

## Ilhas Desertas

Between 32°24'N–32°36'N and 16°28'W–16°33'W

### Introduction

The three islands which together comprise the Ilhas Desertas – Ilhéu Chão, Ilha Deserta Grande and Ilhéu Bugio – lie 10M south-southeast of the easterly tip of Madeira and form a low broken ridge nearly 12M long but less than 1M wide. Maximum elevation is 478m near the centre of Ilha Deserta Grande. All three islands are fringed by rocky cliffs and are largely steep-to, an offing of 0.5M being ample.

In 1990 a Protected Area was established comprising the Ilhas Desertas and their off-lying rocks and islands, plus their surrounding waters to the 100m contour. Before departing Madeira or Porto Santo for the Ilhas Desertas the skipper MUST obtain a permit to land – see page 117. A warden is stationed permanently on the islands to protect the endangered monk seals (*Monachus monachus*) and will normally meet the crew of a yacht as they come ashore. No permit – no access!

All forms of fishing, scuba diving, and the collection of shells, plants or geological specimens are forbidden within the protected area. So are

### Websites

As of early 2004 a single page devoted to photographs of the islands could be found at [www.cm-funchal.pt/actividades/ciencia/portugues/mm08112.html](http://www.cm-funchal.pt/actividades/ciencia/portugues/mm08112.html). They are also mentioned briefly in some of the sites devoted to the archipelago as a whole – see page 115 for a comprehensive listing.

shooting and lighting fires, and wildlife – particularly birds – must not be disturbed. Rubbish must not be dumped (which of course applies to the marine environment generally).

### Navigation

#### Magnetic variation

7°15'W (2004), decreasing by 7'E annually.

#### Tidal streams

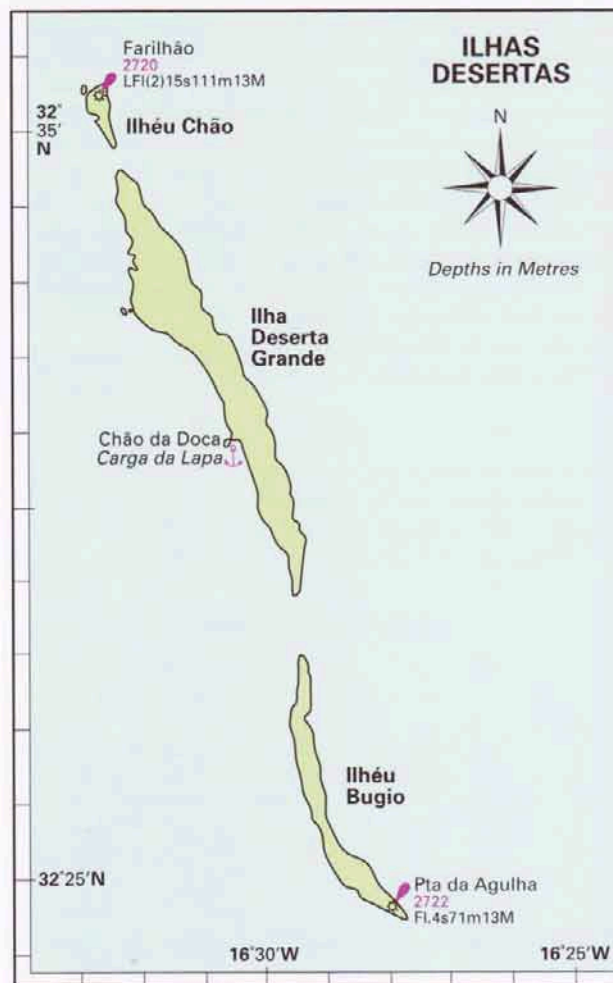
Tidal streams around the Ilhas Desertas set northeast on the flood and southwest on the ebb at up to 2 knots at springs and 1 knot at neaps.

