



RCC PILOTAGE FOUNDATION

www.rccpf.org.uk

[Home](#)>Passage Planning Guides>Indian Ocean>Route i1

Published by the RCC Pilotage Foundation, whose [Terms and Conditions of Use](#) apply
© RCC Pilotage Foundation 2008

Route i 1

INDIA TO EAST AFRICA

Edited by Jane Russell

For text version, see below

For interactive Google Map version,



click on pin.

To return to text version, press
'back' button on your browser.

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 Hiatt	<i>Barnacle B</i>
Andrew Hogbin	<i>Chant de mai</i>
Hugh Marriot	<i>Tacit</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.

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, 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

HARBOURS AND ANCHORAGES

INDIA

Cochin

Approach; Entrance channel is well-marked. You must anchor off the Port Authority building at Taj Malabar to Clear In. Then proceed to Bolgatty yacht anchorage.

Formalities; Check-in is uncomplicated but time consuming.

Anchorage; You are bound to touch bottom, but it's all soft mud. Very sheltered but extremely hot, and may suffer from considerable air and water pollution. Otherwise, the anchorage is convenient for the ferry to the main town and is relatively (to local standards) quiet.

Facilities; Filtered water is easily available.

Fuel; not too difficult by jerry can from town.

Provisions; good fruit and veg and restaurants, most things available.

Gas; Propane is miles away and difficult.

A local man will 'boat-sit' and help with gas etc.

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.

KENYA

Cruising yachts are advised to avoid Mombasa harbour. It is possible to Check In by bus from Mtwapa Creek 9 M north of Mombasa.

Mtwapa Creek . This is a lovely, pretty place. A very friendly (but reportedly expensive) restaurant is run by ex-cruisers Gary and Francie who are a mine of information and hospitality.

Entrance; Try to avoid entering on a spring ebb, with strong (over 20kt) onshore winds. Also avoid entering in the late afternoon when the sun will stop you seeing the transits.

Formalities; Customs in Mombasa is in the Old Dhow Harbour (N.B. There are many Customs offices, but you must go to this one). Immigration is within walking distance of Customs.

Msasani Bay, Dar es Salaam You can Check In here.

Formalities; Go straight to the Yacht Club in Msasani Bay and check in from there. The Yacht Club has a boatman service to take you ashore and back.

Facilities; ATM and shopping within walking distance of Yacht Club.

Kilifi Creek This is an alternative Check-In Port, but you have to bus to Mombasa for immigration.

Facilities; Dutchman Rene Farber has taken over the boatyard and is doing a good job. Clean yard, nice bar, new showers etc, moorings secure and inexpensive, and free boat service across to the small town. Yachts also anchor off Tony and Daphne's.

Lamu A wonderful harbour in Northern Kenya with an old Arab palace. It's also a Check-In/Out place. Lamu is only 50 M from the border with Somalia, so the advice to departing yachts is to head off-shore as quickly as possible to avoid pirates

TANZANIA

Tanga A friendly Yacht Club. Water, electricity and showers are available. Formalities are reported to be painless and efficient. There is no possibility of using a credit card in Tanga, so make sure you have cash or TC to change.

Zanzibar Wonderful! Very interesting, and a place you could hang out in for quite a long time. No ATMs here. Don't anchor off the town, or if you do, always have someone on board. Better, anchor off Mtoni Marine Hotel, about 2 M north of town. Here is a perfectly safe, nice beach, and a very friendly hotel who will look after your dinghy etc. Definitely do a spice tour in Zanzibar - an excellent day out.

ROUTE PLANNING

<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Best time</u>	<u>NM</u>
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

From	To	Best time	NM
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
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