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Route a3

EAST AND NORTH AUSTRALIA

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CONTRIBUTORS

The Pilotage Foundation is extremely grateful to Tony Bolingbroke and Serena Milne for providing the information which is now available for the benefit of others;

GENERAL

Weather

It is also worth obtaining the Bureau of Meteorology pamphlet "Marine Weather HF Radio Service" which gives frequencies and a description of forecast areas. Much general weather info is carried on: <http://www.bom.gov.au/marine/index.shtml>

Currents

The East Australian Current can be very variable. It was 2 kts in a few places but mostly 0.5-1.0 kts. It should, perhaps, be regarded as a series of eddies as it is inconsistent, except between Smoky Cape and Tacking Point – where it is closest to the coast – and searching for it rarely seems to pay dividends. One can avoid it on the way north by sailing close inshore, where a weak favourable countercurrent is sometimes found. The exception to this is between Tacking Point and Smoky Cape, where the current is 2kt southbound.

Entry

The latest regulations for entry and customs clearance can be downloaded from www.customs.gov.au

PORT NOTES

Sydney

***** I have listed the bays separately, in italics, to enable individual pinpoints to be allocated*****

The entry into Sydney Harbour is as spectacular as its hype suggests. Expect the areas around the city itself to be very crowded; it is difficult, but not impossible, to find a place to anchor or a free marina berth.

Rushcutter's Bay location of the d'Albora and Cruising Yacht Club of Australia (CYC) marinas. They generally have some space (but NOT within several weeks of the annual Sydney/Hobart Race which starts on 26th December).

Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron will also welcome visitors from international yacht clubs.

The best anchorage facilities are in Rose Bay (to the east) or Blackwattle/Rozelle Bays (to the west). The former is quite a long way out but has reasonable shopping close to the beach. Blackwattle Bay is the most convenient, with good shopping close by, free electric Bar-B-Q facilities ashore and a regular bus (437) run to the City Centre (CBD) and Circular Quay.

Balls Head Bay About 1.5 ml west of the Harbour Bridge. Sheltered from most winds except northern sector blows.

Birkenhead Point A further 1.5 ml from Balls Head Bay with, a large shopping complex including Coles.

Middle Harbour Has several attractive gunk holes

Bantry Bay Attractive with about eight courtesy moorings.

Long Bay Convenient shopping anchorage. Cammeray Marina nearby is a small, cruiser-oriented marina with all the usual facilities, including token-operated laundry Very friendly and welcoming - email: cammarina@cia.com.au

Broken Bay

A multi-inlet delta with fashionable Pittwater first left on entry. Look for free moorings off both Palm Beach and Newport. Picnic area beside the curiously named Puddle, off Newport, has free electric BBQ pits. There are two pink courtesy (visitors) moorings near Church Point. Leave Scotland Is to stbd and the moorings will be to stbd. Ettalong, in Brisbane Water, has courtesy moorings in Hardy's Bay. Refuge and America Bay had vacant moorings mid-week.

Lake Macquarie Entrance Anchorage

Best approached on a SSW heading towards the prominent CG building, when the start of the line of small red buoys can be found. Keep 5-10m from the marks. Limited anchorage space downriver from the bridge. Expect river to flood until about 3.5 hours after HW and ebb until 4.5 hrs after LW. Not a recommended anchorage.

Newcastle Area

Can be entered at any stage of tide. Night entry is possible but the massive number of town lights means that it can be difficult to identify the leading lights and other navigational lights.

Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club marina is in a relatively quiet spot with helpful and friendly staff and some of the best shower/toilet facilities we have come across. Enquiries to george@ncyc.net.au for the attention of Vicki. There is no VHF; all business is conducted by cell phone

Central Newcastle has an excellent range of facilities. The town is passably attractive but the overall setting is that of a busy commercial port whose main business is the shipping of huge quantities of coal. Not a recommended stop but it has the advantage of having most things available if ambulance is not a requirement

Port Stephens

In reality a series of bays, inlets and anchorages. Entrance much as shown by Lucas. The passage close by Tomaree Head and thence to Nelson Bay had least depth of 2.9m over Entrance Shoal at midtide.