#### Charts

Admiralty 1831 (1:150,000)  
Portuguese 36201 (100,000), [101 (1:150,000), 104 (1:50,000)]  
US 51261 (1:150,000)  
Imray-Iolaire E3 (1:170,000)

#### Lights

2720 Ilhéu Chão (Farilhão) 32°35'.4N 16°32'.8W  
Fl(2)15s111m13M 031°-vis-321°  
Round tower and building 14m  
2722 Ilhéu Bugio (Ponta da Agulha)  
32°24'.2N 16°27'.9W Fl.4s71m13M  
163°-vis-100° Hexagonal tower 8m



The anchorage at Carga da Lapa on Deserta Grande from the east. Chão da Doca and its rocky isthmus give protection from the prevailing northerly seas.

Michael Pocock



## Navigation

### Magnetic variation

11°40'W (2004), decreasing by 8'E annually.

### Tidal streams

Tidal streams set west on the flood and east on the ebb at up to 2 knots.

### Charts

Admiralty 366 (1:500,000)

Portuguese 201 (1:500,000)

US 51500 (1:250,000)

Imray-Iolaire E4 (1:510,000)

### Lights

2934 **Ponta do Barril** 16°36'·5N 24°25'W

Fl(3)12s13m15M White square tower and building 9m

2933·2 **Ponta Espechim** 16°40'·5N 24°21'W

Fl(3)5s43m8M Metal tower 5m

2930 **Ponta Leste**

16°34'N 24°01'·5W Fl(4)10s73m12M

140°-vis-030° White column with red lantern 3m

2933·3 **Ponta Delgado** 16°33'N 24°06'·5W

Fl.WRG.4s7m5M Metal tower 5m

2933·1 **Ponta Vermelharía** 16°29'N 24°19'W

Fl(5)20s18m8M Metal tower 5m

## Harbours and anchorages

### Porto do Tarrafal

16°34'N 24°21'·5W

### Plans

Cabo Verdean 31 (1:5000)

### Lights

2932 **Breakwater** 16°34'·1N 24°21'·7W

Iso.R.4s8m5M Red post and lantern 5m

Note The nearby light (with identical characteristics) identified in the 2004 Admiralty *List of Lights* as Cais o Tarrafal (2933), does not exist

### General

Situated on the southwest coast of the island, Porto do Tarrafal with its substantial breakwater provides shelter from north through east to southwest. A small village when visited in 1993, by 2003 it had grown into a sprawling town sporting a contrasting mixture of old and new buildings and able to meet all daily needs. Many yachtsmen familiar with the Cape Verde islands consider it their favourite anchorage.

The local economy revolves largely around fishing, with tuna and other large fish salted on the quay and a fishmeal processing plant (which generates surprisingly little smell) behind the beach. There has been talk of a tourist centre being built to exploit the excellent sport fishing in the channel between São Nicolau and Santa Luzia where a number of international records are held, but no start had been made by early 2003.

Swimming in the harbour could be unwise, but there is a clean, dark sand beach (complete with local beach bar) five minutes' walk south. The local people are friendly and relaxed towards visitors, and security appears to be good.

### Approach and anchorage

The breakwater and village are easily identified from offshore with no hazards on approach, though if coming from the south a minimum offing of 300m should be allowed around the Baixo da Telha. It would be wise not to close the breakwater until it bears northeast.

Holding is good in 5–10m over black sand – fortunate, since fierce northeasterly squalls may funnel down the ravines with little warning. At other times a light onshore wind picks up, making it essential not to anchor too close in. When very crowded – and some 45 yachts were reported in late 2003 – it will be necessary to anchor in the bay to the north of the harbour, where holding is variable over rock, stones and black sand. There is a Shell depot just south of Ponta João Batista off which tankers sometimes anchor to unload. Long hoses are used, and any yachts in the vicinity will be asked to move.

Ferries and small cargo boats as well as fishing boats use the breakwater and inner quay and the

