

# Stewart Island / Rakiura



Abrahams Bosom, Port Adventure

## A SAILORS GUIDE TO CRUISING AND ANCHORAGES

Compiled by Alastair Walker, 2022

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## Acknowledgements

Chartlets	Extracted from Land Information New Zealand's NZ Mariner Raster Chart series. Full series is available on-line from LINZ ( <a href="http://linz.govt.nz">linz.govt.nz</a> ) along with their ENC Vector chart series.
Satellite Illustrations	Extracted from Google Earth. Well worth having available to view the "big satellite picture" in conjunction with the charts.

That this guide is available at no cost is due in no small part to Otago Yacht Club and their willingness to host the pdf on the club website, despite having to adapt the website to do so. I am indebted to the Club for their willing support, and in particular to the Club Secretary John Arnold for facilitating the process.

For information, advice and encouragement, my thanks go to – in no particular order : Lindsay Smith, Robyn and John Armstrong, Mike Robilliard, Sue and Vern Hall, Eric Bretscher, Steve Phillips, Meri Leask (Bluff Fisherman's Radio), Viki Moore (Island Cruising), Kevin Waters (Moorings Otago).

To all the other cruising sailors whose brains I have picked while sailing about on the east coast of the South Island and on Stewart Island, there are too many of you to name, but you know who you are, I thank you all, and look forward to renewing acquaintances.

Finally, the considerable effort put in by members of the Mana Cruising Club to produce their 1996 "Stewart Island Cruising Guide" is acknowledged. That guide has served visiting sailors well for over 25 years, testament to the thorough work of the authors.

## General

Stewart Island. The very name has an aura to it for many sailors in Aotearoa/New Zealand. One day it feels as if you are in the South Pacific islands, the next, deep in the Southern Ocean. Also known as Rakiura, this is the southernmost cruising ground in the country, one which will appeal to the more adventurous sailor. A high level of commitment and a well found vessel are required just to get there. The weather toys with you once you actually make it. But when you are sailing off that rugged coastline, heading for a snug anchorage where you have to be doing something wrong not to catch your evening meal, then listening to the Morepork calling at night, or watching the deer come down to the water's edge, you would not wish to be anywhere else. It is a stunning place.

At 1746 sq km, rising to a maximum elevation of 980m, and third largest of the islands which make up the country, Stewart Island/Rakiura is largely bush clad and rugged. As far as mainland cruising grounds go, only Fiordland can be considered more remote. Much of the island is a National Park, so is generally unspoilt by development. The small local population is centred on Oban around Half Moon Bay, and supports aquaculture, fishing, and tourism. Stewart Island is the location of one of the Great Walks – the Rakiura Track. The island has a regular ferry service from Bluff, and also an air service from Invercargill airport. Oban has, in a limited way, all of the facilities that would be expected by tourists.

Sitting squarely in the path of the Roaring Forties, the island isn't remotely tropical even at the height of summer. The Catlins coast also catches everything coming up from the south. Warm clothing and good foul weather gear are a must, year round. A dodger or a spray cover to give the cockpit and hatchway some protection are worth their weight in gold. And, although in no way a problem everywhere, some anchorages can be affected by sandflies and mosquitoes, though to a far lesser extent than Fiordland. Since the weather generally means you need decent ventilation in the cabin, fine mesh coverings for hatchways and ports will go a long way to prevent bugs intruding into the living space. However, the good weather does come, and it does so much more often than most folk would think.

Food supplies, water and fuel (diesel, petrol and lpg) are all available in Oban, however, it would be as well to arrive on the island well provisioned. Especially if heading south of Paterson Inlet. Adverse weather can (and does) throw plans and schedules out of the window. On one 14 day trip while researching this guide, the author spent 10 days at anchor hiding from gales.

In the past there used to be a higher probability of settled weather at certain times of the year, making it less of a gamble when planning a trip south. Unfortunately, in these times of climate change, the weather is not as predictable. However, and not to be relied upon, spring is generally quite unsettled, high summer is better and will give warmer weather, late summer and most of the autumn can have long settled spells. If the boat has a decent cabin heater, winter can also have some surprisingly fine weather, especially early in the season. What has not changed, is that the spring and autumn equinox both still bring frequent and severe gales for a couple of weeks either side.

Traditionally, the busiest time of the year for boats on Stewart Island/Rakiura is around late December and January, when local (Bluff and Dunedin) boats come across for their summer holidays. In the past there might have been a couple of dozen local yachts and launches at this time. However, over the summer and autumn now, the island is much busier than it used to be, boats from overseas and even the North Island are common. You can expect there to be a dozen or so boats at all times now, and although there is still plenty of scope to find a peaceful spot to spend the night, solitude can no longer be guaranteed.

## Wildlife - A Caution

The Catlins coast and Stewart Island are renowned for their wildlife, enjoy this, but please keep a good distance. Especially from anything seal-like. The sea lions in particular can be quite aggressive, and move much faster on land than most people would think possible. Give them a wide berth in a tender or kayak too!



## Using this guide

This guide has been written primarily with cruising yachts in mind, but is equally applicable to powered launches. While the information provided is believed to be accurate, remember that this is only a guide, and is supplementary to up to date Land Information NZ navigation charts, which should be carried and referred to. The skipper of each craft must use their own best judgement for their vessel on the day.

Distances are referred to in nautical miles, depths in metres. Courses or compass bearings are in degrees true. Clockwise convention is used when referring to a range of directions (eg northeast to southeast means northeast through east to southeast).

On Stewart Island, coastline and anchorages are mostly described in a clockwise rotation starting from the north of the island. Within inlets and bays (eg Paterson Inlet), a clockwise convention is again normally employed, starting from the entrance. The main exception to this is Lords River, which is more logically described from the mouth upstream.

It is impractical to list every possible anchorage. Not every listed anchorage has an illustration – some are so straightforward it is simply not required. Use your charts.

All of the anchorages detailed have been visited and checked in a 13m yacht with 1.5m draft, which has a tight turning circle. Some of the larger cruising boats, especially multihulls, will have difficulty accessing many of the anchorages described. For these vessels, a list of roomier locations is provided at the end of the guide.

Given the nature of the area, it is assumed that vessels cruising here carry appropriate ground tackle and stern lines, and know how to use them properly. Some anchorages have a seabed containing sensitive marine life, poor technique and/or inadequately sized gear may cause serious damage to these populations.

When using an anchorage set up with a hawser to tie back onto (eg The Nook in Lords River), please try to leave room for any later arrivals – especially in bad weather when fishing boats might want to come in.

Rather than the traditional hand drawn sketch map illustrating anchorages, chartlets and/or satellite images of the area have been used instead. While the official charts are always the first choice for safe navigation, due to the limited surveys of parts of the area, the charted outline shape of some of the bays and coves are inaccurate or inadequate, and in these cases a satellite image may be more useful. This also means that some of the proprietary electronic navigation packages should be used with greater caution than is perhaps normal. Any known hazard not shown on the chart will be mentioned in the description of the anchorage. An indication of depth within the anchorages is given, rather than a detailed blanket sounding, and this relates to normal low water.

Suggested anchoring locations are identified on diagrams either in red (on chartlets) or white (on satellite images). As always though, it is up to the skipper to make the choice appropriate on the day.

Refer to the appropriate NZ Topomap for more detail regarding any tracks mentioned. Descriptions of these are not given here.

Regardless of the information provided in this guide, the best option for safe navigation and anchoring will always be the Mk1 eyeball, an up to date chart, a decent depth sounder, and a prudent approach.

## Place Names

Although many places and features have names which are in common use locally, the identifiers used in this guide are taken firstly from the LINZ charts of the area, and if no identifier is found there, reference is then made to the relevant LINZ Topomap. Local names will additionally be referenced where applicable.

## Communications

VHF provides adequate radio communication, although there are some spots where local terrain makes for sketchy reception. SSB will cover those places, but it isn't essential. The main stations are -

Chalmers Maritime Radio	Ch71	Otago Peninsula to Catlins coast (call on Ch16)
Bluff Maritime Radio	Ch68	Catlins coast to Paterson Inlet (call on Ch16)
Stewart Island Maritime Radio	Ch71	Foveaux Strait to Stewart Island (call on Ch16)
Puysegur Maritime Radio	Ch67	West coast of Stewart Island (call on Ch16)
Bluff Fisherman's Radio	Ch61	Foveaux Strait to Stewart Island (call on Ch61)

Chalmers, Bluff, Puysegur and Stewart Island Maritime Radio are part of the national VHF network operated remotely by Maritime NZ from their base in Lower Hutt. Bluff Fisherman's is a local VHF Assn station.

The local VHF associations operate an excellent network encompassing weather forecasts, TR's, safety information, ship to ship comms, and just providing general assistance and advice. If you are going to be using the service, support the associations by subscribing, it is money well spent. Use Google to get contact details. Bluff Fisherman's Radio / Southland VHF Users Assn has linked repeaters on Ch61 (Bluff) and Ch01 (Puysegur) covering the south coast and Stewart Island. The radio operator, Meri Leask, is knowledgeable and helpful – well worth contacting on arrival in the area. Once past The Nuggets, you can contact Meri on Ch61. The Otago VHF Users Assn has linked repeaters covering the Otago coast – (N to S) Cape Wanbrow (Ch66), Taiaroa Heads (Ch62), Concord (Ch60) and Hina Hina Hill (Ch64). Coverage reaches past Slope Point. The Southland and Otago association networks are additionally linked – you can basically call Bluff Fisherman's from Oamaru and get a reply.

For areas where VHF communication is not so reliable, Bluff Fisherman's can be contacted via SSB on 4417kHz. Maritime Radio can be contacted on SSB via Taupo Radio (ZLM) on one of the HF calling frequencies to suit propagation conditions, probably 2MHz/4MHz at night, 6MHz/8MHz in daylight.

Depending on the track taken, there is reasonable, if sometimes patchy, phone coverage for much of the voyage from Dunedin to Stewart Island. Once you get to Stewart Island, coverage is pretty much limited to Oban and immediate surrounding areas. Where verified, phone coverage at particular anchorages is noted. Don't expect the fastest internet connection through your mobile phone when it is actually available. If you require phone/internet access at all times, some form of satellite communications is required.

## Weather Forecasts

Coastal weather forecast areas of interest are generally Chalmers, Foveaux, and Puysegur. Even if sitting up in Otago Harbour waiting to go south, it is advisable to monitor the forecasts right the way round to Puysegur to let you know what is coming through from the Tasman Sea and/or Southern Ocean.

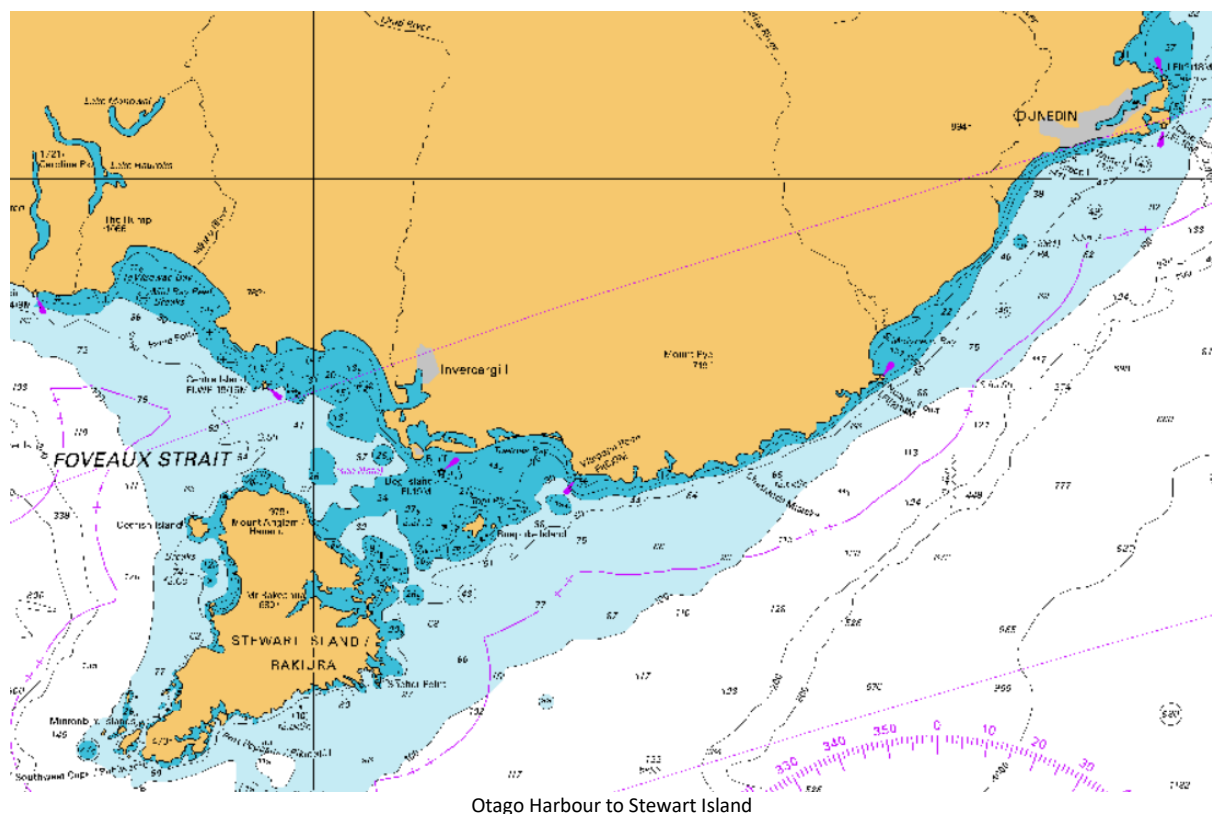
Weather forecasts are available from the marine radio stations servicing the area, and also from the internet. MetService provide the forecasts for the radio stations, and post the same on their website. MetService (and a number of other providers such as METVUW and PredictWind) also issue forecast charts for the area, if you can get a couple of them lining up with the MetService marine forecast, you can have some confidence.

Maritime Radio (VHF)	0133 0533 0733 1333 1733 2133 NZLT
Taupo Maritime Radio (ZLM)	0133 0533 1333 1733 NZLT (2207 kHz, 4146 kHz, 6224 kHz)
Bluff Fisherman's Radio	0705 NZLT (Time can be variable, tune in early, call if you need a forecast) (Ch61 VHF first, then switches to Ch65 and 4417 kHz)

The Coastguard Nowcasting service gives frequently updated reports from weather stations which can be useful, but the forecast may only cover the sea areas immediately adjacent to the repeater. Stations within the scope of this guide are Dunedin (Ch79) and Riverton (Ch20). Coverage is limited, though you can hear Riverton from Slope Point.

## Getting to Stewart Island

This is a guide to cruising on the coast of Stewart Island, but to get there you have to start from somewhere. Most will make the trip via the east coast of the South Island, and this is the route described. Some do make the rather more adventurous voyage down the west coast and combine it with a cruise through the fiords. This route is not detailed, Fiordland is outwith the scope of this guide and cruising there is well documented elsewhere. For the purposes of this guide, a starting point in Otago Harbour is assumed. This is a reasonable choice, with sheltered all-weather berths and mooring, and all the facilities and amenities of a small city close to hand, not to forget (hopefully not required) marine repair and maintenance facilities.



From Otago Harbour, the normal (shortest) route to Stewart Island runs round the coast of the peninsula to Cape Saunders, crosses to Nugget Point, continues to Chaslands Mistake, then runs direct to a point at the entrance to Abbott Passage off Stewart Island. You can of course go via Bluff if so desired, continuing round the Catlins coast from Chaslands Mistake to Slope Point, thence to Dog Island and so to Bluff. From Bluff, a direct line almost south leads to Abbott Passage. While there is no reason to avoid Bluff – You can get fuel, water, supplies and a berth there - it is a fishing/commercial port and not ideally set up to accommodate cruising boats. Local Bluff sailors may have a different point of view, and they may well be right. Although the mileage between Chaslands and Bluff is less than Chaslands to Abbot Passage, isn't so much less as to add any convenience. No matter which route you take, unless you are travelling mid-summer AND stop in one of the Catlins anchorages, you will probably have an overnight sail. It is a trip of around 140nm.

Given half decent conditions, most cruising boats will be able to comfortably make the trip from Otago Harbour to Stewart Island in somewhere around 24 -36 hours. Before setting out, you would be looking for a favourable weather forecast for 48 hours so as to have some time up your sleeve. The weather windows on this part of the coast have a habit of closing as soon as you leave, and if you ended up having to plug through a southerly for the final stretch into Paterson Inlet, you'd know all about it. Foveaux Strait can be very unforgiving in even moderately adverse conditions. Ideally, what you are looking for is a forecast with a moderate northerly or easterly to set you on your way if heading south. Heading north, unless there is a prolonged fine spell, leaving Stewart Island on the tail end of a southerly, once it is starting to quieten down, seems to work for most.

If heading towards the island on a favourable northerly, and the intention is to explore Port Pegasus, it is worth taking the opportunity and heading directly in that direction first, rather than calling into Oban or Paterson Inlet. It frequently turns out to be easier to make passage north than south on Stewart Island.

Combining a trip to Fiordland with Stewart Island can look an attractive proposition, and indeed it is. However, and there is always a “however”, bear in mind that the weather and sea conditions to the west of Stewart Island are often even less benign than those found to the east of Southwest Cape. Check the weather, the seas are big, on the nose, and there is no place to hide.

Caveats about the weather and seas aside, nobody ever comes away from a Stewart Island trip disappointed.

## Official LINZ Charts Required

NZ66	Katiki Point to Nugget Point
NZ68	Nugget Point to Centre Island
NZ69	Stewart Island
NZ661	Approaches to Otago Harbour
NZ681	Approaches to Bluff / Riverton
NZ6612	Otago Harbour
NZ6821	Port of Bluff
NZ6825	Paterson Inlet
NZ6912	Plans in Stewart Island

Navigating in this part of Aotearoa/New Zealand, it is best to proceed on the understanding that there are possibly some inaccuracies in the charts, and exercise due caution in unfamiliar waters, especially at an anchorage level. While it is understood that most vessels now rely on electronic navigation packages, it is strongly recommended that the official NZ paper charts also be carried and used in conjunction with the chartplotter.

## Waypoints

The waypoints detailed below for the trip direct from Otago Peninsula to Paterson Inlet, are for guidance only, and should not be regarded otherwise. Prudent navigation in prevailing conditions (and the inclination of the crew) should always take precedence.

Cape Saunders	45° 54.104 S	170° 49.795 E
Nugget Point	46° 28.978 S	169° 54.315 E
Chaslands Mistake	46° 40.721 S	169° 23.765 E
Abbott Passage	46° 53.677 S	168° 18.018 E
Fast Rock	46° 53.736 S	168° 12.570 E
Half Moon Bay	46° 53.267 S	168° 10.031 E
Paterson Inlet	46° 55.085 S	168° 10.345 E

Courses and distances between waypoints are given below. These may be of assistance with trip planning.

Cape Saunders to Nugget Point	228° T	52 nm
Nugget Point to Chaslands Mistake	241° T	24 nm
Chaslands Mistake to Abbott Passage	254° T	47 nm
Abbott Passage to Fast Rock	269° T	3.8 nm
Fast Rock to Half Moon Bay	285° T	1.8 nm
Fast Rock to Paterson Inlet	228° T	2 nm

## Tides and currents

Tidal predictions can be viewed or downloaded from the Land Information NZ website – [linz.govt.nz](http://linz.govt.nz). They are also available from [Metservice.co.nz](http://Metservice.co.nz) and, to a more limited extent, in the current NZ Nautical Almanac. Detailed predictions are given for most of the important locations around Stewart Island, and the route there. Given the topography, tidal flow in the vicinity of Stewart Island can be significant, to the point that it ought to be taken into account when planning a trip.

How you hit the tides on the trip between Otago Harbour and Stewart Island (or vice versa) can have a significant effect on how long the trip takes, so it is worth checking predictions for relevant locations on the route prior to setting out.

In general, the flood tide sets east as it approaches the west coast of Stewart Island, and divides into two streams at about the latitude of South Red Head (approx. 47° south), one stream heading north to join the east setting flow through Foveaux Strait, the other going south, round Southwest Cape and South Cape to run up the coast past East Cape. Conversely however, on the northeast coast, the flood tide runs vaguely southeast in a big eddy between the two main tidal streams through the straits and past East Cape.

Tidal streams around the coast usually vary between 0.5kts and 1.5kts, however, local variations through constrictions can reach 4kts. There may also be noticeable localised tidal eddies closer inshore, especially between East Cape and South Cape. The tidal flows around the islands between Ruapuke and Stewart Island, around Southwest Cape, and off Port Adventure are significant to the point of being able to pull a boat around considerably. Taking all this into account with the relatively shallow nature of most of the waters, and the effect of both wind and swell against tides, you ought to factor in the possibility of some quite dramatic seas in the right (or wrong) conditions. Foveaux Strait and the surrounding waters are rightly notorious for these.

When heading between Paterson Inlet and Port Pegasus, although the trip is easily achieved in a single day, in order to make best use of the tides it is well worth considering breaking the trip at Port Adventure or Lords River, and have favourable tides for both legs.

The tidal flow out of Bluff Harbour is quite significant (around 4kts), and some fairly large standing waves can be set up.