Nelson There are three pink public moorings east of Nelson Bay Marina. Officially only for a stay of 24 hours. Anchorage near the moorings is in 12-15m but the holding is said to be doubtful.

Shoal Bay Lots of anchorage room in sand and not always rolly.

Oyster Cove Cove Marine at Oyster Cove, is accessible on the top half of the tide. The Lucas chartlet is accurate apart from the marks off Taniba Pt. The buoy is now at 32 42.84S 151 59.20E and a further beacon exists at 32 42.99S and 151 58.68E. These new marks take one to the west of the shallowest soundings on his chartlet of Tillgerry Creek to Swan Bay. Otherwise depths accurate. Haul out and re-launch here is comparatively inexpensive but there is no public transport and a car is essential. Staff give helpful and professional service. Haul out and re-launch can be only done at high water between mid-tide and springs. Phone (02) 4982 4832; email covemarine@bigpond.com.au

Tuncurry, Hawke Harbour

Straightforward entrance. Look for unused private jetties, opposite WC (see Lucas) beyond the fish co-op, on the west bank. Often several of these not in use and the local fishermen are very relaxed about them being used.

Crowdy Harbour

Moor if possible in the pile berths along the fishing wharf or at the unloading wharf rather than alongside the general jetty The harbour is subject to a surge but is safe in all weather while the bay outside offers protection from SE swells and provides good anchoring on a sandy bottom

Camden Haven

Sea at entrance breaks up to mid-flood even in calm conditions but entrance is no problem. Channel in the river is well-marked. Visitors' jetty at Laurieton has little depth alongside. Water available. Laurieton is an undistinguished town in attractive surroundings with delightful wide streets. Mooring alongside is sometimes available at the under-used pump-out jetty, just before the Fish Co-op. The United Servicemen's Club was being extended in 2007.

Port Macquarie

Un-nerving breakers roll in at entrance but are easily negotiated if watched for a bit. Pretty channel inside, very shallow to stbd. Convenient fuel dock at small marina. Marina rents mooring buoys.

Trial Bay

Delightful anchorage in settled weather – sheltered from S of E round to NW. Approach is easy. The bottom shelves gently – anchor in sand in 7m at 30 52.9S 153 03.4E.

Coffs Harbour

Easy to enter at night but a roly anchorage. Pleasant, inexpensive marina with a laid-back air. Power points in short supply. Town 3km away but excellent local shopping centre only 10mins walk away. Yacht Club serves reasonable meals notable for their size.

Yamba/Iluka

Hairy looking entrance when viewed from offshore with white water all over the place. Closer to it is not difficult to judge the entry “moment”. Courtesy mooring available just inside entrance.

River Ballina – Richmond

The bar is said to be one of the worst on the coast. Enter between 4-5 hours after LW. Anchor off the trawler harbour. Biking ashore is good; excellent Naval Museum.

Tweed Heads

Entrance straightforward between extended groins but should be made at HW+3 or 4 if there is any sort of onshore wind, as the bar is substantial. Anchorage may be had just north of the Golf Club or fork right after entry and follow the channel up to Boyds Bay. A small marina (very few free berths) has been constructed in this bay and the public jetty en route may offer mooring space plus fresh water

Gold Coast Seaway and the Broadwater

Entrance to the Gold Coast Seaway can be calm as soon as 1 hr after LW but is best left until the 3rd hour of a rising tide if any swells exist outside. Plenty of room in 6m on a mud bottom in the anchorage area opposite "Sea World". Beacon to Beacon, published by Maritime Safety Queensland, price \$34 (2007), is highly recommended. Be prepared to run aground in some of the very shallow spots (e.g. Jacob's Reach) and allow plenty of time for cleaning the chain of the sticky mud! Provides a huge short cut to Brisbane

Moreton Bay

Navigate the southern section on a rising tide. Horseshoe Bay anchorage S of Peel Island had plenty of room in 5m mud and sand. Mud Island has good anchorage on gently shelving sand at the NW end of the island, north of the isolated danger mark.

