marked by lights, a daybeacon and lighted and unlighted buoys. Marked and unmarked fish havens are in the natural deepwater area northeast of St. Petersburg.

(190)

Pilotage

(191) Pilots for St. Petersburg are obtained through the Tampa Pilot Association. (See pilotage for Tampa.)

(192)

Quarantine, customs, immigration and agricultural quarantine

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

(194) **Quarantine** is enforced in accordance with the regulations of the U.S. Public Health Service. (See Public Health Service, chapter 1.) A city hospital and several private hospitals are in St. Petersburg.

(195) St. Petersburg is a customs **port of entry**, and the harbor basins are under the jurisdiction of the Port of St. Petersburg.

(196) **Port of St. Petersburg**, the deepest and southernmost basin along the city waterfront, is about 500 yards long and 400 yards wide. The Port of St. Petersburg Wharf, along the north side of the basin, provides about 1,500 feet of berthing space with a reported 24 feet alongside and a deck height of 8 feet. Fresh water, electrical shore power connections and telephone service are available. The wharf is used for the receipt and shipment of general cargo, mega-yachts and mooring of cruise vessels. Cargo is handled by rented mobile cranes or ships' gear. The port monitors VHF-FM channel 16 and works on VHF-FM channel 74; telephone, 727–893–7053; fax, 727–893–7428. **St. Petersburg Coast Guard Station** and **St.**

Petersburg Coast Guard Sector Office are at the outer end of the basin.

(197) **Bayboro Harbor**, under the jurisdiction of the Port of St. Petersburg, is entered from the inner end of the ship basin is used by numerous fishing boats and other small commercial craft.

(198) Oil terminals, marinas, boatyards and other commercial landings are along the banks of **Salt Creek**, which empties into the south side of Bayboro Harbor. Controlling depths in the creek are about 8 feet to the first bend, thence 5 feet to about 100 yards east of the first bridge at Third Street South, which is the head of navigation. A marina near the head of navigation has a 20-ton mobile hoist that can haul out craft for complete repairs. Berths with electricity and water are available.

(199) Northward along the St. Petersburg waterfront from the ship basin are the Municipal Pier and three yacht basins. The pier is a concrete structure about 0.5 mile long. North Yacht Basin and Central Yacht Basin are on either side of the inner half of the pier. Both basins are enclosed by sea walls and provide excellent protection for vessels up to about 125 feet. Depths of about 10 feet are in North, Central and South Yacht Basins. Gasoline, diesel fuel, water, ice, marine supplies, launching ramps and open and covered berthage are available at the St. Petersburg Municipal Marina and the yacht club in Central Basin. A marina at the north end of the basin has transient slips and pumpout facilities; telephone, 727–824–8022, or contact via VHF-FM channel 16.

(200) Lights mark the ends of the moles on either side of the entrance to the Central Yacht Basin. A shoal area is south of the entrance channel. Numerous slips are on the north and west sides of the basin, and a public landing is on the west side. The St. Petersburg Yacht Club is in the Central Yacht Basin.

(201)

Boating safety information

(202) Pinellas County Waterway Management Committee offers the marine public local safe-boating information; call 727–684–8559.

(203) **Coffeepot Bayou**, 1 mile north of the Municipal Pier, affords good anchorage for small craft that can pass under Snell Isle Boulevard bridge, which has a 34-foot bascule span with a clearance of 7 feet. (See **33 CFR 117.1** through **117.59** and **117.279**, chapter 2, for drawbridge regulations.) The entrance channel is well marked with private daymarkers, and a depth of about 5 feet can be carried.

(204) **Smacks Bayou**, about 1 mile northeast of Coffeepot Bayou, has a depth of about 5 feet; the approach from the south is marked by private daybeacons. Inside, there is deeper water resulting from dredging to provide land fill. Any vessel able to enter and pass Overlook Drive Highway Bridge, which has a 38-foot fixed span with a clearance of 11 feet, will find good shelter. A marina just inside the entrance has water, ice and berthing for about 30 boats.

(205) **Bayou Grande**, about 1.8 miles north of Smacks Bayou and about 3.3 miles south of the Gandy Bridge, empties into the west side of Tampa Bay. The entrance channel is reportedly marked by private aids with a controlling depth of about 7 feet in 1990. The basins on the south side of the bayou entrance offer good protection for small boats during periods of very bad weather.

(206) The center 100-foot section of the former Weedon Drive Highway Bridge crossing the north end of Bayou Grande has been removed, and the fixed portions of the bridge on either side of the channel remain as fishing piers. Above Bayou Grande, the waterway is known as **Riviera Bay**. A highway bridge at the west end of the bay has a 22-foot fixed span with a clearance of 10 feet.

(207) **Big Bayou** is about 1 mile south of the St. Petersburg ship basin. The entrance channel, marked by private daybeacons, has a depth of about 3 feet.

(208) **Bayou Bonita**, a small-boat channel behind **Coquina Key (Lewis Island)**, connects Big and Little Bayous. It is crossed by two highway bridges, each with a 40-foot fixed span and a pipeline attached. The minimum clearance is 9 feet. Overhead power cables crossing the bayou immediately north of each bridge have a minimum clearance of 36 feet.

(209) **Little Bayou** is 2.5 miles south of the St. Petersburg ship basin. A channel with a reported depth of 6 feet and marked by private daybeacons leads into the bayou. A privately owned yacht basin is in the south part of the bayou.

(210) **Point Pinellas** is the southeast extremity of Pinellas Peninsula. A channel, marked by private daybeacons, leads to several launching ramps.

(211)

ENCs - US5FL11M, US5FL12M, US4FL12M, US-5FL09M

Charts - 11415, 11416

(212) The Intracoastal Waterway leads from Anna Maria Sound, across the lower part of Tampa Bay, thence through **Boca Ciega Bay**, The Narrows, Clearwater Harbor and St. Joseph Sound to Anclote Anchorage. The section of the Intracoastal Waterway from Tampa Bay to Anclote Anchorage passing through the waters described in this chapter and places along its route are discussed in chapter 12.

