Chesapeake Bay
NOAA Chart 12280

A reduced-scale NOAA nautical chart for small boaters
When possible, use the full-size NOAA chart for navigation.

- Complete, reduced-scale nautical chart
- Print at home for free
- Convenient size
- Up-to-date with Notices to Mariners
- Compiled by NOAA’s Office of Coast Survey, the nation’s chartmaker

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**What are Nautical Charts?**

Nautical charts are a fundamental tool of marine navigation. They show water depths, obstructions, buoys, other aids to navigation, and much more. The information is shown in a way that promotes safe and efficient navigation. Chart carriage is mandatory on the commercial ships that carry America’s commerce. They are also used on every Navy and Coast Guard ship, fishing and passenger vessels, and are widely carried by recreational boaters.

**What is a BookletChart?**

This BookletChart is made to help recreational boaters locate themselves on the water. It has been reduced in scale for convenience, but otherwise contains all the information of the full-scale nautical chart. The bar scales have also been reduced, and are accurate when used to measure distances in this BookletChart. See the Note at the bottom of page 5 for the reduction in scale applied to this chart.

Whenever possible, use the official, full scale NOAA nautical chart for navigation. Nautical chart sales agents are listed on the Internet at [http://www.NauticalCharts.NOAA.gov](http://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov).

This BookletChart does NOT fulfill chart carriage requirements for regulated commercial vessels under Titles 33 and 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

**Notice to Mariners Correction Status**

This BookletChart has been updated for chart corrections published in the U.S. Coast Guard Local Notice to Mariners, the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency Weekly Notice to Mariners, and, where applicable, the Canadian Coast Guard Notice to Mariners. Additional chart corrections have been made by NOAA in advance of their publication in a Notice to Mariners. The last Notices to Mariners applied to this chart are listed in the Note at the bottom of page 7. Coast Pilot excerpts are not being corrected.


(Selected Excerpts from Coast Pilot)

**Chesapeake Bay**, the largest inland body of water along the Atlantic coast of the United States, is 168 miles long with a greatest width of 23 miles. The bay is the approach to Norfolk, Newport News, Baltimore, and many lesser ports. Deep-draft vessels use the Atlantic entrance, which is about 10 miles wide between Fishermans Island on the north and Cape Henry on the south. Medium-draft vessels can enter from Delaware Bay on the north via Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, and lightdraft vessels can enter from Albemarle Sound on the south via the Intracoastal Waterway.

The waters surrounding a vessel that is carrying liquefied petroleum gas are a **safety zone** while the vessel transits the Chesapeake Bay and Elizabeth River. (See 165.506, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

**North Atlantic Right Whales**—Endangered North Atlantic right whales may occur within 30 miles of the Virginia coasts in the approaches to the Chesapeake Bay (peak season: November through April, although right whales have been sighted in the area year round). (See **North Atlantic Right Whales**, indexed as such in Chapter 3, for more information on right whales and recommend measures to avoid collisions.)

All vessels 65 feet or greater in length overall (L.O.A.) and subject to the jurisdiction of the United States are restricted to speeds of 10 knots or less in a Seasonal Management Area existing around the entrance to the Chesapeake Bay between November 1 and April 30. The area is defined as the waters within a 20-nm radius of 37°00'36.9"N., 75°57'50.5"W. (See 50 CFR 224.105 in Chapter 2 for regulations, limitations, and exceptions.)

**Chesapeake Light** (36°54'17"N., 75°42'46"W.), 117 feet above the water, is shown from a blue tower on a white superstructure on four piles, 14 miles eastward of Cape Henry. The name CHESAPEAKE is displayed on all sides. A sound signal and racon are at the light. A fish haven, consisting of sunken fishing-boat hulls and marked by private unlighted buoys, is about 0.4 mile southwestward of the light.

**Cape Charles**, on the north side of the entrance, is low and bare, but the land back of it is high and wooded. **Wise Point** is the most southerly mainland tip of the cape. Low **Fishermans Island**, a National Wildlife Refuge, is 1 mile south of Wise Point. The southwest end of **Smith Island** is 2.4 miles eastward of Wise Point; the island is 6 miles long, low and sparsely wooded, and awash at half tide midway along its length.

**Cape Charles Light** (37°07'23"N., 75°54'23"W.), 180 feet above the water, is shown from an octagonal, pyramidal skeleton tower, upper part black and lower part white, on the southwestern part of Smith Island.