Manly Marina and Yacht Club

Station is 20 mins walk with trains to Brisbane every 30 mins. Supermarket 10 mins.

Brisbane

Inexpensive pile berths are available beside the Botanical Gardens (the only place convenient to the city). Dinghies can be left at the former ferry jetty. Laundry and ablutions on shore at the base of the jetty. CBD only a short walk away. A most convenient and attractive spot.

Scarborough

New marina in boat harbour, to the west of the yacht club. Parts of the entrance channel and marina have depths of less than 2m at datum. The marina is good, if somewhat isolated. Chandler, rigger and sail maker on site.

Great Sandy Strait

This interesting short-cut is navigable by yachts up to 2m draught. The anchorage at the Kingfisher resort is free from hazards and the approach is well lit. If entering Gary's anchorage from the north, you need to work the tides; enter at any tide from the south. This is a highly recommended anchorage – quiet and remote.

Bundaberg (Port Marina)

A popular “clearance” port. Report to Bundaberg VMR by VHF (and by email 48 hours in advance of arrival to yachtreport@customs.gov.au). Yachts arriving outside working hours are directed to anchor near the marina until called in to one of the quarantine berths. Bundaberg marina facilities are excellent with travel-lift, copious hardstanding, chandlery, engineering and rigging services, etc.. Daily transport provided to town (15 mins) and to a local farmers’ market on Sundays. The river is navigable 3hrs either side of HW and it is ten miles to the town of Bundaberg where Bundaberg Slipways also has slipping facilities. www.bundabergslipways.com.au

1770

First place Cook stepped ashore in Queensland in 1770. Work tides carefully to get over the bar. The place is a little gem. Pelicans abound, the sandbanks and riverside are very picturesque and there is little commercialism in sight. Limited basic provisions are obtainable at the campsite shop – opposite the anchorage – where gas bottles may be re-filled. Local café offers reasonable fare.

Pancake Creek

Easy entrance and secure anchorage in south-sector winds.

Port Clinton

Easy entrance with a safe, calm anchorage. Can be windy in trade wind conditions.

Island Head Creek

Same as Port Clinton but infinitely more attractive.

Hunter Island

Surprisingly calm anchorage in developed trades. “Washing machine” seas in approach channel but these soon dissipate.

Curlew Island

Lucas’s recommended anchorage is rolly.

Mackay Marina

Modern, well run and with plenty of space. Easy-access to fuel docks. Limited chandlery. Shopping centre a 10 min bus ride away. Most things can be bought in town. Good hardware store called Porters.

Whitsundays

All delightful. Not busy in April/May. Public moorings in lots of bays. Butterfly Bay and Luncheon Bay (north Hook Is) exceptional. Despite its reputation, the facilities at Hamilton Island were not overly expensive. Good marina with restaurants (unremarkable), liquor store, bakery and fishmonger. Avoid Hayman Island – prices extortionate!

Airlie Beach

Good marina with a BiLo supermarket close by. Best chandlery for hundreds of miles is Marlin Marine, half way between Shut Harbour and Airlie Beach.

Woodwark Bay

The “outer” anchorage was roll free and very sheltered.

Gloucester Passage

The section between Monte’s Resort and Passage Islet requires concentration! Lucas’s info is good but be aware that the wind can spring up as one exits the Passage, and from a quite different direction – and strength - than that felt inside.

Queen’s Bay

More sheltered than it looks. Usually roll-free.

Upstart Bay

The outer anchorage just south of the isolated rock proved to be very sheltered and roll-free. Get close to shore – the bottom shelves only gradually and is easy to “read” on the echo-sounder.

Cape Bowling Green

Both outer and inner anchorages can be uncomfortable in even light winds. Best avoided unless really bad weather necessitates taking shelter, in which case some protection is available.