(213) **Bunces Pass** (27°38.9'N., 82°44.4'W.), at the north end of Mullet Key, is a passage into the south part of Boca Ciega Bay from the Gulf and through to Tampa Bay. It is unmarked and, in 2001, shoaling was reported of less than one foot over the bar at the Gulf entrance with greater depths inside. Local knowledge is necessary to use the pass. The State Route 679 Pinellas Bayway Bridge (Structure F) over the pass has a fixed span with a clearance of 20 feet. The Sunshine Skyway Bridge over the east end of the pass has a fixed span with a clearance of 16 feet at the center.

(214) A stake-marked channel with a controlling depth of 3 feet leads from Bunces Pass to the south end of **Mullet Key Bayou**. Small craft can anchor in the bayou.

(215) **St. Pete Beach**, north of Bunces Pass and about 5 miles north of Egmont Key Light, is a beach community that occupies most of the 5-mile-long barrier island known as **Long Key**. **Pass-a-Grille Beach**, **Don Ce Sar Beach**and Lido Beach are sections of the resort city. A large hotel with four towers, other hotel and apartment buildings and a church spire are prominent.

(216) **Tierra Verde**, immediately east of the south part of Long Key, is a resort on what was formerly **Pine Key** and formerly a part of **Cabbage Key**. Marinas at the north end of Tierra Verde have berths, gasoline, diesel fuel, pump-out, electricity, water, ice and marine supplies.

(217) **North Channel**, immediately south of Long Key, is a dredged channel that leads over the bar from the Gulf and connects with **Pass-a-Grille Channel**, which separates the south part of Long Key from Tierra Verde and joins the main channel of the Intracoastal Waterway at the north end of Tierra Verde. North Channel and Pass-a-Grille Channel are well marked by lights and daybeacons. In 2022, the controlling depth in North Channel was 3 feet to the main channel of the Intracoastal Waterway. **South Channel** leads to Pass-a-Grille Channel from the southwest and passes east of Shell Key; in 2003, it was reported to have completely shoaled.

(218) In Pass-a-Grille Channel the flood current sets north with an average velocity of 1.2 knots and ebbs south with an average velocity of 1.4 knots. 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.

(219) A marina near the south end of Long Key, west of **Vina del Mar**, can provide transient berths, gasoline, diesel fuel, wet storage, water, ice, pump-out and a lift to 7 tons for full repairs. In 2005, the approach to the marina had a reported depth of 10 feet.

(220) **Mud Key Channel** connects the island channel between Long Key and Vina del Mar with the main channel of the Intracoastal Waterway north of Vina del Mar. Submerged pilings of former private daybeacons may exist in the channel. Caution is advised. State Route 682 (Structures C and D) bridge of the Pinellas Bayway from Long Key to Isla del Sol has a fixed span with a clearance of 65 feet.

(221) **Blind Pass**, about 4 miles north of North Channel, is a shallow pass from the Gulf to Boca Ciega Bay between the north end of Long Key and Treasure Island. Near the pass are several very prominent landmarks that include a large white 10-story apartment hotel, a large hotel with penthouse and a church spire. The pass is used by local fishing boats and other small craft. State Route 699 highway bridge crossing the pass near the inner end has a 37-foot fixed span with a clearance of 11 feet. Overhead power cables at the bridge have a minimum clearance of 30 feet.

(222) **Treasure Island** is a winter resort with many hotels, motels and other conveniences.

(223)

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Chart - 11411

(224) **Treasure Island Causeway** crosses Boca Ciega Bay from Treasure Island via Paradise Island and South Causeway Isles to the mainland at St. Petersburg. The causeway has a bascule span over the Intracoastal Waterway with a clearance of 21 feet. The bridgetender monitors and operates on VHF-FM channel 9; call signs WQZ-367 or KZU-970. (See **33 CFR 117.1** through **117.59** and **117.287(k)**, chapter 2, for drawbridge regulations.) The east and west openings between the mainland and South Causeway Isles and between Paradise and Treasure Islands have fixed spans with center clearances of 4 and 5 feet, respectively. An overhead power cable of unknown clearance crosses between the mainland and South Causeway Isles.

(225) **Johns Pass**, about 3 miles north of Blind Pass, between Treasure Island and **Sand Key**, affords passage for small craft from the Gulf to the north part of Boca Ciega Bay. A marked channel leads from the Gulf of Mexico through Johns Pass thence north to the Intracoastal Waterway. The channel is reportedly subject to considerable shoaling between Daybeacon 1 and Buoy 3. Extreme caution and local knowledge of the channel conditions is advised. The entrance to the channel is marked by a light, and the channel is marked by lights, buoys and daybeacons. In Johns Pass the flood current sets northeast at an average velocity of 2.0 knots and ebbs southwest at an average velocity of 1.5 knots. 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.

(226) State Route 699 highway bridge over the pass has a bascule span with a clearance of 28 feet at the center. (See **33 CFR 117.1** through **117.49**, chapter 2, for drawbridge regulations.) The bridgetender monitors and works on VHF-FM channel 9; call sign WQZ 213.

(227) Numerous fishing piers are near Johns Pass Bridge.

(228) **Sand Key** is a 12-mile-long barrier island that extends from Johns Pass to Clearwater Pass. The island has been developed as a winter resort and has several well-developed communities.

(229)

Prominent features

(230) The 1,000-foot fishing pier at **Redington Shores**, large apartment hotels with penthouses on the island and the water tank at the Veterans Hospital at Bay Pines are all conspicuous.

(231) **Clearwater Pass**, 12 miles north from Johns Pass, extends east from the Gulf between the north end of Sand Key and the south end of **Clearwater Beach Island**. The pass is crossed by Pinellas County Route 183 highway bridge, which has a clearance of 74 feet.