## Useful publications

Admiralty Sailing Directions, New Zealand Pilot (NP51)  
New Zealand Tidal Stream Atlas  
Mana Cruising Club Cruising Guide to Stewart Island  
New Zealand Marine Radio Handbook  
New Zealand Nautical Almanac

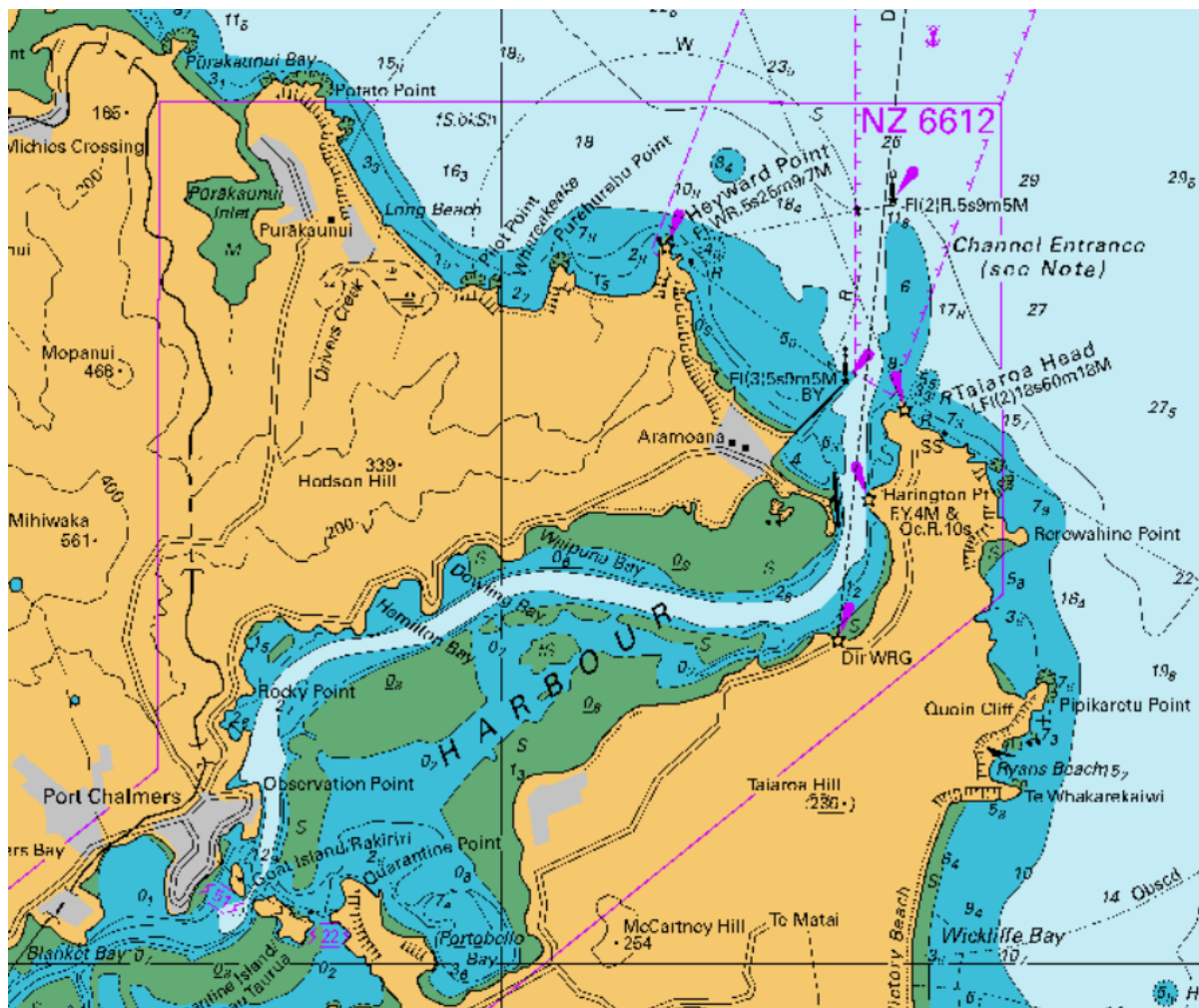
## Useful websites

Metservice	<a href="http://metservice.com/">metservice.com/</a>	Weather forecasts, tides,
LINZ	<a href="http://linz.govt.nz/">linz.govt.nz/</a>	Tides, charts
METVUW	<a href="http://metvuw.com">metvuw.com</a>	Weather charts
PredictWind	<a href="http://predictwind.com">predictwind.com</a>	Weather modelling
Windy	<a href="http://windy.com">windy.com</a>	Weather modelling
Port Otago	<a href="http://portotago.co.nz">portotago.co.nz</a>	Otago Harbour conditions, webcams
Stewart Island	<a href="http://stewartisland.co.nz/">stewartisland.co.nz/</a>	Stewart Island tourist information, ferries
Port of Bluff	<a href="http://southport.co.nz">southport.co.nz</a>	Wind and tide conditions
Dept. of Conservation	<a href="http://doc.govt.nz/">doc.govt.nz/</a>	Stewart Island information
Maritime NZ	<a href="http://maritimenz.govt.nz">maritimenz.govt.nz</a>	Regulations, communications, etc
Topo Map NZ	<a href="http://topomap.co.nz">topomap.co.nz</a>	Topographical maps, free and online.

## Otago Harbour

Otago Harbour is a fairly busy place, with commercial port facilities in Dunedin, Ravensbourne, and Port Chalmers. There is a local fishing fleet operating out of Port Chalmers.

The waters immediately outside the harbour entrance can be quite uncomfortable, even under fairly moderate weather conditions, but inside the line between the end of the mole and Tairaroa Head they smooth out rapidly.



Entrance to Otago Harbour

Prior to your entering the harbour, Otago Harbour Control appreciate a courtesy call on VHF Ch16, to advise them of your intentions, and you can also find out if there is any traffic which may affect your passage. They can also normally be raised on VHF Ch14. If assistance is needed, the harbour control is very obliging. Harbour Control is based in Port Chalmers, but use CCTV, AIS, and radar to monitor key locations.

The harbour is, in general, fairly shallow, but the main channel is kept dredged, and is well marked. Some of the commercial vessels using the port are large, but there is plenty of room for a cruising boat to pass (or be passed) safely. If in doubt, there is always enough depth of water just outside the marked channel for a cruising boat, but don't go too far outside the channel! Although you may see local fishing boats cutting across outside the channel at high tide, visiting keelboats are well advised to remain in the channel. Secondary channels – into Portobello Bay and the Eastern Channel - are not routinely dredged. The Eastern Channel in particular has to be navigated with great caution, if you must then best do so on a rising tide.

Although most of the navigational markers outside of the main channel which are still current (eg – into Portobello Bay and the Eastern Channel) have recently been upgraded and colour marked red or green as appropriate, there are still many old black pile markers around, which are at best confusing, and often now meaningless.

Being quite long, depending on the wind and the state of the tide, it can take a couple of hours for a cruising boat to motor the length of the harbour to Dunedin. Many of the yachts visiting prefer to stop at Port Chalmers, and if they need to go to the city, use the local bus service to do so. Some do opt for the Otago Yacht Club boat harbour in Dunedin, and are welcomed there.

Despite the harbour's size, it is seldom that a sea large enough to impede the passage of a cruising boat will build. However, if heading to the Upper Harbour, once to the south of the Halfway Islands off Port Chalmers, be aware that the wind can be funnelled and accelerated, especially in a southerly. As a rule though, you will always be able to find shelter from severe weather somewhere in the harbour.

Tidal flow in the harbour, while not excessive, is noticeable, and does affect transit times.

When navigating the channel, keep a watch out for small buoys just outside the main channel, and often across the entrance to the side bays. These mark holding pots belonging to the local fishermen. The buoys are most prevalent on the west side of the harbour, between Dowling Bay and Careys Bay. You can't help but see them around the green channel markers.

There is a Coastguard unit with a fast rescue boat in the harbour, based in Dunedin.

## Charts

NZ661	Approaches to Otago Harbour
NZ6612	Otago Harbour

## Moorings and Berths

While there is currently (2022) no commercial marina in Otago Harbour, good facilities are readily available. Many of the bays in the harbour contain private moorings for local boats. Although it might be quite tempting to pick up a vacant buoy for a short or overnight stop, there is no guarantee that the mooring has been maintained, or has the capacity to hold a heavier cruising boat. Deborah Bay, Careys Bay, and Back Beach Bay are the main locations for local boats to be moored.

### Visitor moorings

In the lower harbour there are 2 bright yellow coloured visitor moorings. One is located between the two unlit poles marking the southern entrance into Deborah Bay (suitable for boats up to 12m), the other just off the old pile moorings at the entrance to Careys Bay (suitable for boats up to 20m). Contact the harbourmaster (Phone 0800 474 082 or 027 201 0592). For a longer stay, or if the visitor moorings are occupied, contact Moorings Otago (Phone 0274408716), who may be able to sort you out with a suitable vacant private mooring at a very reasonable cost. The owner, Kevin Waters, is invaluable as a source of information and assistance in the harbour.

### Deborah Bay

Dunedin City Council operates a small private marina (with no amenities) in Deborah Bay, consisting of some permanent berths for local boats, and, a public pontoon. There is a large berth on the outside of the public pontoon which easily takes a 13m yacht, and, a smaller one on the inside. Proceed with caution through the moorings to reach this, although there is plenty of depth alongside (2m minimum), some parts of the mooring field are shallower at low water. This facility is well used by local boats, so a prolonged stay, certainly on the outside berth, will not go down well. Even if some of the private berths are vacant, they should not be used by visiting boats without permission from DCC.

## Careys Bay

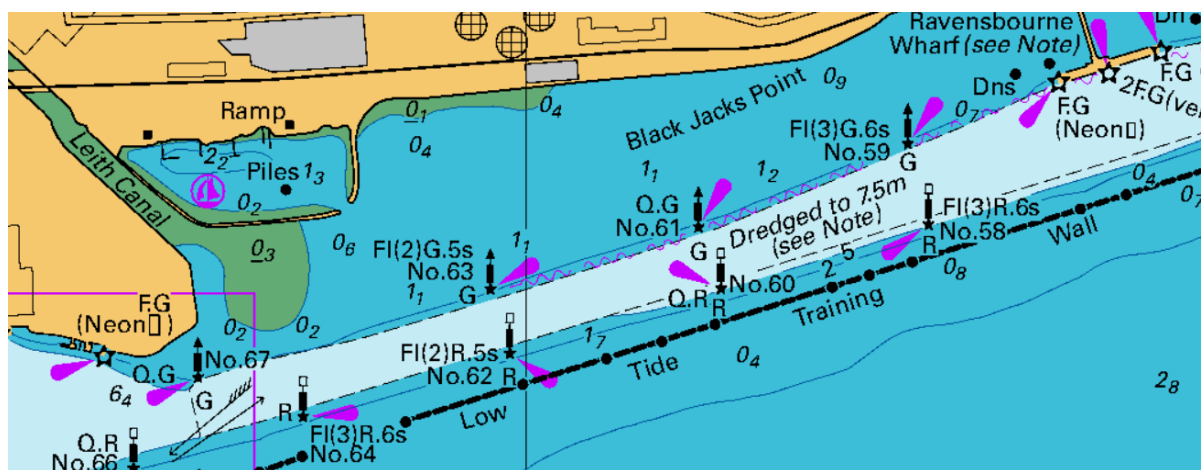
The Fisherman's Wharf in Careys Bay is a private facility operated by Port Otago. It has no visitor berth available. There is a floating pontoon beside the boat ramp in Careys Bay, which can be a handy place to leave the tender if having a run ashore, being a 5 minute walk from here to Port Chalmers, 1 minute to the hotel!

## Otago Yacht Club

Otago Yacht Club has good facilities in Dunedin, which are useful, but they are a long way up the harbour, and the entrance is depth restricted at less than half tide. Contact the resident manager by phone prior to arriving (Phone 0274919508). There is a daily charge made for use of the facilities.

It is best to access the boat harbour on a rising tide if possible. To enter the basin, immediately past starboard channel marker 63 look for the white triangular leading marks, and keep these in line when proceeding into the entrance. Although the water is fairly shallow (around 2m at half tide), the bottom is soft mud, so a grounding is more likely to cause embarrassment than damage. The boat harbour has deeper water, and the club has a number of berthing options available. Be prepared to raft up alongside another boat.

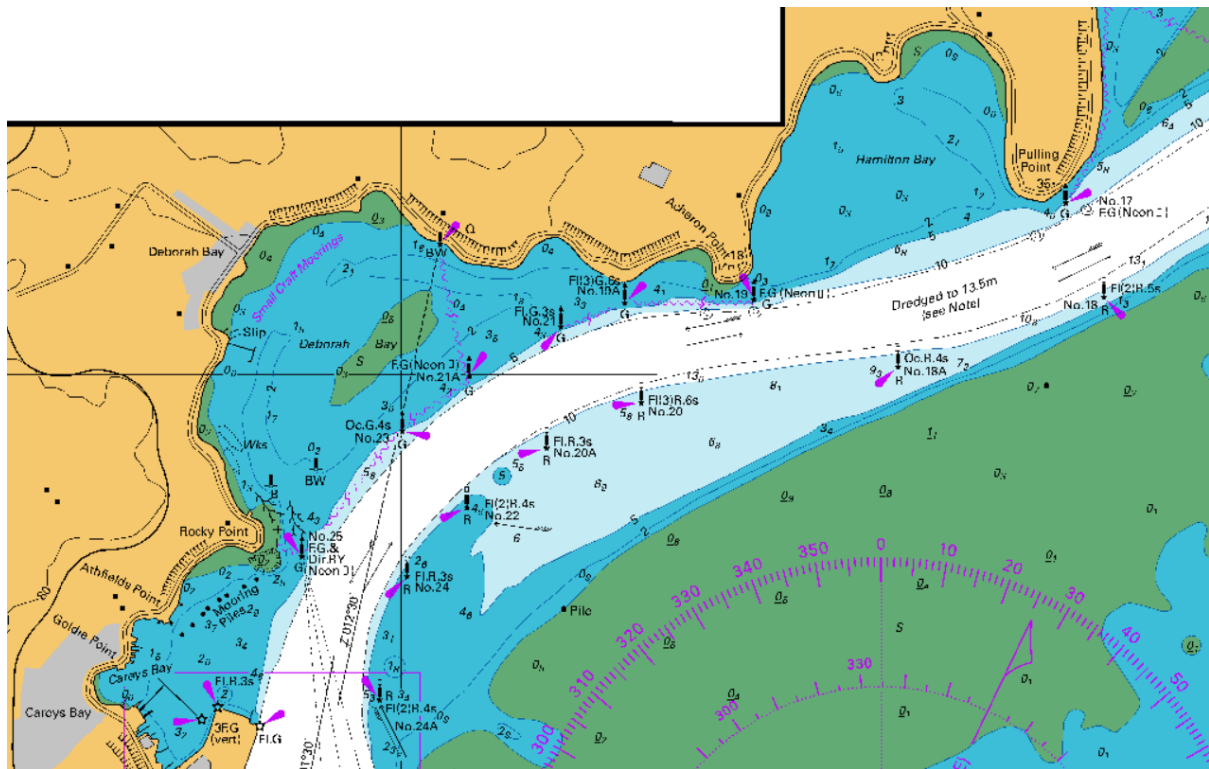
OYC offers comfortable club type amenities – showers, toilets, clubroom with a bar, but is not what you would call a marina. There is mains power and water on the pontoons. The club has good haul out facilities (cradles) for DIY maintenance/repairs, but are quite often busy. Fairly handy for the town.





## Anchorage

In addition to the already mentioned facilities, good anchorage is available in some of the bays in the harbour, Portobello Bay, Hamilton Bay, Careys Bay and Deborah Bay are all commonly used, and generally have decent holding in mud. Pick your bay and spot to suit the weather and your inclination. However, remember that once outside the main channel, the harbour is generally quite shallow



Hamilton Bay to Careys Bay

### Hamilton Bay

Hamilton Bay provides quite good shelter inside the bay, but is open to the south. The entrance channel to the bay is close to Pulling Point, and is very narrow, so proceed into this anchorage with caution using your depth sounder. It might also pay to quarter the inner bay checking depths to sort out the best place to lay the anchor. Bear in mind that if you drag in here, you have very little time to deal with it before running aground. There are a couple of local moorings in the bay.

### Deborah Bay

Deborah Bay is quite shallow – though slightly deeper than the chart suggests - and is largely taken up by local moorings. The best place to anchor here is off the southern entrance, between the two unlit piles marking the safe channel. Fairly open, but good holding. Be aware not to anchor too close to the visitors mooring. With a bit of care it should be possible to find a spot to anchor in enough water just through the northern entrance channel, better shelter but watch out for the sandbanks on the seaward side of the mooring field, and don't get too close to existing moorings.

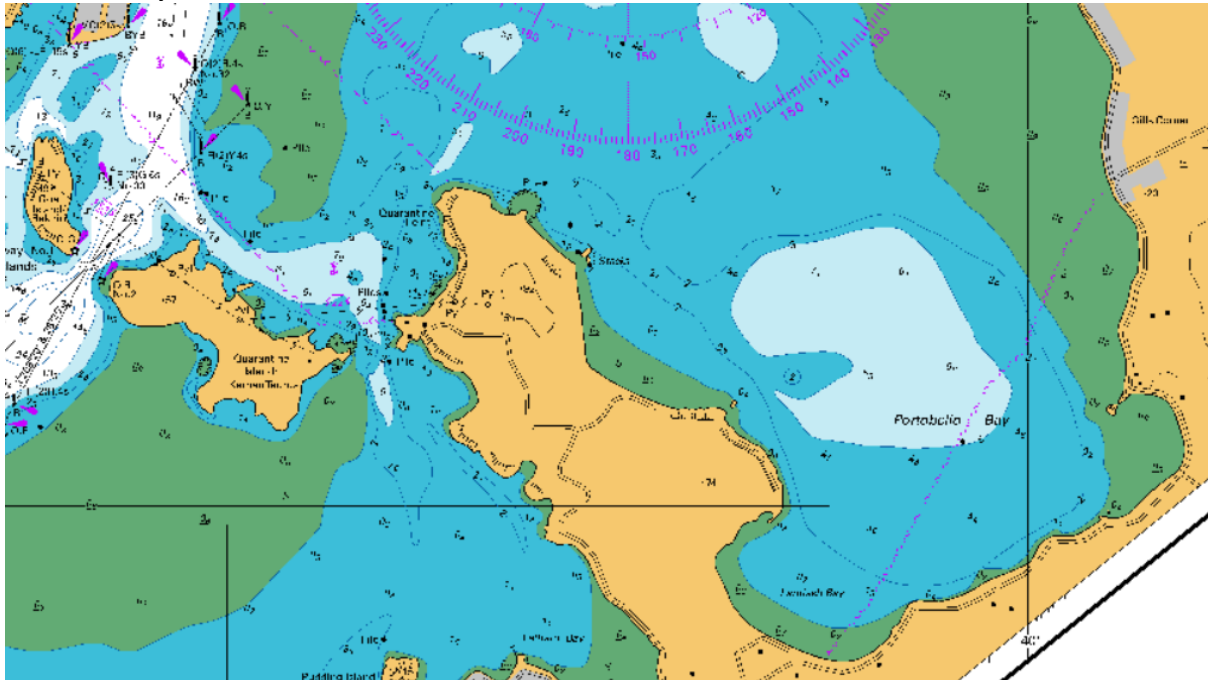
### Careys Bay

Being convenient and easy to access, Careys Bay is well patronised (avoid obstructing access to and from the Fisherman's Wharf). Holding here is variable in places though, and it pays to lay out some extra chain, and pull back hard on the anchor. If you can get it to stick, you should be good. It can be quite bumpy in this anchorage, with fishing boats and the harbour pilots going in and out at all hours. Most visitors anchor off the old piles, which is a bit open to the northeast, but generally fine. There is better all round shelter closer in off the hotel, but space here is more restricted.

### Back Beach Bay

Back Beach Bay, just past the end of the port warehouses, is fairly well sheltered from most directions, though can catch a bit of a southerly from the channel through the Halfway Islands. The bay is full of local moorings, but it ought to be possible to find a spot to anchor just outside the mooring field. The south end of the bay does tend to shallow up. A very friendly local yacht club, Port Chalmers Yacht Club, has its clubhouse beside the jetty/pontoon at the north end of the bay. Depending on your vessel's draft, accessing the pontoons might be problematic at low tide.

### Portobello Bay



Portobello Bay is a large open expanse of water, with adequate depth to give plenty of scope in choosing a spot to anchor. Holding is generally good. Although largely open to the north, the bay gives excellent shelter in a southerly, pick your spot to suit the conditions on the day. Portobello Bay is one of the more pleasant anchorages in the harbour. There are some local moorings in the bay. The approach to the bay is straightforward, the channel immediately north of Quarantine Island is marked by red and green marker buoys. At the last red marker, turn to port and head up past Quarantine Point. There is a small shallow patch off the point, which ought not to be an issue. Once clear of Quarantine Point, keep a look out to starboard for a pile marker, and when this is clear, turn to starboard, and proceed into the bay keeping to the north of the pile. There is a shallower patch some distance past the pile, but it has enough depth that it should not be of concern to cruising yachts. Suitable for larger vessels.

Latham Bay to the south is attractive, but more restricted with regard scope and depth.

## Fuel, LPG, and Water

- Diesel On the inside of the Fisherman's Wharf in Careys Bay. EFTPOS. This is the only waterside pump in the harbour
- Petrol Garages in Port Chalmers and Dunedin.
- LPG Bottle swaps at most garages, or refills at LPG suppliers on Hillside Road in South Dunedin for a much better price.
- Water Deborah Bay Jetty, Fisherman's Wharf in Careys Bay, Otago Yacht Club. Good water, BYO hose and fittings for the tap.

## Repairs and Maintenance

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Otago Yacht Club           | Cradle haul out, DIY repairs (40ft boat, 12 tonnes max haul out) |
| Careys Bay Marine Services | Cradle haul out, full range of shipwright and engineering work   |

There is a drying grid located immediately north of the last boatshed in Careys Bay. Although not large, it can accommodate yachts up to 13m long and 2m draft if the tides are favourable. The water approaching the grid is deep. Fresh water is piped to the walkway. Can be a bit affected by the wash from boats leaving the Fisherman's Wharf, and sometimes awkward getting off if an easterly breeze springs up, but still a very useful facility. Contact Otago Yacht Club prior to use, small charge applied.

Otago Yacht Club in Dunedin has a derrick for lifting out masts and a dedicated work berth.

A full range of engineering services can be found in Dunedin, and a yacht chandler. Although there are no yacht riggers in the area, the yacht chandler can swage wire rope, and there are a couple of wire rope suppliers who may also be able to help. There is no yacht sailmaker, but local canvas businesses may be able to help with repairs if needed.

## Public Transport

There is good regular public transport (bus service) on both sides of the harbour, from Careys Bay Hotel and from Portobello, into Dunedin. There is also a ferry service across the harbour between Back Beach Bay and Portobello, which is well worth the trip in itself – operated by Port to Port Cruises, timetable and bookings online at [porttoport.co.nz](http://porttoport.co.nz).

## Amenities

Port Chalmers is an interesting mix of a place, commercial port/alternative/arty, with a varied assortment of shops, pubs, cafes, etc. There is a small supermarket with good variety of produce, certainly enough to top up on board stores. Apart from the pubs (a couple of which are quite popular), there isn't a lot of night life.

Dunedin, as a university town, is fairly cosmopolitan, with all the amenities expected of a small city. Once in the city centre, most of it is easily accessible on foot. The supermarkets are large, and there are all manner of other shops and stores. There is a wide range of cafes, pubs and eateries, from the more sophisticated, to those catering largely for students – some of which are highly recommended for the quality of the meals and value for money. As might be expected, there is a lot more to do in Dunedin of an evening.

## The Catlins Coast to Stewart Island

From Otago Harbour, the route to Stewart Island runs for a large part of its way along the Catlins coast. This is a wild stretch of shoreline, and well worth exploring. As with most of the waters included in this guide, it is an area for those who know what they are doing, and have a well found boat. Few yachts visit here, due to its reputation for being inhospitable. Indeed it can be so, but in reasonable conditions, it is quite spectacular. While the coast is generously studded with rocks and reefs, these are largely close to the shore, and there are no offshore dangers. Do take note though, that the track taken by commercial vessels to and from Bluff lies reasonably close to the coast in the vicinity of Slope Point, up to the Tautuku Peninsula.

