

A photograph of a sailboat on the water, viewed from the deck looking forward. The sky is bright blue with scattered white clouds. The water is a deep blue-green color with some whitecaps. The sailboat's white sail is visible on the right side of the frame. The deck is white with blue railings and equipment.

SAILING THE NSW COAST

HUNTER COAST
SAMPLE CHAPTER

FIRST EDITION  GREG LUCK

Sailing the New South Wales Coast, First Edition

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Manly Hydraulics Laboratory

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Spelling, Grammar and Style Conventions

Words are spelled according to the Macquarie Dictionary.

Grammar, punctuation, style and conventions are taken from the [Australian Government Style Manual](#).

Acknowledgements

Cover photo, Curlew Escape.

Thanks to the staff and volunteers from Maritime Rescue NSW and Maritime NSW for answering questions.

Thanks to Hamish Dobinson, Simon Mitchell, Scott Turner and Phil Hobson for their advice.

Thanks to all the marinas who permitted their logos to be used and checked the marina entries for correctness.



HOW TO USE THIS EBOOK

Most cruising guides are paper-based; this is an eBook. Being an eBook, we have some additional features. For example, we have links to external online content, and we can load charts and routes featured in this book into your Navionics app and from there to your chart plotter.


There is a large amount of information online — much more than can be put in a reference book. We take advantage of that by adding many links to external online reference material throughout the book. These links will only work if you have internet access, so it will work best if you have internet access when planning a passage.

This book is in two parts:

- Part I - Things to Know Before You Go: Information about preparation, safety, equipment, weather, winds, climate, hazards, cruise timing and all the things to know or think about before you go and vital reference information once you are underway.
- Part II - Guide to the NSW Coasts. A detailed guide to planning passages by coast, with routes, weather, wind and wave statistics, bars and inlets, marinas, courtesy moorings maps, jetties and anchorages.

GPX LINKS

GPX, or GPS exchange format, is an industry-standard XML file format for storing coordinate data. It can store waypoints, tracks, and routes in a way that is easy to process and convert to other forms. Chart Plotters, Navionics, C-Map, SEAiq and OpenCPN can all use GPX files.

We provide GPX links, shown as a blue ship's wheel,  for each passage, anchorage marker, marina, public pontoon and public mooring. You can also download a complete GPX zip archive from <https://curlewescape.com.au/nswgpxfiles1>. Files are named as they are in the book. Important. Read the 00_Important_Warning_Disclaimer_And_Readme.rtf file at the top of the archive before use.

To export a GPX link, simply click on the link and save it as a file. You can do this on a tablet, phone or laptop. You need internet access to export the link, but not afterwards.

IMPORTING GPX FILES INTO THE C-MAP, NAVIONICS & AND SEAIQ APPS

Marinas, anchorages and illustrative routes integrate with C-Map and Navionics.

iOS

To import GPX routes and markers in this book on iOS:

1. Open the file app you saved the GPX file to and find it. The Files app is the built-in one.
2. Select the GPX file.
3. Click the Share icon [↑] and tap C-Map, Navionics or the SEAIq app, depending on where you want to import to. If these apps are not showing as suggestions, click the More (...) button to show them.
4. The GPX file is imported. Navionics will ask you to confirm the import. C-Map will just import it. The SEAIq app will add it to its Files tab. Tap on the just-imported GPX file and tap import. It will then add it to the map.

Android

To import GPX routes and markers in this book on Android:

1. Open the file app you saved the GPX file to and find it. Google Drive is the built-in one.
2. Select the GPX file.
3. Installed apps that can open the file will be shown. If you have both Navionics and C-Map, both will be shown. Select the app to open the GPX file. If you are only shown one app, it is because you have set it as the default for GPX files. To change that, go to Settings -> Apps, Navionics or C-Map -> Set as Default -> Reset. Do that for each of Navionics and C-Map.
4. The GPX file is imported. Navionics will ask you to confirm the import. C-Map will just import it.

IMPORTING GPX FILES INTO GOOGLE EARTH PRO

You can import markers and routes into [Google Earth Pro](#). Google Earth Pro is available for Mac OS and Windows. The version on iOS and Android is Google Earth, which does not support GPX file import.

To import:

1. File Open (not import)
2. Tick “Create KML LineStrings” (otherwise routes will not be created)
3. The marker or route will be created, and Google Earth Pro will zoom into it.

IMPORTING GPX FILES INTO OPENCNP

OpenCPN is a popular, open-source, chart plotter and navigation application for desktop operating systems such as Windows, Mac and Linux. There is also an app for Android.

You can import markers and routes into OpenCPN via GPX.

To import:

1. Open the OpenCPN app.
2. Tap Tools -> Route and Mark Manager...
3. Tap Import GPX.
4. Select the GPX files you want to import. You can select multiple files at once, and you can mix routes and anchorages.
5. The files will be imported. Passages will be added to Routes, and anchorages will be added to Waypoints. The file names are preserved and become the names in OpenCPN.

It is possible to import all GPX files at once. Download the archive of all routes and markers. Unzip it and then select whichever files you want, or all of them.

IMPORTING MARKERS AND ROUTES INTO YOUR CHART PLOTTER

You can import markers and routes to your chart plotter. For passages, note that they are illustrative. There are many reasons why a passage from the book needs modification, e.g. a wreck or a sand bar in the way. Make sure you read the Illustrative Route Warning and the Anchoring Warning. Once a passage is imported, you should only use it as a starting point for your planning.

Caution: Some chart plotters have file name length restrictions, some, such as Humminbird, can crash on GPX import, some may be set to a different geodetic datum and so on. For these reasons, always save your user data to your SD card before importing. After an import, check the marker or routes against those shown in this book for accuracy after import.

There are three techniques for importing markers and passages:

Option 1 (Navionics chart plotters): Using Navionics Sync over WiFi

Navionics provides a sync feature for compatible chart plotters. See the YouTube video for a demo. I occasionally have trouble with this feature. Deleting the connected device in the Navionics app sometimes fixes it. For other compatible plotters, see your user manual.

Option 2 (Newer chart plotters): Using GPX Files

First, export your marker or route as a GPX file (see above). Then save it to an SD card. Insert the card into your plotter and import the GPX file using your plotter. See your chart plotter manual for the exact steps. GPX import from SD card is supported on most newer chart plotters, including Raymarine, Humminbird, Furuno, B&G, Simrad and Garmin.

Option 3(Older chart plotters): Convert from GPX to proprietary file format

While newer chart plotters have good support for GPX, older chart plotters tend to use a proprietary format. For example, older Raymarine plotters use “Archive.fsh” files, older Furuno plotters use “.pnt” files and older Simrad, Lowrance plotters use “.usr” files, older Humminbird plotters use “.hwr” files, and older Garmin plotters have a range of proprietary file types.

Conversion utilities exist that can convert from GPX files to these formats.

Software	Platforms	Notes
<u>GPSBabel</u>	Windows/Mac OS/Source	File formats supported include 0.usr, .hwr, and Garmin types but not .fsh or .pnt
<u>GPS Utility</u>	Windows	File formats supported include .usr, .fsh but not .pnt or Humminbird .hwr
<u>GPSVisualizer</u>	Web	File formats supported include .usr, .hwr, and Garmin types but not .fsh or .pnt
<u>ExpertGPS</u>	Windows	You select your chart plotter model, rather than file types. Chartplotters include models from Garmin, Lowrance, Magellan, Simrad and B&G
<u>RayTech Planner</u>	Windows	Supports the .fsh file format. This software is discontinued but still available for download.
<u>HumminbirdPC</u>	Windows	File formats include .hwr and .gpx.

FEATURES NEEDING INTERNET ACCESS

Being an eBook, we make extensive use of links. There are hundreds of 1,500 external links. These are primarily in the Quick Reference at the start of each coast chapter and in the marina entries.

Apple Books supports web, email and telephone links. Kindle Books supports web and email links.

Downloading GPX links requires internet access. You do not need internet access to use the downloaded GPX files.

If you don't have internet, you can still use the book like an ordinary book. The only difference is that none of the links will work.

ERRATA

Please notify me of any errors or suggested improvements by email, to book@gregluck.com.

HOW TO UPDATE YOUR BOOK

Errata updates may be made after a new edition is released.

How to update your book depends on which book platform you are on. Tap the link below for instructions:

- [How to update your book on Apple Books](#)
- [How to update your book on Google Play Books](#)
- [How to update your book on Amazon Kindle.](#)

APPLE BOOKS

FEATURES SUPPORTED

Apple Books uses ePub 3.2 and supports web links, GPX file integration, internal bookmark links, email links and telephone links.

Apple Books does not support making annotations in the text.

UPDATING ON APPLE BOOKS

Apple Books supports updates within an edition. From time to time, errata will be fixed and uploaded as an update.

To check for updates, ensure you are connected to the internet and view the book in Apple Books. To update:

1. From within the Apple Books app on iOS or Mac OS, select Library.
2. Find the Sailing the NSW Coast book in your library, click the ... icon to its right, and click View in Store.
3. If there is no update available, it will show “Read”. If there is an update available, it will show “Update”.
4. Click the Update button, and the updated version will download to your device.

GOOGLE PLAY BOOKS

FEATURES SUPPORTED

Google Play Books uses the ePub 3.2 file format. It supports web links, GPX file integration, and internal bookmark links, but not email or telephone links. Email addresses and telephone numbers appear – they just aren't clickable.

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To add notes to the book:

1. Highlight text by tapping and pressing on it. Adjust the sliders to select the text you want.
2. Tap the + icon to add a note.

UPDATING ON GOOGLE PLAY BOOKS

Any updates will be automatically available for download in the Google Play Books app on your device. To update the book, in Google Play Books:

1. Tap on Library and find the book.
2. Tap on the 3 dots on the right-hand side of the listing.
3. Tap Remove download.
4. Tap on the 3 dots on the right-hand side of the listing.
5. Tap Download.

AMAZON KINDLE BOOKS

Due to several limitations, as detailed below, readers are recommended to use either Apple Books or Google Play Books.

COMPATIBILITY

The ePub 3.2 standard fixed-layout formats are not supported. Instead, Kindle uses a PDF file as input and then processes it to add links to create what is, in Kindle terminology, a print replica book. Print replica books are not compatible with all Kindle devices.

They are compatible with:

- Kindle for Android
- Kindle for Fire Tablets
- Kindle for macOS
- Amazon Fire Tablets

It is not compatible with:

- Kindle for iOS, including Kindle for iPhone and iPad (links do not work as a deliberate policy on Apple iOS devices)
- Kindle e-Reader physical devices, e.g. Kindle Paperwhite, Kindle Oasis or Kindle Original.

If you have accidentally bought the Kindle version on an incompatible device, please seek a refund from Amazon. They seem good about it.

FEATURES SUPPORTED

On compatible devices: GPX file integration, Table of Contents links, weblinks and internal bookmark links are supported. Telephone links and email links are not supported. Email addresses and telephone numbers appear - they just aren't clickable.

Amazon Kindle uses the PDF format but removes all links and generates red-underlined links. Sometimes the link hotspot that will respond to clicks is fiddly. If you click on a link and it doesn't work or opens a note dialogue box, try clicking in a slightly different spot.

ADDING NOTES

To add notes to the book:

1. Highlight text by tapping and pressing on it. Adjust the sliders to select the text you want.
2. Tap the pen icon in the pop-up menu and add your note.

UPDATING ON KINDLE BOOKS

Kindle Books supports updates within an edition, but only if the changes are significant, as a manual request to Amazon. Therefore, it is possible that updates available on the other platforms will not be made available by Amazon to readers on Kindle devices. I will only be requesting that they update the book if a significant error is found or functionality breaks.

To update:

1. Go to [Manage Your Content and Devices](#).
2. Search for your Kindle book.
3. If available, Update Available will show as a link under the book listing.



4. Tap Update Available, then click Update.

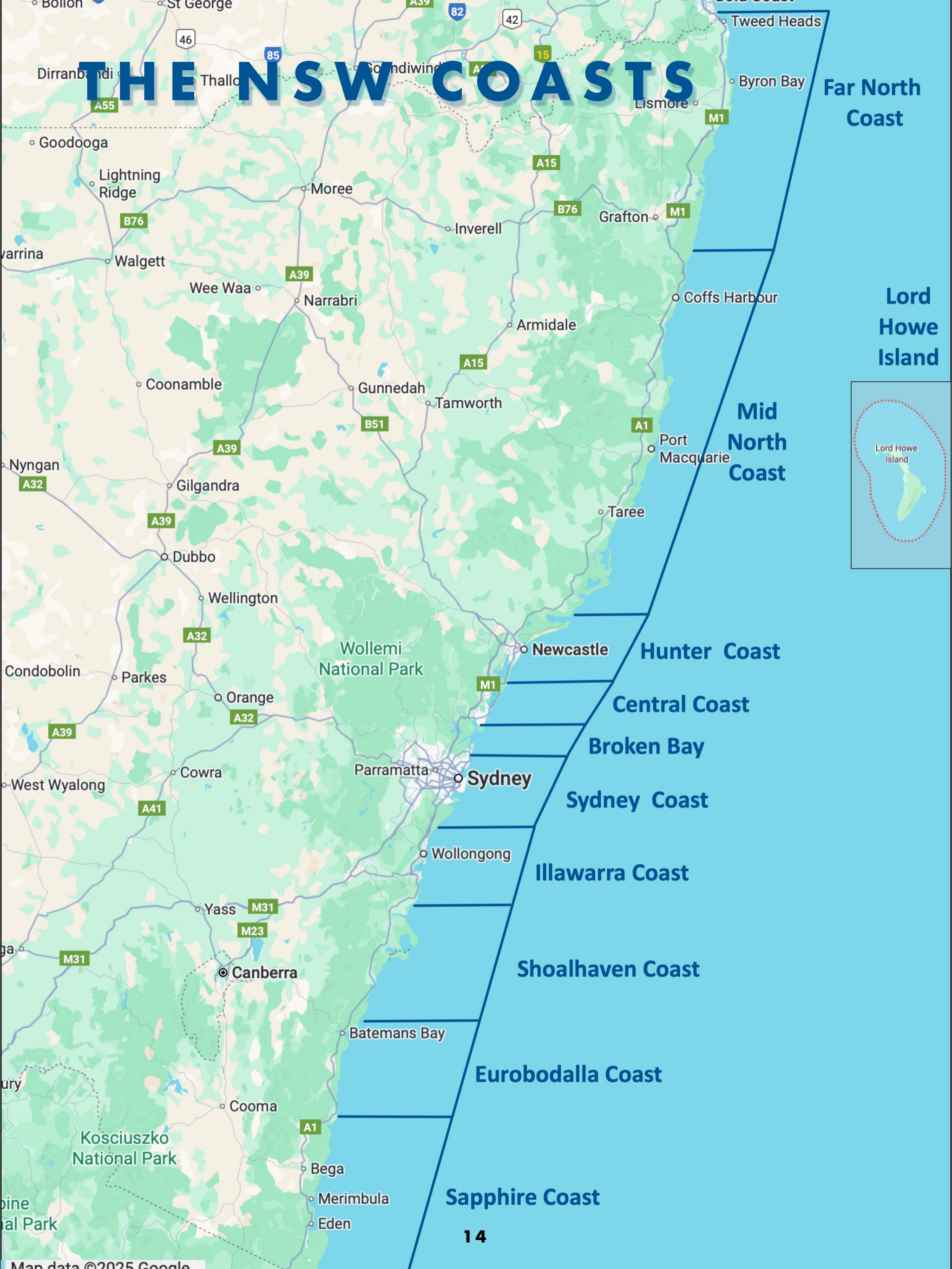
The update will then be pushed to your library.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

See the online [FAQ](#) for frequently asked reader questions and my answers on the cruising guides I write.