**Smith Island Shoal**, which breaks in heavy weather, has depths of 21 feet 7.5 miles east-southeast of Cape Charles Light. Depths less than 40 feet extend another 5 miles northeastward. Outer limits of the shoal area are marked by a lighted buoy.

**Nautilus Shoal**, which extends 4 miles southeastward from Fishermans Island, has patches with depths of 6 to 11 feet. The buoyed channel along the southwest side of Nautilus Shoal, thence northward between Fishermans Island and **Inner Middle Ground**, had a controlling depth of about 16 feet in 1977-1980. The channel is used by local vessels drawing up to 12 feet. This channel is not recommended for strangers because of shifting shoals. In 1996, a 10-foot shoal was reported 1.5 miles S of Fishermans Island in about 37°03'31.2"N., 075°57'27.0"W. Breakers frequently occur along the axis of Inner Middle Ground, starting on the seaward side of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel and continuing the entire length of the shoal. This phenomenon appears to be associated with large swells rolling in from the southeast-going southeaster.

**Cape Henry**, on the south side of the entrance, has a range of sand hills about 80 feet high.

**Cape Henry Light** (36°55'35"N., 76°00'26"W.), 164 feet above the water, is shown from an octagonal, pyramidal tower, upper and lower half of each face alternately black and white, on the beach near the turn of the cape.

A **naval restricted area** extends northward and eastward from Cape Henry. (See 334.320, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

**U.S. Coast Guard Rescue Coordination Center**

24 hour Regional Contact for Emergencies

RCC Norfolk  Commander  5th CG District   (575) 398-6231
Norfolk, VA
NOAA's navigation managers serve as ambassadors to the maritime community. They help identify navigational challenges facing professional and recreational mariners, and provide NOAA resources and information for safe navigation. For additional information, please visit nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/service/navmanagers. To make suggestions or ask questions online, go to nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/inquiry. To report a chart discrepancy, please use ocsdata.ncd.noaa.gov/idrs/discrepancy.aspx.

Lateral System As Seen Entering From Seaward
on navigable waters except Western Rivers

For more information on aids to navigation, including those on Western Rivers, please consult the latest USCG Light List for your area. These volumes are available online at http://www.navcen.uscg.gov

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Puerto Rico
U.S. Virgin Islands
Vacant
Contact Central Gulf Coast or Southeast Navigation Managers

Lateral System As Seen Entering From Seaward
on navigable waters except Western Rivers

PORT SIDE
ODD NUMBERED AIDS

RED LIGHT ONLY
FLASHING (2)
FLASHING
OCCULTING
QUICK FLASHING
ISO

GREEN LIGHT ONLY
FLASHING (2)
FLASHING
OCCULTING
QUICK FLASHING
ISO

COMPOSITE GROUP FLASHING (2+1)

PREFERRED CHANNEL
NO NUMBERS – MAY BE LETTERED
PREFERRED CHANNEL TO STARBOARD
TOPMOST BAND GREEN
GREEN LIGHT ONLY
COMPOSITE GROUP FLASHING (2+1)

PREFERRED CHANNEL
NO NUMBERS – MAY BE LETTERED
PREFERRED CHANNEL TO PORT
TOPMOST BAND RED
RED LIGHT ONLY
COMPOSITE GROUP FLASHING (2+1)

STARBOARD SIDE
EVEN NUMBERED AIDS

RED LIGHT ONLY
FLASHING (2)
FLASHING
OCCULTING
QUICK FLASHING
ISO

LIGHT
LIGHTED BUOY
CAN
DAYBEACON

1 1
"" ""
G R G G
I G E 6s
I
G
C "" ""

2
2
R 8"" R 6s
R N 8"" N 6s
""
""
R 8"" R 6s
R N 8"" N 6s
""
""
SOUNDINGS IN FEET

UNITED STATES - EAST COAST
MARYLAND AND VIRGINIA

CHESAPEAKE BAY

Mercator Projection
Scale 1:200,000 at Lat. 38°10'
North American Datum of 1983
(World Geodetic System 1984)

SOUNDINGS IN FEET
AT MEAN LOWER LOW WATER

HEIGHTS
Heights in feet above Mean Lower Low Water.

AUTHORITIES
Hydrography and topography by the National Ocean Service, Coast Survey, with additional data from the Corps of Engineers, and U.S. Coast Guard.