The main current off this coast runs in a northerly direction, however, between Irihuka/Long Point and The Brothers there can be a contrary stream running in the opposite direction, close in to the coast, which might be useful if sailing in light conditions. In practice, the winds, whether northerly or southerly, tend to blow parallel to the coast, and often pick up as a sea breeze with an easterly component in the afternoon. Unlike many parts of the east coast, this stretch is well served with lights for travel at night. If heading direct to Stewart Island, getting to Nugget Point late evening means you will be arriving at the approaches to Abbot Passage in daylight.

Travelling south, it is as well to wait in Otago Harbour for a spell of northerly / easterly weather to settle in. Ideally, you are looking for a weather window of at least 48 hours to make the trip to Stewart Island, even a fairly moderate southerly can throw up some large and uncomfortable seas – remember that you are well down into the Roaring Forties now. Slope Point is the southmost point of mainland New Zealand. There is nothing much between this stretch of coast and Antarctica, and good weather windows have a habit of shrinking without much warning. If the wind is from the northwest, close inshore you may find smooth seas.

A word of caution regarding Cape Saunders on the Otago Peninsula, there is often a large field of cray pots here, not always conspicuous, and extending well offshore. Give the cape a wide berth. Cray pots aside, it is still worth giving the cape a wide berth anyway for a more quiet sail

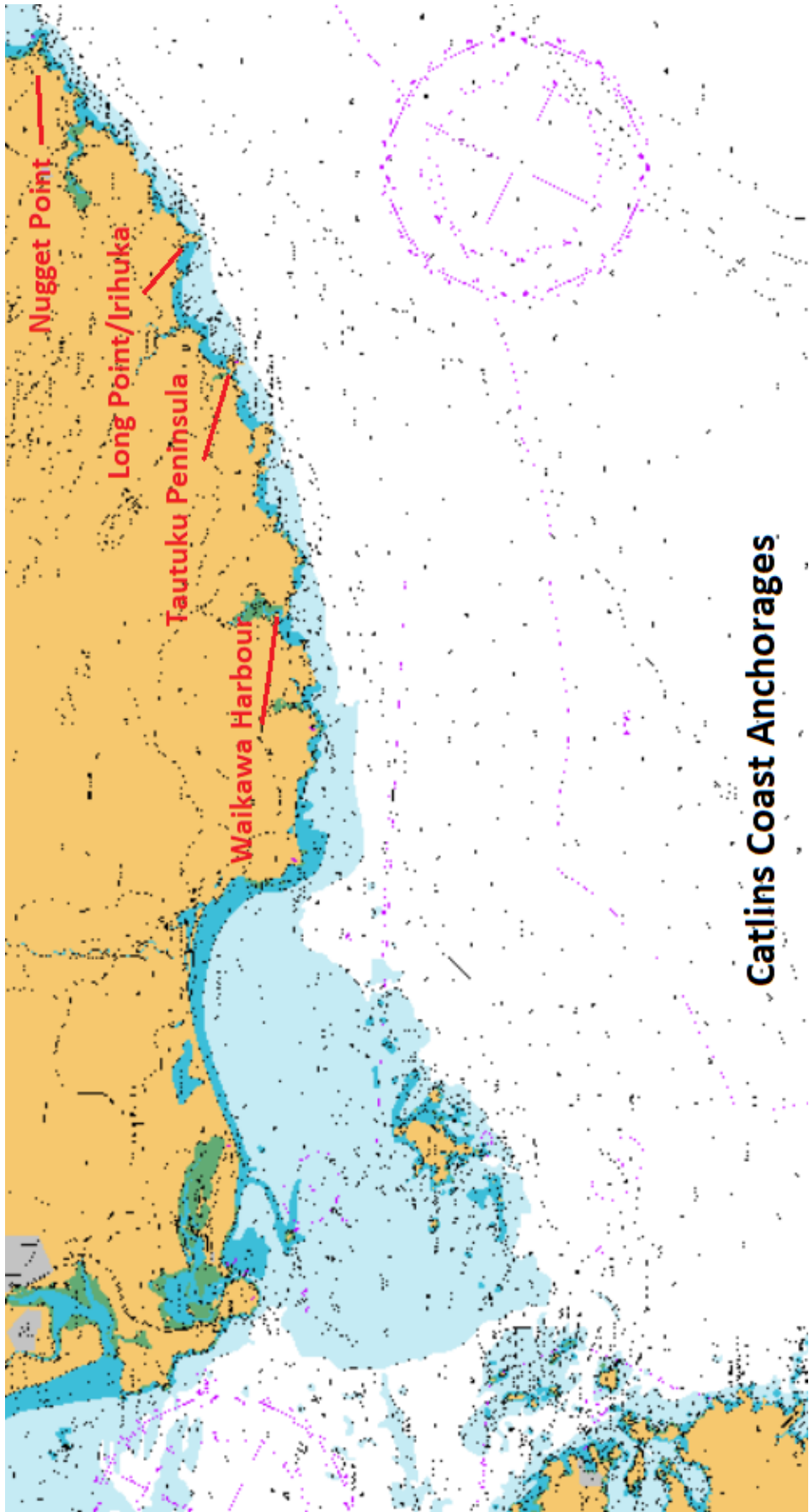
Heading north, if possible wait until a southerly front has passed through, give it a wee bit of time for the sea to start to die down, then run up the coast to Otago Harbour on the back end of the southerly flow.

The Foveaux Strait has a well deserved reputation for nasty seas, strong currents, and hazards. The direct route to Paterson Inlet will keep you clear of the worst, though it does take one fairly close to Ruapuke Island and its associated reefs.

In reality, there is only a single fully sheltered all weather anchorage on the coast between Otago Harbour and Slope Point. However, the local fishing boats always seems to be able to find shelter when needed, it is just a matter of knowing where to go, and getting there in plenty of time. For the purposes of this guide, only the main anchorages are described, however, with judicious use of the echo sounder and charts, there are many more possible. With the exception of the Waikawa River, it is best to avoid trying to enter any of the rivers on this coast. They have dangerous bars which are constantly shifting. Anchorages are described north to south.

### Charts

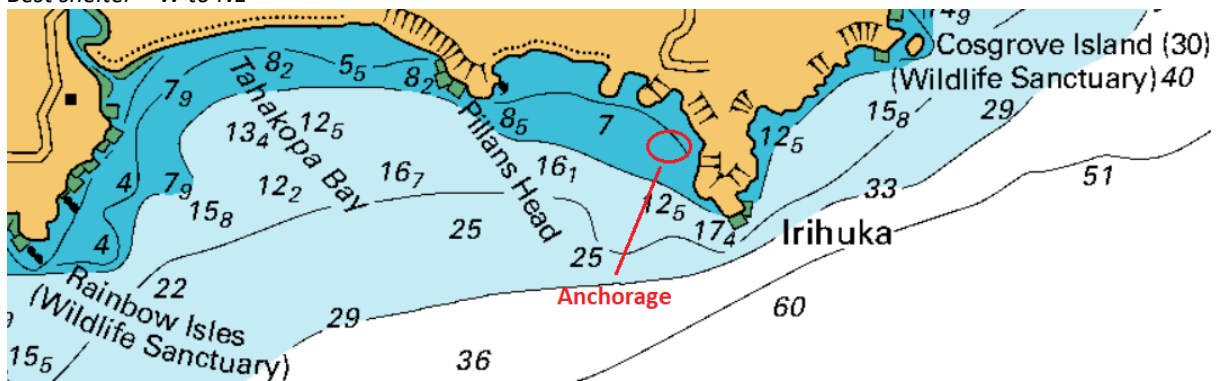
NZ66	Katiki Point to Nugget Point
NZ68	Nugget Point to Rarotoka Island (Centre Island)
NZ681	Approaches to Bluff and Riverton



## Catlins Coast Anchorage

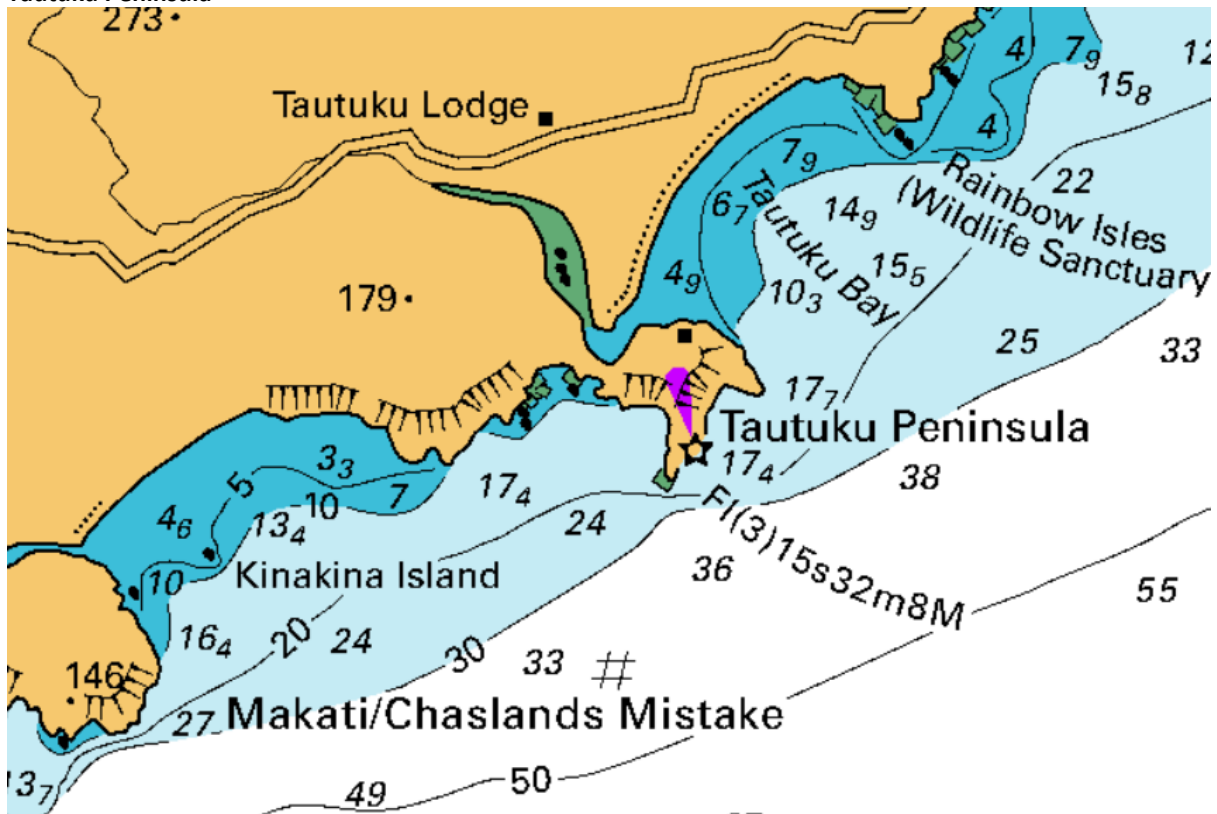


**Irihuka / Long Point**  
 Best shelter – W to NE



Possibly the best northerly shelter on the coast, this is a pleasant spot. There are no hidden dangers on the approach, and the holding is good. There is a crib on the beach below the headland, and a set of converted containers belonging to the Yellow Eyed Penguin Trust further round into the bay. Anchor in front of the crib, NOT the containers. If there is a southerly swell the anchorage can be uncomfortable. It is untenable if the wind picks up and goes south of east. Fishing boats sometimes head behind Cosgrove Island if this happens.

**Tautuku Peninsula**



The light on the Tautuku Peninsula always seems quite friendly, possibly because it is such a good marker of progress up or down the coast.

The stretch of water between Kinakina Island and Chaslands Mistake, while looking promising as an anchorage, has little to recommend it unless the wind is from the west. Good holding, but roly.

It is probably better to regard the next two anchorages on the Tautuku Peninsula as fair weather anchorages only. Both are frequently affected by swell.



**Tautuku Peninsula North Side**

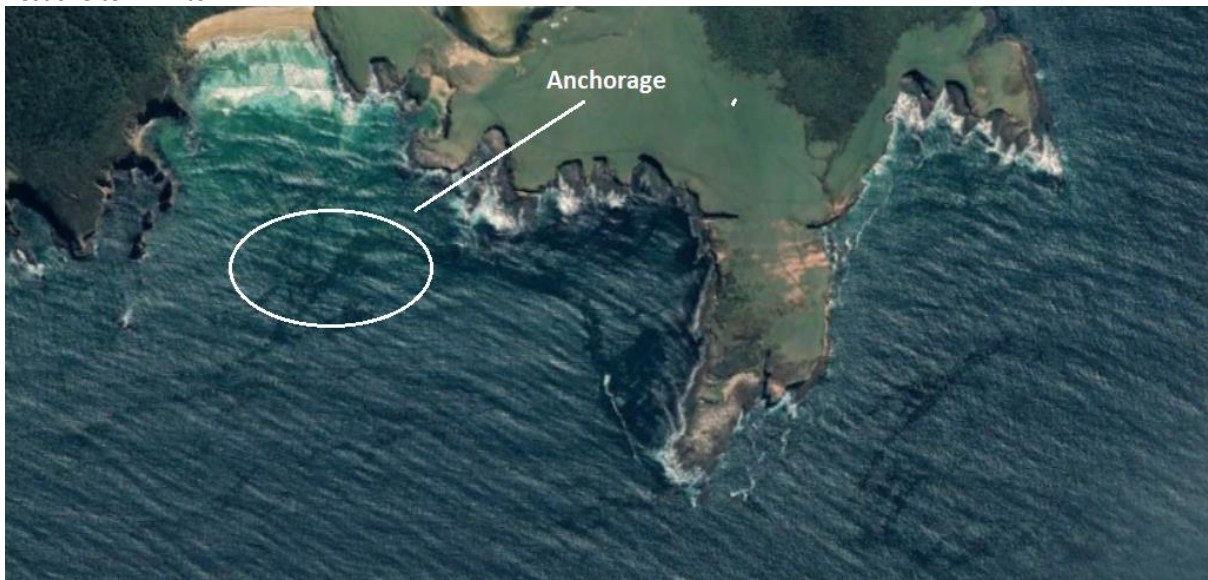
*Best shelter SW to NW*



This bay provides reasonable shelter in south to westerly conditions, provided the southerly swell is not too large. A heavy southerly swell breaks outside the anchorage, and makes it dangerous. Anchor further out than the eastmost cribs on the beach, outside the surf break, a couple of hundred metres offshore, in sand.

**Tautuku Peninsula South Side**

*Best shelter – W to E*

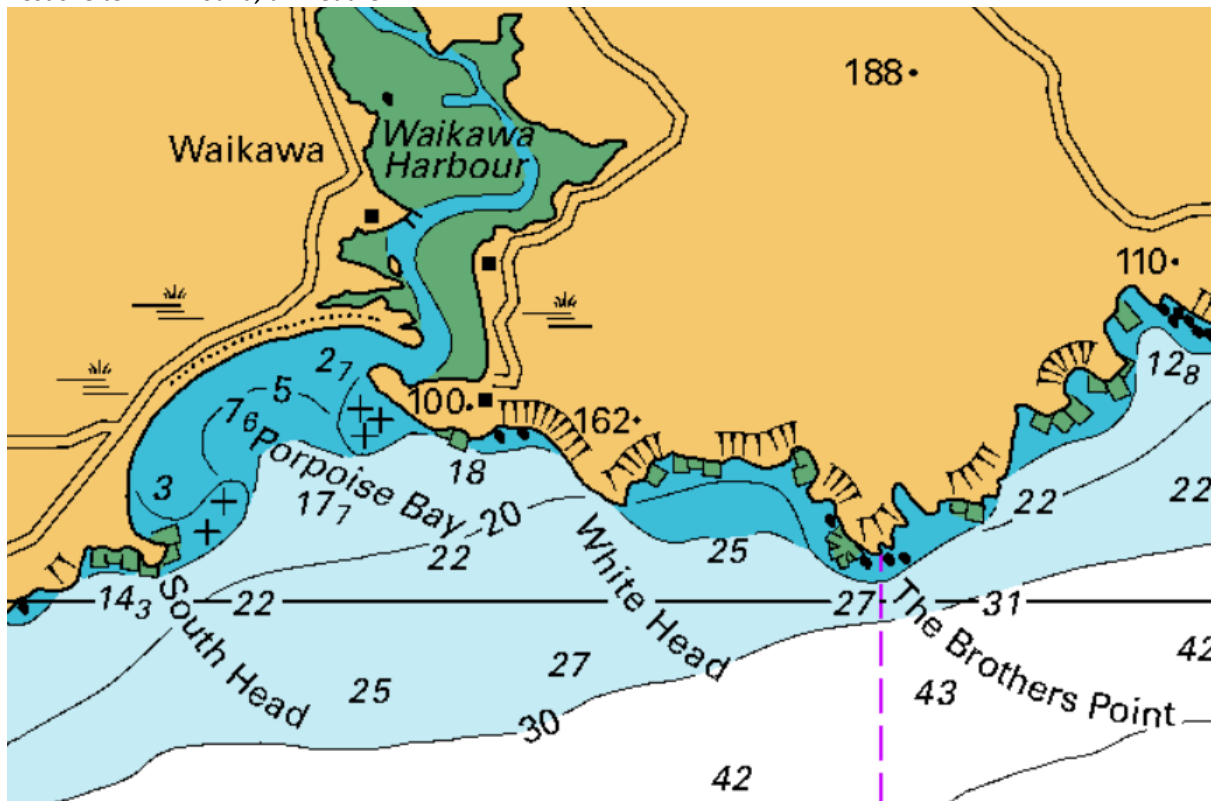


Gives fair shelter in moderate northerly to easterly weather, although some caution is required entering the anchorage on account of submerged rocks relatively close to the shore. The Google Earth image shows the location of these quite well. Although safer than Roaring Bay, this is another anchorage not to be caught in by an unexpected southerly change.



## Waikawa Harbour

*Best shelter – All round, all weather*



This is the only all weather shelter on the Catlins coast. However, in saying that, the entrance into the river in Porpoise Bay is wide open to the south, and can be dangerous in anything over fairly moderate southerly or easterly conditions. If you want to use the harbour to escape a southerly change, get in before the weather arrives.

Approach the mouth of the river so as to clear the rocks just to the south of the headland. These break in easterly or southerly conditions. On entering the river, keep the headland close to starboard. There is a rock shelf about 10m wide running parallel with the base of the cliff into the harbour proper. This is submerged at about half-tide. The channel alongside the shelf is clear and has deep water. Proceed along the channel parallel to the shore to the first shingle beach to starboard past the shelf, where good anchorage can be found. It would be advisable to quarter the area with the depth sounder before dropping the anchor in order to make sure there is swinging room clear of the sandbanks. The anchorage is affected by the tidal flows.

The anchorage is suitable for relatively deep draft vessels, but do not proceed further up-river as the channel is subject to change, and shallows. The Google Earth image below shows the entrance to the harbour at low water, and gives a reasonably good indication of wave patterns at the mouth of the river, and where the rock shelf lies.



There is more room in the anchorage than either the chart or satellite illustrations suggest. A thoroughly lovely wee spot, visit the fossilised trees on the beach adjacent in Curio Bay.

**Check the sea conditions outside the harbour before leaving, especially if there has been a strong southerly or easterly blowing. The swell can persist for a day or two, and the surf can break across the mouth of the river.**

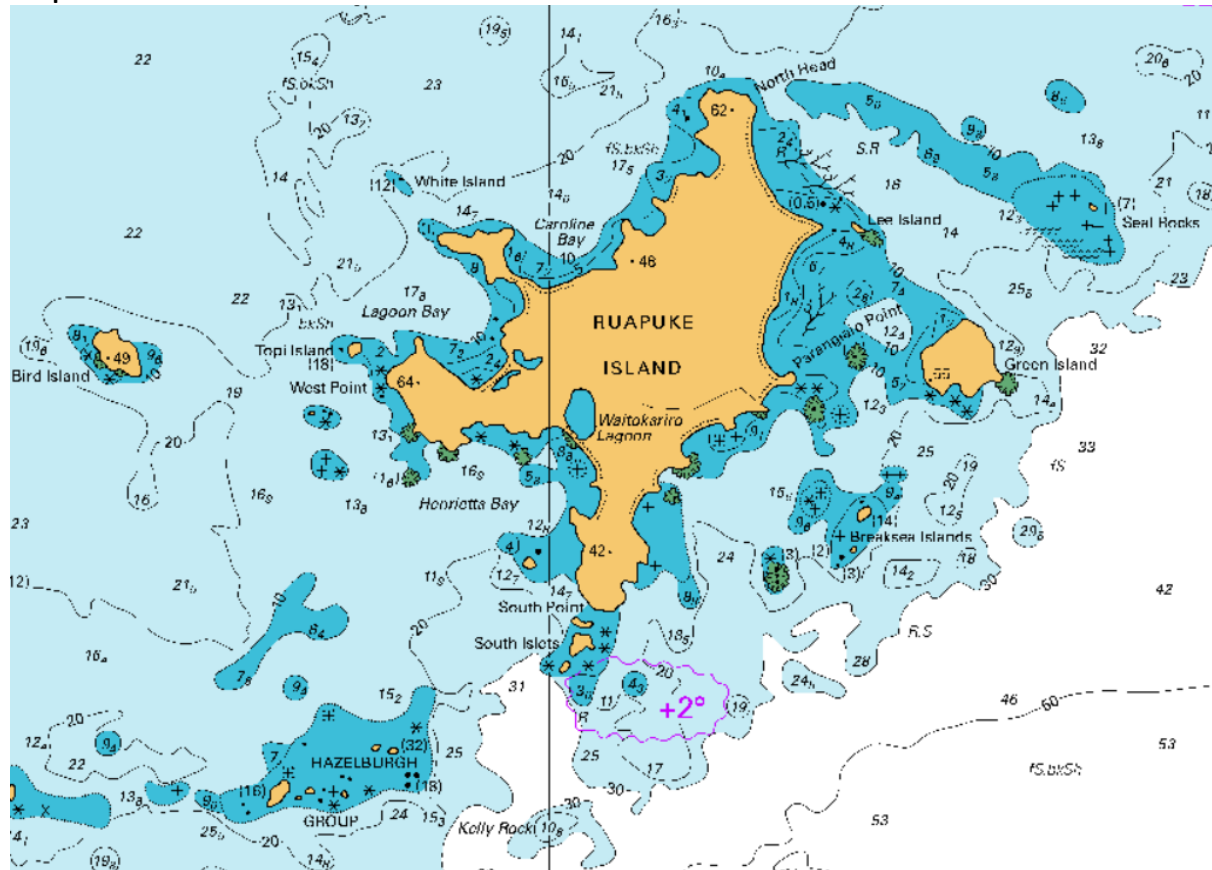
On leaving the Catlins coast heading directly for Abbott Passage off Stewart Island, the track runs clear of any dangers, but tidal flows through the Foveaux Strait are strong. Once off Ruapuke Island, care needs to be taken to maintain a safe distance from the numerous reefs and rocks just to the north of the track. These are identified on the chart, and will either break or cause a surge. When approaching Bench Island, give Kanetoetoe Island in the Fancy Group plenty of clearance, don't be tempted to cut the corner, the shallower water off its southern point can surge quite heavily in a southerly swell. Aim for The Haystacks rather than Bench Island itself. Abbott Passage gives a clear and safe approach to Paterson Inlet and Oban.