PART II: GUIDE TO THE COASTS

THE NSW COASTS



HOW TO USE THE GUIDE

In Part 2, the guide to the NSW coasts, we cover one coastal area per chapter, from the South Coast in the south to the Far North Coast in the north.

Each chapter starts with a Quick Reference, which contains links to key information such as rescue services, notices to marinas, weather links, tides, sewage discharge maps, marine park zoning maps, public moorings and marinas. Items are ordered from south to north and then east to west when they appear in lists.

Next are example passages, with distances, times based on an average speed of 6 knots, information, and hazards to look out for.

Then bars and entrances of interest to cruising yachts.

Transport for NSW provides free charts, based on the Australian Hydrographic charts, but annotated with lots of useful information for navigable areas. We provide thumbnails of these and links to download them. Print copies can also be ordered from TfNSW.

After that, the weather summary, with mean minimum and maximum temperatures, rain, typical wind roses for the summer and winter patterns for 9 am and 3 pm, and wave roses where available.




From there, depending on the coast, we have information on:

- courtesy moorings
- marinas
- jetties and wharves, including pump-out facilities
- anchorages
- bridges

ANCHORAGES/MOORINGS

For some anchorages, we have an infographic panel with depth, suggested wind direction and strength, bottom type, Telstra mobile signal strength, whether Starlink considers the

anchorage to be land or ocean and for moorings, the class of mooring. The digital TV signal quality is also shown.

TV Reception	
	Good reception
	Partial reception. Pixellation and drop outs.
	No reception

Starlink Location Status

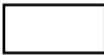


	Land
	Ocean
	Boundary

From Starlink coverage maps 12/23

MAXIMUM RECOMMENDED WIND SPEEDS

The wind infographic shows the recommended maximum wind strength for 8 different directions. A white arrow indicates calm to 6 knots, grey is moderate wind from 7 to 21 knots, and black is 22 - 33 knots. The scale only goes to 33 knots, Beaufort 7.

Anchorage Wind Strengths

	Light: 0 - 6 knots; Beaufort 0 - 2
	Moderate: 7 - 21 knots. Beaufort 3 - 5
	Strong: 22-33 knots. Beaufort 6 - 7

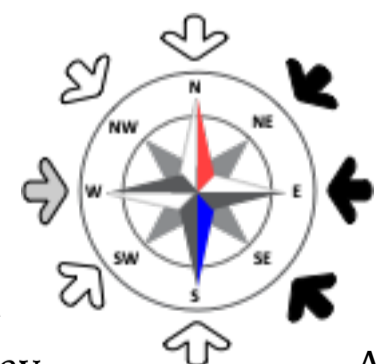
The main consideration is significant wave height for the fetch from each direction, although in many anchorages, waves will propagate around headlands, so an anchorage might have a lower wind rating even though seemingly protected from a given wind direction.

Note that the scale only goes to 33 knots. Beyond that, vessels may drag depending on the bottom, the anchor, current, propagating waves, swell and the windage of the boat.

The same scale applies to public moorings. Classes 15, B, C and D have a maximum wind rating of 34 knots.

An example full-size wind infographic for the Currigee anchorage is shown to the right. Here, the anchorage is 70m from shore at South Stradbroke Island, on its western shore. As there is almost no fetch for SE, E and NE winds, it is suitable in strong wind conditions from that direction. The anchorage is protected to the west by Crab Island, which is 0.4nm away, and then the mainland is 0.6nm away.

Full Size Wind Infographic



A

Mini Wind Infographic



or moderate wind arrow from the west. From the southwest, the fetch is 1.6nm.

A 20-knot wind will generate a significant wave height of 0.35m. A 15-knot wind will generate .0.25m. Neither is comfortable. For tables of public moorings, a mini infographic is used. No arrow is shown for light wind directions, a grey arrow is shown for moderate and a black arrow for strong. The example to the left is for Barren Island. Southeast is recommended for strong conditions, east and south for moderate conditions, and any other wind direction is recommended for light conditions only.

Anchorage positions generally allow enough swing room for a 15m vessel on a 4:1 scope with a 2m draught. This is what works for us. We have a 2m vessel, and our excellent oversized Ultra anchor does very well on 4:1. We provide GPX ⚓ marker links suitable in most conditions for yachts of that size and required scope.

Anchorage Marker Warning

Anchorage markers and mooring markers take into account hydrographic information at the time of writing and are made as a suggestion. The suitability of an anchorage depends on vessel draught and characteristics, wind and sea state.

Wrecks, obstructions, shoaling and new construction can all invalidate an anchorage. Approaches to anchorages and moorings can also be affected by these.

Mariners should check with Notices to Mariners for the area being passaged and with other sources of local information such as VMR and weather forecasts before anchoring.

You should fine-tune the exact position for your vessel's details and conditions. For example, we often see catamarans anchoring a little closer and 55-footer monohulls further out in deep water. If strong winds are expected, move further away from shore with more scope. The anchorage locations should be treated as a suggestion for the recommended conditions. As the skipper, you need to make the final call.

Western shores, in particular, are prone to suddenly becoming lee shores. Most weather systems (cyclones are a notable exception) move from west to east due to the Earth's Coriolis effect. Cold fronts will cause sudden backing to the SW as they arrive. For most of the NSW coast, the land is to the west, and therefore the land breeze comes from the west.

Anchorage chartlets are based on Navionics maps, used with their permission. The settings used to produce the maps, unless otherwise indicated on the chartlet, are:


- SonarChart mode. These are more detailed than the official nautical charts. Note that uncharted rocks and bommies are not picked by the SonarChart survey process, only the

average depth of that location. While sonar does not pick up rocks, any rocks and bommies present in the Navionics charts are shown. I add rocks that have been community-reported.

- White areas indicate average depths $\geq 2\text{m}$, unless otherwise indicated.
- Depth contours $> 10\text{m}$ are hidden to improve readability.
- Drying areas are shown in green.

Anchorage with depths less than 2m are noted as shallow anchorages with the depth shown in red. There are only a few of these.

PASSAGE PLANNING

Each coast features a table of common passages with illustrative routes. Passage information includes the distance and an illustrative route, which can be imported into Navionics by clicking the  icon as a start to planning.

Illustrative Route Warning

Illustrative routes take into account hydrographic information at the time of writing and are made as a suggestion to permit accurate calculation of *minimum* passage distances. Actual distances travelled for sailing vessels will depend on the wind at the time, so passage distances can be considerably longer.

Wrecks, obstructions, dredges, FADs, buoys, seabed movements and weather can all invalidate a route.

Mariners should check with Notices to Mariners for the area being passaged and with other sources of local information, such as Marine Rescue NSW.

Illustrative passage routes featured in the book are planned as follows:

- Direct routes where possible
- Avoidance of hazards known to exist at the time of writing.
- Routes start and stop several hundred metres from known hazards.
- No routes through bar crossings. These are dynamic, and up-to-date information is required. Instead, the sources of information that should be checked when planning a crossing are given.

- Areas marked on the charts as having breaking seas in built-up conditions are avoided. These are typically shallow seamounts.
- Headlands, which often have projecting rocks that are not always charted, are given a wide berth.
- Some passages are tidal and may not be appropriate for vessels with deeper draughts. We feature shallow passages that we have done with Curlew Escape, with a 2.1m draught and warn about sections with LAT depths < 2m.
- Shipping channels are crossed at right angles. Where a shipping channel must be used due to depth, the route passes along the edge of the channel. When operating near a shipping route, you should maintain a watch on VHF channel 16 and use AIS and radar if you have it, with collision warning enabled. Ships steam at 20-30 knots, so they can be on you before you know it. The usual watch-keeping technique of scanning all around and checking the instruments every few minutes is insufficient. A ship travelling at 30 knots will travel 2.5nm in 5 minutes.

These routes should be treated as illustrative routes only, to help you in planning your route and are not to be used for navigation.

For example, if you are sailing upwind, then your actual route will not be a straight line but a series of tacks.

If you are planning your route using electronic charts like Navionics, remember that hazards and shallow areas do not show up until you are at a high level of zoom. It is good practice to create a draft route and then trace the route at a high zoom level. Many tragic marine accidents have been found on investigation to have been caused by this issue, including by very experienced racing skippers.

The NSW coast has numerous examples of isolated rocks and reefs that rise out of deep water.

Finally, notices to mariners should be checked for the route. New hazards, not yet on charts, such as sunken vessels and missing or altered aids to mariners, should be noted, and the route altered, before proceeding on a passage.

MARINE NOTICES

Marine notices provide updated marine information. You should read through these for the areas you will be operating in. Those relevant to each coast are in the Quick Reference section for each coast. There are three types:

- Transport for NSW Marine Notices
- Port Authority Notices to Mariners
- Latest Berths and Depths Surveys

TRANSPORT FOR NSW MARINE NOTICES

Transport for NSW Marine Notices provide information to vessel operators about navigation hazards, restrictions, and special events.

PORT AUTHORITY NOTICES TO MARINERS

Port Authority of New South Wales' Local Marine Notices provide marine safety information on changes that could affect the safety of vessels within the ports controlled by the Port Authority.

Local Marine Notices advise of:

- changes to buoyage and other aids of navigation
- changes to depths in channels or berths
- navigation warnings and hazards
- works that may affect the safe navigation of vessels, e.g., dredging, construction, and cable laying.

Information contained in Port Authority Notices to Mariners is reproduced regularly in the Australian Notices to Mariners produced by the Australian Hydrographic Office.

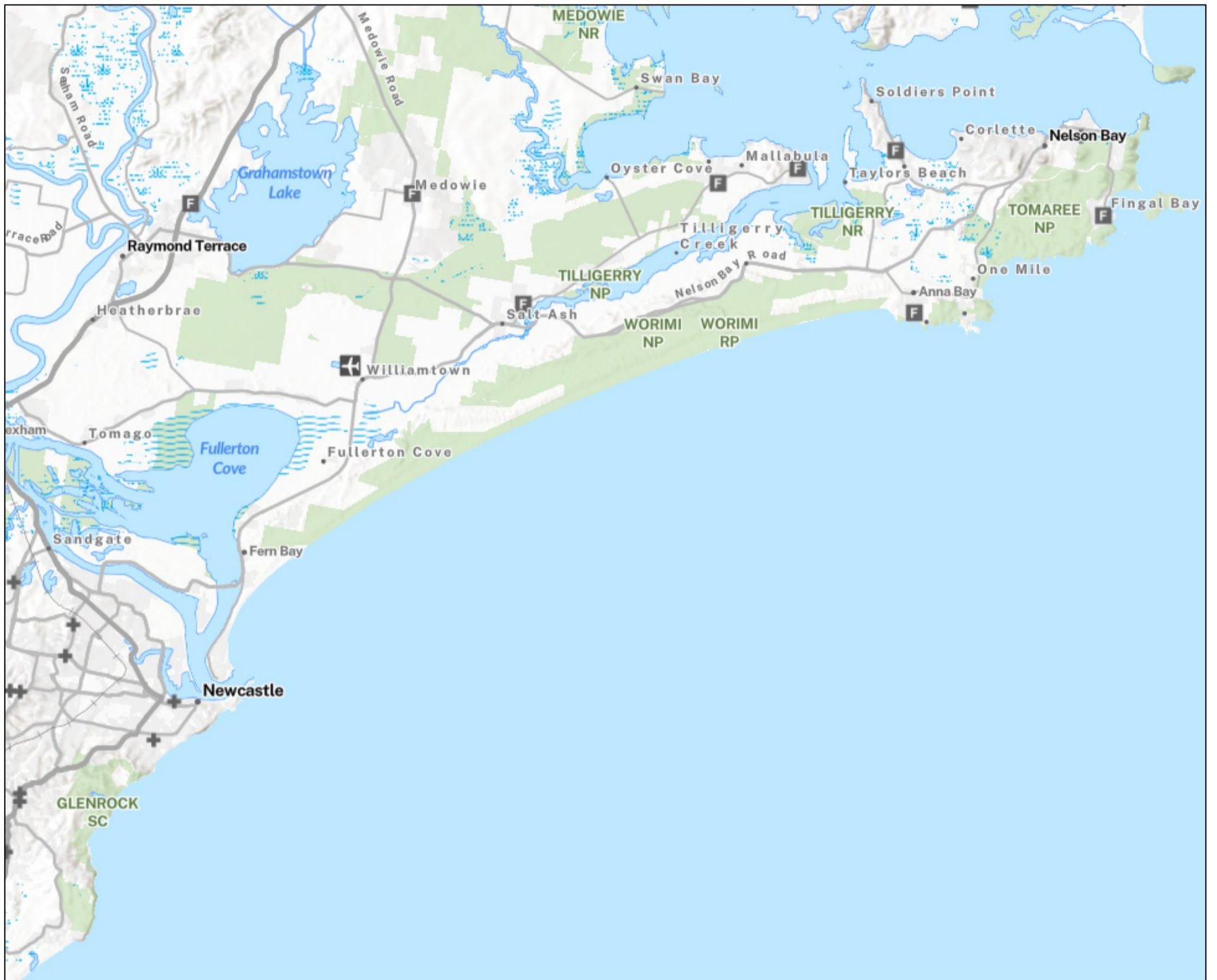
LATEST BERTHS AND DEPTHS SURVEYS

The Berths, Channels and Depths document is the official, formally declared depths of all berths and channels in Yamba, Eden, Sydney, Botany and Port Kembla by the respective Harbour Masters. This is important information to ensure the safe passage of vessels travelling in these areas.

The NSW Government also makes some surveys available, as does the Tweed Bypassing Project. Links for these are provided, where they exist, for each bar/entrance in the Quick Reference section in each coast and also in the sections describing each bar.








