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## Route a5

# AUSTRALIA TO SOUTH AFRICA

VIA CHRISTMAS ISLAND, COCOS KEELING, CHAGOS AND MADAGASCAR

Principle contributors **David and Annette Ridout.**

Edited by Jane Russell

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### CONTRIBUTORS

The Pilotage Foundation is extremely grateful to the following who have provided information which is now available for the benefit of others;

Rod Hall and Bridget Carter	<i>Peer Gynt II</i>
Tim and Ginny Le Couteur	<i>Hesperine</i>
John and Jane Hiett	<i>Barnacle B</i>
Hugh Marriot	<i>Tacit</i>
Andrew Hogbin	<i>Chante de Mai</i>
Graham Morfey	<i>Flight of Time</i>
David and Annette Ridout	<i>Nordlys</i>

### WEATHER PATTERNS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

The great advantage of the Indian Ocean, as compared with the Atlantic and Pacific, is that instead of constant trade winds throughout the year, the heating of the Asian land mass in the northern summer results in a reversal of the wind. It is therefore possible to time your voyages and sail east, as well as west, with a free wind. You can make good passages all over the Indian Ocean, cruising from one side to the other in accordance with the changing monsoons.

The Indian Ocean can broadly be divided into four horizontal bands. The North Indian Ocean runs down to the Equator, then the top of the South Indian Ocean runs from the Equator to 10°S, the middle band of the South Indian Ocean runs from 10°S to 30°S, and the bottom band stretches down from 30°S into the Southern Ocean.

**Band 1 (North Indian Ocean).** The NE monsoon runs from November to March. The further north you are, the earlier it is likely to set in. It is supposed to blow at 10 – 15kts, though is often less in the Malacca Straits and on the coast of Thailand. It may blow from a more northerly direction on the Asian side, working its way round to the east somewhere near 60° E. The SW monsoon runs from June to September, and blows more strongly, often at gale force. The two monsoons are separated by periods of unstable weather in April/May and October/November. During these months the weather is generally typical of the Doldrums, except that these are also the dangerous times for cyclones.

Band 2 (Equator down to 10°S). The SE trades blow from April through to October. The SE trade is mostly steady, but can blow freshly. Between November and March the northern hemisphere's NE monsoon crosses the Equator, but is deflected, and becomes the NW monsoon. The NW monsoon tends to be light and unreliable.

Band 3 (Between 10°S and 30°S). The SE trades blow from Western Australia to Madagascar all year round. The SE zone moves north in the southern winter to a northern limit of about 2°S during August. In the southern summer the SE zone moves south. In January they blow between 12°S and 30°S. Wind strengths are supposed to be 10–15kts in summer and 15–20kts in winter, but the experience of many yachts is that the trades here can blow at Force 7 for days on end.

Band 4 (Below 30°S). Below 30°S the prevailing winds are westerly.

**Convergence Zone;** There is often a trough or line of convergence lying along the Cocos, Chagos, Seychelles routes. Sailing in this should not be underestimated. It is hard tiring work with constantly changing wind strengths and a lot of rain. The Indian Ocean has confused seas, lots of squalls and often strong winds.

**Cyclones;** Tropical revolving storms form in both hemispheres of the Indian Ocean, but at different times of the year. North of the equator, the worst times are late May to mid-June, and late October to the end of November. None have been recorded in February or March, but they can form in the Bay of Bengal at the end of December and early January. Those that form in the Bay of Bengal often trend north-west and then north towards Bangladesh, but sometimes carry on westward into the Arabian Sea, or stall over India. Those that form in the Arabian Sea, usually in May and June, generally head north, and then curve either west towards the Gulf of Aden or east towards India.

South of the Equator, the cyclone season extends from the beginning of November to the end of May.

For yachts leaving Fremantle to cross to South Africa the acceptable first leaving date is the 1st May. Cyclones can happen even this late but they are very rare. Yachts coming from the north of Australia are unlikely to be arriving in the Indian Ocean until well after the end of the cyclone season.

## **WEATHER FORECASTS**

**Indian Ocean;** Two HF transmitters in Australia broadcast automated weather information; Charleville in QLD and Wiluna in WA. The same forecast in text can be received from Catalogues in SAILMAIL.

Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR) stations throughout Aus. broadcast the same info on VHF for their area of interest. Some locations have repeater stations to extend their VHF coverage.