Townsville

Breakwater Marina is convenient, friendly and well run. Call ahead (07) 4721 2233 for reservation. Good chandlery. Some food in marina shop but town/supermarkets/Internet only 5 mins walk away. Town has many well-restored colonial buildings.

Magnetic Island

Named by Cook in 1770. Horseshoe Bay is a delight - Sandbar Café overlooking beach (and licensed) has good food. A short bus trip (\$1) takes one to the Fort’s Walk, a trail that leads to the defences built in WW II with impressive views. Koalas and possums inhabit the parkland.

Orpheus Island

Little Pioneer Bay has public moorings but can be roly in moderate SE trades.

Hinchinbrook Channel

Very sheltered. Crocs visible on the sandbanks at low tide. The creeks can be a bit “buggy”.

Dunk Island

Can be roly but very pretty with good walking trails, free Bar-B-Q facilities and showers (hot) in Park campsite (courtesy of National Park Dept). Small café sells both bread and milk (at a premium price).

Mouriyan Harbour

Site of large bulk sugar terminal. Very secure and easy to get into by night.

Innisfail

Quiet country town serving the local banana and sugarcane growers. Only accessible at the top of normal tides. The Shire Council (who control the alongside berths) are very helpful and will arrange for one to be met and given a berth - call 0408 456 068. Town badly hit by 2006 hurricane.

Cairns

Much nicer than it is sometimes painted. Marlin Marina (07 4035 1881) new, efficient and close to shopping. Good coin laundry on site. Attractive artificial lagoon has been created for croc-free bathing together with a plentiful sprinkling of free, electric bar-B-Q pits in the surrounding park/gardens. A very pleasant amenity. Several reasonable chandlers in town but for some historical reason they are a long way from the marina. Spacious anchorage area opposite marina. Good public library levies small charges for temporary membership - free internet for members. Large range of restaurants, both beside the marina and in town just a few steps away. Fresh fruit and veg market on Friday/Sat/Sun (Rusty's)

Port Douglas

Mirage Marina somewhat scruffy and expensive but under new management and being tidied up. Anchoring in the river is near impossible. Most supplies available in town but no chandlery. A few chic/exclusive shops - overall a bit pricey. Many restaurants/cafes.

Michaelmas Reef

22 ml NE of Cairns. Secure anchorage close to sand cay, protected from NE to S. If approaching from Cairns, the channel through Upolu Reef is well marked with buoys. Arrive late and leave early to avoid the day tripper boats. The sand cay is cordoned off to protect the thousands of birds that nest there but one can still get very close to them.

Norman Reef

11 ml N of Michaelmas Reef. Excellent snorkelling. There is public mooring (blue conical buoy) near the SW end. Again, arrive early to avoid the trippers - not an overnight mooring.

Two Isles

Popular and attractive. Helpful National Park warden will visit (probably by canoe) and give advice/info

Cooktown

Entrance channel is well buoyed. Not much depth but anchorage possible in 10 ft (15 27.70'S: 145 14.73'E) with excellent holding. Water and laundry at quay. Town well worth a visit - essential for Cook's admirers! It has a wild west, out-back feel to it. Well stocked supermarket, butcher, greengrocer and liquor store. Internet at a variety of places, white "Booking Office" the nearest. Excellent museum, with a large section devoted to the Endeavour and her sojourn in the river. Cemetery worth a visit, for the insight into the hardships of settlement in what was for a short time a

highly prosperous gold town. Visit to some aboriginal rock art including 4 hour bush walk, with insight into aboriginal use of plants in the bush, can be arranged (ask for Willie at the Booking Office, or Pam's Place).

Lizard Island

Magical and not-to-be-missed. Anchorage well sheltered from SE trades. Water crystal clear and colourful coral and fish abound. Rays, turtles and sand sharks too. Sharks are quite benign as they have plenty to eat! Lovely walks ashore. Cook's Lookout – where he sought a passage through the Barrier Reef for Endeavour after his reef grounding – is well worth the 1,000 ft climb. It is hard to leave this spot once one has arrived.