(232) There are many prominent features in the Clearwater area including a large white apartment hotel near the north end of Clearwater Beach Island, a large hotel on the island on the north side of the Clearwater Memorial Causeway, several tall radio towers and several other prominent buildings. At Dunedin, 3 miles north of Clearwater, a large hotel, two tanks and a stack are conspicuous.

(233) A dredged channel leads from the Gulf through Clearwater Pass to a junction with the Intracoastal Waterway, and a dredged side channel leads north from just inside the pass along the east side of Clearwater Beach Island to a turning basin at the west end of Clearwater Memorial Causeway.The channels are well marked by lights and daybeacons.

(234)

Currents

(235) The tidal current in Clearwater Pass averages about 1.2 knots. 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.

(236) The city of Clearwater operates the City Pier and Municipal Marina at the turning basin at the west end of Clearwater Memorial Causeway. The marina can provide berths, electricity, gasoline, diesel fuel, water, ice, a pump-out station and marine supplies. The **harbormaster** has his office at the marina and assigns berths. He can be contacted on VHF-FM channel 16 or by telephone (727–462–6954) for marine information or berthing instructions. The Pinellas County Sheriff boat is based at the marina.

(237)

Coast Guard Station

(238) **Coast Guard Station Sand Key** is on the east side of Sand Key about 1 mile south of Clearwater Pass.

(239) Clearwater Harbor is a link in the Intracoastal Waterway, Caloosahatchee River, FL, to Brownsville, TX. Clearwater Harbor and the city of Clearwater are described in chapter 12.

(240)

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(241) **St. Joseph Sound** extends north from Clearwater Harbor nearly to Anclote Keys and is separated from the Gulf for a part of the distance by narrow strips of beach known as **Caladesi Island** and **Honeymoon Island.**

(242)

COLREGS Demarcation Lines

(243) The lines established for St. Joseph Sound are described in **33 CFR 80.753**, chapter 2.

(244) **Dunedin Pass**, 3 miles north of Clearwater Pass at the opposite end of Clearwater Beach Island, is marked by private daybeacons. In 1984, the pass was reported shoaled to 1 foot and closed to navigation.

(245) A fish haven about 1.3 miles long and 300 yards wide and marked by private buoys is about 3 miles west of the pass.

(246) **Hurricane Pass**, between Caladesi Island and Honeymoon Island, is subject to change, but in 1982 it was reported that with local knowledge 3 to 5 feet could be carried. A light and daybeacons mark the pass.

(247) A fish haven, 600 feet wide and 2,000 feet long on a north-south heading and marked by private buoys, is about 4.5 miles west of the pass.

(248) Five miles off St. Joseph Sound the current floods north with a velocity of 0.4 knot and ebbs south with a velocity of 0.6 knot.

(249) The area west and north of **Honeymoon Island** was, in 1991, reportedly shoaled to bare, and passage between Honeymoon Island and **Three Rooker Bar** to the north should only be made with caution.

(250) **Anclote Keys**, several in number, are about 13 miles north of Clearwater. The trees on the south end of Anclote Key, the largest of the group, are rather tall and can be made out from well offshore. The structure of an abandoned light is reported visible above the trees. In 1992, a shoal area that uncovers was reported up to 1.4 miles off the north end of the Anclote Key.

(251) The area between the keys and mainland offers good protection from west gales for vessels up to 7 feet in draft. The area can be reached by passing either north or south of the Keys; both passages are well marked. In 1993, shoaling to 2 feet was reported in about 28°09'07"N., 82°50'42"W. and 28°08'36"N., 82°51'07"W. in the south entrance. Vessels drawing more than 7 feet can anchor west of the keys where, though more exposed to west winds, the water shoals so gradually that the seas are never very heavy, and vessels with good ground tackle can ride out anything but a hurricane. Eastward of the south end of Anclote Key, the tidal current has an average velocity of 0.6 knot on the flood and 0.8 knot on the ebb.

(252) **Anclote River** empties into St. Joseph Sound over a broad shoal area. A tall powerplant stack on the north side of the entrance is reported conspicuous at a distance of 25 miles. The stack is marked by strobe lights by day and by flashing lights at night.

(253) A channel, with dredged sections and with its entrance about 2 miles southwest of the south end of Anclote Key, leads from the Gulf to a turning basin at Tarpon Springs. The channel is marked by lighted ranges and numerous lights and daybeacons. Above Tarpon Springs the river is navigable for drafts of no more than 2 to 3 feet.

(254) **Anclote** is a small town on the north bank of Anclote River about 1 mile above the mouth. A marina has berths,

electricity, gasoline, diesel fuel, water, ice and dry storage available. Hull, engine and electronic repairs can be made. A TV tower marked by strobe lights east of town can be seen for about 10 miles.

(255) **Tarpon Springs** is a winter resort and commercial fishing center on the south bank of Anclote River, 3 miles above the mouth. Tarpon Springs, headquarters for the sponge fishing fleet on the west coast of Florida, has a municipal hospital and rail and highway connections to all parts of the state. The municipal landing is a marginal wharf 330 feet long at the Sponge Exchange, just below the Alternate U.S. Route 19 highway bridge.

(256) There are several small-craft facilities and a yacht club at Tarpon Springs. There is a marine railway 0.4 mile west of Alternate U.S. Route 19 highway bridge that can handle craft up to 95 feet for engine and hull repairs. Water and supplies are available. The yacht club is on the east bank of Tarpon Bayou opposite Chesapeake Point.

(257) Alternate U.S. Route 19 highway bridge with a 41-foot fixed span and a clearance of 16 feet crosses Anclote River about 3 miles above the mouth at Tarpon Springs. A railroad bridge with a 28-foot fixed span and a clearance of 16 feet is about 1 mile upstream of the highway bridge.