Voice Services Automated voice broadcasts occur from both transmitters covering their respective areas east and west. Weather warnings for all areas are given on the hour. Coastal forecast are valid out to 60 nm off the coast. Met area 10 high seas broadcasts cover ocean areas. For more info go to [www.bom.au/marine/australia](http://www.bom.au/marine/australia).

The central southern Indian Ocean is covered by the French Meteo from Mauritius. The best way to get this is with a Sat C receiver. This information combined with the GRIBS is useful, especially concerning the troughs.

From the Seychelles south a South African radio net (Fred) on 8101khz from 0500 GMT and from 1500 GMT, 12353khz at 0530 and 1530hrs. Fred is very knowledgeable about conditions in the Mozambique Channel and points south.

GRIB files get less accurate nearer the equator. The version with rain forecasts is very useful and gives a good idea of the position of the troughs.

**South Africa;** Forecast times, frequencies, areas and warnings – this is all published in the South African Nautical Almanac. Forecasts cannot be accurate for very far ahead and on the HF and VHF they only give a 24 hour forecast. Weather systems seem to move quickly through here, certainly during Oct. Nov and Dec. There are numerous sources of weather. [www.winfinder.com](http://www.winfinder.com), [www.metvuw.com](http://www.metvuw.com). are useful. Also the South African weather bureau's site plus their telephone service. Durban 082 2339500, Port Elizabeth,

0822339700, Cape Town, 0822339900. They are helpful to the small boat community.

## **HAZARDS**

**Piracy** There are areas on both sides of the Indian Ocean in which piracy is reported to be rife. The worst areas are the Malacca Straits, between the Indonesian islands close to Singapore, around the Horn of Africa (particularly the Somali coast), off the Yemeni coast and all the way up the Red Sea. The SE Asian zones seem to hold more dangers for big ships than for yachts. Yachts may be considerably more vulnerable in the Red Sea, particularly its southern approaches. Yachts have been boarded by armed gangs in fast dinghies, and have been robbed of cash and items such as VHF radios and outboard motors. There have been a number of reported incidents in recent years, including incidences of kidnapping. The risk of violence to yachts should not be underestimated. It would seem prudent for yachts to travel in groups and maintain close contact when cruising these areas. Maintaining a regular VHF contact between yachts also makes the various international Naval Patrol and commercial vessels in the area aware of your presence and movements. They are generally very supportive.

## **PILOT BOOKS**

- World Cruising Routes, by Jimmy Cornell, published by Adlard Coles Nautical.
- Cruising Guide to SE Asia, vols 1 and 2, by Stephen Davies and Elaine Morgan, published by Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson
- The Indian Ocean Cruising Guide, by Rod Heikell, published by Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson
- The Seychelles, by Alain Rondeau, published by Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson
- East Africa Pilot, by Delwyn McPhun, published by Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson

## **AUSTRALIA TO SOUTH AFRICA VIA CHRISTMAS ISLAND, COCOS KEELING, CHAGOS AND MADAGASCAR**

This route has several alternatives. The main choice is whether to go east about Madagascar or west down the Mozambique Channel. Most of the following notes are for the western route.

The eastern route commonly stops at Christmas Island, Cocos Atolls, Rodriguez, Mauritius, Reunion, then either Richards Bay or Durban in South Africa. You can add in Chagos atolls after Cocos but this will potentially give you a strong wind on or forward of the beam to get to Rodriguez/Mauritius. The eastern route has the advantage of being slightly shorter than the western route, but the disadvantages are the likelihood of strong winds and missing out on the Seychelles and Madagascar.

From Chagos the alternative is either to go direct to the northern tip of Madagascar and into the Mozambique Channel or to go via the Seychelles to Madagascar. The Seychelles to Madagascar section has, during the SE trades season, a tendency towards strong wind with a lot of south in it. An option is to bear off for Mayotte in the French Comoros. From there head back east to Nosy Be in the shelter of Madagascar and out of the strong trades.

If you are heading for S. Africa from Madagascar it pays to go across towards Africa to hook into the Mozambique Current. A more direct route may meet up to 2 knots of counter current. One other option is to go down the Madagascar coast to Morondava and then across.

There are various places one can shelter in Mozambique. Off the top of Ilha do Bazaruto or more sheltered by Santa Carolina Island. By Inhambane you can tuck in behind Punta da Barra in good holding and wait for southerlies to pass and again at Ilha da Inhaca near Maputo. There may be a fee to the Maputo Harbour Master.