HORIZONTAL DATUM
The horizontal reference datum of this chart is North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83), which for charting purposes is considered equivalent to the World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS 84). Geodetic positions referred to the North American Datum of 1983 do not require conversion to NAD 83 for plotting on this chart.

POLUTION REPORTS
Report all spills of oil and hazardous substances to the National Response Center via 1-800-424-8802 (toll free), or to the nearest U.S. Coast Guard facility if telephone communication is impossible (933 FFR 393).

For Symbols and Abbreviations see Chart No. 1

NOTE 1
Navigation regulations are published in Chapter 2, U.S. Coast Pilot 3 & 4. Additional or revisions to Chapter 2 are published in the Notice to Mariners. Information on the regulations may be obtained at the Office of the Commander, 5th Coast Guard District in Portsmouth, Virginia or at the Office of the District Engineer, Corps of Engineers in Baltimore, Maryland or Norfolk, Virginia. Refer to charted regulation section numbers.

CAUTION
This chart is not intended for navigating the tributaries and nearshore waters of the Chesapeake Bay. Many wrecks, obstructions and aids to navigation have been omitted from this chart. For detailed information use larger scale charts.

WARNING
The prudent mariner will not rely solely on any single aid to navigation, particularly on floating aids. See U.S. Coast Guard Light List and U.S. Coast Pilot for details.

Additional information can be obtained at nausnauticalcharts.noaa.gov.

NOTE 2
NO DISCHARGE ZONE 40 CFR 141
Under the Clean Water Act, Section 312, all vessels operating within a No Discharge Zone (NDZ) are completely prohibited from discharging any sewage, treated or untreated, into the waters. All vessels with an installed marine sanitation device (MSTD) that are navigating, moored, anchored, or docked within a NDZ must have the MSTD certified to prevent the overboard discharge of sewage (treated or untreated) or install a holding tank. Regulations for the NDZ are contained in the U.S. Coast Pilot. Additional information concerning the regulations and requirements may be obtained from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) web site: http://www.epa.gov/owow/oceans/regulatory/vessel_sewage/
This BookletChart was reduced to 75% of the original chart scale. The new scale is 1:266666. Barscales have also been reduced and are accurate when used to measure distances in this BookletChart.
Note: Chart grid lines are aligned with true north.
NOTE F

TRAFFIC SEPARATION SCHEME

The traffic separation scheme is designed to aid in the prevention of collisions at the approaches to Chesapeake Bay and does not supersede or alter the applicable Rules of the Road.

The RECOMMENDED routes for entering and exiting from Chesapeake Bay are superimposed on this chart. The Northern Approach is marked by a inflated magenta line centered on a line of buoyant buoys which separates the course of inbound and outbound vessels. Vessels should leave all buoys on their port hand.

It is RECOMMENDED that the following ships use the Southern Approach deepwater route when bound for Chesapeake Bay from east or west from Chesapeake Bay. Deep-draft ships, defined as 47 feet (14.3 meters) or greater in the water line, and naval flag carriers. Ships drawing less than 47 feet (14.3 meters) may use the deep-water route when, in their master's judgment, the effects of tide characteristics or, the speed, and present environmental conditions may cause the draft of the ship to equal or exceed 47 feet (14.3 meters).

It is RECOMMENDED that all ships using the deep-water route:
- Announce their intention on VHF-FM channel 16 as it approaches the Chesapeake Bay Southern Approach Lighted Whistle buoy "CS" or on the south end, or Chesapeake Bay Entrance Lighted Whistle buoy "CH", on the north end of the route.
- Avoid, as far as practicable, overtaking other ships operating in the deep-water route.
- Keep at or near the left side of the channel for the departure of other shallower draft vessels operating in the right-hand channel.
- All other ships approaching the Chesapeake Bay traffic separation scheme should use the appropriate inbound or outbound traffic lane of the traffic separation scheme.
- Traffic within the precautionary area may consist of vessels operating between Thimble Shoal and Chesapeake Channels and one of the oblique traffic lanes. Mariners are advised to exercise extreme caution in navigating within this area. The normal Pilot Boarding Area is denoted by a magenta band.

Note: Chart grid lines are aligned with true north.
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As far as practicable, operating other ships in the deep-water route.

Towline is on the starboard side as a safe and practicable.