If making the crossing in the hours of darkness, the lights of Slope Point, Waipapa Point, and Bushy Point on the mainland coast are visible in reasonable conditions.

Keep in mind that between Slope Point and Stewart Island you will be crossing the tracks taken by large commercial vessels in and out of Bluff. These routes will be obvious from a quick look at the chart. There are also many smaller fishing vessels operating in this stretch of water, so watch for these, and small marker buoys between Green Island and Bench Island. Remember, not all fishing vessels will transmit on AIS.

Taking the direct route from the Catlins coast to Port Pegasus or Port Adventure keeps one clear of any dangers until the coast of Stewart Island is reached just off Port Adventure.

## Ruapuke Island



Strictly speaking, Ruapuke Island would be more accurately included in the section of the guide covering Stewart Island itself. However, being on the route to the island, it is included here for convenience. It is an area seldom visited by cruising boats.

In poor conditions, give Ruapuke and the surrounding area plenty of clearance. Being low lying, in heavy rain it can be quite difficult to make out much detail visually.

The waters around Ruapuke and Green Islands are liberally studded with rocks and reefs. However, it is an area well worth a visit in settled conditions. Be aware of the strong tidal streams around this area. Anchorages can be found around Ruapuke. Holding in Caroline and Lagoon Bays on the west coast is variable. There is a small bay in the southeast corner of Henrietta Bay which provides better shelter and holding, but the ground is reputed to be foul, and it may be best to buoy the anchor. There are a couple of fishermen's moorings in this bay, and some cribs just back from the beach. In settled moderate westerly conditions, it is possible to anchor between Ruapuke and Green Island, just south of Lee Island, but caution needs to be exercised because of the varied nature of the seabed.

In settled weather, if time is on your side, a nice excursion is to head off through the Titi / Muttonbird Islands instead of the normal route to Paterson Inlet or Oban. Although there are many reefs and shallows around here, they are well charted, and there is good deep water between them – albeit with fairly strong current flow. Keep a lookout for cray pot buoys. Cruising boats don't seem to visit this area, but there is no real reason not to do so.

## Stewart Island / Rakiura

### Charts

NZ69	Stewart Island
NZ6825	Paterson Inlet
NZ6912	Plans in Stewart Island

Once off Ruapuke Island, you would be forgiven for thinking that the trip is almost over. However, the stretch from Ruapuke to Stewart Island always seems to take forever. More often than not, all you can make out is a vague outline of Mt Anglem, and further south, the hills around Paterson Inlet, and they never seem to get any closer. Unless going directly to points south of Paterson Inlet, you ought to be heading for Bench Island, which, being low lying, can be difficult to see in moderate visibility until 5 or 6 miles out. As mentioned before, don't cut the corner at the bottom of the Fancy group of islands, head for The Haystacks off Bench Island until there is a clear run into the Abbot Passage to take you past Bench Island.

There are Coastguard units based in Bluff and Riverton on the south coast of the mainland. Both have fast rescue vessels.

### Oban

This very pleasant small town centred on Half Moon Bay is the only populated part of Stewart Island and as such deserves its own mention. The town supports the local aquaculture industry, fishing, and tourism. It has all the amenities you would expect of a tourist destination, albeit in a more limited way. Oban can become quite busy in the tourist season, visitors outnumbering locals. The visitor centre on the pier, and the local DoC office are good places to head for some inspiration and advice on what to see and do. You should not come for a prolonged stay on Stewart Island without visiting Oban.

Medical facilities on the island are limited, being a nurse led clinic with limited opening hours.

As relating directly to visiting sailors, the following may be of use

Fuel	Diesel is available on the pier, petrol and LPG a short walk away in the town at the garage. Contact Pete Ross Automotive (03 219 1266) Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm, Sat 10am to noon to arrange for diesel. Do not call outside these hours please.
Water	Available on the pier.
Food supplies	Four Square store a very short walk from the pier. Good range. Open 7 days.
Repair facilities	Slipway with a cradle for haul-out located just along the beach from the pier. Mechanical and shipwright repairs and DIY. Waterblaster. The cradle normally pulls fishing boats, but can handle yachts provided they can sit comfortably on their keel. Contact Steve (021 204 6125). Automotive engineer a short walk away from the pier in town. Does marine engine repairs, carries all the usual products. Pete Ross Automotive – see above for contact details.
Moorings	Casual moorings are available, donation to the school for their use. Play the game here, some people seem to think that \$10 for a 5 day stay is fair payment, it isn't, so be reasonable (or better still, generous!!). Contact Luke (027 275 7015)
Marine surveys	Holt Marine Surveys based in Oban. The only qualified marine surveyor in the bottom half of the South Island. Very handy with a slipway in Oban, takes a very practical approach. Contact Rowan (021 186 5227).
Waste Disposal	Limited facilities, please take your rubbish and recycling with you when you leave.

There is a regular fast ferry service connecting Oban and Bluff, and a scheduled air service from Invercargill Airport. Check the Stewart Island Promotions Board website ([stewartisland.co.nz](http://stewartisland.co.nz)) for details.

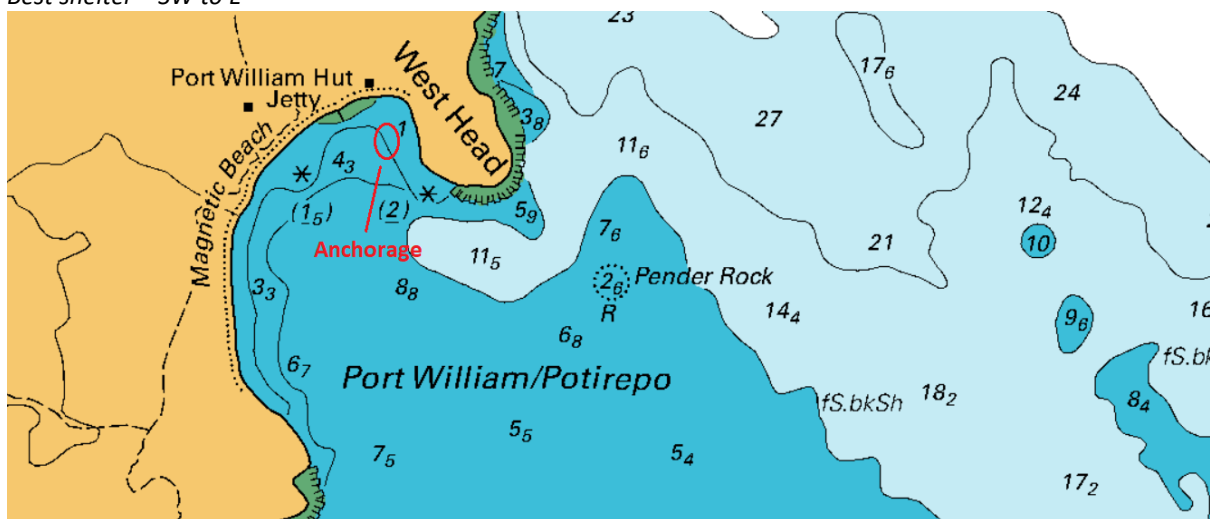
## Saddle Point to Half Moon Bay

This section of the guide covers the upper east coast of Stewart Island, from Saddle Point in the north, down to Half Moon Bay. Between Saddle Point and West Head there is little to attract a cruising sailor other than the scenery, there being no anchorages to speak of. The coast here is largely low lying, with the bush coming right down to some attractive sandy beaches. It is relatively sheltered from the south through to northwest. Inside West Head is the excellent anchorage of Port William, south of which the coast becomes more hospitable.

Any hazards on this stretch of coast are offshore around the Titi / Muttonbird Islands, and are clearly marked on the charts

### Port William

*Best shelter – SW to E*



A very pleasant anchorage, a bit open to the southeast round to south, but with good shelter from every other direction. There is a substantial jetty with a decent depth of water alongside at high tide, which is used by commercial boats on a regular basis. Best anchorage is to the east of the jetty. DoC have a hut and a shelter close to the beach, servicing the Rakiura Track.

No real dangers in the approach, but keep a good lookout for cray pots. Once in the bay, take care not to venture much to the west of the jetty – this part of the bay has dangerous rocks scattered about more widely than the chart indicates.

Anchor between the jetty and West Head, sandy bottom with a very thin skim of grass. Good holding in about 4m at low water. Going into the northeast corner of the bay gives some shelter from the south, especially if you are close in to the shore – takes the edge off any roll coming in. If you have to anchor to the west of the jetty, stay well offshore to clear the rocks.

This is a popular spot with the local fishing boats, so it pays to get in and anchored early to get the best position.

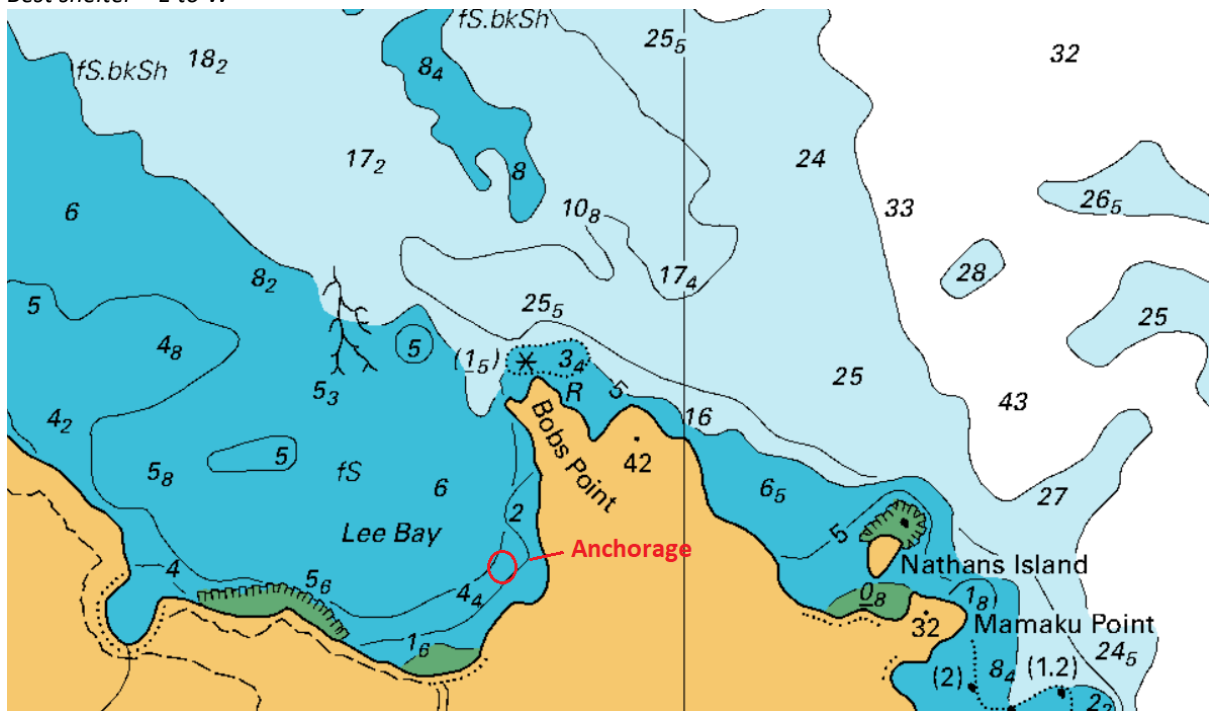
### Wooding Bay

While on the chart Wooding Bay, to the south of Port William, looks as if it would give shelter to the south and west, in fact, the large open valley coming down into the bay from the southwest acts as a wind funnel.

Although no sea builds up, a better option in a southerly would be to head further south to Lee Bay or points beyond.

### Lee Bay

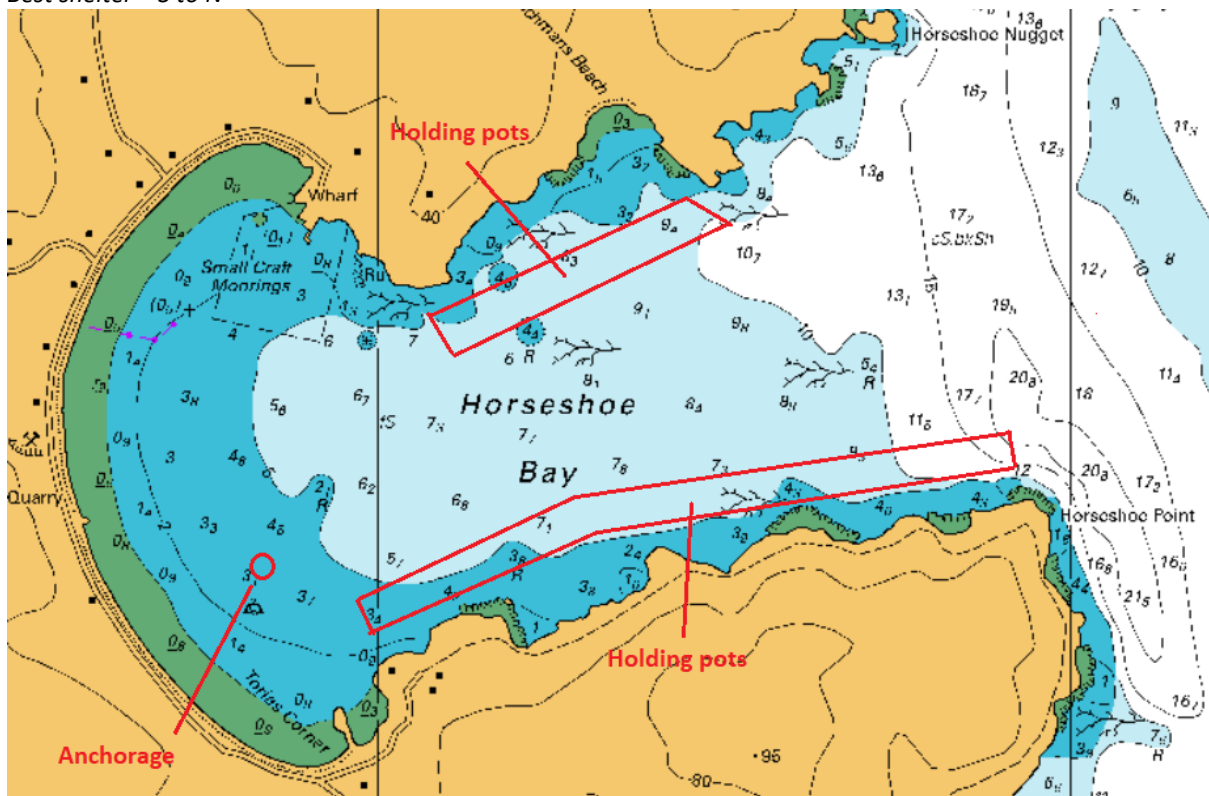
Best shelter – E to W



Offers reasonably good protection when the wind is from east through south to west. Good holding on a sandy bottom just inside a small cove beside a predator proof fence close to the sandy beach at the head of the bay. Be wary of cray pots off the point when coming into the bay. Other than that, no hazards and plenty of depth. Anchor in 4 to 5m at LW.



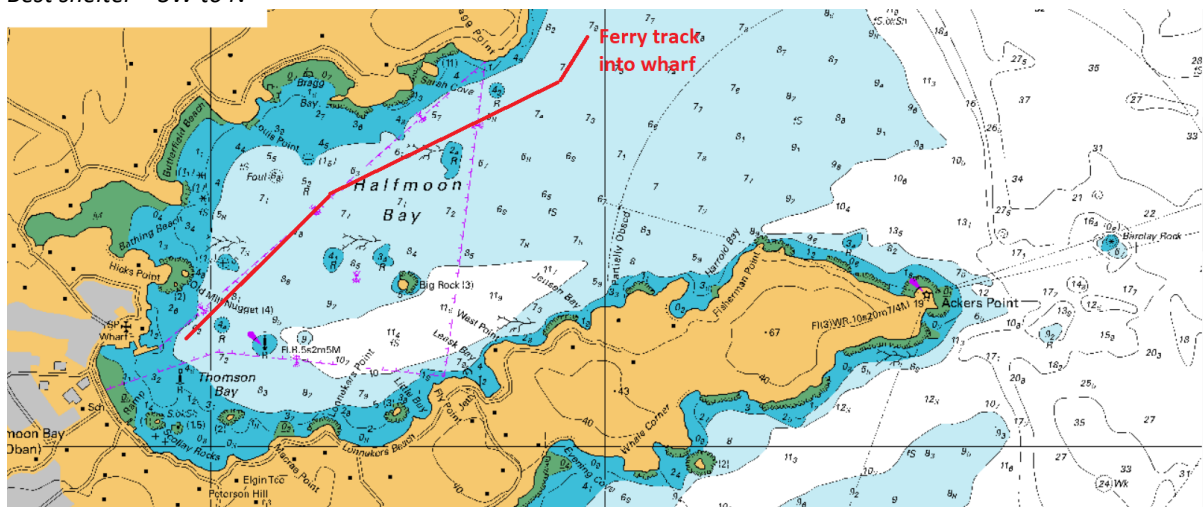
**Horseshoe Bay**  
*Best shelter – S to N*



An attractive setting, although quite open and prone to being roly. There are some local moorings in the bay, but they are fairly well spaced. There is plenty of room in front of a couple of green roofed houses towards the southern end of the bay, in about 4m of water. Watch for small local mooring buoys. Really only for settled conditions. The jetty at the northern end of the bay is for local fishing boats. Take care entering Horseshoe Bay, as there are many holding pots laid off the shores. Give the points plenty of clearance.

## Half Moon Bay

Best shelter – SW to N



The township of Oban is centred on this open and, to be honest, for Stewart Island, not terribly attractive bay. The bay is busy with commercial traffic - the ferry to Bluff and many other boats use the pier. Although cruising boats do anchor here, there are so many local moorings that it might be difficult to find a decent spot for an overnight stop. You are pretty much restricted to the north side of the bay, keeping clear of the ferry track. Do not try to navigate through the main mooring field, some of the mooring buoys have ropes strung between them to catch the unwary.

There are moorings available here for rent, contact details under the previous heading 'Oban'.

There are assorted rocks and obstructions in the middle of the bay on the approach to the pier. There is deep water on either side, and between the hazards. This is all well charted. The ferry uses the channel on the north side of the obstructions, and comes round the point relatively quickly.

There is a prohibited anchoring zone covering much of the bay, check the chart for details.

The pier is large. Fishing boats and the ferry tend to use the longer outer side, charter boats and smaller vessels the shorter inner side. If going alongside, try to stay off the outer side, and tie up where possible, then go and have a word with the staff in the pier office. As might be expected, there is a good depth of water alongside the pier. The diesel fuel point is on the end of the wharf, hose reaches either side.

Oban in itself is a pleasant small town, with very friendly and helpful locals, but the bay is open and roly, and has little to recommend it other than as a convenient spot to refuel and restock supplies. If you want to stop and have a decent look around, and sample the hospitality – which you should – then better to anchor off Golden Bay in Paterson Inlet and walk the short distance over the hill.

This all seems to show up Half Moon Bay in a fairly negative light, but let's put this into perspective, and remember that the centre of population is being compared with the rest of this superlative cruising ground. Elsewhere in the country, the bay would be deemed very acceptable.



## Paterson Inlet

Handy to the amenities of Oban, this large, almost totally enclosed stretch of water tends to be where most cruisers head on arrival at Stewart Island from the Catlins coast. The inlet boasts anchorages to suit all shapes and sizes of boats, and even in the worst of conditions, safe anchorage will be found in one of the many bays and coves around it. Ulva Island, in the middle of the inlet, is an attractive and popular nature reserve. There is a marine reserve (no fishing zone) off Ulva Island – check the chart for details.

Although the main part of the inlet is fairly open to the winds, especially a westerly, it is a great place to go day sailing. Even on a windy day, when a wee sea can build, there is none of that nasty swell you find outside. The water is generally deep, and most obstructions are marked with poles. There are many attractive and quiet spots to drop the anchor for lunch.

Being so user friendly, Paterson Inlet does tend to get busier than other parts of the island. Around Xmas and New Year many locals (from as far away as Dunedin) arrive to spend their holiday in their boat. Some of the anchorages can get a bit boisterous at this time, but there are enough alternatives to always be able to find some tranquillity. You will also find water taxis and the like buzzing about, but they tend to have predetermined routes.

The approaches and entrance to Paterson Inlet are quite straightforward, there are many reefs and rocky islands close at hand, but all are well marked on the chart, and have deep clear water around them. Bench Island and the Muttonbird Islands do a fairly good job of breaking up the swell. If approaching at night, while the entrance itself is unlit, there is a light on Ackers Point outside Half Moon Bay which will give a good pointer.

Anchorage in this area are described from the entrance, going clockwise around the inlet. Refer to the LINZ Paterson Inlet chart for locations. While not every single possible spot is noted, omission does not mean an anchorage is poor. Check the chart and make your choice.

## Papatiki Bay

*Best shelter – NE to SW*



A small bay on the Bradshaw Peninsula, just to the east of Pipi Rocks. A lovely spot. There is room for one, possibly two boats to swing at anchor here. Excellent holding with a sandy bottom in the middle of the bay, in about 3.5m at LW. The bay is out of the roll coming in through the entrance to Paterson Inlet. Ulva Island gives it reasonable shelter from a westerly, while Pipi Rocks does a good job of stopping the seas coming through from the south of Ulva Island. There is excellent protection from the north, through east to southwest. Used by fishing boats.

Good phone coverage.

Heading south between Ulva Island and the Bradshaw Peninsula, stay well to the Ulva Island side of the channel to keep clear of the reef at Pipi Rocks. The water is deep to the shore on the Ulva Island side. There can be quite a current running through the channel. Coming in from the west, to the south of Ulva Island, there are no unmarked dangers.