HUNTER COAST





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Marine Rescue NSW			
Newcastle VHF: 16 Phone: 02 4907 8200 Local Hours: 24/7	Lemon Tree Passage VHF: 16 Phone: 02 4982 4981 Local Hours: 24/7	Port Stephens VHF: 16 Phone: (02) 49813585 Local Hours: 24/7 Live Webcam	
Marine Notices	Climate & Weather	Charts	
Transport for NSW Marine Notices Port Authority Notices to Mariners for Newcastle Harbour Masters Directions (includes surveys) Newcastle TfNSW Bar Warnings Marine Traffic Newcastle Live Ships	☒ Decln 11/25 12° 37' E Newcastle Climate Average Wind Conditions BOM Forecasts Forecast Hunter Waters East Australian Current Forecast NSW Nearshore Wave Forecast Newcastle Port Stephens	Coastal Map 8 Coastal Newcastle to Broken Bay (11/16) Map 7 Coastal Seal Rocks to Newcastle (11/16) Location 7C Front Hunter, Williams and Paterson Rivers (6/21) 7C Back Lower Hunter River and Newcastle Harbour detail inset (9/23) 7B Front Lower Myall River and Tea Gardens area (2/22) 7A Front Port Stephens and Lower Myall River area 7A Back Nelson Bay, Karuah River, Broughton Island, Lemon Tree Passage and Soldiers Point insets (5/24)	
BOM Tides	Marine Parks	Anchorage	Marinas & Moorings
Newcastle Port Stephens	Port Stephens Great Lakes Marine Park Hunter Marine Park Waverider Buoys Sydney Collaroy-Narrabeen (UNSW) Newcastle Entrance Channel (Port Auth)	Newcastle Anchorages Port Stephens Anchorages Fingal Bay Shoal Bay Nelson Bay Fame Cove Broughton Island Coal Shaft Bay Providence Beach	Newcastle Moorings (4) Port Stephens Moorings(18) Broughton Island Moorings (1) Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club Marina Honeysuckle Marina Nelson Bay Marina Anchorage Marina Soldiers Point Marina Albatross Marina

PASSAGES

Passage	Notes		Dist.	@6kts
Sydney to Newcastle	<p>Bar free entrance to Port Stephens although note the caution about ebb tides.</p> <p>Follows the leads out of Sydney Heads. Passes east of Tuggerah Reef and the shoals at Pelican Point. Passes east of Bird Island and Moon Island, east of Big Ben Rock and shoals, west of the isolated danger marker, then joins the leads into Newcastle Harbour.</p> <p>Ships waiting to enter Newcastle anchor in a line 3 - 4 nm off the coast south from Newcastle. Beware ship movements.</p>		66nm	11 hrs
Sydney to Port Stephens	<p>Bar free entrance to Port Stephens although note the caution about ebb tides.</p> <p>Follows the leads out of Sydney Heads. Passes east of Tuggerah Reef and the shoals at Pelican Point. Passes east of Bird Island and Moon Island, across the shipping route for ships entering or leaving Newcastle, passes southeast of Telegraph Shoal, and south of Point Stephens before joining the leads into Port Stephens, then passing south of Boondelbah Island.</p>		87nm	15 hrs
Broken Bay to Port Stephens	<p>Bar free, however, note the warning on Port Stephens on an ebb tide. Stays south of West Reef and associated shoals, east of Tuggerah Reef, east of shoals off Pelican Point, east of Fingal Island, then joins the leads into Port Stephens.</p>		72nm	12 hrs
Swansea to Newcastle	<p>Shallow bar 1.4m LAT at Swansea. Bar free entrance to Newcastle.</p> <p>Takes the leads out of Swansea. Passes north of Moon Island, west of the Newcastle Offshore Artificial Reef, east of Big Ben Rock and shoals, then joins the leads into Newcastle Harbour.</p> <p>Ships waiting to enter Newcastle anchor in a line 3 - 4 nm off the coast south from Newcastle. Beware ship movements. This route should take you inside the line of anchored ships but beware.</p>		15nm	3 hrs

Passage	Notes		Dist.	@6kts
Swansea to Port Stephens	<p>Shallow bar 1.4m LAT at Swansea. Current up to 6 knots at Swansea Channel. Bar free entrance to Port Stephens although note the caution about ebb tides.</p> <p>Takes the leads out of Swansea. Passes north of Moon Island, passes across the shipping route for ships entering or leaving Newcastle, passes south of Telegraph Shoal, and south of Point Stephens before joining the leads into Port Stephens, then passing south of Boondelbah Island.</p>		41nm	7 hrs
Newcastle to Port Stephens	Bar free, however, note the warning on Port Stephens on an ebb tide. Passes south of the isolated danger buoy, south of Fingal Island, then joins the leads into Port Stephens.		30nm	5 hrs
Port Stephens to Cape Hawke Harbour	Caution: Crosses a bar. See the <u>Cape Hawke Harbour Bar</u> . Note the caution on Port Stephens on an ebb tide. Follows the white sector light out, passes south of Boondelbah Island, east of Little Island, east of Broughton Island, east of Little Seal Rocks, east of the Pinnacle, then rounds Cape Hawke.		46nm	8 hrs
Port Stephens to Crowdy Head	Note the caution on Port Stephens on an ebb tide. Follows the white sector light out, passes south of Boondelbah Island, east of Little Island, east of Broughton Island, east of Little Seal Rocks, east of the Pinnacle, east of Dennis Shoal, then rounds Crowdy Head, staying well outside Forde Rock and associated shoals and reef, then positions for entry into the harbour.		66nm	11 hrs
Port Stephens to Camden Haven	Caution: Crosses a bar. See the <u>Camden Haven Bar</u> . Note the caution on Port Stephens on an ebb tide. Follows the white sector light out, passes south of Boondelbah Island, east of Little Island, east of Broughton Island, east of Little Seal Rocks, east of the Pinnacle, east of Curphey Shoal, east of Mermaid Reef, east of Cod Grounds Shoals, east of Telegraph Rock, then joins the entrance leads.		83nm	14 hrs
Port Stephens to Trial Bay	Bar free, although note the caution on Port Stephens on an ebb tide. Follows the white sector light out, passes south of Boondelbah Island, east of Little Island, east of Broughton Island, east of Little Seal Rocks, east of Forde Rock, east of Curphey Shoal, east of Mermaid Reef, east of Cod Grounds Shoals, east of Fish Rock, then rounds Laggars Point to the anchorage. The faster part of the East Australian Current comes in close to Trial Bay.		134nm	22 hrs

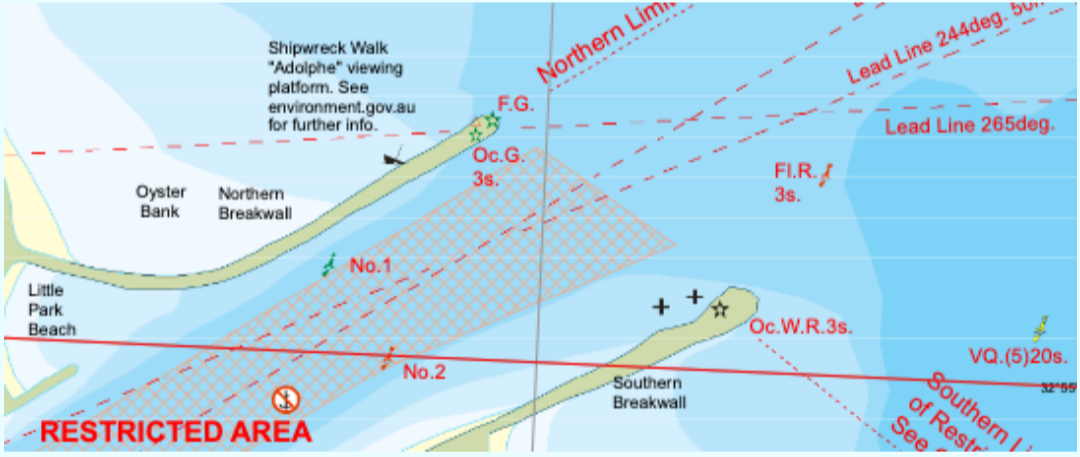



Passage	Notes		Dist.	@6kts
Port Stephens to Port Macquarie	Caution: Crosses a bar. See the <u>Port Macquarie Bar</u> . Note the caution on Port Stephens on an ebb tide. Follows the white sector light out, passes south of Boondelbah Island, east of Little Island, east of Broughton Island, east of Little Seal Rocks, east of Forde Rock, east of Curphey Shoal, east of Mermaid Reef, east of Cod Grounds Shoals, east of Tacking Point, then joins the leads.		94nm	16 hrs

* These are illustrative routes only. See Illustrative Route Warning and instructions at the start of Part II of this book.

The East Australian Current stays 20 - 30 nm offshore through this part of the coast.

BARS / ENTRANCES

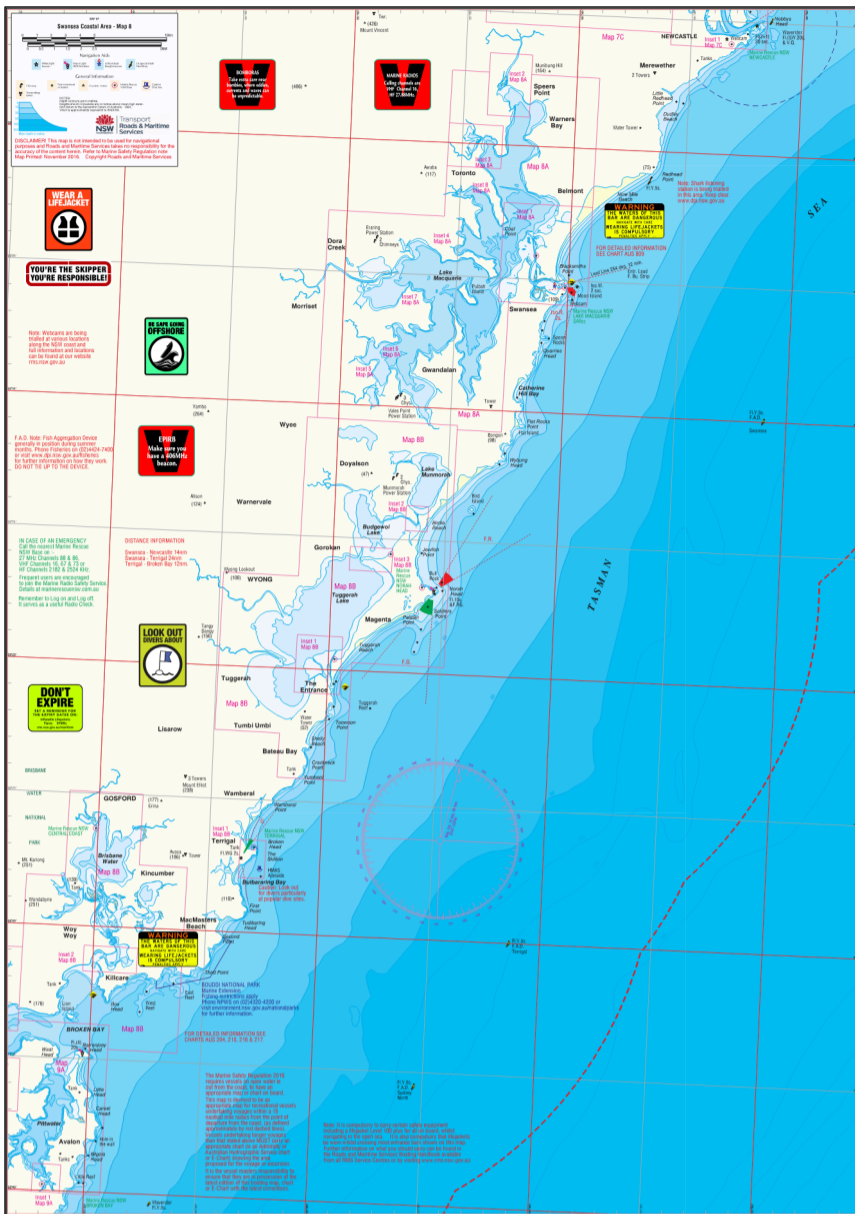
Following is a list of bars and entrances with nominal depths of at least 2 - 5m, along with the depths and cautions or warnings, all taken from the TfNSW charts.

Bar/Entrance	Depth LAT (from TfNSW chart)	Caution/Warning (from TfNSW chart) + "Dangerous Area Breaks at Times"	Webcam
Hunter River (Newcastle)	10 - 20m See Port of Newcastle <u>Promulgated Depths</u>	See <u>Recreational Vessel Guide Notes Newcastle Harbour</u> .  See detailed coverage.	 #
Shoal Bay (Port Stephens)	10 - 20m	Caution: Navigating the entrance to Port Stephens can be dangerous during runout tides.  See detailed coverage.	

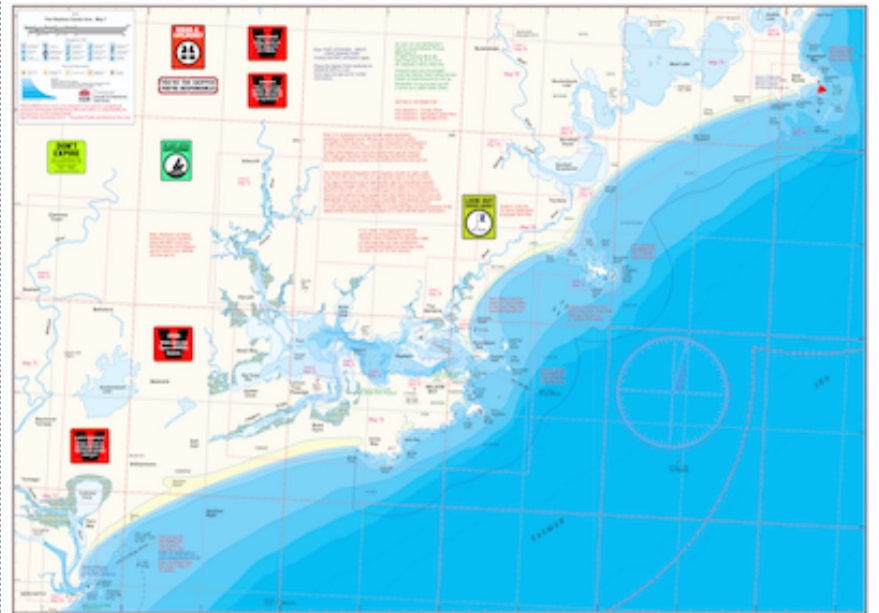
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The Newcastle harbour entrance webcam is from the Port of Newcastle, streamed on YouTube.