The Agulhas Current is very helpful along the S. African coast. It runs up to 5 knots. Boats that keep south after passing Port Elizabeth hold the current further west. East London and Port Elizabeth are stopping options, as is St. Frances (if you are not too big). Knysna is accessible if there is not a big swell and you do not mind possible delays as you might get trapped in there.

A very useful annual publication is the South African Nautical Almanac (cost Rand 189 in 2007) by Tom Morgan, ISBN 978-0-620-38759-0. It is well worth buying for its up to date harbour plans and facts alone.

Other information can be found on the internet. The official pilot book does give some idea of where the currents are.

## HARBOURS AND ANCHORAGES

### CHRISTMAS ISLAND

An interesting place to visit even if the anchorage can be rocky. Excellent diving and good snorkelling by the anchorage. When there is a phosphate ship in, the anchorage receives quite a bit of the dust. However, this activity will not last for many more years as the lease for mining phosphate is not being renewed.

**Formalities;** The authorities here like to be told in advance of your planned arrival. Look on the internet for an email address or ask in Australia if coming from there. On arrival to Flying Fish Cove contact Customs on VHF Ch. 16 and fly the Q flag. From 2007 you are no longer permitted to anchor but must pick up a buoy (there were 7). Clearing In and Out (no cost) are easy formalities which you have to comply with even if coming from Australia and going on to Cocos. You do need a valid Australian visa. Quarantine is no problem if you come from Australia, certainly WA, but they are quite strict if you come from another country.

**Facilities;** Visitors' Centre a short walk up the hill with internet facilities. Very helpful with information and car hire, open every day, mornings only on Sundays. Supermarket with reasonable supply of goods, some fresh produce can be purchased otherwise things are imported. Laundry where they do the washing for you. Various eating places. Good fishing tackle shop. Duty free port; good value wines, spirits and beers. Australian mobiles work here. Gas bottles can be filled and fuel is available (you will have to use cans unless taking on a lot when other arrangements can be made). Drinkable water supply on the dock where you moor the dinghies. You can receive mail but make sure it is by express mail. There are some limited repair facilities.

### COCOS KEELING

Only two of the numerous islands in the Cocos lagoon are inhabited. The largest population are Malays (about 300 in 2002) who reside on Home Island. Of these 65% are unemployed. The rest are ex-pat Australians who reside on West Island. There are now only about 80 left after government cutbacks recently. Facilities and supplies are limited but parts and supplies can be obtained from the Australian mainland if needed and flown out on the twice weekly service from Perth (Friday and Sunday). An amusing, sometimes frustrating, aspect to these islands is that shops and services are only open at certain times on certain days, and they are not synchronised. It may be that the bank is open on a day when the shop is closed, or the ferry is not running when the relevant shop is open. This may be because the person selling fuel is also the person running the hardware store and some other services so the times are shared between his demands. This makes it hard for yachts just passing through for a couple days to get everything done.

**Direction Island** The Direction Island anchorage with its lovely palm trees, white sand beach and turquoise waters is a stereotypical paradise. The diving and snorkelling are reasonable although the fish life is surprisingly thin. The famous "Rip" in the Cut SE of the island is a very strong current but is an excellent and safe drift snorkel with good fish and coral. A line has been positioned for you to catch onto. Oceania House and grounds are interesting. This is the Cloonie-Ross residence dating back over a hundred years. There are two little museums on the islands which are also worth a visit. The cemetery on Home Island has graves of the Cloonie-Ross family dating back a couple of centuries.

**Approach;** The approach to the lagoon is via the Northern entrance between Direction Island and Horsburgh Island. This is known as Port Refuge. No other entrance should be attempted.

A morning entry makes approach to the Direction Island anchorage difficult due to the angle of the sun. A good lookout for coral heads and patches is required. Temporary anchorage in Port Refuge is possible in bad light conditions or at night, although a night entry is not advised.

**Formalities;** Vessels arriving at Cocos Keeling are subject to full Australian Immigration requirements. They like prior warning of your arrival but do not have email so ask Customs in your previous port to warn them if possible. When in range contact Customs on VHF Ch. 20. You will be told to go into the anchorage under Direction Island, the only one available to yachts. They come and clear you in. Quarantine and visa regulations same as for Christmas Island. No fees are charged for clearance in or out. Proceed to the quarantine area at Direction Island and pick up a yellow mooring or anchor close by. Contact Customs on VHF CH 20 on arrival to arrange time for clearance. Vessels arriving at night must report arrival first thing in the morning.