(258) **Kreamer Bayou** and **Whitcomb Bayou** empty into Anclote River along the west side of Tarpon Springs. The junction is at the north end of a small island; the river channel passes to the east of the island, and Anclote River South Channel to the bayous passes to the west. The South Channel branches at Chesapeake Point into Kreamer Bayou on the west and via Tarpon Bayou into Whitcomb Bayou on the east. The channel to Kreamer Bayou has shoaled, and only small skiffs can enter. Beckett Bridge, the highway drawbridge over Tarpon Bayou (South Channel) has a 25-foot bascule span with a clearance of 8 feet. (See **33 CFR 117.1** through **117.59** and **117.341**, chapter 2, for drawbridge regulations.) The clearance of the nearby overhead power cable is 38 feet. A public wharf and launching ramp are south of the entrance to **Spring Bayou**, the east arm in Whitcomb Bayou; and another public wharf is at the yacht basin at the entrance. A draft of 3 feet can be carried from Anclote River through Whitcomb Bayou, which is centrally located in the town of Tarpon Springs.

(259)

St. Martins Reef

(260) The shoals that extend over 10 miles offshore along the coast for 40 miles north from Anclote Keys are known under the general name of **St. Martins Reef**. Many of the rocks and shoals are marked by private daybeacons. The outer limit of shallow water and detached shoals is marked by **St. Martin Outer Shoal Light 10** (28°25'50"N., 82°55'05"W.), 16 feet above the water and shown from a dolphin with a red triangular daymark.

(261) Strangers should approach the coast with care, and deep-draft vessels should stay in depths of 30 to 35 feet. Small craft of 3 to 4 feet in draft usually follow the coast more closely, especially during windy weather, and find comparatively smooth water by keeping about 7 miles offshore. Hazy atmosphere frequently obscures this section of the coast, and the vessels standing inshore close enough to sight land are mostly spongers and fishermen, who sometimes anchor in shoal water, soft bottom, behind shell reefs and ride out the heaviest gales.

(262)

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Chart - 11411

(263) Two privately maintained and marked channels, about 3.5 and 4 miles north of Anclote River, respectively, lead east to a private housing development known as **Gulf Harbors**. No known services are available.

(264) An unmarked fish haven is about 7 miles west of the entrance to Pithlachascotee River, and fish havens marked by private buoys are about 11.5 and 15 miles west of the river entrance.

(265) **Pithlachascotee River,** locally known as the **Cotee River**, empties into the Gulf 7 miles north of Anclote River. The river has an extensive shoal area off the mouth and numerous oyster reefs just inside. A dredged channel, marked by lights and daybeacons, leads from the Gulf to a turning basin just below the first bridge at Port Richey, about 1.2 miles above the mouth. Depths of about 4 feet can be carried across the shoals to the channel entrance. Depths of 2 feet and greater can be carried to New Port Richey with local knowledge.

(266) Four bridges cross the Pithlachascotee River. The first bridge, U.S. Route 19 highway bridge about 1.2 miles above the mouth, has a 48-foot fixed span with a clearance of 12 feet. An overhead power cable with a clearance of 69 feet is close west of the bridge. An overhead power cable about 2 miles above the mouth has an estimated clearance of 40 feet. The second bridge, a highway bridge about 2.7 miles above the mouth, has a 32-foot fixed span with a clearance of 10 feet. The third bridge, State Route 595 highway bridge about 3.6 miles above the mouth, has a 27-foot fixed span with a clearance of 6 feet; overhead power and telephone cables 0.25 mile east of the bridge have a clearance of 38 feet. A fixed highway bridge with reported clearances of 10 feet vertical and 27 feet horizontal is about 0.25 mile above the third bridge.

(267) **Port Richey** is a resort town at the entrance to the river. Marinas below the first highway bridge have gasoline, diesel fuel, pump-out, ice, boat storage, limited marine supplies and lifts to 22 tons; hull, engine and electronic repairs are available.

(268) **New Port Richey** is a town about 2.5 miles above the mouth of Pithlachascotee River. The municipal water tank at the town is prominent from offshore. There are two hospitals and a small public wharf and launching ramp at the town. Gasoline, oil, water, ice and provisions are available in the town but not on the waterfront.

(269)

Hudson to Crystal River

(270) **Hudson** is a small town on Hudson Creek, which empties into the Gulf 12 miles north of Anclote River. The entrance channel is marked by a private light and daybeacons. Berths, electricity, gasoline, diesel fuel, water, ice, marine supplies, sewage pump-out, launching ramp, wet and dry storage and hull, engine and electronic repairs are available.

(271) **Aripeka** is a village on **Hammock Creek**, 17 miles north of Anclote River. There are numerous deep springs and shoals in the creek, which has a depth of about 1 foot. The approach to Aripeka is marked by a private light and daybeacons. The highway bridges over the channels around the north and south sides of the island in the middle of the creek have fixed spans with clearances of 4 and 8 feet, respectively. There are fish camps on the creek. Gasoline in cans, water, ice and provisions are available at the north of the two highway bridges. The village, on State Route 595, has a launching ramp.

(272) **Hernando Beach** is the site of a large housing development 20 miles north of Anclote River. Transient berths, electricity, gasoline, diesel fuel, water, ice, marine supplies, provisions, a launching ramp and a forklift capable of hauling out craft to 65 feet for hull and engine repairs are available. The approach channel is marked by a private light and daybeacons and can be followed by keeping several yards south of the jetty and fill spit. In 1999, a large submerged rock covered at all stages of tide was reported in the middle of Hernando Beach channel at about 28°30'00"N., 82°40'30"W.; a sign located just outside the southeast channel boundary is reported to warn mariners of the impending danger.

(273) **Bayport** is a village at the mouth of **Weeki Wachee River**, 23 miles north of Anclote River. On a favorable tide a draft of about 2 feet can be taken to a small marina about 1.5 miles above the mouth. Gasoline, water, ice, marine supplies, and outboard engine repairs are available. Bayport Channel Approach Light BP (28°32'49"N., 82°42'15"W.) marks the approach to the channel to Weeki Wachee River. **Beacon Rock**, close north of the light, covers at high water and is marked by a private daybeacon. The remainder of the channel is marked by private daybeacons and a light, and continues in a generally east by south direction through the oyster reefs and into the river. A public launching ramp and wharf are near the north side of the river entrance.