CHARTS



Map 8 Coastal Newcastle to Broken Bay (11/16)



Map 7 Coastal Seal Rocks to Newcastle (11/16)



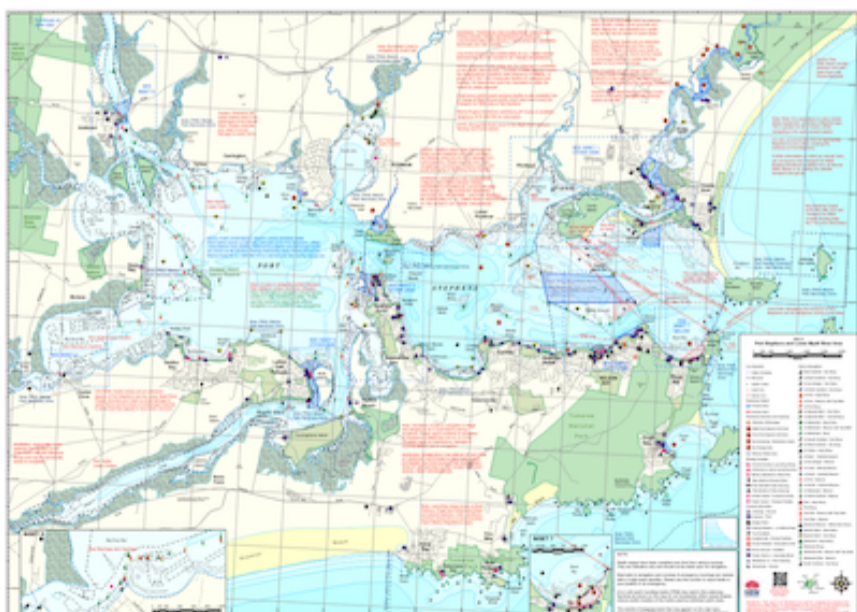
7C Front Hunter, Williams and Paterson Rivers (6/21)



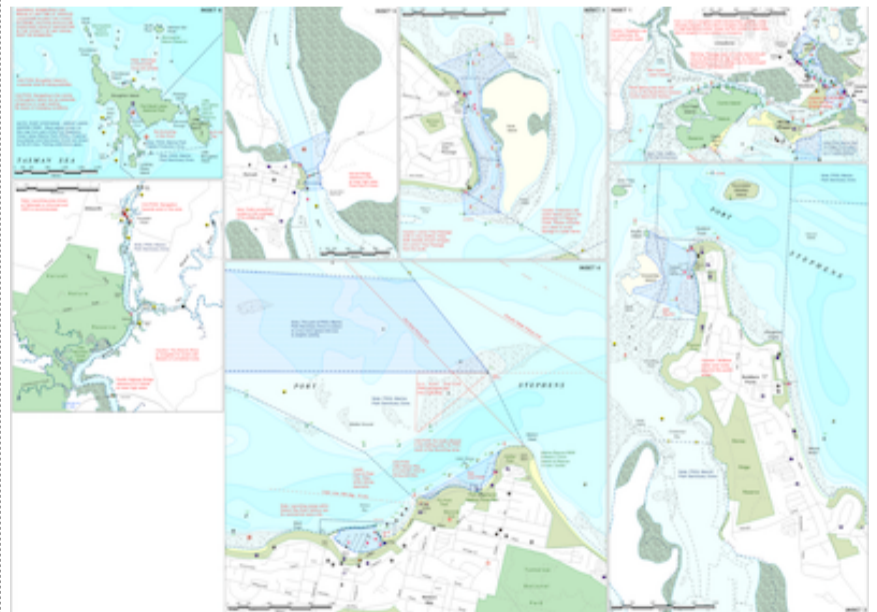
7C Back Lower Hunter River and Newcastle Harbour detail inset (9/23)



7B Front Lower Myall River and Tea Gardens area (2/22)



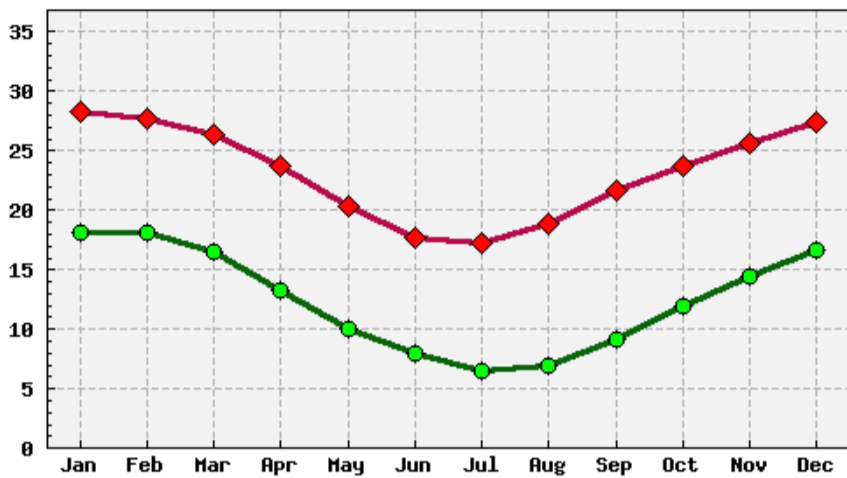
7A Front Port Stephens and Lower Myall River area



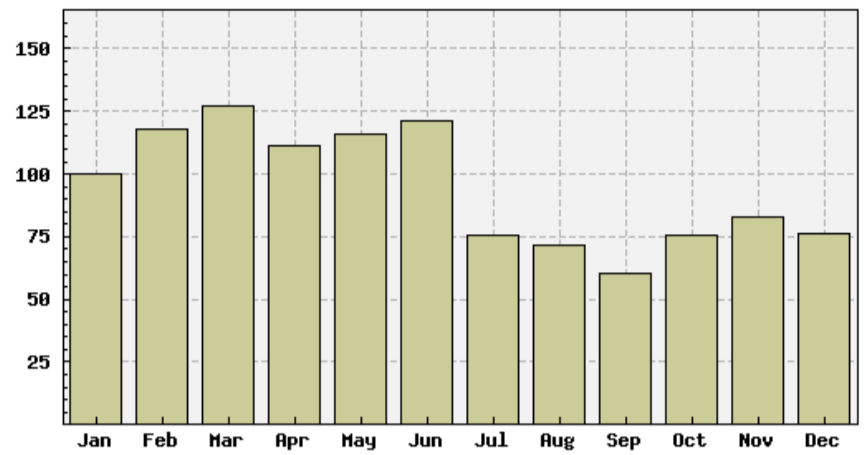
7A Back Nelson Bay, Karuah River, Broughton Island, Lemon Tree Passage and Soldiers Point insets (5/24)

HUNTER CLIMATE & AVERAGE WIND CONDITIONS

Mean Min & Max Temperatures

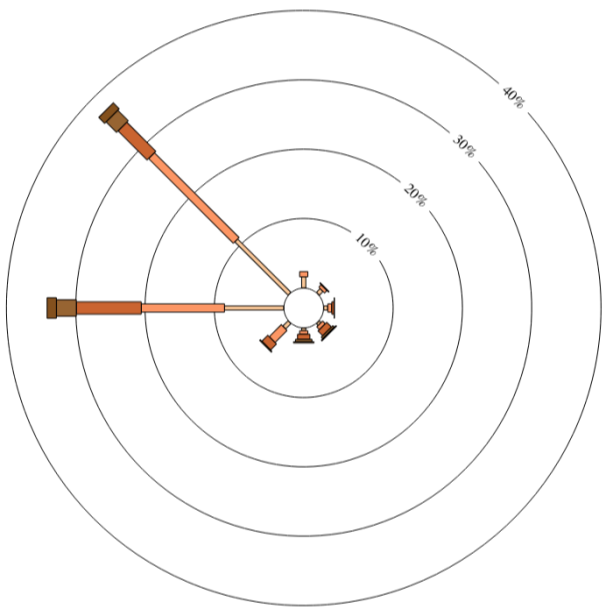


Rainfall (mm)

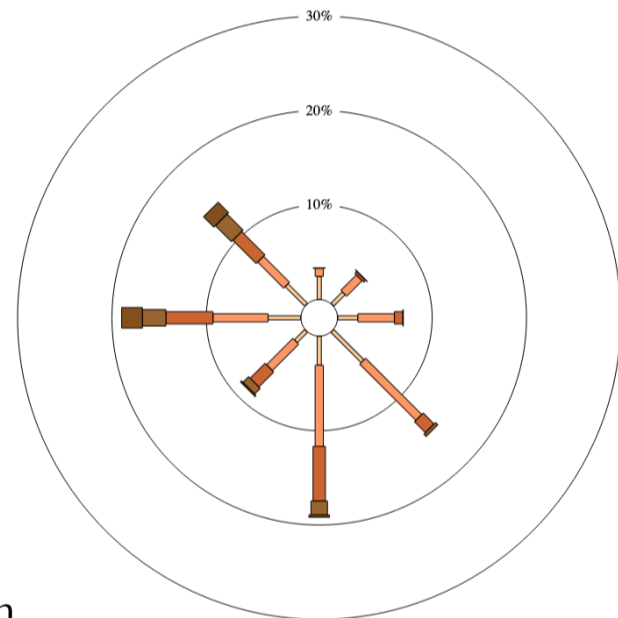


Bureau of Meteorology, © Commonwealth of Australia. Licensed from the Commonwealth of Australia under [CC4](#)

Wind Rose for May. 1942 - 2024. Williamtown. 9m altitude, 5km from coast.

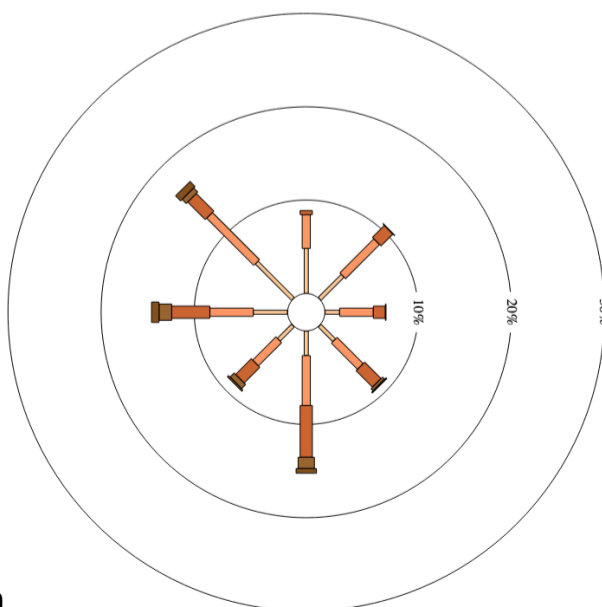


9am

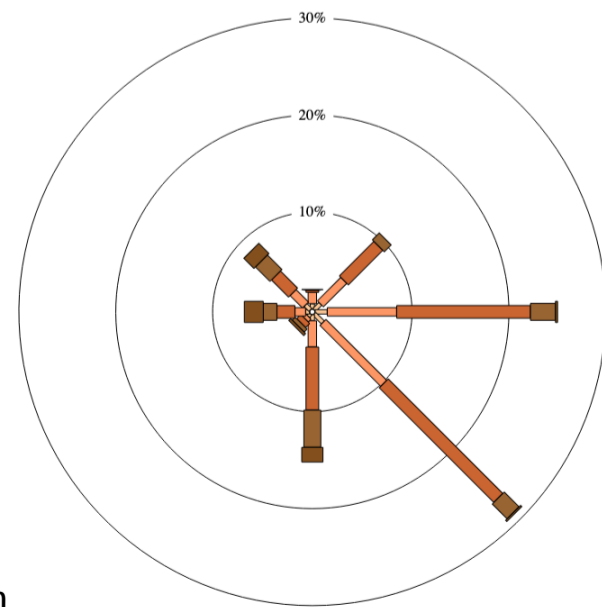


3pm

Wind Rose for November. 1942 - 2024. Williamtown. 9m altitude, 5km from coast.



9am



3pm

NEWCASTLE

Newcastle is the largest port on the east coast and operates a Vessel Traffic Service (VTS). Vessels under 30m are not required to participate in the VTS but are strongly encouraged to do so. See the sidebar for a summary of the VTS port procedure. I find that contacting VTS is useful in any case to learn about upcoming ship movements.

In addition, Transport for NSW's Map 7C has a recreational vessel guide, reproduced below, which spells out their concerns

Recreational Vessel Guide Notes Newcastle Harbour

WHERE DO RECREATIONAL BOATS FIT IN

The Port of Newcastle is primarily a working commercial harbour. Recreational boaters also use the harbour for fishing and sailing.

Any recreational boaters who operate on Newcastle Harbour must be constantly aware of commercial ships and their movements.

Large vessels:

- Are restricted to particular channels and cannot deviate from their set course.
- Are restricted in their ability to alter their course due to their size.
- Need a large area to turn. Their stern swings out wide when negotiating a turn
- Lose steerage if they travel too slowly.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

As a recreational boater, you are required by law to:

- Maintain a proper lookout.
- Not to impede any commercial ship.
- Make clear your intentions to an approaching vessel **WELL IN ADVANCE**. You should indicate that you are getting out of the way of a large vessel **AT LEAST ONE NAUTICAL MILE IN ADVANCE**.
- **NOT ANCHOR IN A NAVIGATIONAL CHANNEL**.
- Ensure that at all times you can be seen clearly. Dull aluminium tinnies can be difficult to see on overcast and poor conditions. Wear bright clothing and be seen
- After sunset and in restricted visibility, ensure you have the correct navigation lights fitted and that they are in proper working order.

Failure to comply with the regulations can result in penalties of up to \$1,500.

Newcastle Port Procedure

The VTS control area extends to a 6nm radius out from Nobbys Head light.

Contact them before entering the VTS or before moving within the VTS.

Participating vessels must seek permission from VTS to enter the VTS area, move or anchor within the VTS area

VHF Channels:

9 for initial calling

Call Sign: Newcastle VTS

See [Newcastle Harbour Master's Directions](#) for full details.

and requests, in all caps in places. (That is them, not me.)

It does highlight the seriousness of operating recreationally in a busy commercial port that is space-constrained.

There are 15-25 ship movements per day into and out of the port. See [Newcastle Harbour Daily Vessel Movements](#) for the times ships are due to depart or arrive.

Reproduced from Map 7C.