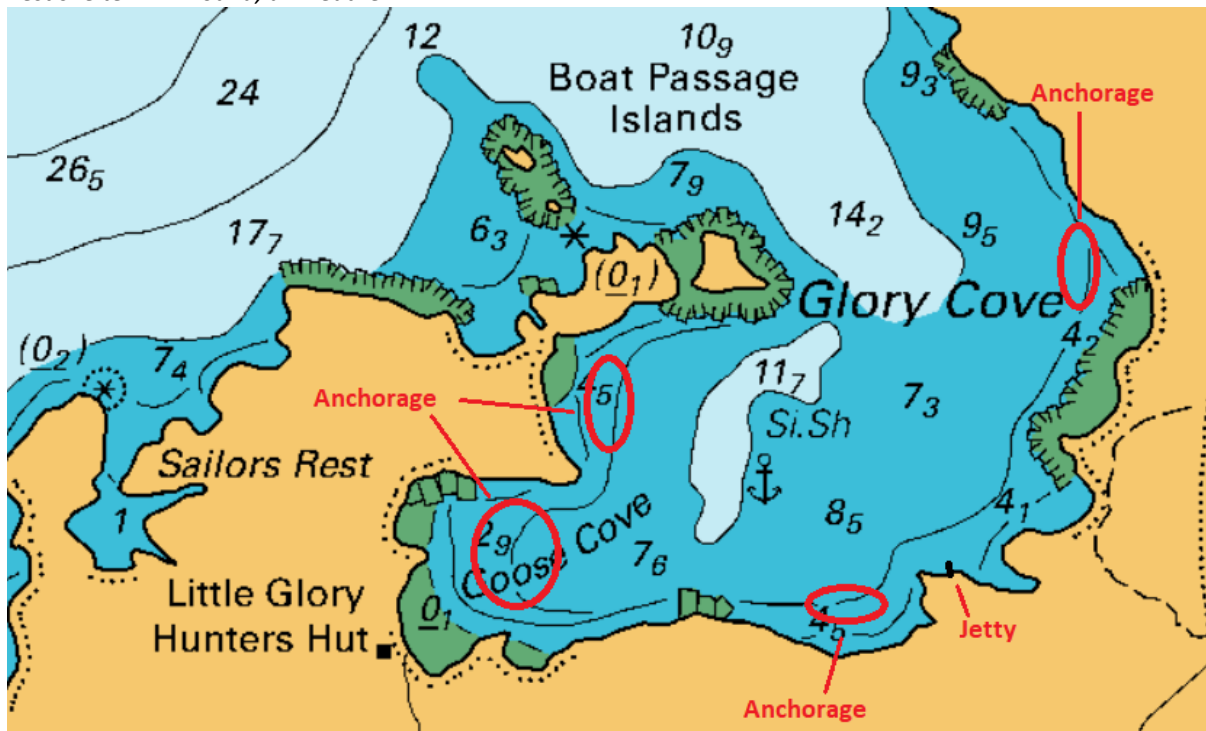
There are often seals on the beach at The Neck, and in fair weather you can anchor off and watch them. It is easy to go ashore at this point, but just keep a prudent watch on and distance from the wildlife. This isn't a good place to overnight

If making the transit of this water in strong westerly, be aware that this wind blows unimpeded across Paterson Inlet for some distance here, but the passage by Ulva Island is usually pretty sheltered. A moderate sea can build, but with no swell, it is of no great issue to cruising boats.

Big Glory Bay is literally filled with aquaculture installations, and best left to the commercial operators. It is the only place in the Inlet where cruising is constrained, so ought not to be viewed as a problem. The locals have to generate an income using what resources they have, and concentrating in one bay seems to be quite a pragmatic approach.

## Glory Cove

Best shelter – All round, all weather



With easy access, no hidden dangers, and plenty of room, Glory Cove (known locally as “Little Glory”) is probably the all weather anchorage of choice in Paterson Inlet. In bad weather in summer it is not uncommon to see five or six boats dotted about the cove. It is also a favoured location for local fishermen to find shelter. While the cove lacks the safe enclosed feel of some of the other all weather anchorages in Paterson Inlet, the holding is good, and by choosing your spot, excellent shelter can be obtained from any wind direction. The bay is described clockwise, from the jetty. Patchy mobile phone coverage at the jetty.

At the east end of the cove is a substantial jetty, well seen on the approach from Ulva Island. There are tracks from here through to Ocean Beach. If using this jetty (2.5m at LW) be sure to vacate it well before dusk as it is used by commercial operators to bring in tourists to view kiwi. If making a night-time trip ashore to see the birds, be considerate of the commercial operation. Just to the west of the jetty are a couple of coves which give good holding. The one closest to the jetty in particular gives good shelter in an easterly or southerly, tuck well into the shore in about 6m at LW.

There is a hunter’s hut in the southwest corner of Goose Cove which is used regularly. A couple of buoys are laid in the shallower water off this, moorings for the boats the hunters use to access the hut. Anchoring further out from these buoys is in good holding, and is well sheltered from southeast round to north. A small sea can build into this corner when there is much easterly in the wind, but would normally not be of a magnitude to make the anchorage untenable. 4.5m at LW

The northwest corner of Goose Cove is an excellent anchorage. Although you will need to have faith in both your ability to pick your spot, and in your anchor, going tight into the NW corner gives pretty much all round shelter. There is deep water almost to the rocky north shore, less so to the beach to the west. Just chose the best location for the expected wind direction. Although it looks open to the east, an 11.5t 13m yacht comfortably sat out strong easterly gales here with no sea to speak of and only gusts coming along the shore from the point. 4m at LW

Round the point, to the north of Goose Cove, good anchorage can be had with shelter from westerly winds through to north. Anchoring relatively close in to the beach, location dictated by wind direction, will give the best shelter, but be aware that the water is shallower some distance from the shore here in places. In settled fair weather, you can of course anchor anywhere, in deeper water, and have good holding.

## Sailor's Rest

*Best shelter – All round, all weather*



Entrance to this almost totally enclosed all-weather anchorage is at the mouth of Glory Bay, on the east shore. The setting makes it a popular spot, but there really isn't a lot of room for more than one larger boat, possibly two at a push, unless rafting up.

A boat with a deep draft (over 2m) or a poor turning circle might be best to enter the anchorage at closer to high water. Once set up, there is plenty of depth, however, on entering the cove for the first time, it might be best to have a couple of wee circles just to orient and sort yourself out. Have your anchor ready to deploy before you go into the cove, and you will probably eventually need well in excess of 25m of chain in the water. When entering, keep more towards the right hand (west) bank of the channel to avoid rocks close to the east bank. The channel is narrow. Inside there is more room and depth than might be thought from the chart. The water is fairly shallow off the beaches to the south, and also in the two inlets to the east, but there is enough deeper water in the middle of the cove, and close to the north bank, to allow manoeuvring to lay out the anchor, and sit while running stern lines.



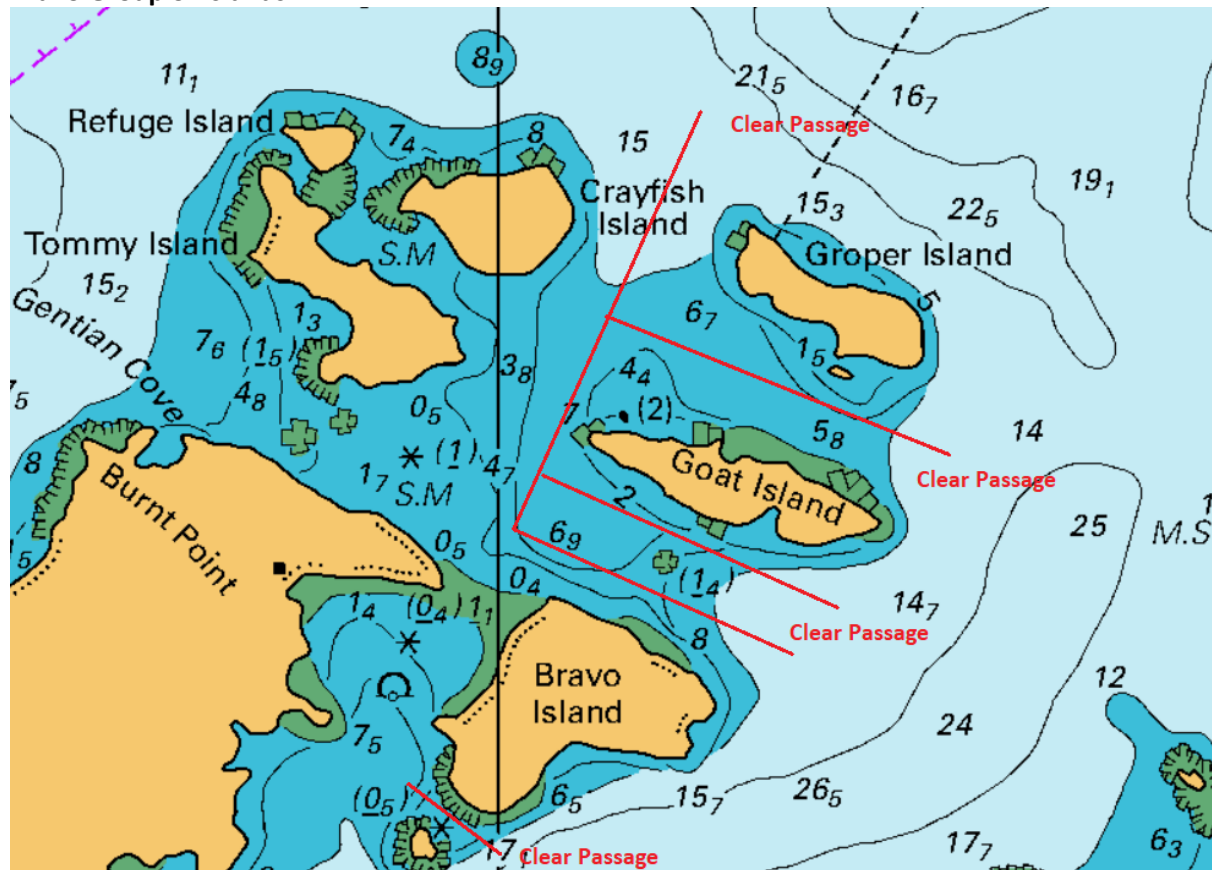
Coming into the cove proper from the channel there are buoyed stern lines on the port side as you leave the entrance channel. The water is deep up to them. Drop the anchor off the rocky promontory in the middle of the south beaches (approx. 2m at low tide). Don't drop too close to the mouth of the southernmost inlet – holding isn't as good. Pull back on your stern lines so that the boat is out of the line of the entrance channel, in around 3.5m at low tide.

Once set up, this is a very secure anchorage, although not always peaceful. There can be machinery noise from the fish farms in Big Glory Bay. Also, gale westerlies can gust in over the trees, and buffet the boat about a fair bit. Although there is no sea, it gets quite noisy and jerky. In other wind directions the anchorage is perfectly sheltered.

### Big Glory Bay

Best avoided due to the scale of the aquaculture installations in the bay. Also tends to be noisy. The best, and probably only realistic, anchorage in Glory Bay is in behind Bravo Island, at the mouth of the bay. Holding is good, and under different circumstances, it would be an attractive spot. However, given the proximity to the aquaculture installations in the rest of the bay, the operators have moorings here used for tenders, barges, even a trawler. There is still plenty of room for a cruising boat or two, and also in a couple of other spots in the back of the main bay, but the aquaculture operators have confined themselves to this area, so it seems good manners to keep out of their way.

### Bravo Group of Islands



This group is a pleasant place to poke around on a nice day, watch for shallows and the odd rock. The most up to date LINZ charts seem to have the depth contours placed pretty accurately. The rock in the middle of the channel between Goat Island and Bravo Island can normally be visually identified by a kelp patch. Do not try to pass between Tommy Island and the mainland, or between Crayfish and Tommy Islands. Both passages dry. There may be the occasional cray pot laid around the islands, usually with a very small marker float. Anchorage here is reasonably good in settled conditions (pick your spot to suit), but with so many better places close at hand one has to question why. The westerly wind fairly whistles through the group.

The south shoreline of Paterson Inlet has steep sided hills to the water, and between Gentian Cove and Harry West Point there is fairly deep water almost to the beach. To the west of Harry West Point, the water becomes shallower, and a bit more prudence is in order. It is an interesting bit of coast to explore, with large bays, points, and nooks. The larger bays tend to provide less shelter than might be hoped – they generally have valleys running into them which funnel the southerly, the points give better protection dependant on where you anchor, and some of the nooks provide fine esoteric anchorages, which although perfectly safe if approached in a confident manner, are best described as interesting.

Apart from those noted here, there are many other small anchorage spots along the southern shoreline. However, let's work on the assumption that if you are in that area looking for a quiet place for the night, you know what you are about, and can choose your own spot.

There is patchy phone coverage along this shoreline.

### **Gentian Cove**

*Best shelter – NE to W*



One of the more esoteric anchorages. This small cove gives good shelter though is more open to a northerly. The entrance is clear and the depth inside the cove is over 2.5m at low water. Drop anchor in the middle of the cove and tie back with 2 stern lines into either of the two back corners. There is (just) room for a 13m boat to swing while running out the first stern line. In a fresh easterly with a moderate sea running outside, the cove itself was peaceful. This is a nice location.

### **Paua Beach**

*Best shelter – SE to SW*



The main beach is a pretty spot, but more open than it looks, however, the next cove to the west of the beach is one of the “interesting” anchorages alluded to earlier. Watch out for the submerged rocks off its eastern entrance point. Go well into the cove and, smartly, drop anchor and run a stern line to the trees on the west bank. Pull in close to the trees for very good shelter from the south through to west. Around 5m over most of the cove. Possibly better suited to a smaller boat, or one with a tight turning circle.

### **Hapautuna Bay**

*Best shelter - Limited*

As with most of the bigger bays, more exposed to the south than might be thought, but a nice spot with room for a couple of boats to swing at anchor, in good holding, in the southeast corner. There is a hunters hut further along the bay, beside the small lagoon.

### **Abraham’s Bay**

*Best shelter - Limited*

A large open bay which offers decent holding but limited shelter. The head of the bay is shallow a long way out.

### **Harry West Bay**

*Best shelter – E to SW*

Good holding and shelter from the east and south, in the corner of the bay just off a rock pillar and an orange DoC marker triangle. 3.5m depth at LW.

## Harry West Point

*Best shelter – NE to SW*



A pleasant wee spot, nicely sheltered from the east and south, in the deep cove immediately west of the point. The access and holding are good, and there are a few options for anchoring. Watch for the odd rock close in on the west side of the point.

On the side of the point are a couple of rocky inlets which are big enough to pull back into (anchor outside inlet in 5m, plenty of rocks to tie back onto inside the inlets), or else go more into the corner and swing in about 3.5m on a mud/sand bottom.

From this point westwards, the water close to the shore becomes a fair bit shallower, but there are still interesting places to nose into.

## South West Arm

The South West Arm is a place of contrasts, narrow and enclosed at its entrance, once off Ogles Point it opens up dramatically, and the nature of the surrounding hills changes equally so. The water is relatively shallow, and the winds can be flukey, but, the South West Arm ought to be obligatory for anyone having a day sail on Paterson Inlet. The marked depths and contours on the latest LINZ paper chart are pretty accurate, but a deeper draft keelboat might be advised to visit on a rising tide.....just in case!

Unfortunately, there are no decent all round anchorage spots in this arm, although some very attractive spots could be used in settled weather. Behind Ogles Point looks promising but is shallow, care needed here. The jetty at Fred's Camp has 2m alongside at LW. Approach with care, shallows exist on either side. This jetty is used by water taxis picking up and dropping off trampers on the Southwest Circuit, so if going ashore be considerate of this. Anchoring is possible around here, with shelter from the westerlies. Good holding.



If crossing from the South West Arm over to the North Arm, remember that the mudflats extend a long way out. On the north shore, around Dynamite Point, is a prominent white rock below a grey rock outcrop. Heading for this from Fred's Camp will keep you in the clear.

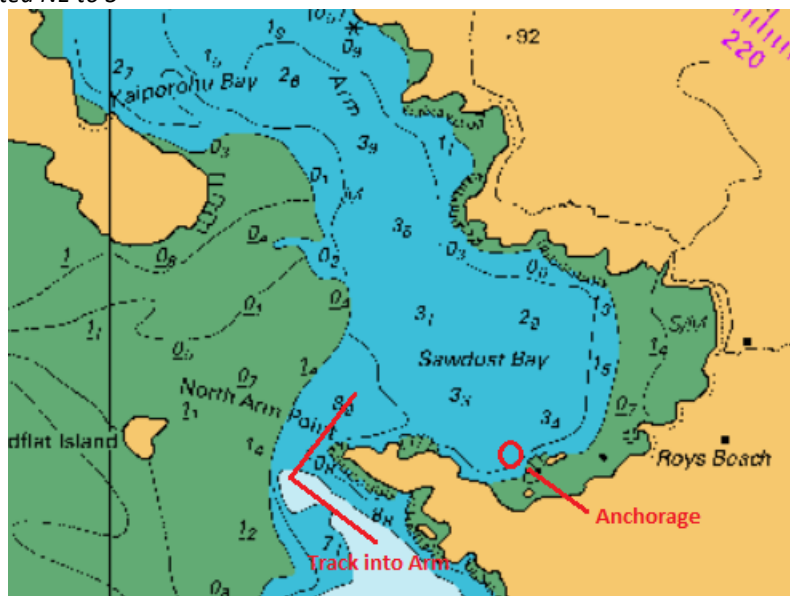
### North Arm

A part of Paterson Inlet that isn't visited very often by cruising yachts, and for valid reason, but actually deserves a bit more attention. It is a quiet area, and gives a different perspective of Stewart Island. Very exposed to the wind from almost every direction.

Approach up the deep channel parallel to North Arm Point, aiming to pass fairly close to the rocks off the point. Passing the point the depth goes rapidly to about 7m, then just as quickly back to over 8m. Tend to starboard into Sawdust Bay immediately so as to stay well clear of the mudflats. See the chartlet for the suggested track. From Sawdust Bay the charted deeper channel up into the head of the arm can be followed without difficulty through the narrows into Kaiporohu Bay and beyond, with only the odd shallower section. Keep to the channel though, some of the charted depths outside this are optimistic. Being so constrained, the North Arm is probably better explored in the tender or by kayak from Sawdust Bay.

### Sawdust Bay

*Best shelter – Limited NE to S*



Quite a large open expanse of water, but does give reasonable shelter from wind from a southerly direction in the corner by the small islets, in about 4m at LW. It is a peaceful spot on a nice day, and the holding is excellent. Worthy of consideration if the weather is settled.

### Prices Inlet Area

The Prices Inlet area is a good place to head if you pull into Golden Bay or Faith, Hope, and Charity and are put off anchoring by the number of moorings. A short trip along the coast westwards brings you to this popular part of Paterson Inlet. The area is generally well sheltered, though more open to the east. Millars Beach in particular is an extremely pleasant place to spend a sunny evening. For bad weather, the Kidney Fern Arm anchorage must be one of the most sheltered in the whole of Paterson Inlet.

There are a number of rocks and small islets scattered through the inlet, but they present little danger, being either visible or clearly marked, and charted. Do check your chart for the submerged rocks though.

In addition to the anchorages described, there are a number of other fine spots dotted about the area, but have due regard for hazards and the direction the weather is coming from. Just off the whaler's base is one.

For a break ashore, the old Norwegian whaler's station at the back of Prices Inlet is well worth a visit. A short walk from Millars Beach, there are the remains of a slipway, a boiler, and assorted propellers scattered about. DoC have set up informative notice boards around the site. The remains of a sunken whaler can be seen at low water. The DoC shelter at Millars Beach has a rainwater tank.. There is mobile phone coverage over much of this area.



### Dundas Harbour

*Best shelter – NE to NW*

With decent holding in about 3m in the middle of the bay, this anchorage provides reasonable shelter from moderate northerly sector winds, but becomes uncomfortable in anything stronger. If the winds are from any other direction, a move round into Prices Inlet would be prudent. Don't be seduced by some better shelter tucked in behind the islets, although the water is generally deep enough, it is very constricted, and there are rocks, best avoided by cruising boats.

### Whitestone Beach

*Best shelter – SE to NW*

A pleasant spot, well sheltered from the south and the west. Good holding on a sandy bottom with occasional weed patches. The bush covered shore to the east of the beach is deep close in, the rocky point between Whitestone Beach and Millars Beach slightly less so. The line of rocks off this corner is well marked and ought present no danger.

Either anchor and swing in the middle of the cove, or, for more shelter from the east, drop anchor closer in to the south end of the beach, and pull back in on a stern line run ashore to a convenient tree on the rocky shore to the east. Good holding in sand in about 4m at LW. Mobile phone coverage in this anchorage.

### **Millars Beach**

*Best shelter – SE to NW*

Another fine sunny beach with good shelter from the south and west, though more open to the east than Whitestone Beach. There is a substantial jetty used by commercial tourist operators, and a DoC shelter. The path to the old Norwegian whaler's base starts here, an easy 15 minute walk through bush. A popular anchorage.

Anchor and swing in the middle of the bay, well clear of the jetty. Good holding in sand in about 3.5m at LW. Mobile phone coverage in this anchorage.

### **Kidney Fern Arm**

*Best shelter – All round, all weather*



An excellent all-weather anchorage, with good all round shelter. You can sit out a 35 knot southerly here and hardly notice it. Good holding. There is really only room for one 13m yacht in here.

Leave Kidney Fern Island to starboard when entering the channel, there are rocks off the north end of the islet. Anchor between the crib on the west bank and the large scrub capped rocks off the east point opposite in around 3.2m at LW. It is worth circling the area first to determine where the shallows to the west start. The water is deep almost to the rocks on the east. There is adequate room to swing at anchor with a least depth of 2.2m at LW in the swinging circle, but you need to choose the position and amount of chain with care, to suit your boat. Do not be tempted to anchor further into the inlet towards the floating mai-mai. Although wider, and with adequate depth, the holding is poor.

Along the north shore of Paterson Inlet, between Prices Inlet and Golden Bay, there are any number of smaller bays where anchorage can be had, dependant on wind and weather conditions. Any obstructions are marked on the chart. Be a bit wary of holding in some of them, but if you get your anchor to stick by backing up on it, you ought to be good. There is location dependent phone coverage in the bays along this coast.

### **Kaipipi Bay**

*Best shelter – Limited all round*



Although suitable for most weather, in a moderately strong southerly the wind funnels up the narrow entrance channel into the anchorage, and while there is no sea to speak of, this tends to make for an unsettled night.

The inner bay can also be a bit gusty in a strong breeze from other directions.

