



# RCC PILOTAGE FOUNDATION

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## Route i 2

### THAILAND TO YEMEN

VIA SRI LANKA, MALDIVES AND OMAN  
Edited by Jane Russell

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#### 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.

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.

## **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
- Red Sea Pilot, by Stephen Davies and Elaine Morgan, published by Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson

## HARBOURS AND ANCHORAGES

### THAILAND

#### PHUKET

Phuket is a busy and popular destination for cruising yachts. Several Yacht Charter companies have bases around the coast.

**Formalities;** Check In/Out is via a one-stop facility at the root of the pier at Ao Chalong. Alternatively, Customs & Immigration in Phuket Town are in Phuket Road. They can process yachts and are most helpful. It is most important that crew are registered as "passengers" otherwise you will have to post a bond for them. They may not need to be physically present throughout the formalities. Note that the Bond procedure is at Immigration in the centre of town. You must have an outward flight ticket before setting up a Bond. Take several photo copies and be prepared to do more at Chalong half way through the process.

**Import Duty;** In order to compete with Langkawi, Thailand has recently reduced all its import duties to between 3% for new equipment and 25% on spare parts. Other items have an assessed rate of 7%.

**Facilities;** There are a wide range of services available in Phuket, including teak work and sailmakers at very reasonable prices.

Excellent medical treatment is available at Phuket Ruampaet Health Clinic in the centre of town.

**Boat Lagoon** For both the Boat Lagoon and the Yacht Haven it is essential to book early.

E-mail is [marina@phuketboatlagoon.com](mailto:marina@phuketboatlagoon.com) and the web page is the same. Phone 076-239 055, Fax 076 239 056 or Channel 71.

**Approach;** It is advisable to enter on a rising tide and to request the Harbourmaster to act as Pilot when entering, as the junction at the entrance to the new marina is tricky and shallow. There is a pleasant anchorage off a sandy beach on the south west side of Ko Rang Yai where you can wait for the tide. Coordinates for the start of the beacons channel 7 ° 58.65'N, 98° 24.95'W. White painted beacons are on the port side only, and quite difficult to see from far away. The 2.5m.dredged channel has almost no water at low tide. Add 0.4m. to the published tide height for the supposed depth (Range 2.2m. at springs / 1.3m at neaps). Turn to starboard at the end of the beacons channel to enter a mangrove lined river. Follow this for about half a mile until the marina entrance is seen.

**Formalities;** There is an English speaking agent at Yacht Solutions, E-mail [leon@yachtsolutions.net](mailto:leon@yachtsolutions.net), who will handle the formalities for a fee.

**Facilities;** There is a hotel within the marina. E-mail [hotel@phuketboatlagoon.com](mailto:hotel@phuketboatlagoon.com)

Fuel Dock selling Diesel & Petrol at entrance.

180 marina berths and 80 hauled out berths available.

Water & Electricity at all berths.

Three Travel Lifts (80 tonne maximum)

All charges plus 7% VAT.

Two swimming pools, cold showers and toilets are inclusive in marina charge.

Restaurants, Hotel, Apartments, Canvas Shop, Limited Chandlery, Supermarket, and Laundry are all around or close by the marina.

Engineering facilities at Precision Shipwright Services Phone: 661 891 3067, Fax: 66 76 239 113, Email: [pss@loxinfo.co.th](mailto:pss@loxinfo.co.th)

Phuket Marine Electronics Phone 66 76 252638 Fax 66 76 213287 e-mail: phuketmarine@hotmail.com.  
Wood Working from Pro-Yachting Phone 01-6911835.

**Ratanachai Slipway** A very friendly place to carry out repairs. 60/58 Ta-rue Mai Road, Muang District, Phuket Town. Phone (076)252 852, Fax (076)212 443 , E-mail [infor@ratanachai-slipway.com](mailto:infor@ratanachai-slipway.com).  
**Facilities;** They can slip vessels up to 45 metres/180 tons, 9.1m wide, 3.5m. draft. There is a daily dry dock fee. The rail slipway is designed for fishing boats but used by many yachts.