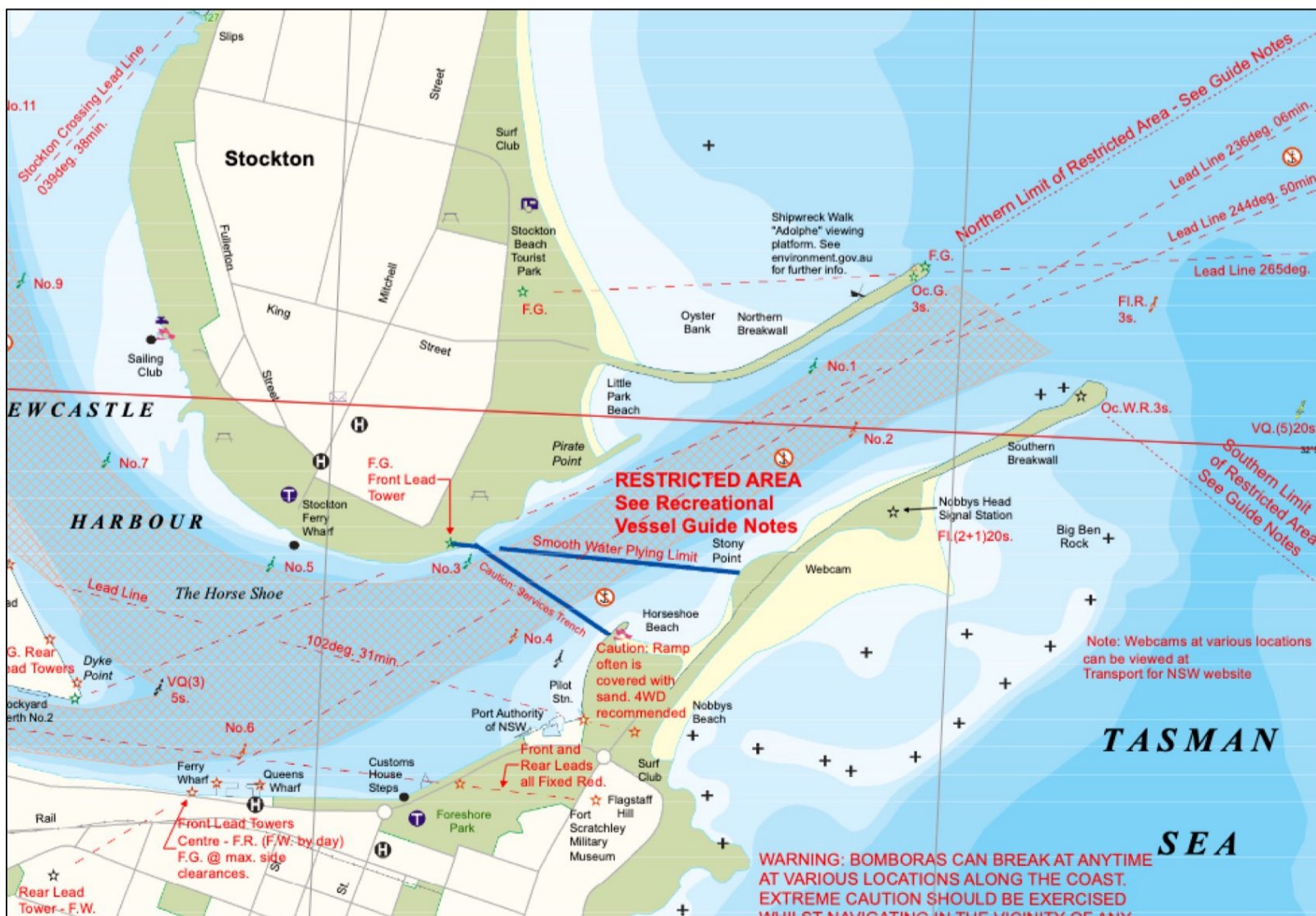
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NEWCASTLE HARBOUR ENTRANCE




The entrance approach and channel are dredged to maintain a minimum depth for ship navigation. In September 2025, the lowest depth in the channel was 15.2m. Because of the depth, the entrance is not considered a bar by TfNSW. Overrun is around 1 hour after low and high tide. While this is a deep draught entry, it is not passable in all sea conditions. In heavy northeast swells, the entrance channel develops a large, surfable, right-handed wave that breaks against the inside of the southern breakwater. This area is indicated by the “+” symbols on the TfNSW chartlet below, indicating “Dangerous Area Breaks at Times”.

Approach into the channel is 236° 6' T towards the leads. The arrangement of the leading lights operates like a sector light. Flashing white means on course, flashing red is too part to port and flashing green too far to starboard. There are also in-line port and starboard lateral channel markers. See the [Wave Rose](#) for average stats and [YouTube](#) for current wave conditions. Also see the [Port Authority of NSW wave buoy](#), located just outside the channel.

Before transiting, check whether there is a ship movement happening that you might encounter. Most exiting ships will first come down the Steelworks Channel before turning into the entrance channel. Check the [movement times](#), contact VTS and monitor ship movement on AIS and/or radar. See [Marine Traffic Newcastle Live Ships](#) for local ships.



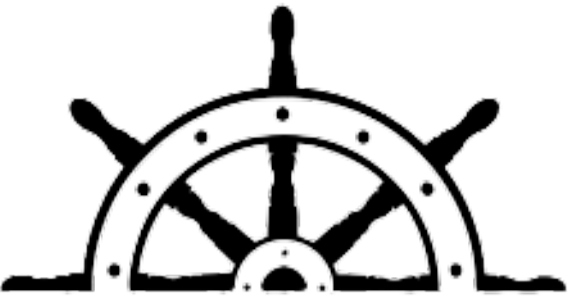


NEWCASTLE CRUISING YACHT CLUB MARINA

Website	Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club Marina Map			 NEWCASTLE CRUISING YACHT CLUB	
Address	95 Hannell St, Wickham NSW 2293				
Email	dockmaster@ncyc.net.au				
Location	32°55.285'S 151°45.761'E 				
Berth Sizes	10m - 33m berths, monohull and cats			Berths	180
				Swing Moorings	-
Hours	Bookings: 8:30 am - 1:30 pm Monday to Friday 8:00 am - 4:00 pm Saturday and Sunday 8:30 am - 12:30 pm			VHF	-
				Phone	0408 299 512
After Hours	Locate a spare berth on F-Dock and contact the Marina Office the following morning to check in.			Internet	
Power	15 amp, 32 amp			Berth Depths	2 - 8m LAT
\$ 15m mono	\$93 per night (9/25)	Laundry	Y	Diesel	Y
\$ 15m cat	\$132 per night (9/25)	Showers	Y	Petrol	Y
Chandlery	Whitworths 4.5km	Toilets	Y	24 Hr Fuel	Y
Dining	Nautica Dining Wickham Boat Shed	WiFi	Y, password	LPG Refill	N. Saddingtons
Bar	Club Bar	Dogs	On leash	Lift-Out	40t Straddle lift Beam 5.6m
Groceries	Foodworks 400m, Coles 1.1km, Woolworths 1.2km	Sewage	Y. \$70	Hardstand	Y
Security Barrier	Arm	Sailmaker	4-5 local sailmakers	Mechanic	Y
Public Transport	13Cabs Uber Local Buses Train - Central Coast & Newcastle Line	Car Hire	N	Electrical	Y
		Car Park	Y	Shipwright	Y

There is a generally good availability for short-term visitor berths. There are one or two events per year where the berths will be full.

Haulout and boatyard services are provided onsite by [Midcoast Boatyard & Marine](#).

HONEYSUCKLE MARINA

Website	Honeysuckle Marina Newcastle				
Address	Wharf Rd &, Merewether St, Newcastle NSW 2300				
Email	info@honeysucklemarinanewcastle.com.au				
Location	32°55.478'S 151°46.369'E 				
Berth Sizes	10m - 26m berths, monohull and cats			Berths	6
				Swing Moorings	-
Hours	Monday to Friday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm Saturday and Sunday 8:00 am - 12:00 pm			VHF	-
				Phone	0490 463 174
After Hours	The security door uses a PIN code. Get the code when you make your booking.			Internet	
Power	15 amp, 32 amp			Berth Depths	4m LAT
\$ 15m mono	\$80 per night (11/25)	Laundry	N	Diesel	N. NCYC
\$ 15m cat	\$80 per night (11/25)	Showers	N	Petrol	N. NCYC
Chandlery	Whitworths 6km	Toilets	Y	24 Hr Fuel	N. NCYC
Dining	Many options. CBD	WiFi	N	LPG Refill	N. Saddingtons 4.7km
Bar	Honeysuckle Hotel 300m	Dogs	On leash	Lift-Out	N
Groceries	Woolworths 1.7km, EzyMart 50m	Sewage	N	Hardstand	N
Security Barrier	Marina	Sailmaker	4-5 local sailmakers	Mechanic	N
Public Transport	13Cabs Uber Local Buses Train - Central Coast & Newcastle Line	Car Hire	N	Electrical	N
		Car Park	N	Shipwright	N

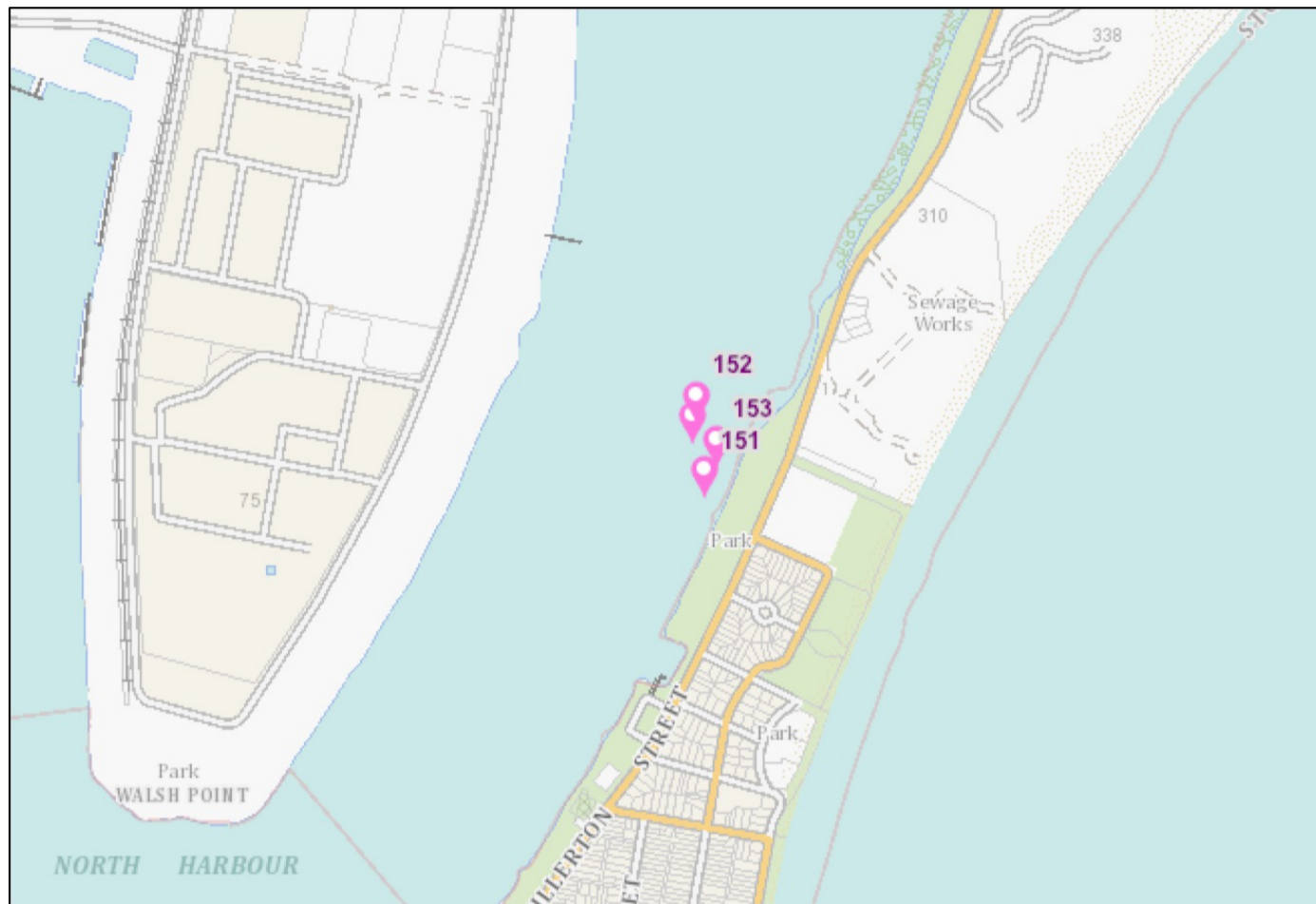
This is a destination marina right in the CBD of Newcastle, so it is great for exploring the city, dining and resupplying.

It is exposed to passing ships' wakes and tug boats leaving or entering The Basin. However, there are usually only 1 or 2 movements per day to and from the basin.

You can also book a free courtesy berth for 2 hours.

NEWCASTLE PUBLIC MOORINGS

There are 4 courtesy moorings located on the eastern side of Stockton Channel. Each is for 24 hours and limited to 20 tonnes.



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NEWCASTLE ANCHORING

Much of Newcastle Harbour is a restricted area. The restricted area stops at the start of the Newcastle Marina.

Stockton Channel, which branches off to the north, is outside of the restricted area and available as an anchorage. There is a small craft mooring area here, which is where there are courtesy moorings (pink) and private moorings (yellow). Anchor north or south of the moorings, keeping out of the main channel.

The Stockton bridge height midway up the channel is 30 metres HAT. The channel is narrow from the bridge upstream, with shoals starting just outside the channel on the eastern side, so it is not suitable for anchoring.

PORT STEPHENS

Port Stephens is a large natural harbour conveniently located north of Pittwater. It is a major yachting destination.

Shoal Bay (Port Stephens) extends westward for about 18km, with a breadth of from 1.5-5km; it has an area of approximately 100km², with adequate depth for a wide range of vessels.

Several streams run into the inlet, the principal ones being the Karuah River, at the north-western head, and the Myall River, which empties itself through the northern shore 5km within the entrance, and is the outlet for the large Myall Lakes, which extend parallel to the shore for 40km to the north.

The entire area is popular for a variety of boating activities.

PORT STEPHENS ENTRANCE

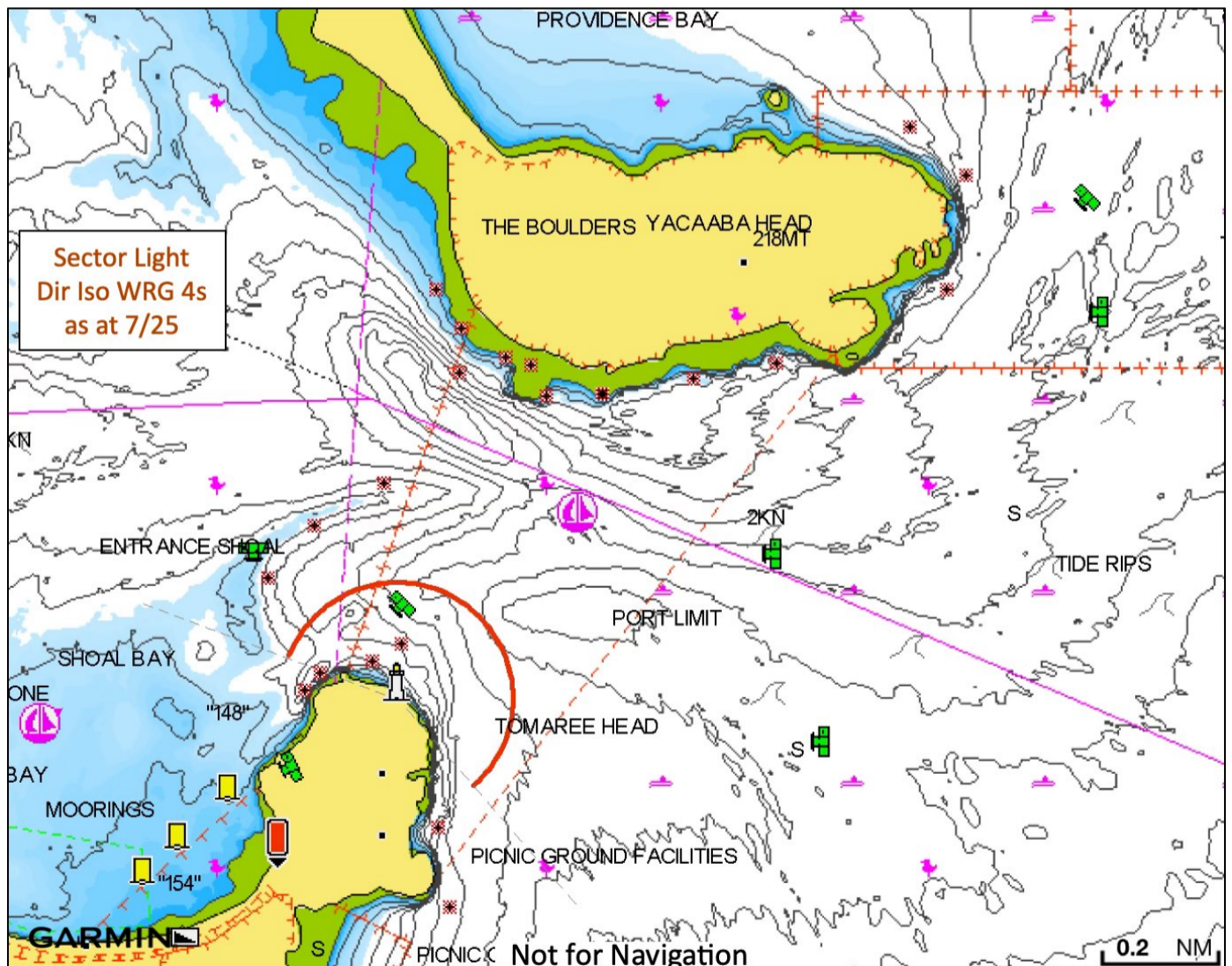
There can be overfalls outside the entrance if there have been strong easterly or southeasterly winds and there is an outgoing tide. Waves can also break in on Entrance

Shoal to the south of the leads.