Keep to port in the channel when entering the bay, to clear the rocks marked on the chart. These are normally visible. The water in the channel is deep close to the west bank. When the bay starts to open out, anchor in the deeper water before the scrubby islet is reached. Holding can be variable but is generally good, just make sure the anchor is well set. There is plenty of room to swing, but if required a stern line can be run to the trees on the north bank. 4m depth at LW. Alternative spots are just past the scrubby islet, in towards the south shore in the deeper water. Exercise caution here. Room for a 13m yacht, tied back. It is also possible to moor in the cove just to starboard as you emerge from the entrance channel, drop the anchor in the deeper water and pull in out of the weather with a stern line run ashore into the cove. This is used by local boats.

Although there are a couple of mooring buoys in the wide part of the bay beyond the islet, anchoring here is not advised. The water is shallower, and the holding poor.



## Golden Bay

*Best shelter – NW to E*



Despite being pretty full with local boats moorings, it is still possible to anchor in a couple of spots between Iona Island and the mainland, reasonably close to the Golden Bay wharf. In doing so though, bear in mind that the wharf is a fairly busy place, position yourself so as not to impede access to either the wharf, or the commercial boat pontoons. Holding is generally good, but bear in mind the moorings (plus any older ground tackle unseen) to avoid fouling. There is also good holding (and a bit more room) to be found between Iona Island and the Faith Hope and Charity group, outside of the local moorings. A bit more open to the south and west, but still a good spot. Suitable for larger boats. Mobile phone coverage here.

The area behind the Faith Hope and Charity Islands is full of local moorings and any remaining space is shallow.

Water is available on the wharf (BYO hose and tap fittings}, but the flow rate is low. Don't leave the boat unattended, and don't stay on the wharf for an extended time. Although the water taxis and ferries have their own pontoon, they also use the front of the wharf. There is deep water at the wharf, the rocks at the landward end might cause concern, but the water is deep right to them, and they don't impede at all. Just a short walk over the hill to Oban.

## Deep Bay

*Best shelter – NW to E*

The bay gives protection from the northwest through to east in good holding, and is still handy to Golden Bay. Anchor at the mouth of the bay, in around 4m. Pretty tight. There are local moorings for small boats, largely behind the rocky islet. The head of the bay is very shallow. Mobile phone coverage here.

## Trails Bay

*Best shelter – NW to E*

Although open to the south and west, this is a very attractive bay. Anchor in the middle of the bay, in about 4m at LW. Excellent holding. Mobile phone coverage here.

## Ulva Island

A nature reserve, popular with the tourists. It is well tracked, with plenty of bush walks. There is a regular ferry service from Golden Bay wharf. The jetty at Flagstaff Point is for the use of ferries and smaller vessels. On the north side of the island are three anchorages which are very useful in that while they provide no all round shelter, they all have good phone coverage. There is a rock some distance off the shore between Flagstaff Point and Blancmange Rock, marked by a pole.

### Sydney Cove

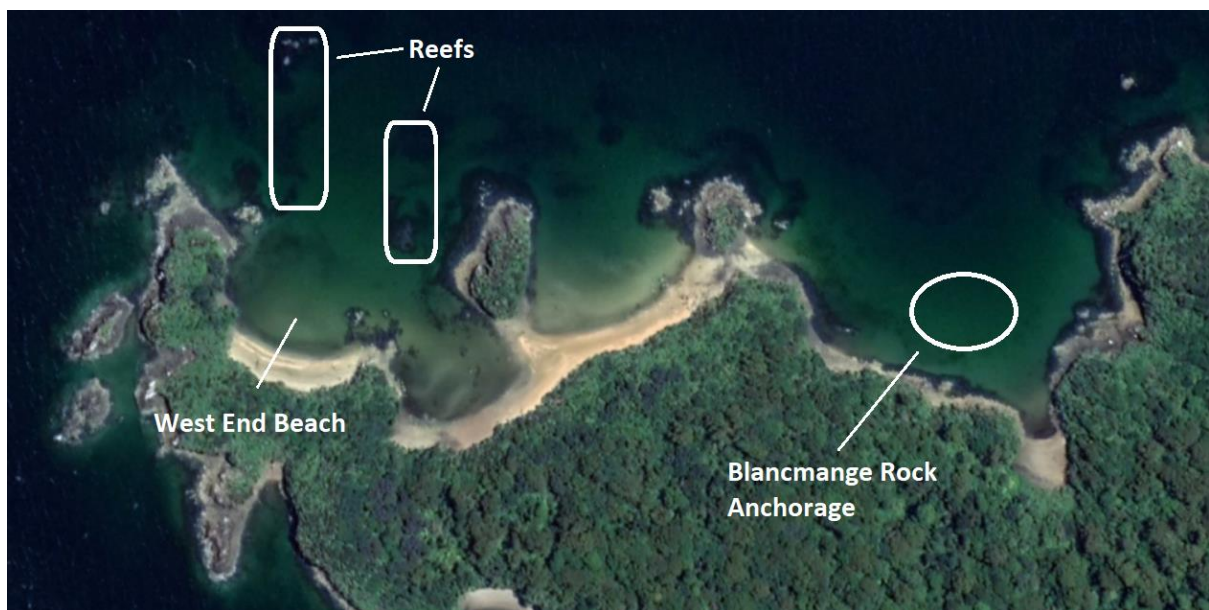
*Best shelter – S to W*

Good holding on a sandy bottom, in about 5m at LW, tucked in behind the islet. Sheltered from SE through to NW, although it does pick up a bit of a roll coming in through the entrance to Paterson Inlet. Good access to the beach for exploring the island. Room for many boats to swing at anchor here.

### Blancmange Rock

*Best shelter – E to SW*

This is the bay immediately east of Blancmange Rock. The bay is deep (4.5m at LW) well into the shore. Holding is good. If you go into the back of the bay shelter is adequate for a westerly, and excellent for east through to southwest. Less affected by surge than Sydney Cove. Only room for one boat here, but it is probably the most secure anchorage on Ulva.



Ulva Island West End

### West End Beach

A day anchorage in a lovely setting, for smaller vessels, however watch for the reefs at the entrance, they are quite extensive. Good holding on sand. Good shelter from the east through to the south, but shallower than Sydney Cove or Blancmange Rock. 2m at LW. Another good spot to access the paths on the island.

Passing round the west end of Ulva, be aware of the rocks off to the south of the point, and the shallower areas between the islets. The rocks are marked by poles.

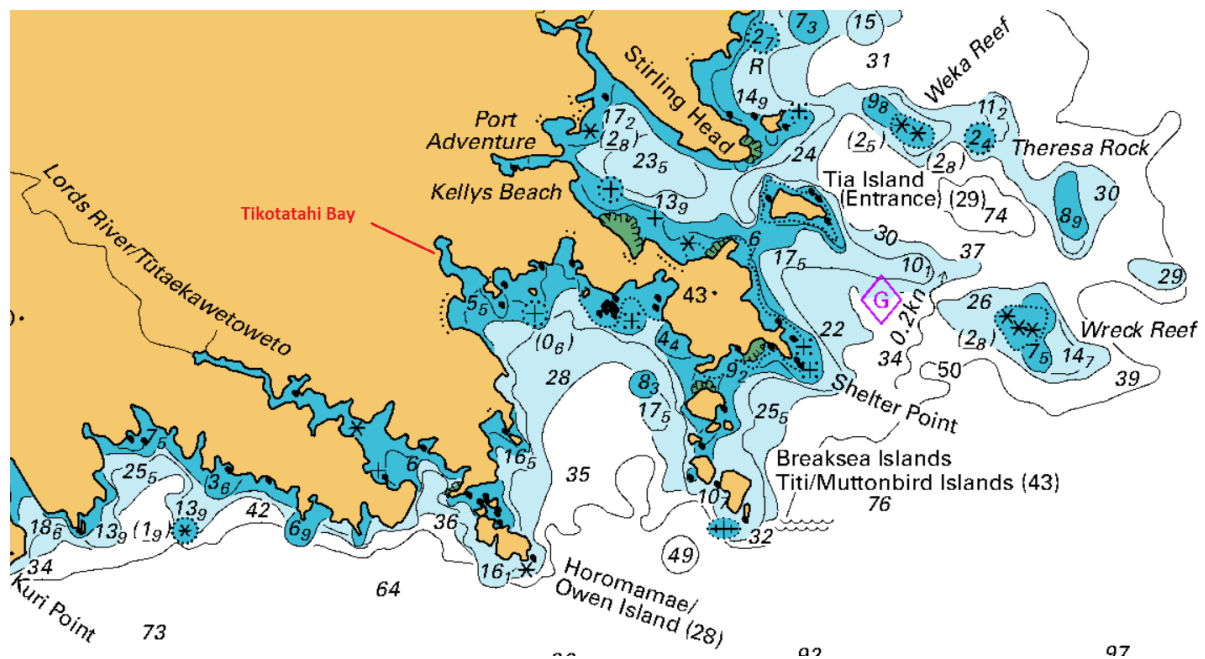
### Boulder Beach

*Best shelter – N to E*

On the southwest corner of the island, this peaceful spot gives good holding in about 5m at LW, in the corner outside the reefs off the sandy beach, but is wide open to the south and west. Good shelter in a northerly through to easterly, though it can be gusty in a strong easterly. Tucking in beside the island at the south end of the bay, under the headland, is also quite comfortable and less gusty in a depth of about 8m. Good holding in both locations.

In addition to the anchorages described, there are a number of other smaller coves dotted around the island which would provide an anchorage, some better than others, some more interesting than others. The Snuggery for example looks excellent from the sea, but actually shallows quite rapidly towards its head.

## Bullers Point – Seal Point



This section of the guide covers the section of Stewart Island between Carters Passage at the entrance to Paterson Inlet, and Seal Point, just before the entrance to Port Pegasus. It is trying to get beyond here that trips to Stewart Island can founder, thwarted by southerly gales and heavy seas. It is not unknown for boats to have to spend days – or weeks – in Paterson Inlet waiting on favourable conditions.

In general, if heading to Port Pegasus or further round, the best idea is to make the passage south as quickly as possible, to make the most of spells of good weather. It is easier to head back north in poorer weather if needs be. However, if the spells of good weather are on the short side, and you REALLY want to get out of Paterson Inlet, remember you can always hop down the coast via Port Adventure and the Lords River. You might just have to stay in those for a while waiting for the weather to ease.....

South of East Cape the flood tide flows northeast-ish, and to the north of East Cape it flows east-ish, so, unless timed well, a tide favourable for the run down the coast to East Cape, may turn out unfavourable once round the cape. It may well be worth considering breaking the trip at Lords River to have the tides with you on both legs. Remember that the tidal flows can be pretty strong. Adverse tides in the vicinity of East Cape – Lords River can easily knock 1.5 – 2 knots off boat speed. Passage planning is important, wind against tide and swell here can result in some very uncomfortable seas. Additionally, the wind is often stronger south of East Cape, and can be quite gusty if out of the west.

Heading south from Paterson Inlet, the Carter Passage is taken. There is clear passage between Whero Rock and Bullers Point. Other than the area immediately south of East Cape, off Port Adventure, there are few offshore obstructions to watch for. Seas break on the offshore reefs around here in most conditions, so there ought to be no difficulty in identifying them. There is clear passage inside Weka Reef off Port Adventure, but keep to the middle of the passage off Weka Island, and also watch for the rocks to the east of Tia Island when passing. Shelter Point ought to be given a wide berth to seaward on account of the shallow and broken ground extending eastward some distance from the point. Southerly seas break here with force. If in doubt, or for a better sail, take the outside passage to seaward of Weka and Wreck Reefs.

For exploring the coast, and the coast is well worth exploring, there are passages inside both the Breaksea Islands, and Owen Island. These do need to be treated with caution, tending to keep more to the Stewart Island side of each passage to avoid rocks. Some of the rocks only break at low tide. There is plenty of depth of water through both of these channels, but the currents, especially through the Owen Island passage, run strongly. These passages certainly facilitate visiting the Tikotatahi Bay area.



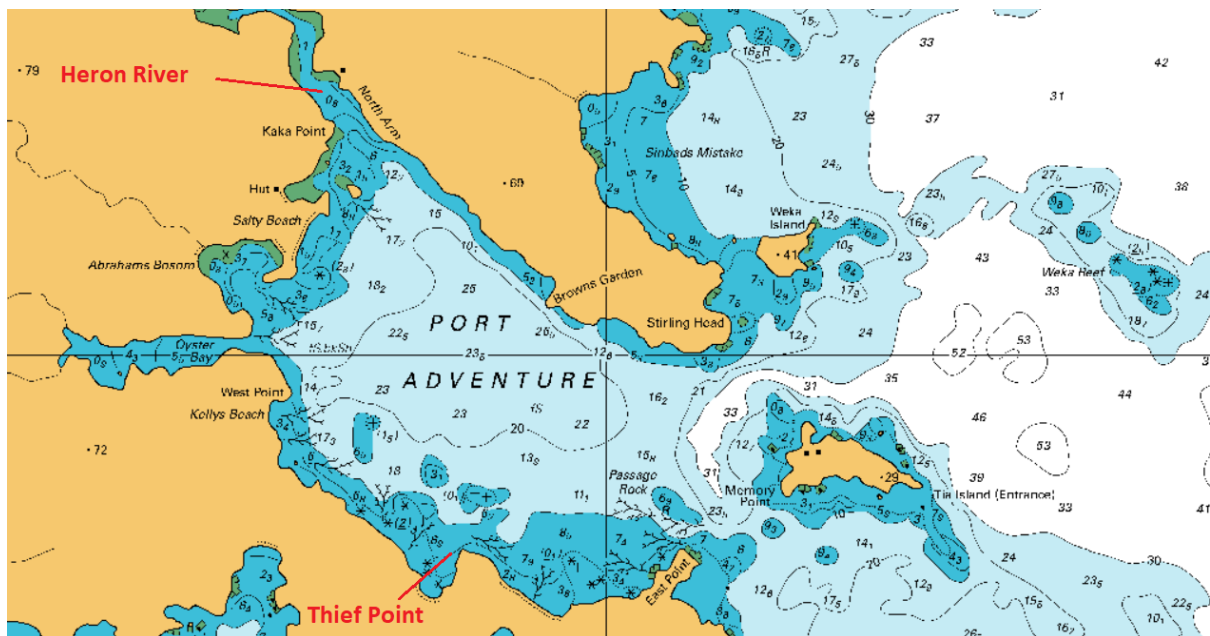
## Chew Tobacco Bay

Immediately to the north of East Cape lies Chew Tobacco Bay. Quite an attractive bay, it is however very open, and while worth a visit either when passing, or a day trip from Paterson Inlet, it can't be recommended as an overnight anchorage.

## Port Adventure

This is an extremely attractive part of Stewart Island, and being a fairly short trip from Paterson Inlet, is easily reached even in doubtful weather. However, to fully appreciate the area, make your first entry into Port Adventure on a calm sunny day.....

Access to Port Adventure is safe via the passages both to the north and the south of Tia Island. There may be a kelp bed in the middle of the southern passage, but it can be passed on either side. Approaching from the north, running close down the coast inside Weka Reef, the muttonbirders cribs on Tia Island are prominent, and give a good marker to make the entrance. In easterly weather, there can be quite a surge coming into the bay, but it will be easier than the seas outside. The tides can be quite strong off the entrance. Be aware of the kelp beds and rocks off the southern shore of the bay.



Port Adventure

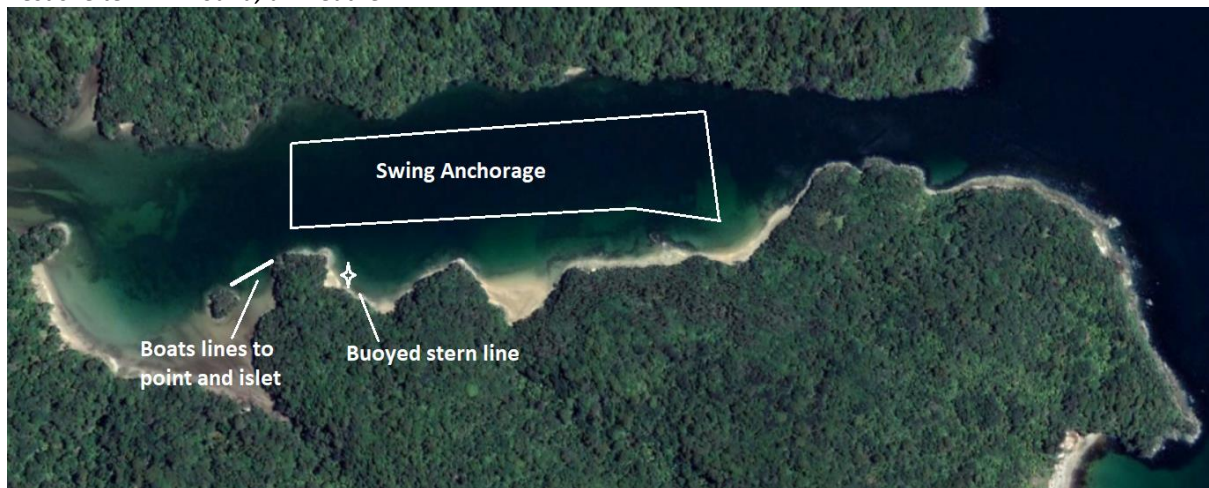
## Thief Point

*Best shelter – SE to SW*

There is a pleasant day anchorage just inside Thief Point, (not marked on the chart but the next point to the west of East Point), in a small bay known as "The Kaik". The bottom is sand, with some weed about. It can be roly if there is much sea outside. Given the nature of the ground outside the anchorage (submerged rocks and reefs), moving from here in worsening conditions or at night could be a bit fraught. However, it is a very pretty spot, and at least worth a visit for lunch. The beach is superb.

## Oyster Bay

*Best shelter – All round, all weather*



The story goes that this is where the original Bluff oysters came from. There are few left!

The inlet offers good anchorage in a heavy mud bottom. Excellent protection from westerlies, less so but still adequate in strong easterlies. There is deep water (10m+) throughout most of the bay, but be aware that the inner basin, while looking attractive at high water, dries to quite a large extent. There are no other hazards inside the cove. For a secure all weather anchorage, drop the anchor just off the small cove immediately before the inner basin, and pull into the cove on a buoyed stern line. To be really sure, a bow line can be run as well. This cove has 4m at low water over most of its area.

Another possibility is to anchor and tie back to the small islet and the headland just at the mouth of the inner basin. At least 4m depth at LW, but shelves rapidly past the islet. Otherwise, anchor and swing wherever suits the conditions prevailing at the time.

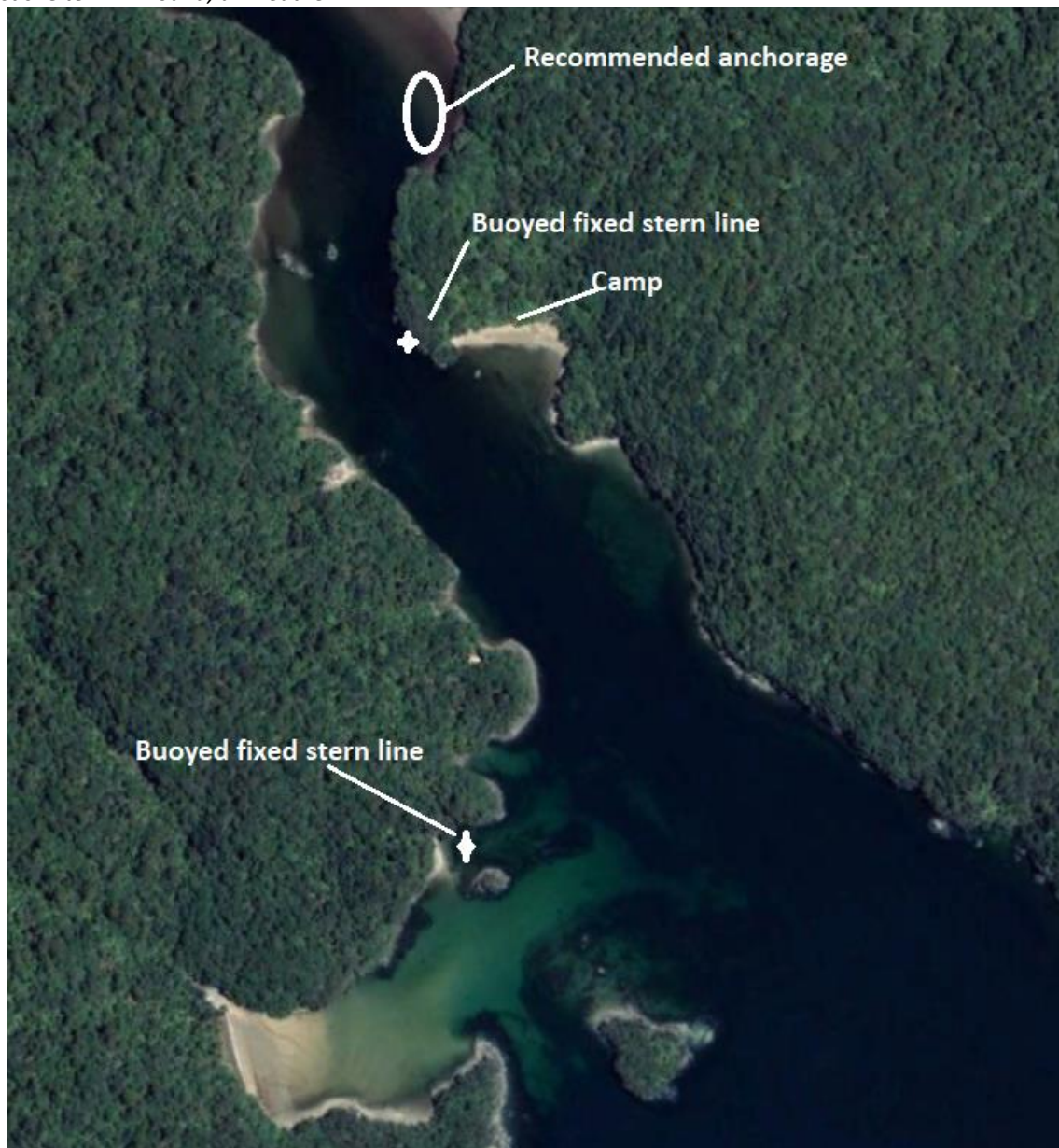
## Abraham's Bosom

*Best shelter – S to NE*

An absolutely beautiful spot, with a path leading over to Salty Beach. Although appearing to give good all weather protection, you do need to pick your spot if gale easterlies are forecast as these can set a fair surge into the bay. The entrance to the cove is easily identified by the large rock on its northern point. Enter along the southwest shore, there may be some kelp in the middle of the entrance channel. The bottom is muddy shelly sand, check that the anchor is well set. The best all round shelter is towards the beach on the eastern shore, in 3.5m at LW off some rocks just inside the headland, but anchor to suit the conditions. However, note that the water is fairly shallow off the sandy beaches, and dries some distance. Good fresh water can be had from the creek in the northwest corner of the cove, at high water this can be accessed directly in a dinghy. The creek is worth exploring up past the falls.