**Anchorage;** The only anchorage is at Direction Island. The chart shows a yacht anchorage at Home Island which is incorrect. The Direction Island anchorage is well protected from the Trades and is good holding in sand. There are no other anchorages anywhere in the lagoon suitable for yachts. Getting into the anchorage is a bit of a dog leg round some coral, one post is in place which you leave to starboard (2007).

**Facilities;** Direction Island is uninhabited. There is a lean-to with BBQ facilities. This is a popular spot for yachties and many sundowners and BBQs happen here. The big surprise is that there is a telephone here. It is free for local numbers and can be used for international calls. The roof of the lean-to is connected to two large water tanks and water may be available depending on the season and the amount of usage. This water should be treated before drinking but is generally clean for washing etc.

Potable water; Drinking water can be obtained by taking the dinghy to Home Island (about 2 miles) where there is a tap and hose on the jetty by the ferry landing.

Ferry Service; The ferry between Home and West Island runs a couple of times a day and is free, as is the bus connecting the ferry to the shops on West Island.

Gas is available but is quite expensive.

Bank; Australian Dollars are good currency. It may be difficult to obtain cash on the islands.

Restaurants; are available on Home Island but only open on request (bookings therefore needed in advance).

Diesel and Petrol; are available on both Home and West Islands but difficult to access. Although the prices may be higher on Home Island, it is easier to obtain here by taking the dinghy to the jetty and then a short walk to the distribution point. West Island can be reached by ferry from Home island and it is permitted to carry diesel (not petrol) on the ferry. Therefore the cheapest way to obtain diesel is to dinghy to Home Is. and then ferry to West Is. This takes nearly a whole day due to ferry times etc. It is possible to take a yacht to West Island for larger quantities of fuel but be warned, this can be difficult if not dangerous. The West Island jetty is very exposed to the trades and the fetch across the lagoon. The ferry suffers some serious bashing when it goes alongside. The transit across the lagoon dodging the coral heads would also need good conditions. Only rarely is it calm enough for a yacht to safely make this trip. Fuel can be delivered by barge, but there is a high charge for the service, which is normally for vessels requiring a lot of fuel such as freighters.

Provisions; There are basic supermarkets on both Home and West Islands. Very limited fresh goods except when the supply ship has been in. It is possible to get limited fresh goods from the small farm on West Island. Alcohol is only available from West Island. It is a duty free port so that alcohol can be purchased at fairly reasonable prices.

Internet Facilities; Available on both Home and West Islands.

Post; Good postal service with apparently reliable and fast service and poste restante mail service.

Medical; Small hospital on West Island and Doctors available on both Home and West Island. If needed call on CH20 or 24 for assistance. There is an emergency link to Perth.

Diving; There are several public dive buoys on the outer reef which you can get to by dinghy on calmer days although it can be a rough ride back.

**Home Island** This is where the Malay community live and you are asked to wear modest standards of dress, long shorts, T shirts/shirts, sarong. It is (most times) a bumpy dinghy ride of about 2 miles to Home Island from Direction Island.

**Facilities;** gas bottles filled, fuel, some stores, fresh produce arrives on Home Island early on Saturday morning, internet cafe, post office. Opening times for everything are very limited (leaflet given on arrival).

Leave your dinghy here to catch the ferry across to:

**West Island** This is where the Australian population live. Because of limited ferry times it is almost always a day excursion to get to WI from the anchorage.

**Facilities;** Restaurant, internet cafe, post office and supermarket (fresh produce here on Monday pm/Tuesday).

You can receive mail but make sure it is by express mail. There are some limited repair facilities.

## **CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO**

These atolls attract a lot of long term liveaboards and those who demand no civilisation at all. The atoll scenery is magnificent.

**Formalities;** The two atolls you are allowed to visit in this group are Salomon and Peros Banhos and in both cases you are limited to dedicated anchorages; Ile Boddam and Ile Fouquet/Takamaka on Salomon.

Diamant, Ile de Coin and Fouquet on Peros Banhos. Exact co-ordinates will be given on applying for a permit with The British Indian Ocean Territory. You need to apply for a permit before arrival. In 2007 this had to be

done by bank transfer but a pay-pal system will be introduced. Apart from the bank transfer, all dealings with BIOT is by email [BIOTAdmin@fco.gov.uk](mailto:BIOTAdmin@fco.gov.uk).

## SALOMON

**Ile Boddam** This is where the settlement was and there are ruins. Many coral heads in the anchorage.

**Facilities;** There is a well and a facility for disposing of rubbish.

**Takama and Fouquet** The anchorage under Takamaka and Fouquet is more sheltered in strong trade winds but it is quite deep. Water is very clear and snorkelling good.