All other ships approaching the Choctawhatchee Bay traffic separation scheme should use the appropriate inbound or outbound traffic lane of the traffic separation scheme.

Traffic within the precautionary area may consist of vessels operating between the Inner Harbor and Choctawhatchee Channels. All vessels are advised to exercise extreme care in navigating within this area. The normal Pilot Boarding Area is outlined by a magenta band.

NOTICE 5

CAUTION

The Choctawhatchee Bay Bridge-Tunnel complex has on several occasions suffered damage from vessels due to adverse weather conditions. Cautions in excess of three knots can be expected in the area. Mariners navigating this area are urged to be particularly alert in regards to the weather situation. The National Weather Service provides 24-hour weather broadcasts on 162.55 MHz. The Local Marine Operator also issues marine weather information at 0100, 0700, 1300, and 1900 local time on 2538 and 2460 Hz. Transmitting schedules are subject to change, see Notice to Mariners. Maneuvering in close proximity of the bridge-tunnel complex is discouraged.

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Assist, as far as practicable, oversteering other ships operating in the deep-water route. Keep as near to the outer limit of the route which lies on the starboard side as is safe and practicable.

All other ships approaching the Chesapeake Bay traffic separation scheme should use the appropriate inbound or outbound traffic lane of the traffic separation scheme. Traffic within the precautionary area may consist of vessels operating between Thimble Shoal and Chesapeake Channels and one of the inbound or outbound traffic lanes. Mariners are advised to exercise extreme care in navigating within this area. The normal Pilot Boarding Area is outlined by a magenta band.

**NOTE A**

**CAPTAIN OF THE PORT**

The Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel complex has on several occasions suffered damage from vessels due to adverse weather conditions. Vessels in excess of three knots can be expected in the area. Mariners traveling this area are urged to be particularly alert in regards to the weather situation. The National Weather Service provides 24 hour weather broadcasting on 162.55 MHz. The Local Marine Operator also transmits weather information at 0700, 1300, and 1900 local time on 156.8 and 2460 kHz. Transmitting schedules are subject to change, see Notice to Mariners. Maneuvering in close proximity of the bridge-tunnel complex is discouraged.

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**Note:** Chart grid lines are aligned with true north.
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VHF Marine Radio channels for use on the waterways:
Channel 6 – Inter-ship safety communications.
Channel 9 – Communications between boats and ship-to-coast.
Channel 13 – Navigation purposes at bridges, locks, and harbors.
Channel 16 – Emergency, distress and safety calls to Coast Guard and others, and to initiate calls to other vessels. Contact the other vessel, agree to another channel, and then switch.
Channel 22A – Calls between the Coast Guard and the public. Severe weather warnings, hazards to navigation and safety warnings are broadcast here.
Channels 68, 69, 71, 72 and 78A – Recreational boat channels.

Getting and Giving Help — Signal other boaters using visual distress signals (flares, orange flag, lights, arm signals); whistles; horns; and on your VHF radio. You are required by law to help boaters in trouble. Respond to distress signals, but do not endanger yourself.

Distress Call Procedures
• Make sure radio is on.
• Select Channel 16.
• Press/Hold the transmit button.
• Clearly say: “MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY.”
• Also give: Vessel Name and/or Description; Position and/or Location; Nature of Emergency; Number of People on Board.
• Release transmit button.
• Wait for 10 seconds — If no response Repeat MAYDAY call.

HAVE ALL PERSONS PUT ON LIFE JACKETS!

NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards (NWR) is a nationwide network of radio stations broadcasting continuous weather information directly from the nearest National Weather Service office. NWR broadcasts official Weather Service warnings, watches, forecasts and other hazard information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/

Quick References
Nautical chart related products and information — http://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov
Interactive chart catalog — http://www.charts.noaa.gov/InteractiveCatalog/nrnc.shtml
Chart and chart related inquiries and comments — http://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/mcd/updates/LNM_NM.html
Coast Pilot online — http://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/nsd/cpgdownload.htm
Tides and Currents — http://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov
National Data Buoy Center — http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/
National Hurricane Center — http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/
Pacific Tsunami Warning Center — http://ptwc.weather.gov/
Contact Us — http://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/staff/contact.htm

This Booklet chart has been designed for duplex printing (printed on front and back of one sheet). If a duplex option is not available on your printer, you may print each sheet and arrange them back-to-back to allow for the proper layout when viewing.