(274) **Chassahowitzka River** empties into **Chassahowitzka Bay** 31 miles north of Anclote River. On a favorable tide a draft of about 2 feet can be taken into the river. The channel is marked by a light and private daybeacons. From Johns Island to the village of Chassahowitzka, the river is shallow and partly blocked by grass and during the summer by hyacinths; the depth is about 1½ feet. **Chassahowitzka** is a small fishing village with a lodge, cabins and a trailer park; a road connects with the state highway. Berthing, gasoline, water, ice, limited marine supplies and a launching ramp are available.

(275) **Bird Island** is prominent in the entrance to Chassahowitzka Bay. **Black Rock**, 1.3 miles seaward from the island, bares at half tide. **Chassahowitzka Point**, on the north side of the bay, is a high and conspicuous mangrove key.

(276) **Homosassa River** empties into **Homosassa Bay** 36 miles north of Anclote River. **St. Martins Keys** are prominent mangrove islets on the north side of the bay entrance.

(277) **Homosassa** is a small fishing community 4 miles above the mouth of the river. Several commercial fish houses, a public pier for transient craft and marinas are here; berths with electricity, gasoline, ice, marine supplies, covered dry storage, launching ramps and a forklift capable of hauling out craft to 26 feet for engine repairs are available. A launching ramp and berths are available just inside the entrance to Halls River, which empties into the north side of Homosassa River about 1 mile above Homosassa. A highway leads from Homosassa to the town of Crystal River.

(278) **Homosassa Bay Entrance Light 2** (28°41'26"N., 82°48'39"W.), 16 feet above the water and shown from a dolphin with a red triangular dayboard, about 3.3 miles southwest of the entrance to the channel, marks the approach. The river entrance is clearly marked by lights, buoys and daybeacons. Shoals on either side of the channel are discernible by their lighter color. The river channel is marked by buoys and daybeacons. Mariners are advised to use extreme caution at a slow and safe speed to avoid collision when approaching and transiting through **Hell Gate**, a narrow section of the Homosassa River between Daybeacon 57A and Buoy 59.

(279) The overhead power cables crossing Homosassa River below Homosassa have a reported least clearance of 45 feet.

(280)

Manatees

(281) Regulated speed zones for the protection of manatees are in Homosassa River. (See Manatees, chapter 3.)

(282) **Crystal River** empties into the north side of **Crystal Bay** 45 miles north of Anclote River and 23 miles southeast from the town of Cedar Keys. **Mangrove Point**, on the south side of the entrance to the bay, is prominent in the approach from the southwest. The white shell of **Shell Island**, on the south side of the river's entrance, is prominent when approached from the dredged channel across Crystal Reefs.

(283) A marked channel with dredged sections leads from the Gulf through Crystal Bay and Crystal River to **Kings Bay** and the town of Crystal River at the river head. The channel through Crystal Reefs to the mouth of the river on the north side of Shell Island to Kings Bay is marked by daybeacons. During periods of prolonged northeast winds, depths in the river may be lowered 1 to 2 feet

below normal levels. With local knowledge, greater depths can be carried in all reaches of the entrance and river; the area is subject to frequent shoaling and extreme caution is advised. A 25 mph speed limit in the channel is strictly enforced year round.

(284) **Salt River** joins Crystal River about 4 miles above the mouth. An overhead power cable with a clearance of 47 feet crosses the entrance to Salt River. The channel is marked with private daybeacons. Berths, electricity, gasoline, diesel fuel, pump-out, water, ice, marine supplies, a launching ramp, a 35-ton lift, storage and hull and engine repairs are reported available at a marina just above Daybeacon 30. A public fishing pier juts out from the south side of the river 4.5 miles above the mouth. A public launching ramp is available just east of the fishing pier.

(285) The town of **Crystal River**, at the head of the river 6 miles above the mouth, has highway connections. Several commercial fish houses, marinas and boatyards are at Crystal River in the coves on the northeast side of Kings Bay. When entering the coves, keep close west of the small island in the entrance. In 1982, it was reported that 3 to 4 feet could be carried into the coves; caution is advised. Overhead power cables crossing the coves have a least clearance of 32 feet. Berths, electricity, gasoline, diesel fuel, pump-out, water, ice, provisions, marine supplies, storage and launching ramps are available; a marine railway can haul out craft to 60 feet for hull and engine repairs and dry open or covered storage. A **no-wake idle speed** is enforced in the coves.

(286)

Manatees

(287) Regulated speed zones and a motorboat prohibited area for the protection of manatees are in Kings Bay. (See Manatees, chapter 3.)

(288)

Cross Florida Greenway to Boiler Gap

(289) A privately dredged channel, marked by private lights, leads east from the Gulf for about 14 miles to a turning basin at the Florida Power Corporation's Crystal River power plant about 2 miles northwest of Crystal River entrance. In 1982, the channel had a reported controlling depth of 20 feet. The inner end of the channel is protected by two dikes extending to shore. The north dike is about 3 miles long, and the south dike about 2 miles long. Spoil banks extend along the north side of the channel for about 3.5 miles seaward from the end of the north dike. Two stacks on the north side of the turning basin, four stacks in about 28°58.0'N., 82°41.8'W., several cooling towers, and the power plant are conspicuous. The stacks at the turning basin, with alternating bands of white and red, are marked on top by flashing red lights and by fixed and flashing red lights on the lower section. The 600-foot stacks to the north and the cooling towers are marked by strobe lights. The power plant has a T-head pier with 500 feet of usable berthing space and 20 feet reported alongside. The pier is used to unload coal from barges. Fresh water and electrical shore-power connections are available.