Outer Channel North of Pippon Islets (off Cape Melville)

There is a second marked channel for vessels transiting N/S which saves the coastal dogleg here. The buoyage, which only appears on very recent charts, is the following approximate positions (running from south to north):

13 53.6S 144 14.3E – marks W side of Fairway Channel

13 46.4S 144 09.7E [Gp Fl (2) 6s] – marks 15m patch – leave to stbd

13 39.8S 144 06.0E [Gp Fl (3) 12s] – marks 9m patch S of Creech Reef – leave to stbd

13 26.6S 143 58.2 – seems to mark port side of First Three Mile Opening – leave to stbd

13 19.3S 143 52.6 – not sure what this marks but we left it to stbd

13 17.5S 143 50.5E – Green buoy that is left to port

13 16.8S 143 51.2E – Red buoy left to stbd

13 11.7S 143 47.8E [Qk Fl (3) 10s] – marks Diamond Reign Reefs – leave to port

13 11.5S 143 49.3 – W cardinal – leave to stbd

13 01.9S 143 45.6 [VQ 10s] – seems to mark a 12m shoal – leave to stbd

12 59.5S 143 43.8E – marks reef near Sherrard Isles – leave to port

12 52.5S 143 38.5E – marks end of Frederick Patches – leave to port

12 51.2S 143 38.4E – marks Sunk Reef – leave to stbd

Then rejoin coastal channel. NB Big ships also use this channel. More buoys may be lit than noted here.

Escape River

Large, secure anchorage but featureless and devoid of interest apart from crocs ashore. Numerous pearl farms. A buoyed channel leads through the shallow bits inside the river.

Albany Passage

Very attractive. Useful anchorage in Shallow Bay at northern end. Despite its shallowness one can tuck in quite a long way.

Cape York

Good stop for those who wish to stand on the northern tip of mainland Australia. Windswept but well sheltered anchorage a long way offshore - holding good on sand.

Thursday Island (Thorn Is anchorage)

Anchorage off Thursday Island itself is not recommended. Anchor on opposite side of channel beside Thorn Island, taking care of sandbanks. Water on the public quay at Thorn, plus a shop that appears to sell everything from videos to soap. Interesting private museum close by with

a lot of wartime memorabilia. Thursday Island itself can be accessed by a regular ferry. Torres Island Cultural Centre is worth a visit. Outbound clearance Quarantine Service is compulsory for all. (Simple form-filling at shore-side office).

Red Island, Seisa

Convenient stop having rounded Cape York if in need of re-provisioning. It avoids a clash with the quarantine regs, which a stop in Thursday Island would incur. Very sheltered anchorage, good holding on sand. Camp site has laundry. Well stocked supermarket with lots of fresh fruit and veg, a garage and telephones. Crocodiles abound so avoid dangling limbs in water!

Gove

Large sheltered anchorage off welcoming Yacht Club - small joining fee allows use of showers (basic but with plentiful water supply, both hot and cold) and laundry machines/dryers. Water supply available on beach. Woolworth's and IGA supermarkets in Gove which is 16 Km away. Easy to hitchhike – both there and back. Taxi was \$25 one way in 2005. Aboriginal community at Yirrkala is worth visiting.

Hole In The Wall (S entrance 11° 34' S 136° 22.4' E)

This exciting passage must be done with favourable tide as the current can reach 9 knots. The ebb (N going) commences at approximately HW Gove – 1 hr. The optimum time to transit on spring tides is HW Gove + 10 min.

Darwin

If wanting a marina berth, reserve early. Cullen Bay Marina 0412955061 <http://www.cullenbaymarina.com.au>, Tipperary Waters Marina 0889422231 or Bayview Marina 0418910888 <http://www.bayviewmarina.com.au>. Cullen's has a more central location and better facilities (restaurants, chandlery, etc.) on site. It is also accessible at all states of the tide. Anchoring is possible in both Fannie Bay and Frances Bay but you must anchor well offshore in at least 10m to allow for the 8m tides which makes for a long dinghy haul up the beach at low water

29/3/2010