**Facilities:** There is a well on Takamaka but no other facilities.

## PEROS BANHOS

The atoll of Peros Banhos is 12 M x 12 M and filled with fish. It is possible to spend weeks there, sailing from islet to islet, and never encounterING more than a handful of other boats. Peros Banhos has no protection from the east and may become untenable in adverse weather conditions. More sociable yachts go to Salomon.

## SEYCHELLES

Cruising in the Seychelles is rewarding with several islands within a short days sail and others not that far away. There are two distinct seasons weather wise. The ocean crossing visitor will be in the SE trade season and these are the stronger winds so many outer island anchorages are tricky. Charter visitors might consider the NW monsoon season the best time to visit as many more anchorages are available and the winds tend to be lighter. There is a thriving bare boat charter industry. The air is cool from the high mountain downdrafts, there is wonderful hiking in lush forests, everything is clean and safe. This is reported to be the best place in the Indian Ocean to have yacht spares sent in. There is no hassle or cost for yachts in transit. An advantage of coming here before Madagascar is that you can get a 3-month visa for Madagascar, instead of the 1-month you get on arrival. Medical and dental services are free, even for foreigners. It is advisable to carry US Dollars or Euroos in small denominations to use as tourist cash.

**Approach;** Very easy and clear, even by night. Call Victoria Port Control and they will give you GPS co-ordinates to anchor off the lighthouse and await clearance the next day. C-MAPS is reported to be accurate. Older charts are outdated by land reclamation, but the leading lights are good.

**Formalities;** Victoria on Mahe is the only entry/departure port. Call them on VHF Ch. 16/12 when in range, about 20 miles out if possible. They will give you co-ordinates for you to anchor for clearance, this is in effect 3 cables east of the light house at the main entrance to Victoria Harbour. If you arrive after hours you can anchor there for the night and will get cleared in the morning. Officials will come out to the yacht. The Officials are reported to be extremely efficient and courteous. They want to see crew lists and passports. You may be asked to report to the port authorities. There is a charge to fumigate the boat. You are given a 30 day visa which they are happy to extend at no cost but they will need your passport for 5 working days for this. You are given a complex set of rules about clearing in, out and moving around the islands. The rules are less restrictive than would first appear but you do need to go to the harbour authorities to get permission to move around the various islands. There is a daily charge. The charge is for boats up to 20 gross tonnes. In addition you may be charged if you anchor in a Marine Park Area, the charge here is in foreign currency, preferably euros or US Dollars, not SR. **Clearing Out;** first take passports to the immigration 48 hours before leaving. They keep them till you leave. Get a letter from them which you take to the ports authorities and pay your dues. You then sign out with customs (near port authorities) at an agreed time. Liaise with the harbour control on channel 12; go to the coastguard dock just outside the Victoria anchorage where they hand over your passports and clearance papers.

**Anchorage;** Anchoring in Victoria Harbour offers shelter but holding is poor after the harbour was dredged. If there is a blow coming, you can move down to anchor inside Eden Island (a new project) where protection and holding is good. The 'Inner Harbour' has been much improved by the protecting walls on the outer reef, so the anchorage is calm and has good holding. But it is too far from the Yacht Club for dinghies without outboards. By the Yacht Club is more convenient and even calmer, but often crowded and with patchy holding. The best spot is at the E end of the small island.

**Facilities;** The Yacht Club offers you temporary membership (with showers, dinghy dock, good water, restaurant, bar, TV room). Sail repairs are available behind the Yacht Club.

At the Club you can leave the dinghy, get water, arrange to have your washing done (there are no laundrettes in Seychelles) there is WI-FI (for which you pay) a bar and restaurant open for lunch and dinner every day. The Commodore is helpful with information. There are two marinas near Eden Island where you can leave your boat. Fuel, both petrol and diesel is easily available in Victoria Harbour and not expensive. Spares and repairs are not easy to get but you can get things sent to the Seychelles. There are 3 supermarkets within walking distance of the YC, a combination of all of them should cover most of your needs and the fresh fruit and veg. market is good. The cost is fairly high. International Flights are available.

## **MAYOTTE**

Mayotte is a French island, a "collectivite territoriale", which has a peculiar status. They voted to remain French when the rest of the Comoros group voted for independence, but the UN recognises the Comoros claim to Mayotte and not the French (they say the plebiscite was flawed). Mayotte says it is part of the EU and you will draw Euros from the ATM. No duty is charged on parts sent from Europe.