The leads lie in approximately a WNW direction heading in. There is a sector light. White means you are on track, red means you are too far to port and green means you are too far to starboard.

See the [Wave Rose](#) for Zenith

Beach for average wave conditions. Waves range from south to ENE, with south more

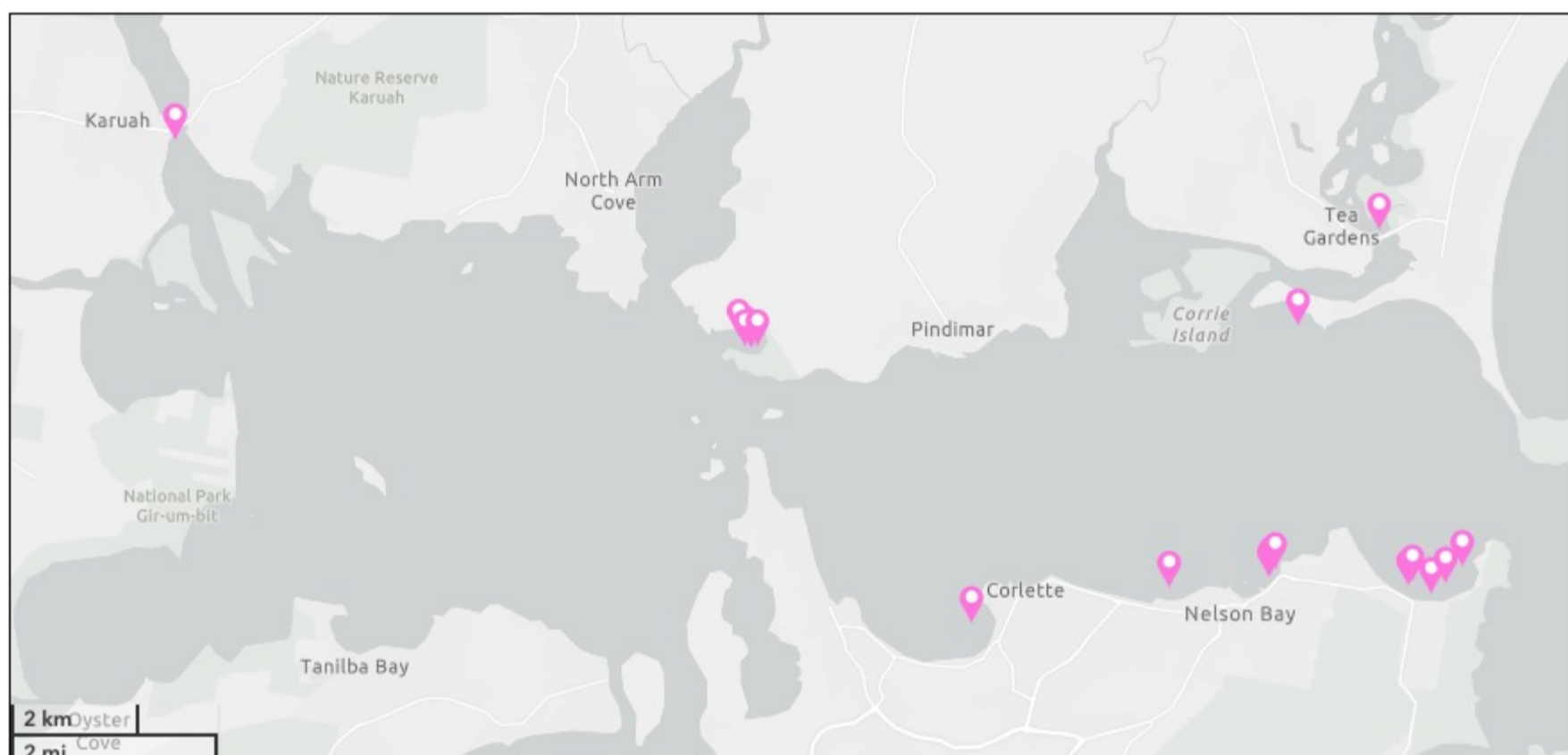


common from April to November. Current wave conditions can be seen at the Manly Hydraulics Laboratory's [Crowdy Head Waveride buoy](#), 59nm NNE of Port Stephens and the [Live webcam](#).

Note that, at the time of writing, Navionics charts had not been updated to show the sector light and were still showing fixed leads.

PORT STEPHENS MOORINGS

There are 18 public moorings available in Nelson Bay: Corlette Point (1), Redpatch Point (1), Nelson Bay (3), Winda Woppa (1), Fame Point (1), Karuah (1), Fame Cove (5), Shoal Bay (5).



Maritime NSW Public Moorings © 2020 Transport for NSW. [Creative Commons Attribution License](#)

PORT STEPHENS PUBLIC JETTIES

These jetties can be used to replenish supplies, pick up and drop off passengers and to pump out sewerage.



Location	Hours	Size	Depth	Time Limit	Water	Pump Out	Fee	⊗
Karuah Public Wharf	24/7	18m	2m LAT	None		Y	Nil	⊗
Lemon Tree Passage Wharf	24/7	36m	2m LAT	None		Y	Nil	⊗
Nelson Bay Public Wharf Avoid scheduled Tea Garden Ferry times.	24/7	22m	2m LAT	None	Y	Y	Nil	⊗

PORT STEPHENS MARINAS

There are several marinas at Port Stephens:

- Nelson Bay Marina, Nelson Bay (detailed below): Ph (02) 49841333, 196 berths to 35m, 24/7 fuel, boatyard, chandlery, pump out, <https://www.dalbora.com.au/marinas/nelson-bay>
- Anchorage Marina Port Stephens, Corlette: Ph (02) 49811388, 90 berths, 6 swing moorings, fuel, 1 superyacht berth, pump out, <https://anchagemarina.com.au>
- Soldiers Point Marina, Soldiers Point: Ph (02) 4982 7445, 100 berths, swing moorings with tender service, pump out, complimentary day berth, <https://www.soldiersptmarina.com.au>
- Albatross Marina, Tanilba Bay: ph (02) 94824422 52 berths, 15 swing moorings, chandlery, \$110 for 15m overnight, pump out, <https://albatrossmarina.com.au>

NELSON BAY MARINA

Website	d'Albora Nelson Bay Marina Marina Map			<h1>d'Albora Nelson Bay</h1>	
Address	6 Teramby Rd, Nelson Bay NSW 2315				
Email	enquiry@dalbora.com.au				
Location	32°43.059'S 152°8.759'E 				
Berth Sizes	7m to 35m berths, monohull and cats			Berths	200
				Swing Moorings	-
Hours	Monday to Friday 8:30 am - 5:00 pm Saturday and Sunday 8:30 am - 5:00 pm			VHF	-
				Phone	1800 32 52 672
After Hours	Locate a spare berth on F-Dock and contact the Marina Office the following morning to check in.			Internet	
Power	15 amp, 32 amp			Berth Depths	3- 5 m LAT
\$ 15m mono	\$146 per night (11/25) *	Laundry	Y	Diesel	Y
\$ 15m cat	\$219 per night (11/25) *	Showers	Y	Petrol	Y
Chandlery	MarineMaster 8km	Toilets	Y	24 Hr Fuel	Y
Dining	Many choices	WiFi	Y. Members Lounge	LPG Refill	BCF . 10km
Bar	Many choices	Dogs	On leash	Lift-Out	50T Travelift
Groceries	Foodworks 400m, Coles 1.1km, Woolworths 1.2km	Sewage	Y	Hardstand	Y
Security Barrier	Arm	Sailmaker	Y	Mechanic	Mid North Marine Engineering
Public Transport	Coffs Taxis Uber Local Buses Airport Interstate Train	Car Hire	N	Electrical	Y
		Car Park	Y	Shipwright	Y

* Berth prices are for the winter low season, starting in May.

This is the largest of the marinas at Port Stephens, and the closest to the entrance. It is a full-service marina.

PORT STEPHENS ANCHORAGES

FINGAL BAY

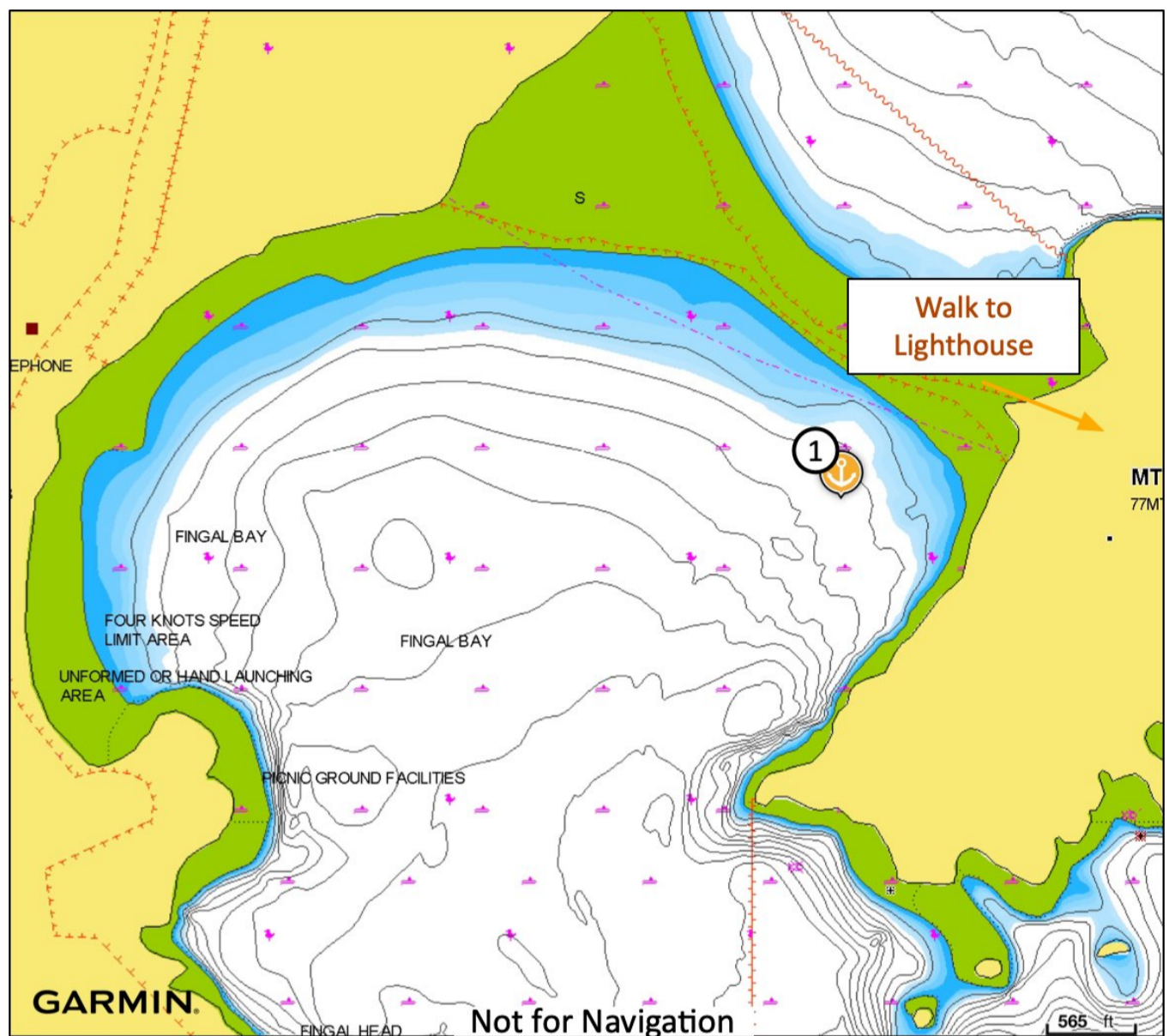
Fingal Bay is convenient and easy to get in and out of during northerly and westerly winds.

Allow sufficient depth for ocean swell.


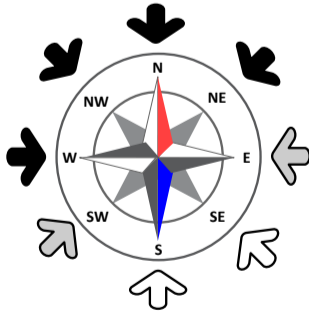




The spit covers over apart from low tide, but is shallow enough to break up waves.

When covered over there is a strong current across the spit.

There is a nice walk to the Port Stephens Lighthouse where the spit joins the Mt Stephens.