(290) **Cross Florida Greenway** enters the Gulf about 3.0 miles north of the Crystal River power plant. The 8.5-mile approach channel, marked by lights and daybeacons, can be approached by way of the two outermost reaches of the power plant entrance channel, which are almost in line with the Greenway canal. The canal is primarily open to barge traffic but also used by pleasure and fishing boats. About 4.3 miles above the mouth, a fixed highway bridge crosses the canal with a clearance of 40 feet. A Florida Marine Patrol station and public boat ramp are just east of the bridge. About 5.75 miles above the mouth, the Withlacoochee River enters the canal on the south side. About 7.0 miles above the mouth, the Inglis lock is no longer operational. Overhead power cables crossing the canal have a least clearance of 80 feet.

(291) In 1986, the federal government de-authorized the Cross Florida Barge Canal project and in 1990, turned the right of way to the State of Florida. It is operated by the Office of Greenways and Trails under the State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection. For current information on the Cross Florida Greenway, contact the Office of Greenways and Trails at 352–236–7143 in Ocala, FL.

(292) **Withlacoochee River** rises in the central part of the Florida Peninsula and empties into the Gulf about 17 miles southeast of Cedar Keys. **Withlacoochee River Entrance Light 1** (28°58'08"N., 82°49'43"W.), 16 feet above the water and shown from a pile with a green square daymark, marks the approach.

(293) A dredged channel leads from the Gulf to a turning basin at Port Inglis, about 7 miles above the mouth. Navigation is possible above the turning basin in an unmarked channel to a spillway about 11 miles above the mouth. The dredged channel is marked by lights and daybeacons to a point about 1 mile above the mouth.

(294) The lock in the Cross Florida Greenway (formerly the Cross Florida Barge Canal) is no longer operational. The body of water above the spillway is locally known as **Lake Rousseau** and leads to **Dunnellon**, 24 miles above the mouth. Local knowledge is recommended for navigation through Lake Rousseau; numerous submerged trees and stumps have been reported in the area. Navigation is possible in the river channel above Dunnellon where depths reportedly vary from less than 1 foot to several feet, depending on time of year and rainfall.

(295) Port Inglis was a town at the mouth of the river that has been abandoned. A public launching ramp and park are on the north side of the entrance.

(296) **Yankeetown**, the principal town on the river, is a small winter resort and fishing village about 3 miles above the mouth. A marina, in the town boat basin on the north side of the river, has limited berthage, gasoline, diesel fuel, water, ice, launching ramp and limited marine supplies. A seafood receiving plant is about 1 mile above

the marina. **Yankeetown Coast Guard Station** is at Yankeetown.

(297) **Inglis** is a small town about 6 miles above the mouth of the river. Overhead power cables crossing the river about 1 mile below the town have a minimum clearance of 40 feet. The U.S. Route 19 dual highway bridges crossing the river at Inglis have 38-foot fixed spans with clearances of 10 feet.

(298) Floating logs and other debris partially obstruct the channel above Inglis making it passable by small boats only.

(299)

Currents

(300) Off the mouth of the river a tidal current sets east during the flood and west during the ebb. The ebb has a reported velocity of 3 knots at times, and this must be taken into account by vessels coming in from the entrance buoy. A strong northeast wind may increase the velocity of the ebb current, and a southwest wind may decrease it. 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.

(301)

Manatees

(302) Regulated speed zones and a caution zone for the protection of manatees are in the Withlacoochee River and its approaches. (See Manatees, chapter 3.)

(303) **Waccasassa River**, 10 miles north of Withlacoochee River, has the extensive **Waccasassa Reefs** off its entrance. A channel marked by private daybeacons leads east of the reefs and, in 1982, had a reported controlling depth of 2 feet with greater depths inside the river. A public launching ramp and a marina are on the north shore about 4 and 4.3 miles, respectively, above the mouth. The marina is in a small basin. Gasoline, berths, water, ice, some marine supplies and a launching ramp are available.

(304) **Cedar Keys**, 95 miles north of Tampa Bay, are a group of low sandy islets covered with mangrove trees. Prominent from offshore is the white tower of the abandoned lighthouse on **Seahorse Key**, the outermost of the group. The tower, which is flanked by two white-roofed buildings, shows to seaward among the trees; the tower is 30 feet high and stands on a 45-foot mound on the south side of the key. **Seahorse Reef**, a dangerous shoal with little depth over it, extends 11 miles southwest from Seahorse Key. The outer end of the reef is marked by **Seahorse Reef Light** (28°58'31"N., 83°09'13"W.), 31 feet above the water and shown from a white square skeleton tower on piles.

(305) A submerged wreck with 7 feet of water over it is about 3.5 miles east-southeast of Seahorse Reef Light in about 28°57.7'N., 83°05.4'W.

(306) **Main Ship Channel**, a dredged channel, leads from the Gulf in a general northeast direction between East Bank and West Bank, east of Seahorse Key and Grassy Key; thence by a crooked and winding channel west of Atsena Otie Key into Cedar Key Harbor. In 2010, the centerline controlling depth was 6.5 feet. The channel is well marked by lights and daybeacons. Extreme caution must be exercised at two hairpin curves.

(307) **Northwest Channel**, a dredged channel, leads from the west between North Bank and South Bank.The channel is marked by lights, daybeacons and an approach light. Small craft bound up the coast should enter by Main Ship Channel and leave by Northwest Channel rather than cross Seahorse Reef. Local fishermen have reported a controlling depth of 4 feet in **Deadmans Channel**, a natural channel, which is unmarked and should not be used without local knowledge.

(308) **South Bar Channel**, the approach channel to Cedar Key from the east, had a reported depth of about 2½ feet in 1982. The channel is marked by an entrance light and several daybeacons.

(309)

Fog

(310) This area has considerable fog during the winter; south winds bring it in, and north winds clear it away.

(311)

Currents

(312) Outside the entrance channel the current sets east on the flood and west on the ebb. Inside, the currents generally follow the channels. Currents are strong in the vicinity of the city dock, and caution must be observed when docking with a fair current.