**Reef entrances;** N pass is wide and deep, and always safe. Main E pass (Passe Bandrele) is pretty rough on the ebb, especially with strong onshore winds or swell. It is better at high or low slack water. All very well lit, beacons and buoyed at entrances and inside, but no leading lights.

**Formalities;** There are no charges and unrestricted stays for EU vessels. Vessels from other countries may need visas in advance.

**Facilities;** There are no alongside facilities, and there may be a long wait for crane haul-out next to the friendly Yacht Club. It is possible to scrub off alongside the Yacht Club wall, but there may be an unpleasant surge. Minimal chandlery is available, but there are no customs problems for parts flown in. The Mail service is slow - do NOT put Comoros Islands on envelope. It is better to put Mayotte via Reunion Is. Duty Free fuel is available. Drinking quality water available from the Yacht Club by jerry can for a small charge. Yacht Club has internet access, washing m/c, fax, etc. Mayotte is generally expensive, especially for fresh produce and hardware, but there are excellent French supermarkets and bakeries.

**NOTE ABOUT THE COMORROS ISLANDS** - Grande Comore, Anjouan and Moheli. For many reasons these islands are not recommended to cruising yachts.

## **MADAGASCAR**

On approach to Madagascar from the Seychelles, once south of an island called Mitsio the strong SE trade winds die out to be replaced by little permanent wind and a predominance of land/sea breezes. The afternoon sea breeze provides excellent sailing over calm seas. The NW coast of this huge island provides very rewarding cruising with calm weather, almost universally good holding and a large choice of anchorages. Outside of the main centres very few of the villagers even speak French so communication can be difficult. Sailing pirogues and dhows are everywhere and make a very picturesque sight. The state of many of the sails and of the craft in general suggest that light winds are the norm here.

**Hellville, Madagascar** You need a visa obtainable on arrival in Madagascar. (Also obtainable in the Seychelles - 3 months from the date the visa was issued). It is very difficult to extend your visa. It is feasible to take a short trip to Mayotte and back to extend for a further three months.

**Formalities;** You need 4 crew lists. First go to the police in the port cabin on the dockside, then customs – next building, then the Port Captain (who tells you to come and pay him when you leave) and finally the Maritime Authorities who take your clearance. You have to return and pay the police 14000 ariary. Most yachties also clear out in Hell-Ville. Again 4 crew lists are needed. First go to the police who stamp your list then customs then port captain where you pay (2007 it was just over 45.000 ariary per month). Get your clearance from the Maritime Authorities and you then go back to the police who stamp your passport. It is also possible (2007) to clear out in Mahajunga or Tulear. You may wish to confirm this when you check in.

**Facilities;** (Hell-Ville) Supermarkets, shops, Internet cafe, laundry and other services via boat boys. Sakatia Towers is a small resort on the island of Nosy Sakatia. (NW of Hell-Ville) It is a very safe anchorage and a good place to leave a yacht Call John on Ch 16/09. For longer periods a yacht can be left in Russian Bay. There are two moorings for up to 18 tons. Call Andrew on Ch 16/09

**Onward Passage;** From Hell-Ville you can cruise gently down the coast before setting off for somewhere in Africa. If you are heading for S. Africa it pays to go across towards Africa to hook into the Mozambique Current. A more direct route may have up to 2 knots of counter current. One other option is to go down the Madagascar coast till about Morondava and then across.

## **EAST AFRICA**

There are various places to shelter in Mozambique. Off the top of Ilha do Bazaruto or more sheltered by Santa Carolina Island. By Inhambane you can tuck in behind Punta da Barra in good holding and wait for southerlies to pass and again at Ilha da Inhaca near Maputo. There may be a charge from the Maputo harbour master.

## **SOUTH AFRICA**

### **Advice for cruising the South African coast;**

1. Do not leave if there is more than 5mb difference in pressure between Cape Town and Richard's Bay.
2. Leave on a SE, do not wait for the wind to go north.
3. The real danger spot is half way between Durban and East London. Here the continental shelf comes almost up to the coast and the current is near the coast. If you get caught in a SW blow here you are in for trouble.
4. Half way between East London and Port Elizabeth the current goes offshore (usually keeps just outside the 200m line). This makes it easier to dodge in as the wind goes round to the SW.
5. After Port Elizabeth there is usually very little North East wind, it just goes round from south East to North West, for 24 hours then SW.
6. Plattenburg is a good safe anchorage. As is Mossel Baai if the harbour there is full.