**Yacht Haven Marina** Book early. This is located in the NE, close to the airport. 8° 10.2'N 98° 20.4'E. The marina is a very pleasant place to stay, but it is a long way from the centre of town, Immigration, suppliers etc. Taxis get expensive and most people hire a cheap car to access all necessary facilities. Contact: [zara@yacht-haven-phuket.com](mailto:zara@yacht-haven-phuket.com) Phone: +66 76 206 704/5 Fax +66 76 206 706.

**Facilities;** Water and electricity are extra to marina charges.  
There is currently no travel lift, but this may change.

The marina staff are very helpful and will advise on suppliers/services.

**Nai Harn Bay** This is an excellent protected anchorage much favoured by cruisers. Expect 50 - 100 boats here at Christmas with room to spare.

**Formalities;** Checking in to Thailand is done at Ao Chalong but yachts can remain in Nai Harn and make the trip by tuk-tuk.

**Facilities;** Good restaurant ashore and many car-hire/taxi/tuk-tuk services available to get in to both Ao Chalong and Phuket City.

#### **SRI LANKA**

**Galle** This is a traditional stop-over, and has much to offer despite the rather unusual arrangements for visiting yachts. Many yachts call at Galle to see something of Sri Lanka, a spectacularly beautiful country. A five day tour to Ella, Nuwara Eliya, Sigiriya and Kandy should include the mountain train journey through tea plantations from Ella to Nuwara Eliya. Joining the pilgrim's route to see the sun rise from Adam's Peak is another unforgettable experience.

The short route is from the north side of the mountain, the longer and much more challenging route from the south is not for the faint hearted! Many yachts share transport for an inland tour and some operators have mini vans available at the same cost as a taxi. In Galle itself, a very pleasant few hours can be spent strolling around the old walled village of Galle Fort with the famous cricket ground at its feet.

**Approach;** The buoyed channel shown on Page 127 of Heikell's Indian Ocean Cruising Guide is the easiest approach, but there are only two sets of buoys not three as shown. The lighthouse on Fort Galle is the only navigation light and now shows FL(2)10s. A night entry of the harbour is prohibited as an anti Tamil Tiger net is stretched right across the harbour entrance. Also depth charges are occasionally used at night inside the harbour to deter Tamil divers. A pretty overnight anchorage can be found in the bay just north of the 'Tr (Conspic)' (just inside Watering Point which is marked on most large scale charts). This tower is no longer conspicuous. Other yachts have anchored for the night off the main northern beach of Galle just outside the harbour but it may be quite busy with fishermen, and at times very rolly.

**Moorings;** On arrival yachts must anchor outside the harbour to allow a visit from the Navy who will inspect the hull. If arriving at night you will have to anchor off until the morning as the inner harbour is sealed off with a floating boom to deter terrorist attacks by the Tamil Tigers. Once you have been inspected you can move through into the inner harbour.

There is now a cruise liner wharf alongside the creek on the north east side of the harbour and an excellent yacht berth has been created along the north side of this wharf. There is room for about eight 12 metre yachts with a minimum depth of 2.5 metres alongside the quay. These depths shoal quickly to the north of the wharf and you should keep to the south of a small black buoy (used at night to drape more anti Tamil Tiger nets) to avoid running aground. This buoy is just off the end of the quay where the harbour tug usually moors.

Two other mooring areas are used by yachts. One is just inside the harbour entrance tied between the remnants of blue plastic pontoons and laid buoys. The other berths are fore and aft anchored on the east side of the harbour with a line taken ashore. This is where the dinghy landing steps are so is quite convenient, but this berth should be treated with caution as several concrete remains have been reported visible at low tide.

**Formalities;** You may be required to use the services of an agent in order to complete your clearance. The Don Windsor family have been acting as agents to visiting yachts for very many years. Other agents may also be available.

**Facilities;** Most yachts fill up with water by jerry can from a tap in the yachtsman's shower and toilet block close by the cruise liner wharf. The water is said to be potable. Arrangement with the harbour authority can be made to obtain large quantities of water by tanker from alongside the cruise liner wharf.

**Fuel;** There are two pumps on the fisherman's quays. Diesel from this pump may be reserved for the fishermen. You may therefore have to make special arrangement through Mike Yacht Services. Fuel through Don Windsor is available by jerry can.