## Heron River

*Best shelter – All round, all weather*



This is a good place to head if serious weather is expected. However, don't hug the shore when entering. The river is shallower across the entrance (3-4m at LW), but deepens again quite quickly. It is deeper towards the north/east bank. The large, attractive looking bay with the sandy beach to port as the large islet is passed when entering the river is actually quite shallow and of little use as an anchorage. Entering the river, behind the small islet, is a cove with a buoyed stern line. This will provide shelter in westerly conditions, but seems to be completely open to the southeast. There is 8m of water here at LW. Proceeding upriver, just past the camp, a buoyed stern line is rigged, with good deep water off (7m at LW). However, this is a bit exposed, and a better option would be to continue a short distance, round the bend in the river, where there is more space, more shelter, deep water (5-6m at LW), and plenty of trees to tie back to. 5 or 6 boats sat out the aftermath of a severe tropical storm here in safety. Alternatively, there is room for one boat to swing, but you would need to watch your scope. The Google Earth image shows the obstructions in the river well. It isn't advisable to go any further up the river than the inner anchorage. In settled conditions, one can of course simply anchor in the middle of the entrance to the river.





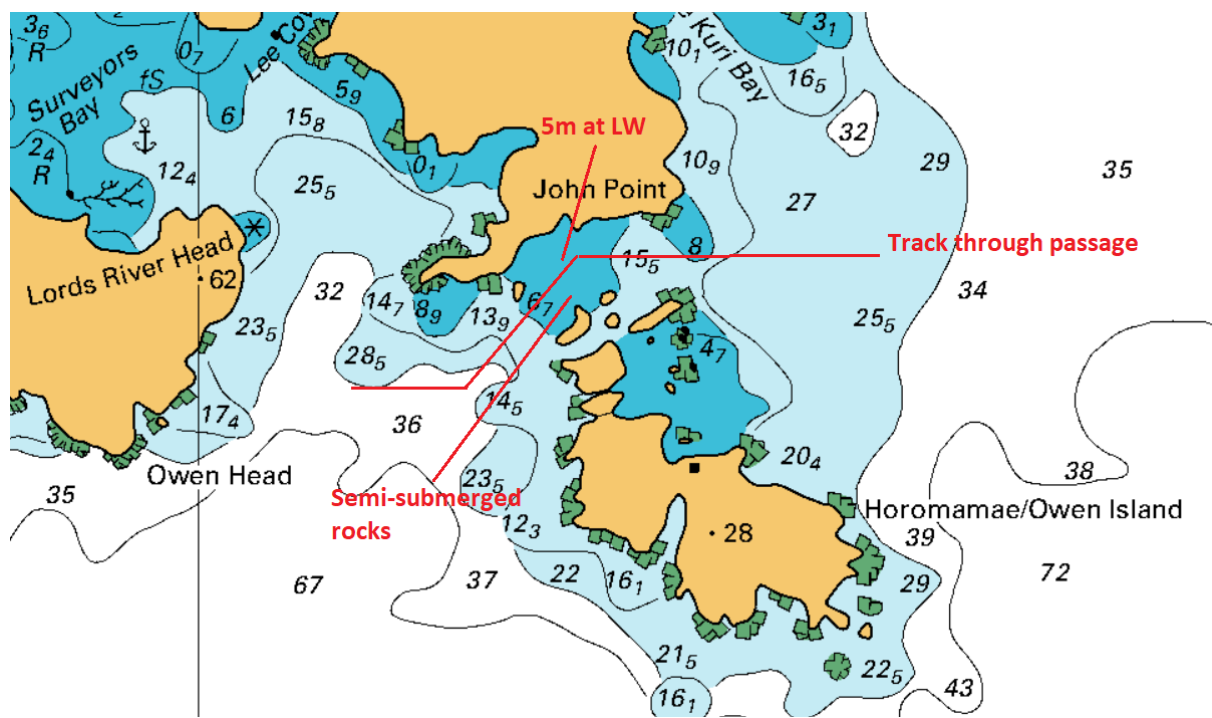
## Tikotatahi Bay

*Best shelter – W to NE*



Tikotatahi Bay is a decent anchorage for moderate northerly conditions. The inner bay would probably be safe enough in more, but would be hard to escape from in bad weather or a heavy easterly/southerly swell. Once inside the bay, the water is deeper than the chart suggests, but the channel snakes about a bit. Following the channel, there is a reasonably good anchorage to starboard, in a small bay, in behind the headland off the first hunter's camp – marked with a small white float. Proceeding upriver, the channel crosses from the east to the west bank – watch the rocks and shallows - and another hunter's camp in another small bay. Fairly sheltered anchorage is possible here too. Continuing further upstream round the bend, the water starts to shallow and the channel becomes tenuous. It would be possible to anchor and tie back to the west bank just before here, opposite a small rocky islet, with fairly good all round protection. Up to this point there is generally about 4-5m in the channel at LW. The bay is worth the diversion.

## Lords River



Lords River approaches

Well sheltered, and a good place to head to get out of bad weather, but equally a great place to visit on a nice day. Approaching from the north, there is a passage between Owen Island and the mainland, keep more to the mainland side of the passage, but be very aware of the rocks and reefs off the southern end of John Point and give them clearance. There is about 5m depth in this channel at LW, and the current is strong. There are semi-submerged rocks close to the rocky islets on the Owen Island side of the channel. Head well over towards Owen Head before turning to starboard and heading into the river. If in doubt go round to seaward of Owen Island, in a moderate swell there can be quite big breakers at the Lords River end of this channel.

Owen Head is also locally known as Surf Head on account of the sometimes spectacular breaking seas, but these are not dangerous.

Approaching from the south there is deep water and no real hazards, just keep a prudent distance off the shore.

If entering the river while it is in flood, be cautious and keep a watch for trees being washed downstream.

When proceeding up-river, the deeper clear water is in the middle and towards the northern shore. There are a number of possible anchorages to choose from. Lee Cove, the first cove to starboard once inside the river, is probably best avoided due to rocks at the entrance, and being open to southerly swells. Red Sand Beach, the first bay to port once inside the river, is a nice spot in fair weather with good fishing, but has many hazards. The main anchorages in the river are further upstream.

Keep a good lookout for fisherman's pot buoys, especially off Red Sand Beach and Lee Cove.

Sea conditions outside the river can get quite nasty during a spell of southerly weather, so it pays to keep an eye on both the forecast and the tides. Southerlies blow straight up this coast, and the ebb tide runs straight down.

Anchorage in Lords River are described from the mouth heading upstream.





Lords River Anchorages

### **Cooey Bay**

*Best shelter – All weather, all round*

This bay is much larger than might be expected, and can accommodate many boats swinging at anchor. There is no need to tie back to the bank, although there is a rigged line in one of the coves to port as the bay is entered. There is deep water (7-8m at LW) over much of the bay. The holding is good. The small cove to starboard halfway up the inlet gives access to the hunter's camp and looks attractive, but the ground inshore of the rocks is reportedly foul and the water in the bay is shallow. Anchoring between the islet and the mouth of the bay is popular, but there is also plenty of room further in. The anchorage is best in winds from the west through to easterly, but can still be considered as all weather from any quadrant. The local fishermen regard this as the main anchorage in Lords River. It can be busy. There are often a couple of cray pot buoys in the bay.

Proceeding upriver from Cooey Bay, the main channel runs closer to the north bank of the river, although there is generally sufficient water elsewhere.

### **River Anchorage**

*Best shelter – SW to E*

Immediately through the narrows, on the starboard side, is a large open bay. In the northwest corner of this bay is a narrow inlet, with a hawser rigged across its mouth. The water across the bay is shallower than Cooey Bay (3-5m at LW), but generally deeper than the chart indicates. Holding is excellent, and there is plenty of room to swing at anchor in good shelter. This is a good spot to anchor if exploring further up river in a dinghy or kayak. It should only be beneficial to use the rigged line if there is a strong southwest to westerly gale. The inlet past the rigged line is worth a trip in the dinghy or kayak, with some falls in the creek at its head. Off the small peninsula bounding the southern side of the inlet there are a couple of submerged rocks to be aware of, otherwise the bay is clear.

### **Deep Bay**

*Best shelter – E to SW*

In recent years more yachts are anchoring here, in the middle of the bay. There are a number of submerged sandbanks dotted around this bay, and these do shift after storms. The depth over these sandbanks seems to be no less than about 1.5m at low water, and they tend to be quite widely spaced. It ought to be easy to find a suitable spot to anchor in around 3m at low water quite well into the bay. Or you could just continue on into The Nook. Excellent holding.

## The Nook

*Best shelter – All weather, all round*



This is the most secure anchorage in the river. There is a hawser run across the inlet for tying a stern line to. The shallower approach and seemingly tight nature of the anchorage appears to put off some cruising boat skippers, but in reality these present no problems, even for large-ish boats.

The track into The Nook runs across Deep Bay in shallower water (about 3m at LW – no particular favoured line but watch for shifting sandbanks going slightly shallower), then deepens again as you turn to port into The Nook (5m+ at LW). There is deep water right up to both banks and the hawser with no obstructions. Although the entrance is narrow, closing up to the hawser there is plenty of room to manoeuvre and lay out an anchor or bow/stern lines. Room in here for 3 or 4 boats if you tie onto the hawser and lay your anchor in a considerate manner.

The downside of The Nook is that it is so sheltered that the flying bitey insects can be a bit bothersome in lighter weather in summer.

It is possible to take the boat further up-river than Deep Bay, but not advisable even though the channel is still reasonably deep. You end up navigating by depth sounder as the channel becomes quite tortuous. Well worth exploring in the dinghy though, and you can go on for quite some distance.

The coastal scenery between Lords River and Seal Point becomes more rugged and dramatic, and it is worth making this passage relatively close inshore in order to fully appreciate it. This of course also lets you nose about in any interesting looking corner that catches the eye. The only offshore hazard here is Black Rock, which is clearly visible at all states of the tide. Closer inshore, near the track between Lords River and Big Kuri Bay, well off Tutaepawhata Bay, is an isolated rock which breaks. Just off Toitoti Bay is White Rock, which has passage on both sides, and is again clearly visible. These are all marked on the chart.

Spend some time monitoring the weather before setting out on this stretch of coast, good weather in Paterson Inlet, or even Lords River, does not always equate to the same a short distance further down the coast. It is not uncommon for the division between two weather systems to lie – and stall – on a line between Puysegur Point and South West Cape. This – or of course any southerly/westerly weather pattern – can throw a large swell up the coast, which will make travel here at best uncomfortable and tedious, possibly far worse.

The swells on this coast have considerable power behind them. Even if making the passage in favourable conditions, be aware that a westerly here can be rather gusty at times, especially closer inshore.

One very experienced sailor tells of leaving Lords River heading south with a good forecast in settled light conditions, but ended up hammering into an unanticipated 40 knot norwester. By the time he was abeam Port Pegasus, things had deteriorated to the extent that he was unable to make out the entrances, and had to turn round and head back north again, a wild sail in those conditions.

Despite that cautionary tale, by far the vast majority of yachts transit this stretch of coast without a problem. As has been mentioned previously, it is frequently easier to make progress north than south on this coast. It is worth waiting for a decent weather window to transit these waters – this cruising is meant to be enjoyable!

### **Coastal Anchorages**

Between Lords River and Port Pegasus there are few coastal anchorages. Such as they are, these are marked on the chart, but only Big Kuri Bay has any detail. You would really want to be sure of stable light northerly conditions if contemplating these places, bear in mind that a southerly swell will roll in unabated, and trying to escape them with any sea on top of a big swell could be “interesting”. These are not large bays and there is little room for error. They are mentioned here for completeness, no diagrams are provided.

Although some of these are occasionally used by local fishermen for an overnight, remember they have the benefit of local knowledge, and far more horsepower at their command than the average cruiser.

#### **Big Kuri Bay**

Used occasionally by local fishermen and the odd recreational sailor with local knowledge. For a cruising boat though, not a place to be caught by a big southerly swell.

#### **Toitoti Bay**

Again, used occasionally by local fishermen. Anchorage to the head of the bay, in the mouth of the Toitoti River. And as you might expect, for a cruiser, not an ideal spot to sit out the weather.

#### **Kopeka Island**

This is a fair weather only destination, not recommended for an overnight stop at all, however it is a fine spot worth making the effort to visit in calm conditions. Being caught here by a swell of any size would likely be terminal. Entry to the north of the island. Deep water.

## Port Pegasus

Very different to Paterson Inlet further north, Port Pegasus is the large enclosed harbour in the southwest corner of Stewart Island. Not surprisingly, this is often top of the destination list for the cruising sailors who visit the island. As mentioned a couple of times previously, some effort may be needed to get here. However, the scenery is stunning with a backdrop of granite peaks, and there are a myriad of sheltered coves and inlets to provide safe anchorages. You could easily take weeks exploring this area.

Approaching from the north, give Seal Point a reasonably wide berth, then head directly to whichever of the entrance passages suits. Even in good visibility these are not always immediately apparent. If you have the time, take it, and enjoy the rugged coastal scenery as you sail along past The Brothers towards the entrances to Port Pegasus.

Port Pegasus consists of two arms – the North Arm and the South Arm. The North Arm is accessed past Pearl Island via either Whale Passage to the north, or Big Ship Passage (sometimes referred to as Broad Passage) to the south. The South Arm is accessed to the south of Noble Island by the South Passage. Transit through Blind Passage is possible, but it is shallow with rocks, and probably best avoided. Safe passage between the two arms can be had via Pegasus Passage. The tides can run very strongly through all these passages.

Depending on the direction, strong winds can blow through both arms of Port Pegasus unabated. Tidal flows are strong in places. A fair sized sea can develop in a fresh breeze, however, the islands do a magnificent job of damping down what may be a considerable swell outside. And there are always sheltered spots to be found to nose about in.

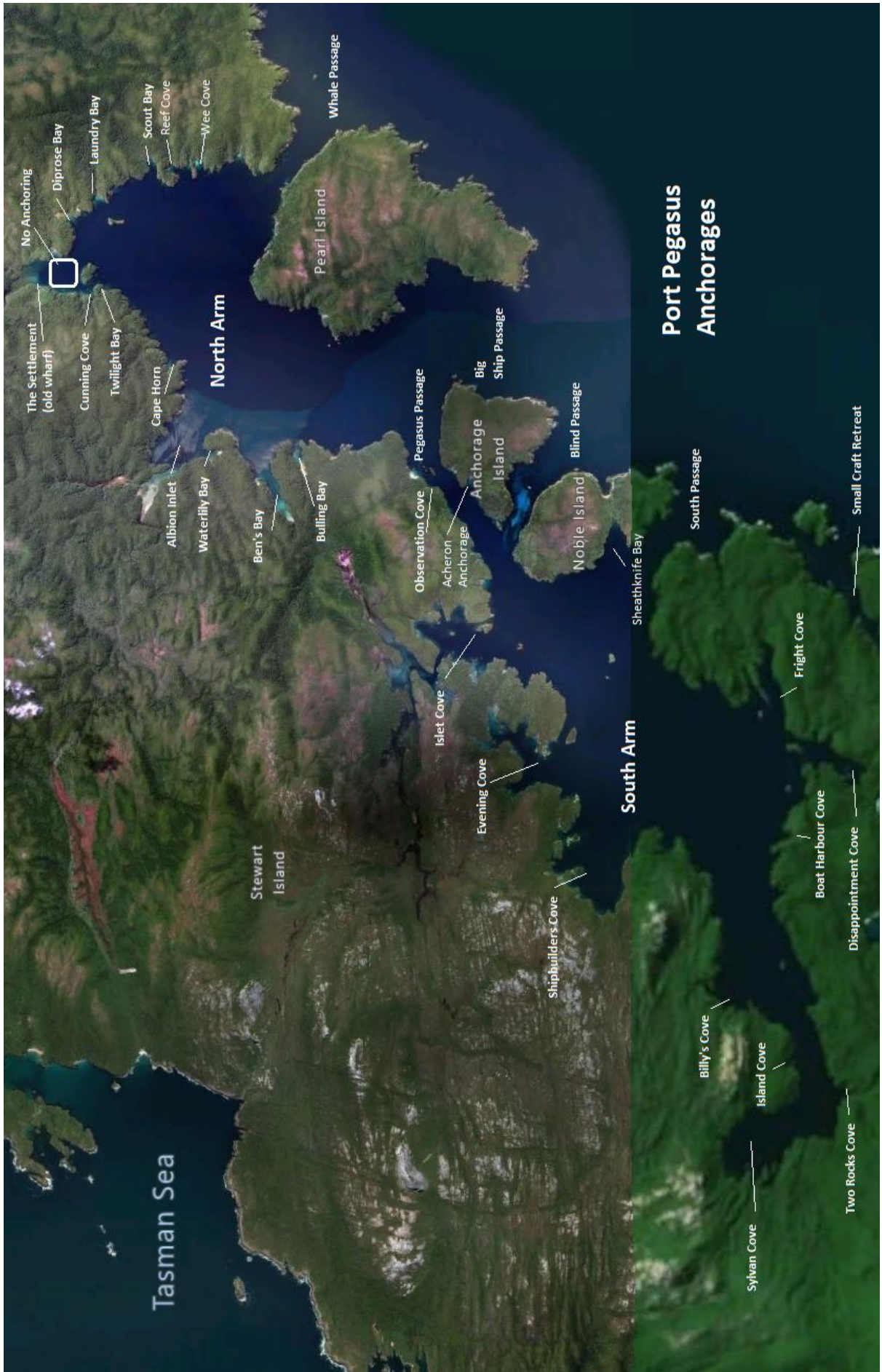
With little swell, deep water, and little in the way of uncharted hazards, the North Arm especially is a fine place to go sailing just for the fun of it.

The North Arm is an exceedingly attractive place, but prepare to be stunned by the South Arm. Each has a different character about it.

The location of anchorages in both arms is shown on the next satellite image “Port Pegasus Anchorages”

Entrance passages are described first, followed by anchorages in the North Arm, Pegasus Passage, and then the South Arm.





## Port Pegasus Anchorage

## **Entrance Passages**

### **Whale Passage**

A narrow passage, but with plenty of depth for a cruising boat. Generally stay towards the middle of the channel. At the seaward end however, keep well to the Pearl Island side to give Orphan Rock, just off the entrance to the channel, a very wide berth to miss the submerged (but breaking) rocks just to its south. These are charted, but not on every chart. On the flood tide, the current flows out seawards through this channel, at upwards of 2 knots.

### **Big Ship Passage**

Also known as Broad Passage, this deep wide channel has no hazards. This is the best passage to use if there is a large sea running outside.

### **Blind Passage**

Although navigable, best not attempted in bad weather or poor visibility without prior knowledge. Entering Blind Passage from seawards keep to the deep water towards the middle of the channel. About halfway through the passage, just where the water shallows abruptly, leave the islet in the middle of the channel well to starboard. Tend more towards the Noble Island side of the channel and continue through in adequate water (approx. 3m at LW)

### **South Passage**

Although relatively narrow, this channel is deep and has no obstructions. The seas can be quite big outside the passage when tide and swell are opposing. Well identified by the conspicuous Pigeon House rock outcrop high on the southern entrance headland.



## Port Pegasus - North Arm

By and large, the waters around the North Arm are clear of hazards, with very deep water. At the north end of the arm, between the north tip of Rosa Island and the ruined wharf, is a no anchoring zone. A vulnerable seabed community here would be easily damaged by a vessel anchoring.

Vessels too large for the good anchorages described will still be able to find decent shelter by anchoring close in along the shore as appropriate, or in the lee of Burnt Island. This may involve anchoring in very deep water though.

## Bulling Bay

*Best shelter – S to NW*

Apart from having a nice beach at its head, this bay has little to recommend it as an overnight stop. It is very exposed to the east, and there are submerged rocks extending almost halfway across the entrance from the north. Enter very close to the head on the south. The entrance shallows but inside the bay is deeper (around 5m at LW). The bottom is sand, the holding is good. You would need to run a stern line to one of the banks.

## Ben's Bay

*Best shelter – All round, all weather*



An excellent place to comfortably sit out any gale or storm, although a strong easterly will still be felt – albeit lessened – at the anchorage. Enter and proceed up the middle of the bay in deep water to the basin just before the bay becomes narrower at its head. Anchor in the middle of the basin in around 7m, and tie back to a buoyed stern line close to the north bank, or to the bank itself if wind direction dictates. The water is deep right up to the bank. Very good holding. The head of the bay starts to shallow a short distance past the buoyed line.

## Waterlily Bay

*Best shelter – all round, all weather*



Another excellent all weather anchorage, more attractive and even better than Ben's Bay. Very popular. Drop anchor in the middle of the bay, run a rope onto the buoyed hawser, and pull back into about 4m at LW. Excellent holding. The buoys on the hawser are attached to loops. For further security in bad weather, run an additional line from the bow forward to one of the trees on the east bank. If you are considerate, there is room for two boats to tie up here. While being very secure, in a strong northerly the bay can be a bit blustery, however there is no sea to bother about.

There is a water pipe attached to the hawser. This can be seen running along the shore between the two beaches. Flow is adequate.



### **Albion Inlet**

*Best shelter – W to NE*



This large inlet is exposed to both the east and the south. The head of the bay offers good shelter from westerly and northerly sector winds though, pick your spot to suit once the water starts to shallow. Good holding. Suitable for larger vessels in the right conditions.

An interesting place to visit in the tender or kayak when anchored here is “Smugglers Cove”, in the NW corner of the inlet. The entrance is very narrow, and can be challenging to find. Basin Creek is also worth a visit.

### **Cape Horn**

Previously reported as a “snug” anchorage, this spot is in reality very tight and there are too many rocks off the shore to be of any use to cruising boats. In 2022, on as close an inspection as was possible in the given conditions, it did not look as if there were any fixed lines, certainly not visible on the surface.