Between Durban and Mossel Bay there are harbours and anchorages at the following; East London; Port Elizabeth – can suffer from a bad surge; St Francis Bay Marina – not suitable for larger yachts; Knysna – the narrow heads can make entry or exit dangerous in a big swell.

The Agulhas Current is very helpful along the S. African coast. It runs up to 5 knots. Boats that keep south after passing Port Elizabeth hold the current further west.

From Mossel Bay it is around 220 miles to Simon's Town in False Bay. There is some help from the current all the way. There is commercial shipping around Cape Agulhas. If there is a good SE wind blowing this does tend to accelerate as you get past Hangklip Point. 40 knot winds for quite a distance past the point is not unusual during December and January. local knowledge reports a gale blowing here 100 days a year!

**Richard's Bay** A big a easy port to enter. Good place for visiting various game parks. In severe weather the harbour may be closed to incoming vessels.

**Formalities;** Contact Port Control when you are on the leading line which is visible about 4 miles out, white over red. They will direct you, but go into the Small Craft Harbour and tie up alongside a wall to clear customs and immigration. A 3 months visa can be extended for another 3 months or more, although this means paper work and is time consuming.

When it comes to leave for your next port, even if not leaving SA, you need to fill in a 'flight plan' form, get it stamped by port captain, then the marina or wherever you have been moored, and finally the police. Form available from the marina.

**Mooring;** You can tie up to a jetty which is free for a month, or negotiate with either Zululand Y.C. for a berth or the Tuzi Gazi marina.

**Durban** You may be able to anchor here for 72 hours without repeating all the paperwork. However, the marina office will give you what information you need. Anchoring is in a fairly small area of reclaimed land with very uneven depths. You can also tie to the international jetty at the marina (N.B. marina severely damaged during 2007).

**Mossel Bay** A good stopping place. The police may check your passports. Harbour berths are available. Anchor off if awaiting favourable winds for going west. Plettenberg Bay is an alternative if wind changes.

**Facilities;** Shops are within easy walking distance and there is a good and interesting group of museums just up the hill.

**Simon's Town** Simon's Town is a charming, unthreatening town. It is only a short train journey or drive into the capital. Car hire is not expensive. The False Bay Yacht Club is attached to the marina in Simon's Town. It is very friendly and helpful and has a brochure of information about everything for visitors. They make foreign cruisers welcome and they are extending the marina and laying more moorings. Royal Cape Yacht Club may be fully subscribed. There are some places in the Elliott Basin nearby. Most places fill up quickly during the season, so it pays to think ahead.

**Formalities;** Check in with Immigration and Customs in Cape Town (a one hour train journey away, less than an hour by car). South Africa is changing their rules and regulations. You will have to ask the latest rules, which probably will differ from port to port.

**Facilities;** There are several repair facilities available here or in Cape Town (a one hour train journey away, less than an hour by car). Some food shopping in the town though to get to the main super markets you will need to go by train or car. There is a laundry in town and internet cafes and post office.