(313) **Cedar Key** is a small town on **Way Key**. The most prominent object in the town is the municipal water tank, 140 feet high. A radio tower is nearby. In 1982, it was reported that a draft of about 8 feet could be taken through the main channel to the city dock, which had reported depths of 8 to 15 feet alongside. A circular boat basin, accessible through a causeway with an estimated clearance of 3 feet, is also used by small boats at Cedar Key.

(314) A marina in the small cove just northeast of the city dock can provide berths, water, ice, electricity and marine supplies. A launching ramp is in the small cove. In 1982, a reported depth of about 3 feet could be carried in the privately marked channel leading to the marina.

(315) The **Cedar Key State Memorial and Museum** is the west side of Way Key. An airstrip is here. Several launching ramps are available.

(316) **Suwannee Sound**, 7 miles north from Cedar Keys, has a long line of narrow shoals on the seaward side known as **Suwannee Reef**. The sound is about 8 miles long and has an average width of about 3 miles. The principal entrance to Suwannee Sound is through **Derrick Key Gap**, a dredged channel 4 miles northwest from Cedar Keys.The channel is marked by daybeacons. The passage through Suwannee Sound from Derrick Key Gap is west of **Lone Cabbage Reef**, which extends about 2.3 miles northwest from **Lone Cabbage Island**. The

entrance channel to East Pass is unmarked. Lone Cabbage Reef bares in spots at low water and is to be avoided.

(317) **Steamboat Gap**, and **West Gap**, unmarked secondary channels with depths of 4 feet or less, should not be entered without local knowledge. **White Shell Bar Gap**, about 1 mile northwest of West Gap, has a controlling depth of about 2 feet through an unmarked channel. About 2.8 miles northwest of West Gap is a channel, marked by a private light and daybeacons, which leads from the Gulf of Mexico through **Ranch Bar Gap** to West Pass at the mouth of Suwannee River. In 1994, the controlling depths were 4 feet in the entrance channel and Wadley Pass to its junction.

(318) **Suwannee River** empties into the north part of Suwannee Sound through the three mouths known as **East Pass, West Pass** and **Wadley Pass**. Wadley Pass is the main entrance. West Pass is little used and good only for shallow draft boats. A private light and daybeacons mark the entrance to West Pass.

(319) The entrance channel to Wadley Pass, dredged by the Suwannee River Authority, leads on a bearing of **102°** from a point in the Gulf about 1.4 miles **260°** from **Axe Island** (29°18.8'N., 83°10.5'W.), thence through Wadley Pass south and east of **Little Bradford Island** to its junction with West Pass. At the southeast end of Little Bradford Island, a branch channel leads north through **Northwest Pass**, thence northeast into **Salt Creek** to the village of **Suwannee**. Suwannee is also fronted on its east side by the Suwannee River. Private lights and daybeacons mark these channels.

(320) There is little commerce on the river.

(321) Low river stage occurs in the winter, and high river stage in the fall months. Fluctuations are extreme because of freshets.

(322) Once inside the river the centerline controlling depths, in 1986, were 3 feet from the junction of East and West Passes (29°19.0'N., 83°07.2'W.) to **Fanning**, about 26 miles above the junction, and thence 3 feet to **Ellaville,** 109 miles above the junction. At high water stages small boats can go to **White Springs,** 147 miles above the junction.

(323) An unmarked sandbar, locally known as **Jack's Sandbar**, is about 13.7 miles above the junction of East and West Passes. The bar is about 800 yards long and 200 yards wide in places and is said to cover almost two-thirds of the east side of the river. Depths over the bar range from less than 1 foot to 3 feet. The bar is not discernible because vegetation colors the water a dark brown. It can best be avoided by passing close to the west shore to within 75 to 100 feet of the shore vegetation.

(324) Marinas in the dredged canals on the north side of Suwannee River at the town of Suwannee can provide berths, gasoline, diesel fuel, launching ramps, marine supplies and hull, engine and electronic repairs. There are marinas, several fish camps, fish wharves and a seafood packing plant at the town on Salt Creek. Berths, gasoline, a limited supply of water and launching ramps are available. Minor hull and engine repairs can be made. There is a post office at the town, and State Route 349 connects the town with Old Town on the main coastal highway.

(325) Water is available at a fish camp at **Vista** about 7.5 miles above the junction of East and West Passes. Gasoline, water, a launching ramp and marine supplies can be obtained at **Fowlers Bluff** (Fowler Bluff), 10 miles above the junction of East and West Passes; at **Manatee Springs State Park**, 16 miles above the junction; and at **Old Town** at U.S. Route 19 highway bridge, 25 miles above the junction. The bridges, the first above the mouth, have fixed spans with least clearances of about 30 feet at low water stage and 15 feet at high water stage. In 1985, the lower bridge was being replaced by a fixed bridge with a design clearance of 29 feet at high water stage. The minimum channel clearance of the bridges crossing the river is at the Seaboard System Railroad Bridge at **Old Town** and 28 miles above the junction of East and West Passes. This bridge has a swing span with a channel width of 48 feet and a clearance of 5 feet at high water stage and 15 feet at low water stage. (See **33 CFR 117.1** through **117.59** and **117.333**, chapter 2, for drawbridge regulations.) An overhead pipeline and numerous overhead power cables cross Suwannee River between the mouth and Ellaville, least clearance is 23 feet.

(326) **Boiler Gap**, about 1 mile **290°** from Axe Island, was formerly used as a passage by local boats going up Salt Creek to Suwannee. The channel through Northwest Pass is now used.

(327)

Horseshoe Point to Hampton Springs

(328) **Horseshoe Beach** is a village on **Horseshoe Point**, which is 5 miles west-northwest from Shired Creek. The village has a seafood packing plant, several fish wharves and a county wharf and is a shrimp boat base. State Route 351 connects the village with **Cross City** on U.S. Route 19, the main coastal highway. **Horseshoe Beach Approach Light 2** (29°23'16"N., 83°20'24"W.), 16 feet above the water and shown from a dolphin with a triangular red daymark, marks the approach. A dredged channel leads from the Gulf to a turning basin at the 100-foot marginal county wharf. The channel is marked by lights and daybeacons. A branch channel leads from the turning basin around Horseshoe Point to a basin on the north side of the point. This channel is marked by private stakes.