**Gas;** Mike Yacht Services will fill most types of can for you.

**Laundry;** Several local laundry services are available

**Provisions;** There are many local market stalls and shops. There is also a service provided by Mike Yacht Services.

**Courtesy Flags;** This is a good place to buy courtesy flags or a new ensign.

## **MALDIVES**

**Malé** There are three agents in Malé. One address is: Alliance Marine Services Co. Pvt Ltd.

3rd Floor, MA. Rafrage, Buruzu Magu, Malé, Maldives. Tel: 00 960 310096 Fax: 00 960 310129 Mobile: 00 960 776884 E-mail: mhameed@alliancemarine.com.mv

Website: [www.alliancemarine.com.mv](http://www.alliancemarine.com.mv)

**Uligan (Uleguma or Thiladhunmathee Atoll)** A totally delightful place . No sign of the marina development at Haa Dhaalu.

**Approach;** The FI Red light on the northern boat pass channel may no longer exist. The Light on the southern boat pass should be described as FI R.

**Anchorage;** An alternate anchorage can be found on one of many sand patches in 15m, just off the northern boat pass. The position of one of these is 7° 04.99'N , 72° 55.03'E.

**Formalties;** You will need 4 crew lists on arrival and another four on departure. There is an anchorage fee. The security check is not longer carried out on departure. Formalaties are speedy and painless, with all officials coming to the boat.

**Facilities;** Fuel was available from Amsco, Sailor's Choice, or the local diesel mechanic. Mail can be sent from The Post Office. Fresh, potable water may be supplied by jerry can at no charge by either Amsco or Sailors Choice if you use their services.

## **OMAN**

**Sandstorms** Visibility near the desert coasts of the Gulf of Aden and Horn of Africa is often poor as a result of the dust in the air. Visibility can be reduced even further when the wind freshens.

**Salalah** Admiralty Chart 2896 The Port of Salalah is the major container transshipment port for the Gulf of Aden. Its twelve container cranes are working day and night on the four or five ships who call here each day. It is well worth hiring a car and exploring the area. Beware the camels which cross the road without any wariness of vehicles. You can visit the site of the Queen of Sheba's Palace and find the strangely shaped frankincense trees growing in the desert. It is the resin from these trees that was once such a valuable commodity.

**Approach;** The ship anchorage off the port and the lights of the container terminal make it an easy harbour to locate and enter at night.

**Anchorage;** The holding is not as good as it may seem, so make sure your anchor has dug in well.

**Formalties;** Call Salalah Port Control on VHF Ch 16 for permission to enter the harbour and hoist flag Q. They will ask your vessel's name, tonnage, port of registry and number and nationality of people on board. They will also want to check that you are anchoring in the right place before you drop anchor. Once anchored the navy will call to check you out, followed by the Customs who are quite often several hours later. On departure you will need to visit Customs who will usually only issue clearance if you are sailing within one hour.

**Facilities;** Water; The wash block has two doors one unlocked the other locked. A key for the locked door can be obtained from the Port Police Office. The showers and toilets there are excellent.

**Fuel;** A mini tanker for a minimum of 1000 litres can be shared between several yachts.

**Repairs;** Most yacht repairs can be carried out in Salalah given patience and time. The industrial area on the left as you head into town is a great source of skilled mechanics. If you drive around long enough you will probably find someone to help you. If you want them to work on the boat you will need to organise a gate pass for them.

To save this trouble Mohammed Saad (Phone 23 212 747 or 99 088 206 or 92 339 763 E-mail number

Qasboob@hotmail.com will organise a repair person for you who he will deliver, acting if necessary as interpreter.

Provisions; There are a range of western supermarkets as well as local market stalls in the main town. It is worth sharing a car hire to stock up.

## YEMEN

**Aden** Aden is one of the traditional stop overs for cruising yachts entering or leaving the Red Sea. In recent years there have been various incidents which have meant that yachts from some countries have not been allowed entry or have been discouraged from stopping there. However, the experience of several yachts has been that they are made to feel welcome, if only to the dockside area of the port. In these cases, fuel and water were made available, and provisioning was possible with the help of locals to run errands.

## ROUTE PLANNING

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

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

19/1/2009