**See next page for Route Planning**

## ROUTE PLANNING

<b><u>From</u></b>	<b><u>To</u></b>	<b><u>Best time</u></b>	<b><u>NM</u></b>
Thailand (07° 47'N 98° 25'E)	Singapore (01° 16'N 103° 50'E)	Dec - April	500
Sri Lanka (06° 00'N 80° 14'E)	Aden (12° 48'N 44° 58'E)	Jan - March	2150
Sri Lanka (06° 00'N 80° 14'E)	Cochin (09° 58'N 76° 15'E)	Dec - Feb	350
Sri Lanka (06° 00'N 80° 14'E)	Maldives (04° 10'N 73° 30'E)	Jan – March	400
Sri Lanka (06° 00'N 80° 14'E)	Singapore (01° 16'N 103° 50'E)	July - Sept	1500
Cochin (09° 58'N 76° 15'E)	Aden (12° 48'N 44° 58'E)	Dec - Feb	1900
Oman (16° 53'N 53° 58'E)	Aden (12° 48'N 44° 58'E)	Jan - March	650
Aden (12° 48'N 44° 58'E)	Sri Lanka (06° 00'N 80° 14'E)	Sept	2200
Aden (12° 48'N 44° 58'E)	Maldives (04° 10'N 73° 30'E)	Sept	2000
Bali (08° 43'S 115° 11'E)	Singapore (01° 16'N 103° 50'E)	May - Sept	1000
Bali (08° 43'S 115° 11'E)	Sri Lanka (06° 00'N 80° 14'E)	Sept - mid-Oct	2400
CocosKeeling (12° 04'S 96° 50'E)	Sri Lanka (06° 00'N 80° 14'E)	Sept	1600
Chagos (05° 00'S 72° 00'E)	Sri Lanka (06° 00'N 80° 14'E)	May - Sept	900
Chagos (05° 00'S 72° 00'E)	Maldives (04° 10'N 73° 30'E)	May - Sept	600
Seychelles (04° 34'S 55° 27'E)	Aden (12° 48'N 44° 58'E)	Sept - mid-Oct	2100
Mombasa (04° 00'S 39°45'E)	Aden (12° 48'N 44° 58'E)	April/May & Sept	1700
Mombasa (04° 00'S 39°45'E)	Sri Lanka (06° 00'N 80° 14'E)	July - Sept	2600
Maldives (04° 10'N 73° 30'E)	Chagos (05° 00'S 72° 00'E)	May - Sept	600
Aden (12° 48'N 44° 58'E)	East Africa (12° 48'N 44°58'E)	Nov - March	1600
Sri Lanka (06° 00'N 80° 14'E)	Chagos (05° 00'S 72° 00'E)	April	850
Sri Lanka (06° 00'N 80° 14'E)	Mauritius (20° 09'S 57° 29'E)	May/June & Sept	2100
TorresStrait (06° 00'N 80° 14'E)	Bali (08° 43'S 115° 11'E)	May - Sept	1600
Darwin (12° 21'S 130° 42'E)	Ambon (03° 42'S 128° 10'E)	May - Sept	550
Darwin (12° 21'S 130° 42'E)	Christmas Is.(10° 25'S 105° 43'E)	May - Sept	1500
Broome (18° 00'S 122° 05'E)	CocosKeeling (12° 04'S 96° 50'E)	May – Oct	1500
Fremantle (32° 00'S 115° 45'E)	CocosKeeling (12° 04'S 96° 50'E)	May – Oct	1600
Bali (08° 43'S 115° 11'E)	Christmas Is.(10° 25'S 105° 43'E)	May – Oct	570
Bali (08° 43'S 115° 11'E)	Chagos (05° 00'S 72° 00'E)	May – Oct	2600
Bali (08° 43'S 115° 11'E)	CocosKeeling (12° 04'S 96° 50'E)	May – Oct	1100
Bali (08° 43'S 115° 11'E)	Mauritius (20° 09'S 57° 29'E)	May/June & Oct	3400
Bali (08° 43'S 115° 11'E)	Darwin (12° 21'S 130° 42'E)	Nov & May	950
Christmas Island (10° 25'S 105° 43'E)	CocosKeeling (12° 04'S 96° 50'E)	May - Oct	500
Cocos Keeling (12° 04'S 96° 50'E)	Mauritius (20° 09'S 57° 29'E)	May/June & Sept/Oct	2300

<b><u>From</u></b>	<b><u>To</u></b>	<b><u>Best time</u></b>	<b><u>NM</u></b>
Cocos Keeling (12° 04'S 96° 50'E)	Chagos (05° 00'S 72° 00'E)	May/June & Sept/Oct	1600
Christmas Island (10° 25'S 105° 43'E)	Chagos (05° 00'S 72° 00'E)	May - Sept	2200
Chagos (05° 00'S 72° 00'E)	Seychelles (04° 34'S 55° 27'E)	May - Sept	1000
Chagos (05° 00'S 72° 00'E)	Mauritius (20° 09'S 57° 29'E)	Sept/Oct	1150
Seychelles (04° 34'S 55° 27'E)	Mauritius (20° 09'S 57° 29'E)	May/June & Oct	950
Seychelles (04° 34'S 55° 27'E)	Comoros (11° 42'S 43° 15'E)	April - May	850
Seychelles (04° 34'S 55° 27'E)	Mombasa (04° 00'S 39°45'E)	May - Sept	950
Comoros (11° 42'S 43° 15'E)	Seychelles (04° 34'S 55° 27'E)	May - Oct	850
Mauritius (20° 09'S 57° 29'E)	Durban (29° 52'S 31° 05'E)	Oct/Nov	1500
Mauritius (20° 09'S 57° 29'E)	Seychelles (04° 34'S 55° 27'E)	June - Sept	950
Mauritius (20° 09'S 57° 29'E)	Comoros (11° 42'S 43° 15'E)	May - Oct	1000

24/1/2009