White > 3m LAT

1		Depth	4.5m	
		Bottom	Sand	
		Zone		
		Internet		
		TV		

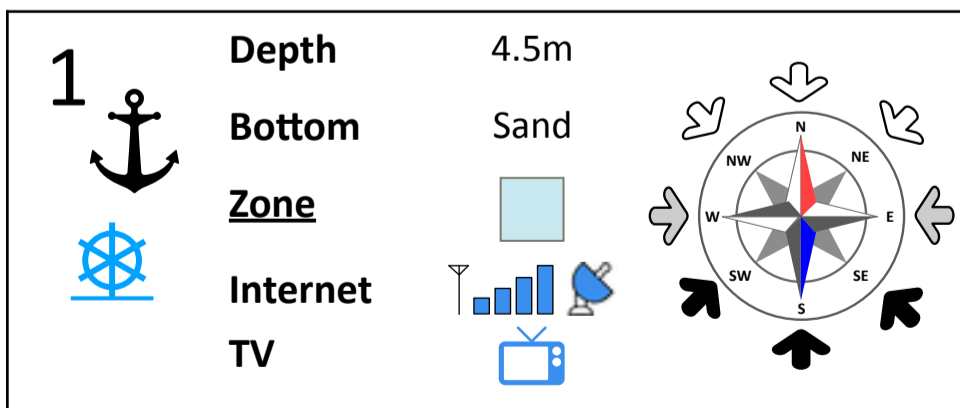
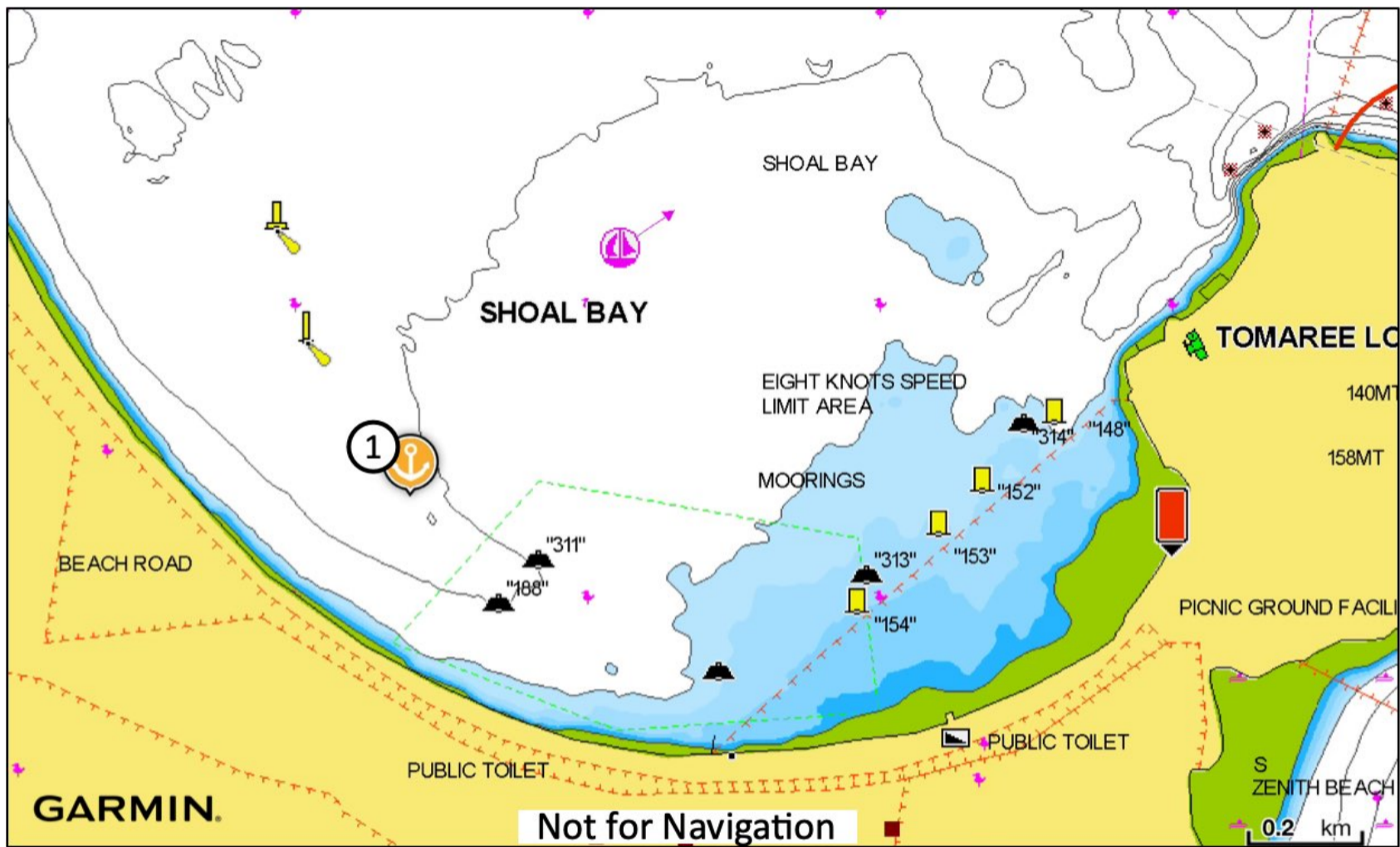
Well protected from the south and southwest.

SHOAL BAY

Shoal Bay is a quick stop off just inside the entrance, although a little roly in the swell.

An IGA and restaurants right on the beach, making it a convenient stop. There is also a Grade 5 walk up to Tomaree Head Summit, which you can start from the eastern end of the bay.

Avoid anchoring in the Small Craft Mooring area. As an alternative to anchoring, there are 5 courtesy moorings in the bay, although only the westernmost 2 have sufficient depth for a keel boat.



A bit roly due to proximity to the entrance of the port.

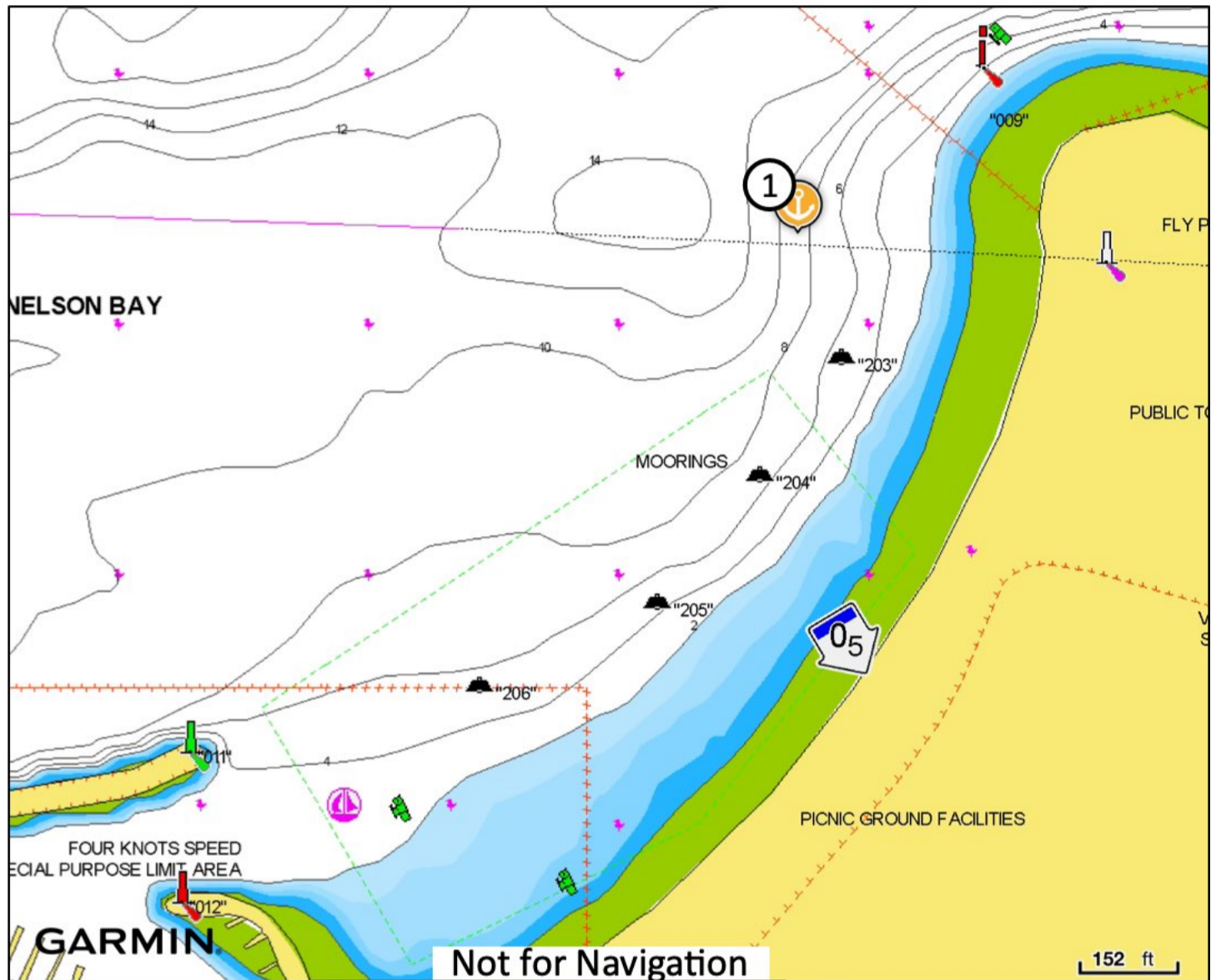
NELSON BAY

Nelson Bay is the main town in Port Stephens. It is a good place to reprovision.

Most of the bay is taken up with the Nelson Bay Marina and a Small Craft Mooring Area, which runs from the marina up to Shoal Bay Road, leaving a small area where it is possible to anchor.

There are 3 courtesy moorings in the bay, 203 to 205. 206 is an emergency mooring. These are closer in and better protected from easterlies.

You can take your dinghy into the Nelson Bay Public Wharf



and tie up along the walkway. Woolworths Nelson Bay is 800m from the wharf.

1	Depth	8.5m	
	Bottom	Sand	
	Zone		
	Internet		
	TV		

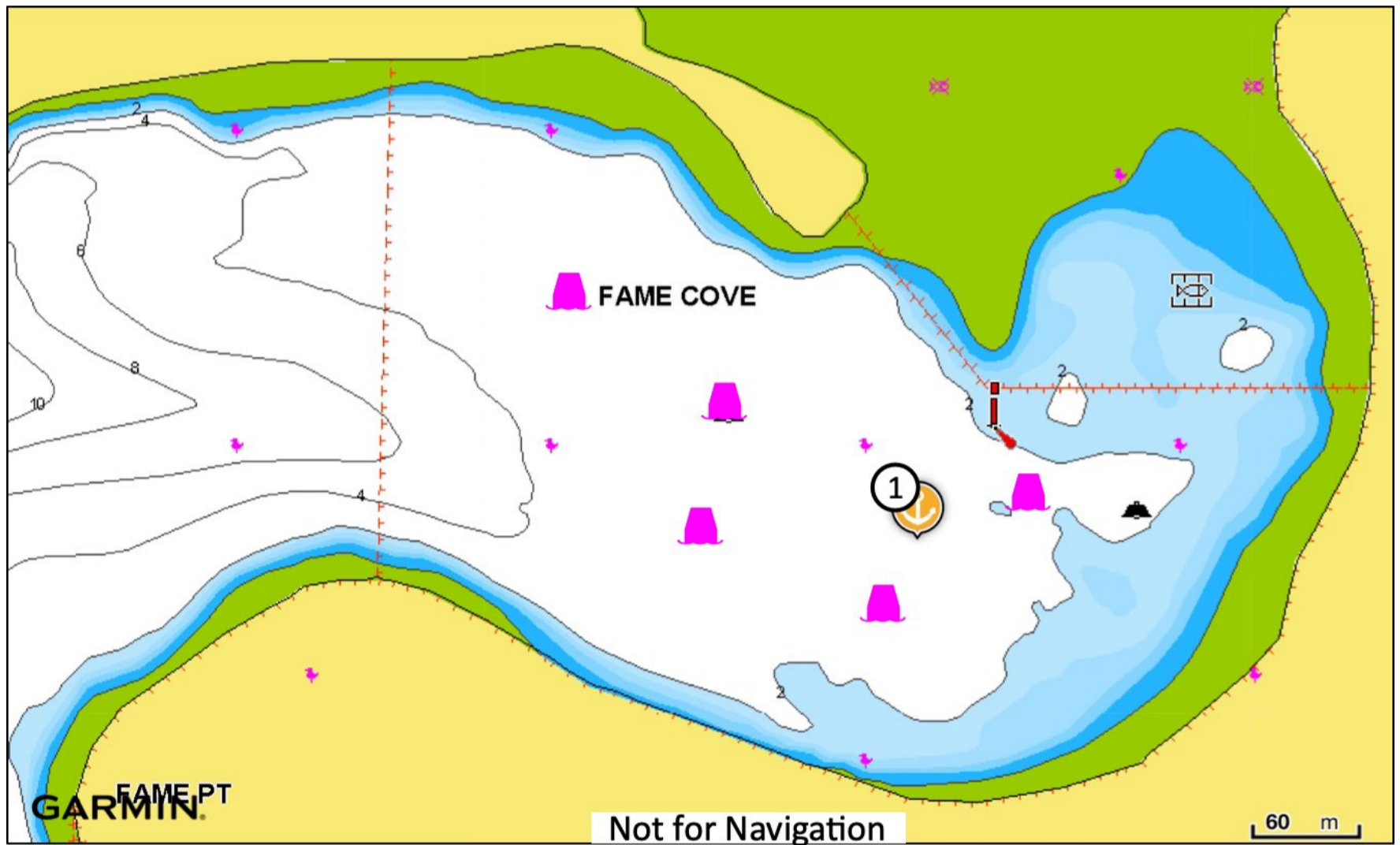
Exposed except for the SE and S.

FAME COVE

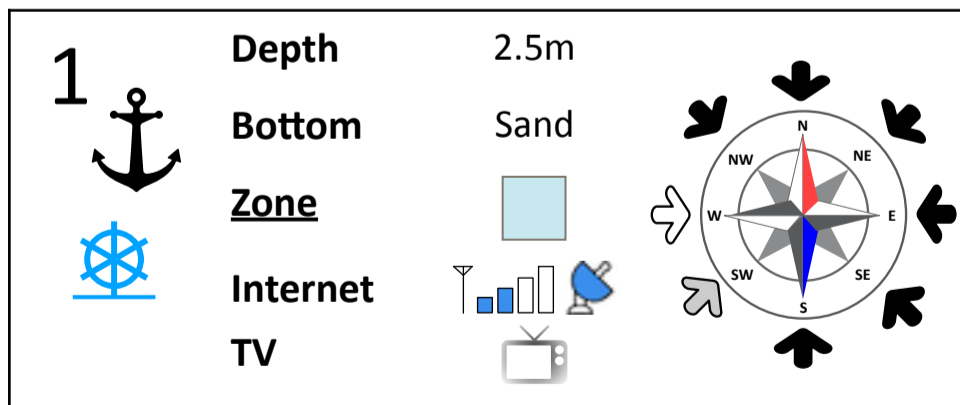
Fame Cove is a small, well-protected cove on the northern shore of Port Stephens, opposite Soldiers Point.

There are 5 courtesy moorings, but still room to anchor in 2-3m depth.

The peninsula to the south is part of Gir-um-bit National Park.



The river and shallows north of the anchorage are a sanctuary zone with no fishing.



Excellent holding and shelter except from West.

BROUGHTON ISLAND

Broughton Island lies 8nm northeast of Port Stephens. The island is part of the Myall Lakes National Park. There is a 2km walking track that takes you from the eastern end of Providence Beach to Esmeralda Cove and Coal Shaft Bay.