(329) Spoil banks are on either side of the entrance channel about in the middle of the dredged cut. A fish haven is about 6 miles southeast of the entrance light. There are fish wharves on a dredged basin that extends about 1,000 feet northeast from the east end of the turning basin. There is a boatyard at the head of the basin with a marine railway that can handle craft up to 50 feet for hull and engine repairs. Berths, gasoline, diesel fuel by truck, wet

and dry covered storage, water, ice, marine supplies and a launching ramp are available.

(330) Overhead power cables leading from the mainland at Horseshoe Beach to off-lying Grassy Island, Bird Island and Cotton Island have clearances of 34 feet.

(331) **Pepperfish Keys**, about 5 miles northwest of Horseshoe Point, are the only features that a stranger can recognize between Cedar Keys and St. Marks River. Pepperfish Keys are 0.3 to 1 mile off the mainland and can be made out at a distance of 5 to 6 miles. The white sand beach on the northwesternmost key is easily identified. Protected anchorage is available for small craft north of this key where depths are 3 to 10 feet and the bottom is sand with patches of boulders. The approach to the anchorage is through an unmarked channel that extends in an east-southeast direction. Boats of less than 3 feet in draft can enter by keeping in dark water; the shoals are discernible by lighter color.

(332) **Steinhatchee River** empties into **Deadman Bay** about 15 miles north-northwest of Horseshoe Point. **Steinhatchee River Light 1** (29°39'23"N., 83°27'23"W.), 30 feet above the water and shown from a pile with a square green daymark, marks the entrance. A dredged channel leads through Deadman Bay to a turning basin at the seafood plants on the south bank of the river about 2 miles above the mouth. Lights and daybeacons mark the channel. A water tank at Steinhatchee is reported to be prominent from seaward.

(333) A fish haven, marked by private buoys, is about 9 miles west of the light marking the entrance to Steinhatchee River.

(334) **Steinhatchee** is a small village and fishing resort on the north bank of the river about 1.2 miles above the mouth. It is the base for a commercial fishing fleet. There are marinas with boat lifts and several fish camps. Craft up to 23 feet can be handled for hull and engine repairs or open or covered storage. Berths, electricity, gasoline, diesel fuel, water, marine supplies, ice, provisions and launching ramps are available. On the south bank of the river about 0.5 mile above Steinhatchee are seafood packing plants and two private boatyards. Craft up to 50 feet can be handled in an emergency.

(335) State Route 358 highway bridge, 2.2 miles above the mouth, has a 45-foot fixed span with a clearance of 25 feet. At **Jena**, about 3 miles above the mouth, there is a fish packing house. Overhead power cables 0.8, 1.6 and 2.5 miles above the bridge have clearances of 43, 43 and 40 feet, respectively. There are several fish camps on the river above Jena. State Route 358 connects Jena with the main coastal highway, U.S. Route 19. State Route 51 runs along the north bank of the river to the main highway. State Route 361 runs along the coast as far as Adams Beach and joins U.S. Route 19 a few miles south of **Perry.**

(336) **Dallus Creek**, 5 miles northwest from Steinhatchee River, has a bar across its mouth that bares at low water. Small boats of not more than 2 feet in draft use the creek as far as **Dallus Creek Landing** a mile above the mouth, where a road connects with the main highway.

(337) The pine trees on **Piney Point**, 10 miles northwest from Steinhatchee River, are visible from well offshore on a clear day. Several small villages north of Piney Point have roads connecting with State Route 361 and the main U.S. Route 19 coastal highway but offer no supplies. The village of **Fish Creek** is 0.5 mile above the mouth of Fish Creek, 2 miles north from Piney Point.

(338) A data tower marked by a private light is 10.4 miles west-southwest of Piney Point in about 29°42'28"N., 83°46'21"W. Mariners are advised not to pass within 150 feet of the tower to avoid its guy wires.

(339) **Cedar Beach** on **Cedar Island**, about 13 miles northwest of Steinhatchee and about 3 miles north of Piney Point, has a boat ramp and a fishing pier for the use of Cedar Island residents. Fresh water is available. The approach is marked by a lights and daybeacons.

(340) **Keaton Beach**, a fishing village 4 miles northwest of Piney Point, is reached through a small-boat channel. The approach is marked by lights and daybeacons. Small docks and several marinas are at the village. Berths, gasoline, diesel fuel, water, ice, a launching ramp, marine supplies and hull and engine repairs are available as well as a hoist that can handle craft up to 40 feet.

(341) **Jug Island**, a summer resort 5 miles northwest of Piney Point, has a small-boat wharf. **Dekle Beach**, about 0.5 mile north of Jug Island, has a boat ramp, rental cottages and a grocery store. **Adams Beach** is 8 miles north from Piney Point. **Yates Creek Landing** and **Spring Warrior** are small landings on the creeks of the same names 9 and 11 miles, respectively, north-northwest from Piney Point. A fish camp is about 0.5 mile above the mouth of the Spring Warrior Creek on the north side. Berths, gasoline, ice, provisions and a launching ramp are available. The creek is marked by a private light and piles and is reported navigable by craft drawing 3 feet on a favorable tide.

(342) **Fenholloway River** empties into the Gulf of Mexico east of Apalachee Bay and about 17 miles northwest of Piney Point. A draft of 3 feet can be taken into the river on a favorable tide, but a knowledge of local conditions is needed. A private light marks the west side of the entrance to the river. The river is navigable for only a few miles above the mouth. About 2 miles above the river's mouth is a small-boat landing but no supplies are available. A paved road connects the landing with U.S. Route 98 at **Hampton Springs** where gasoline and supplies are available.