The waters around the island sit in the Port Stephens Great Lakes Marine Park.

The island is surrounded by shoals, reefs and rocks. Note the “+” symbols indicating “Dangerous Area Breaks at Times”.

The island is home to Australian little penguins, most active from Spring to Autumn, and the Australian Fur Seal.



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Note that fishing from an anchored vessel is not permitted, nor is fishing with bait.

The two anchorages are Providence Beach on the north side and Coal Shaft Bay on the southwest.

Esmeralda Cove is a little tight and deep for anchoring. The inside cove has private moorings.

BROUGHTON ISLAND COURTESY MOORINGS



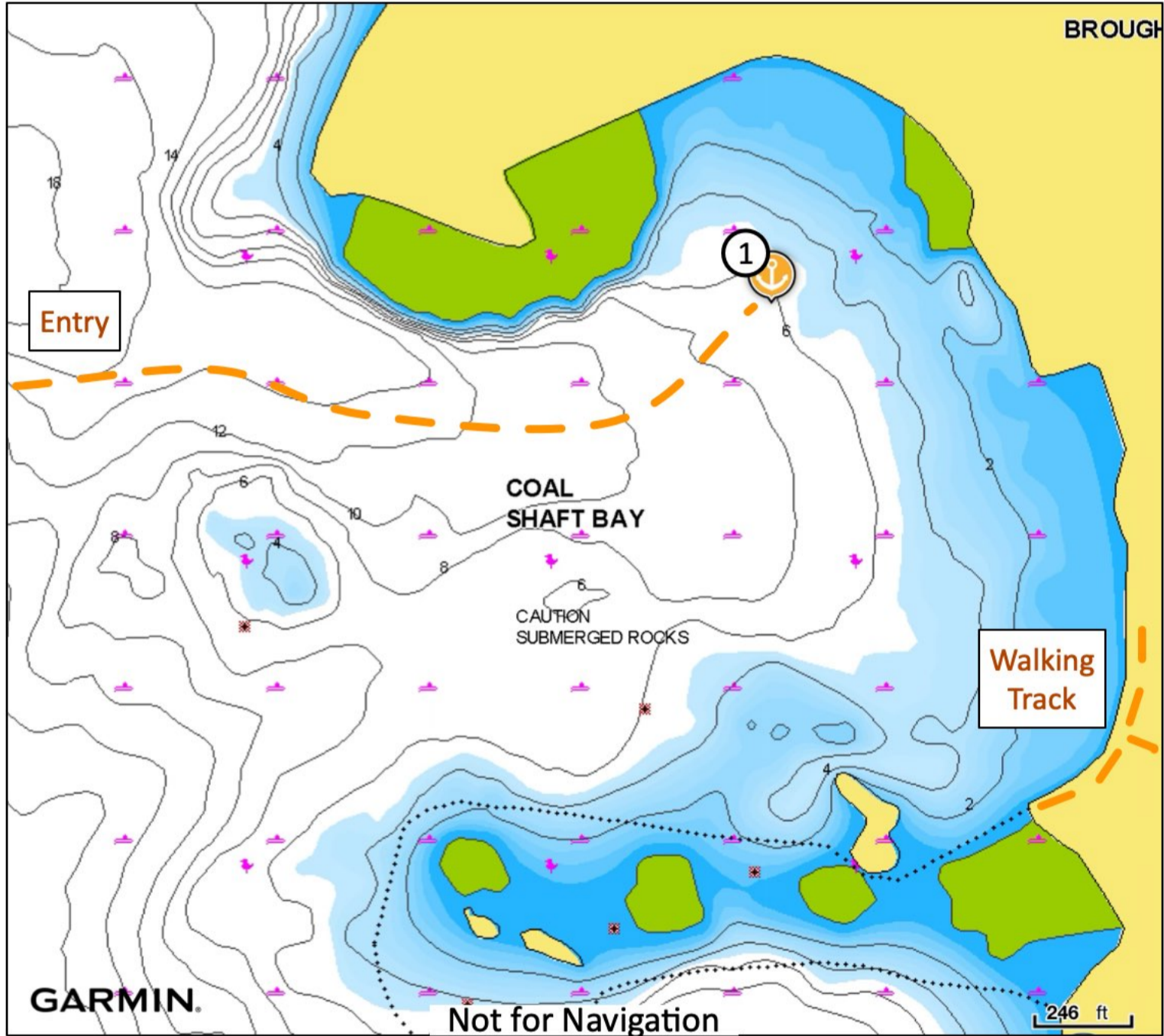
Maritime NSW Public Moorings © 2020 Transport for NSW. [Creative Commons Attribution License](#)

The courtesy mooring is on Providence Beach, suitable for westerly to southeasterly winds. Some southeasterly swell will wrap around. Mooring 160 is in 3m of depth and is tucked in very close to the beach.

COAL SHAFT BAY

Coal Shaft Bay is a popular northerly anchorage. There is a walking track that takes you to Esmeralda Cove and Providence Beach.

Entry into the bay is from the west, avoiding shoals and rocks.



Blue shaded areas < 5m depth to highlight shoals.

1	Depth	6m	
	Bottom	Sand/Kelp	
	Zone		
	Internet		
	TV		

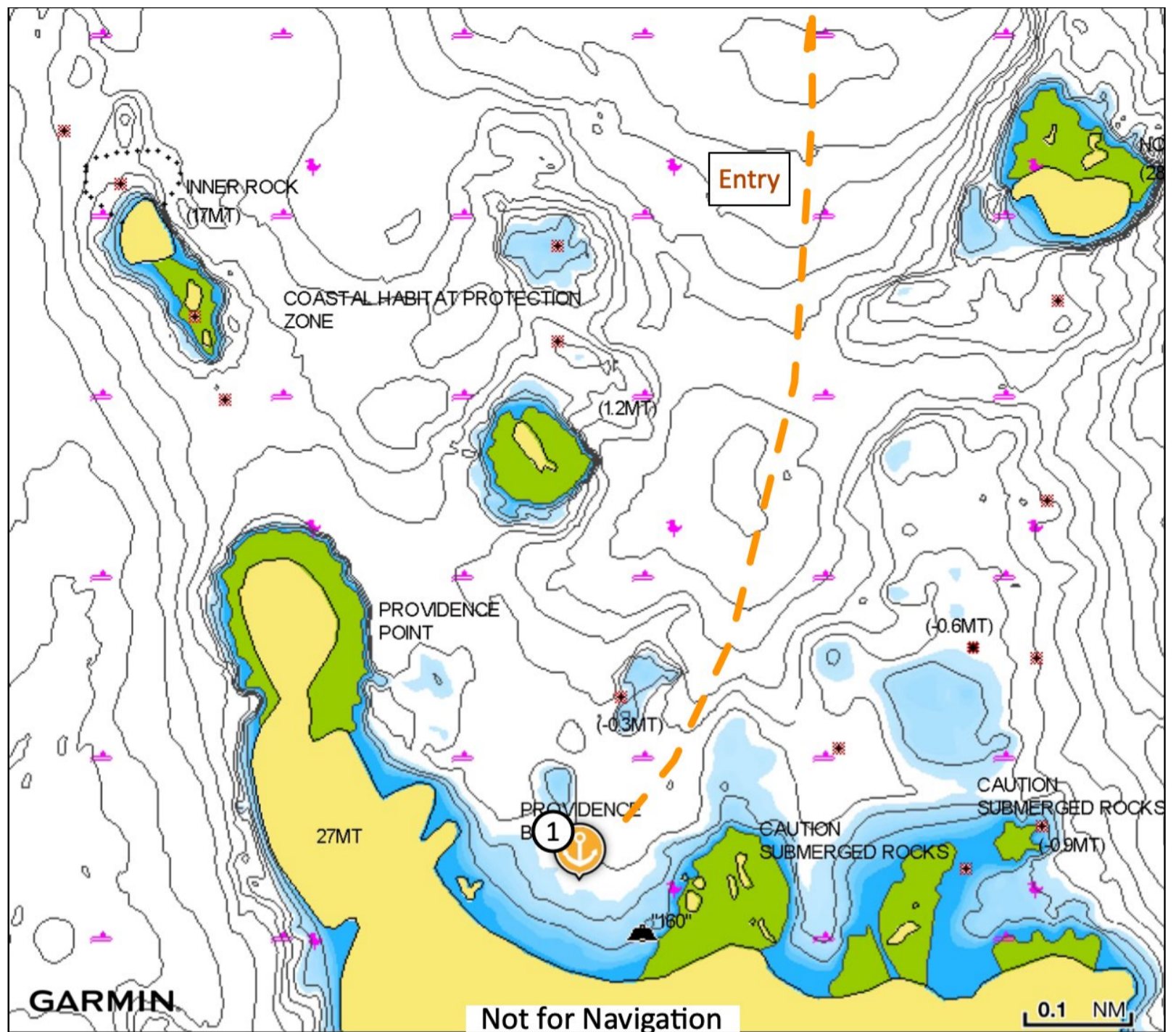
Good for northerlies. Avoid anchoring in kelp, which can cause dragging. Rolly in southeast swell.



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PROVIDENCE BEACH

The swell from south to east with more easterlies from December to March. Most of these swells will partly wrap around into Providence Beach, so it is better in a southerly swell or

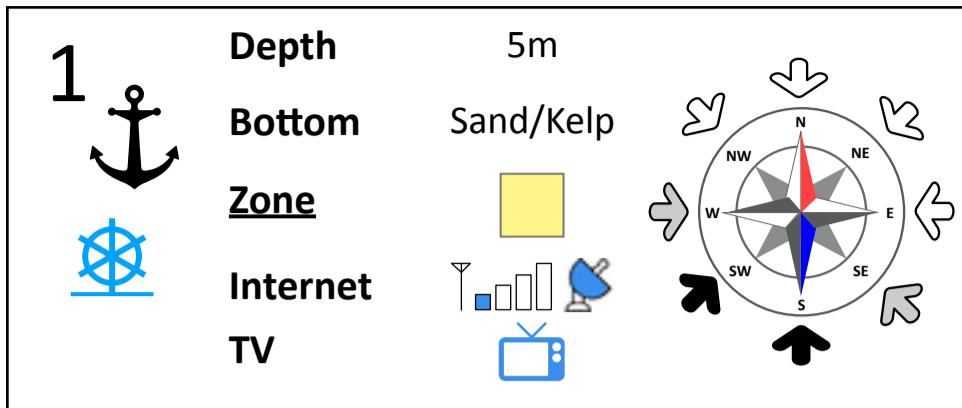


Blue shaded areas < 5m depth to highlight shoals.

light conditions. For stronger conditions, consider Port Stephens nearby.

Access is difficult. The suggested entry below avoids the areas marked with “+” on the TfNSW map, shoals and known rocks. The chart below shows blue shading on depths < 5m to highlight the shoals.

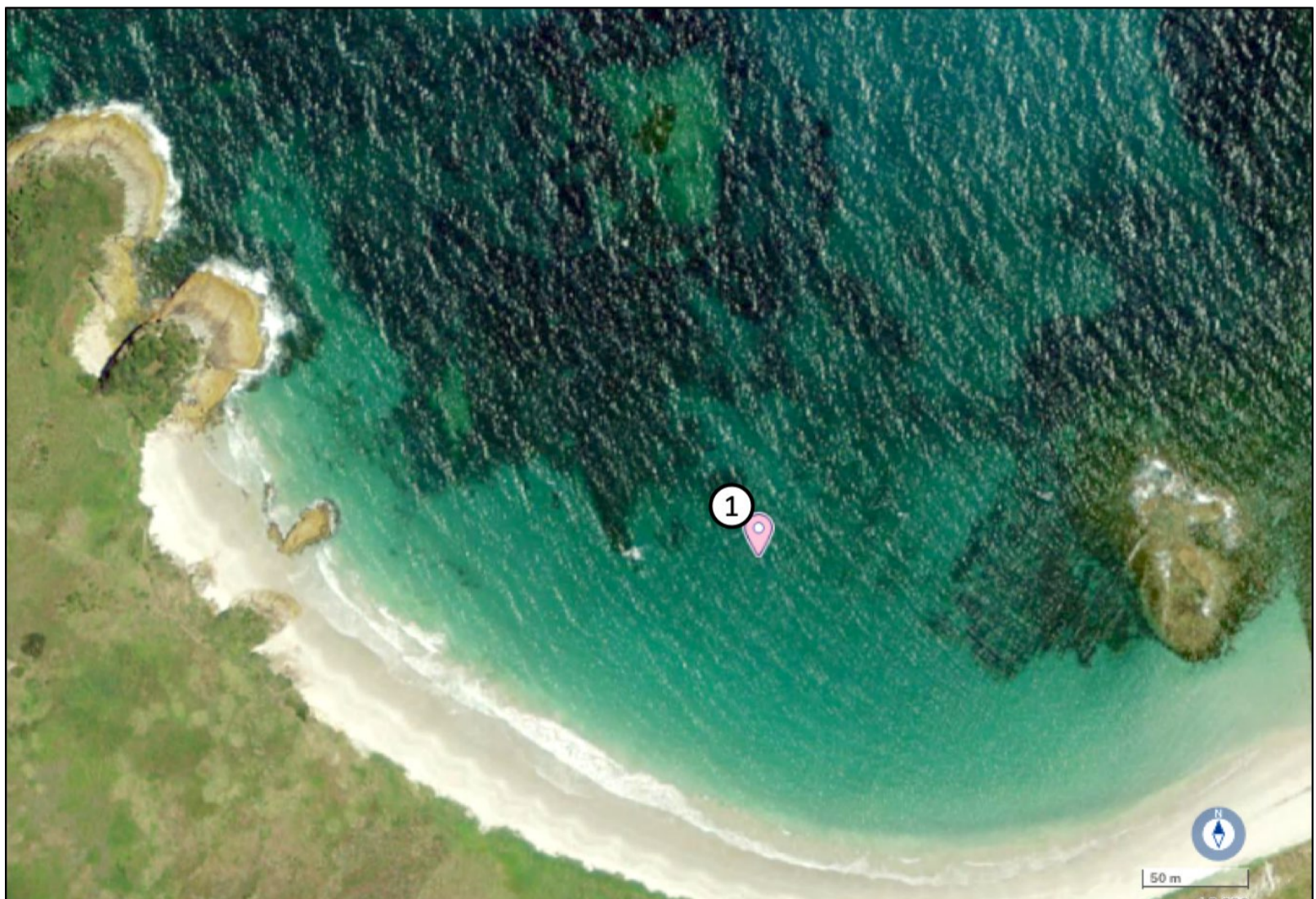
Avoid anchoring in kelp, which can cause dragging.



Exposed except for the SE and S. Rolly

Fishing is not permitted from anchored vessels in the Broughton Island Habitat Protection Zones, which include all the anchorages and the public mooring. The reason is to protect the grey nurse shark nursery.

Note the extensive kelp beds. Anchor in clean sand.



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Note the anchorage “1” above refers to the anchorage, not the courtesy mooring. It is much closer to the rock at the eastern end of the beach.