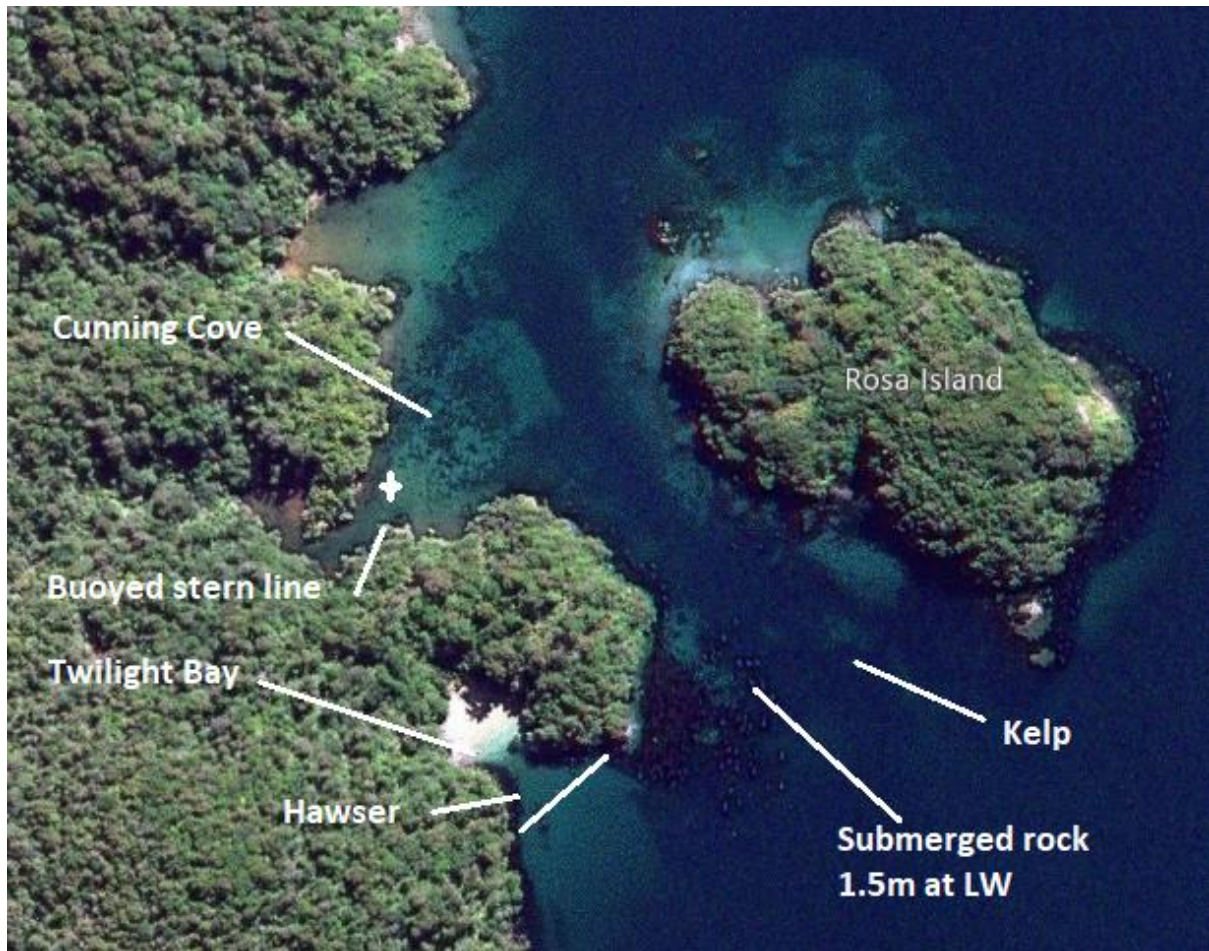
### **Rosa Island**

There is passage on both sides of Rosa Island, but care must be exercised at very low water in the passage by Twilight Bay and Cunning Cove. This is generally about 6m deep at LW, however, there is an unmarked submerged rock at the south end, midway between the charted kelp patch and the Twilight Bay side, 1.5m at LW, possibly slightly less. The author had been through the passage multiple times in both directions at different states of the tide before finding it. At HW, watch for the reef off the north end which runs in line with the island.

### Twilight Bay

*Best shelter – W to N*

This anchorage gives good protection from the west through to north, but is completely exposed to an easterly or southerly. There is a fixed hawser in place. Anchor off the hawser in about 10m at LW, and pull back onto the hawser in about 5m. It does have a nice outlook down the arm.



### Cuning Cove

*Best shelter – E to W*

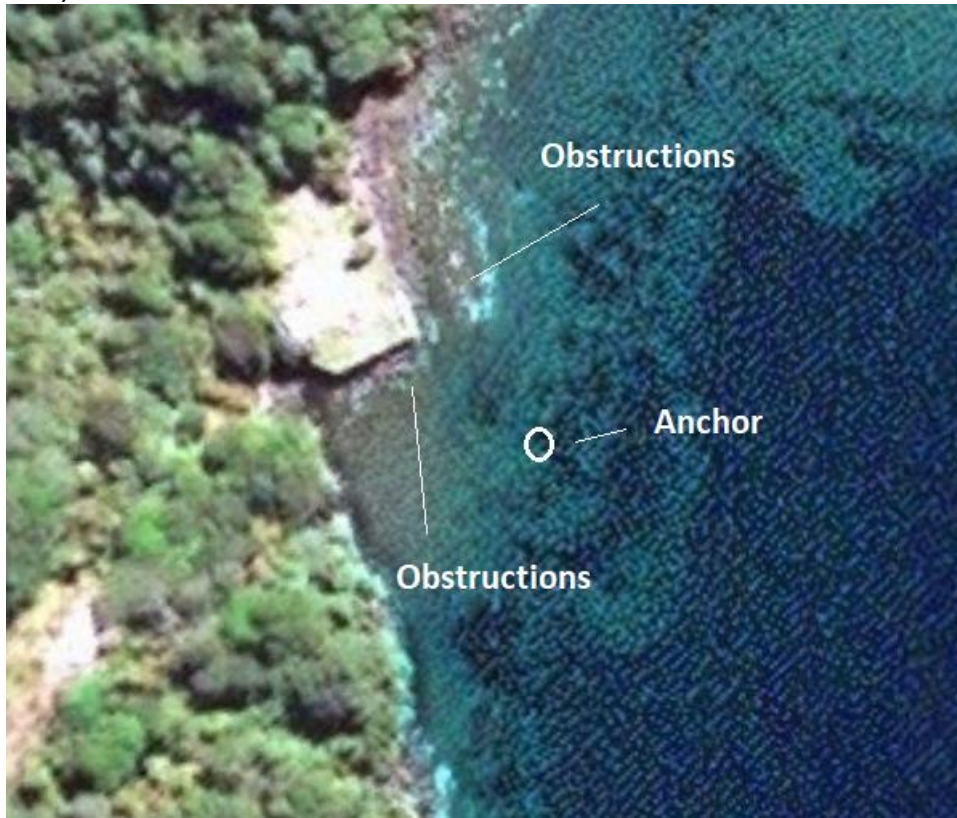
Although a bit shallower than Twilight Bay, this cove gives far better shelter in east and south sector winds. Drop the anchor in about 5m at LW, off the middle of the cove, then pull back into the cove on a buoyed stern line to end up in about 2.2m at LW. Perfectly sheltered and peaceful with a 25kt easterly blowing. Quite a pleasant place to sit and enjoy a sunny afternoon.

The head of the North Arm is an interesting place to visit, if sometimes a bit breezy. The ruined wharf marks the site of The Settlement, which for a short time was reasonably sizeable on account of the tin mining, naturally enough in the Tin Range. It was also the site of a fish processing operation for a while after the mining died. The access track into the Tin Range starts on the shore opposite the wharf. Charter boats will come in to drop trampers off here periodically. There is also a hunting camp close to the start of the track. Combined with the Belltopper Falls, it is a good place to spend a day poking around ashore, a kayak is handy to facilitate exploration.

**Please note and observe the no anchoring zone which exists between the northern tip of Rosa Island, almost as far as the wharf, essentially to both banks. As mentioned previously there is a sensitive seabed community here, which contains some rare corals.**



**The Settlement**  
*Fair weather only*



Anchorage off The Settlement is very open, and care must be taken not to anchor much to the north or south of the wharf. Anchor off the wharf in about 4m at LW. The wharf really marks the end of navigable water in this arm, the water shallows to 1m at LW just north of it. It is not possible to go alongside the wharf on account of large boulders and other debris in the water.

Fresh water is available here through a pipe which is long enough to extend around 15m out past the end of the wharf. It may be best to approach the wharf for water at low tide when the obstructions are visible.

Approach the corner of the wharf diagonally, from the southeast. Drop anchor, smartly run a stern line to a convenient rock below the wall, and pull in close. The bottom here is soft, the stern can be pulled well in, and the pipe run on board. While the corner itself is clear, be aware of the obstructions close to the corner below the walls. The water is good, the flow is excellent.

**Diprose Bay**

*Best shelter – N to E*

Shallows rapidly from just inside the entrance. Reasonable fair weather anchorage in an easterly or northerly. Holding is good.

**Laundry Bay**  
*Best shelter - E*



Shallows rapidly, but just inside the entrance gives a pleasant and fairly sheltered anchorage in an easterly. Holding is good.

**Scout Bay**  
*Best shelter - N to E*

Could provide good easterly shelter for a short stop, but not really suitable as an overnight anchorage unless you tie back onto a tree on the shore. Anchor inside the mouth of the bay in about 6m. The water shallows from about halfway up the bay. Holding is good.



## Reef Cove

*Best shelter – all round, all weather*



Care is required entering this excellent all weather anchorage, there is an unmarked submerged reef extending some distance from the headland on the north side of the entrance. That aside, this would be one of the head-to spots for shelter in extreme conditions. Proceed into the enclosed basin at the head of the bay (about 6m at LW), anchor and tie back to the buoyed stern line. Excellent holding in mud.

**Wee Cove**

*Best shelter – N to SE*



The small bay to the south of Reef Cove. Just inside the entrance to the bay, to starboard, is a buoyed stern line. Anchor and tie back to this for decent shelter from an easterly or southerly. Deep water (about 6m at LW). Good holding, easy access.



## Pegasus Passage

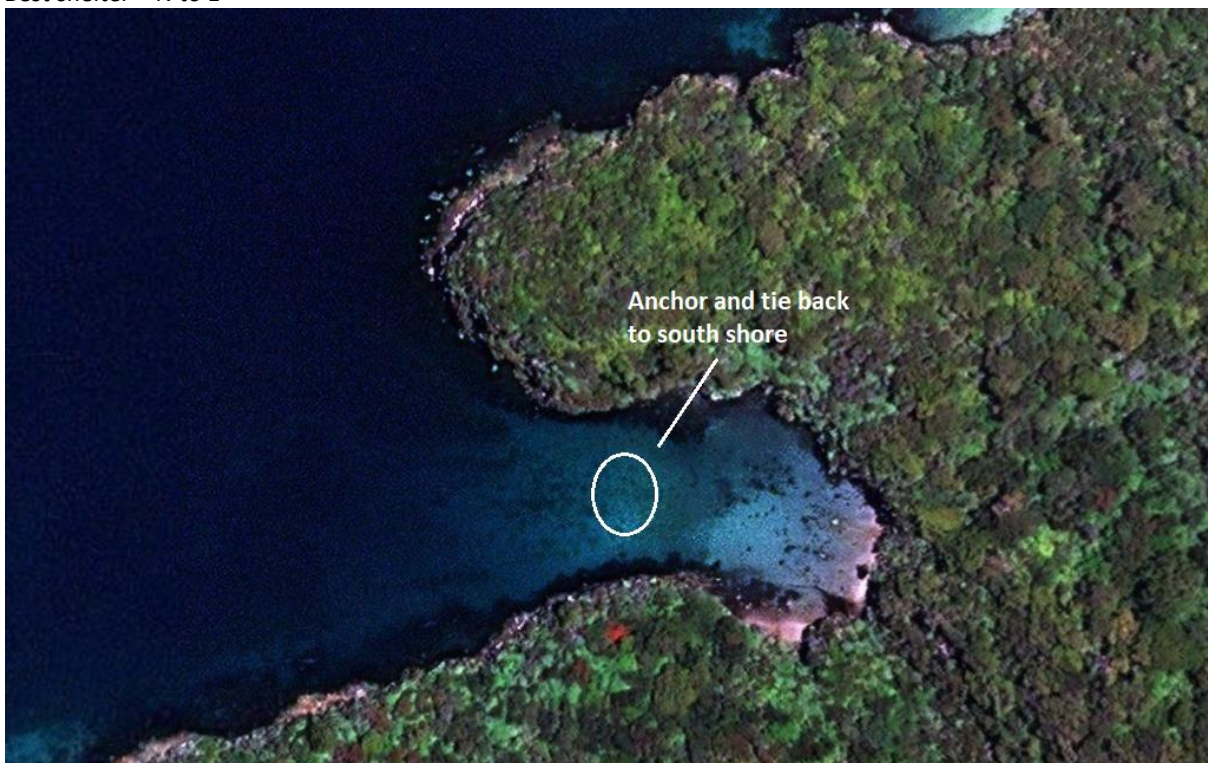
This is the inside passage joining the North and South Arms, sheltered by Noble and Anchorage Islands. Although quite narrow, the channel generally has deep water. At the northern end there is an islet roughly in the middle of the channel. Unless heading into Observation Cove from the south, pass between this islet and Anchorage Island, but watch for a rock close to the shore of Anchorage Island. The transit of this stretch of water gives a good view out through Blind Passage.

The tides flow quite strongly through Pegasus Passage, and the wind tends to blow either up or down the passage, regardless of what it is doing elsewhere in Port Pegasus.

There are two good anchorages here.

## Acheron Anchorage

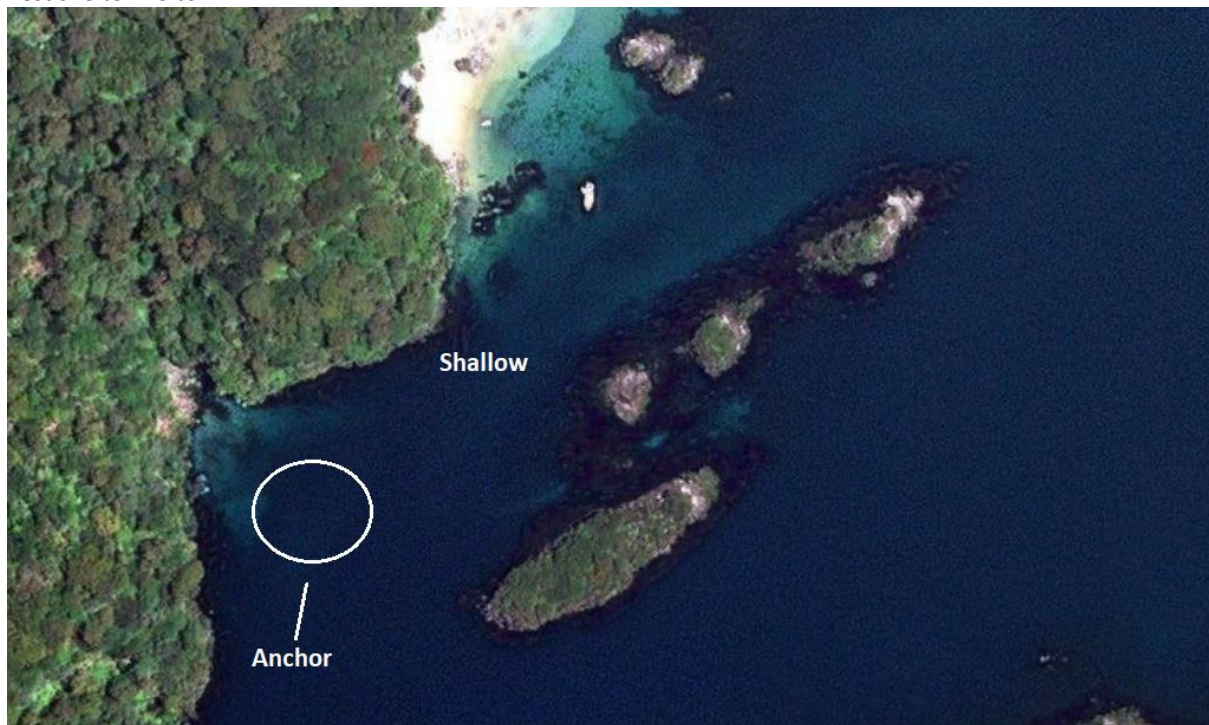
*Best shelter – N to E*



Very sheltered in easterly and northerly conditions not so much in a southerly. Sandy bottom and good holding in about 5m at LW. Not much room to swing inside, but it is possible to tie back to the shore if necessary. Don't go right into the back of the cove. Catches any evening sun going.

## Observation Cove

*Best shelter – S to W*



More sheltered than it appears, with a reef and islets breaking the sea and wind. Come in behind the big islet into the sheltered water, and anchor in 10-12m at LW. The holding is good. There is room to swing, but it is better to tie back to the bank towards the west. The drawback here is a busy hunter's camp in the next cove to the north, but occupation will be seasonal. That aside, this is quite an attractive spot.

## **Port Pegasus - South Arm**

The South Arm, unlike the North Arm, is liberally strewn with islets, rocks and reefs. Not all the rocks and reefs are awash, but all seem to be charted, with some being quite inconveniently located. Much more extensive than the North Arm, with an open feel about it, and some of the finest coastal scenery in the country.

### **Sheathknife Bay**

*Best shelter – N to SE*

This deep indent in the lower west coast of Noble Island, is far enough north of the South Passage to be clear of any roll coming in. Anchor close to the head of the bay, in the middle, when the water starts to shallow to around 10m. The holding is good, but the topography makes the bay a bit gusty in anything over a moderate easterly. That said, a nice spot in settled weather.

Heading south down the coast from the South Passage, there are a few coves which look promising as anchorages, but fail to live up to appearances. The two un-named coves immediately north of Fright Cove have poor holding on a rock bottom.

### **Fright Cove**

*Fair weather only*

Atmospheric and quite attractive, Fright Cove is not a recommended overnight anchorage. Contrary to appearance, it is actually very exposed to most winds, and the holding at the head is variable. Worth a visit for the scenery though.



## Disappointment Cove

*Best shelter – all weather, all round*

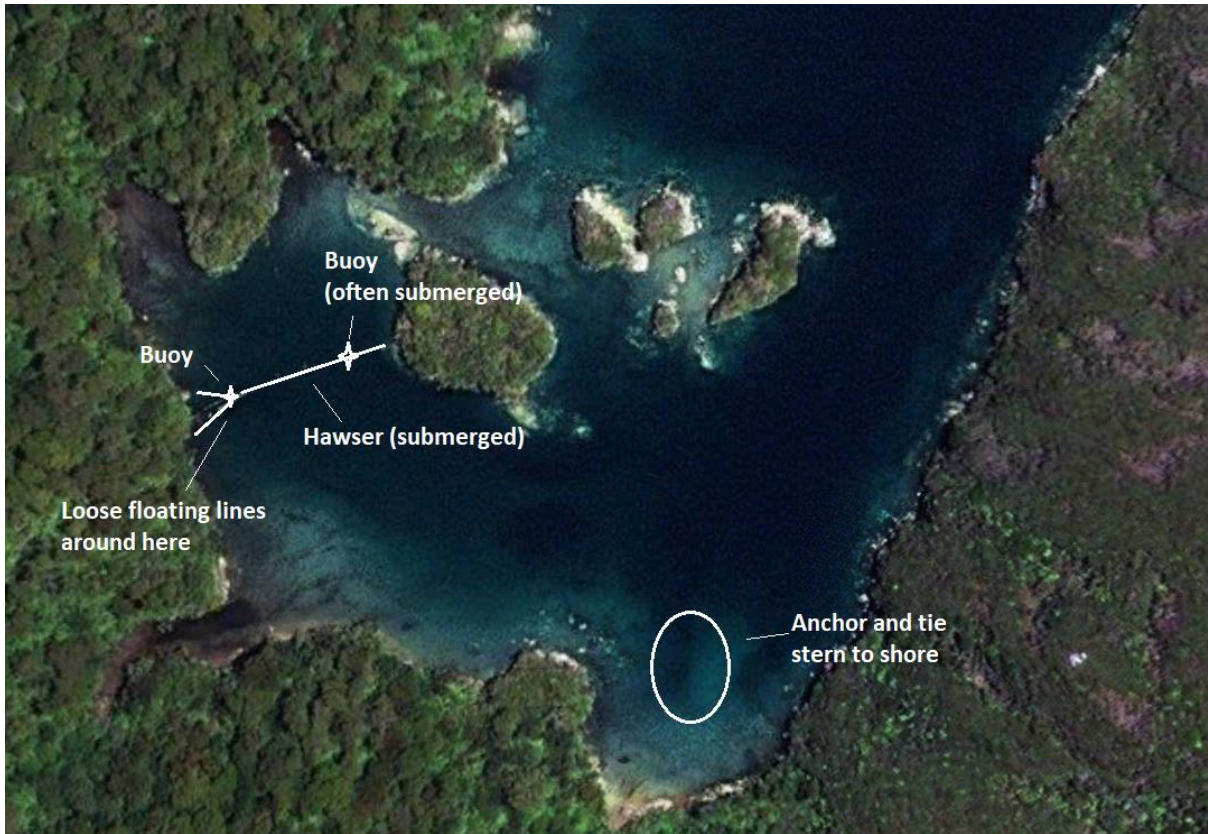


Disappointment Cove approach

This is a very secure, all weather anchorage. However, if heading here to sit out bad weather, it is best to get in before the weather hits. The entrance into the channel is fairly narrow, a northerly can build a fair sea running in, easterlies can be very gusty across the entrance and down most of the channel, westerlies can throw up a sea as well.

Although fairly narrow in places, the channel into the head of the cove is deep (over 6m) and free of obstructions other than the islands. Heading into the channel a white sign is visible on an islet well ahead. It is there as a marker for bad weather. Leave it to starboard. Currently the sign says "No Fish Farming in Pegasus", but this is liable to change..... Turn to starboard past the islands to enter the anchorage. There is adequate water across the whole area (min 3.5m at LW) and plenty of room to manoeuvre.

Strung between the island and the shore is a long hawser. It has been recommended in the past to tie alongside this hawser, but this is NOT advisable. The hawser is heavily encrusted with mussels and weed, and no longer floats. Although it is supported and marked by two buoys, the one closest to the island is often submerged. At the shore end, there are an assortment of loose-ish lines floating about. More than one vessel has fouled a prop on these. The best approach for a cruising boat would be to anchor in an appropriate spot in the cove, and run a stern line to the hawser in the tender. Be prepared for a bit of a struggle landing the hawser though, it is quite heavy and well under the surface.



Disappointment Cove configuration

All that aside, this is a very secure spot, so bear in mind that in bad weather there are liable to be fishing boats wanting to use it as well. Plenty of room for multiple boats if everyone is considerate.

In more settled weather, a nice alternative is to anchor off the small cove at the end of the entrance channel in 4m at LW, and tie back to one of a couple of trees, then pull back into the cove. Good shelter other than in a northerly.

The diagram shows the current (2022) configuration of the hawser.

The tidal flow in Disappointment Cove is quite strong.

The path through the bush to Communicating Coves is in good order.

### **Boat Harbour Cove**

*Best shelter – E to SW*

Bigger than it looks from seaward, and fairly deep. Good easterly and southerly shelter. Anchor just inside the mouth of the bay in about 7m on a sandy bottom with good holding, run a stern line ashore, and pull back into the cove. A path through the bush to The Settlement in Broad Bay starts here.



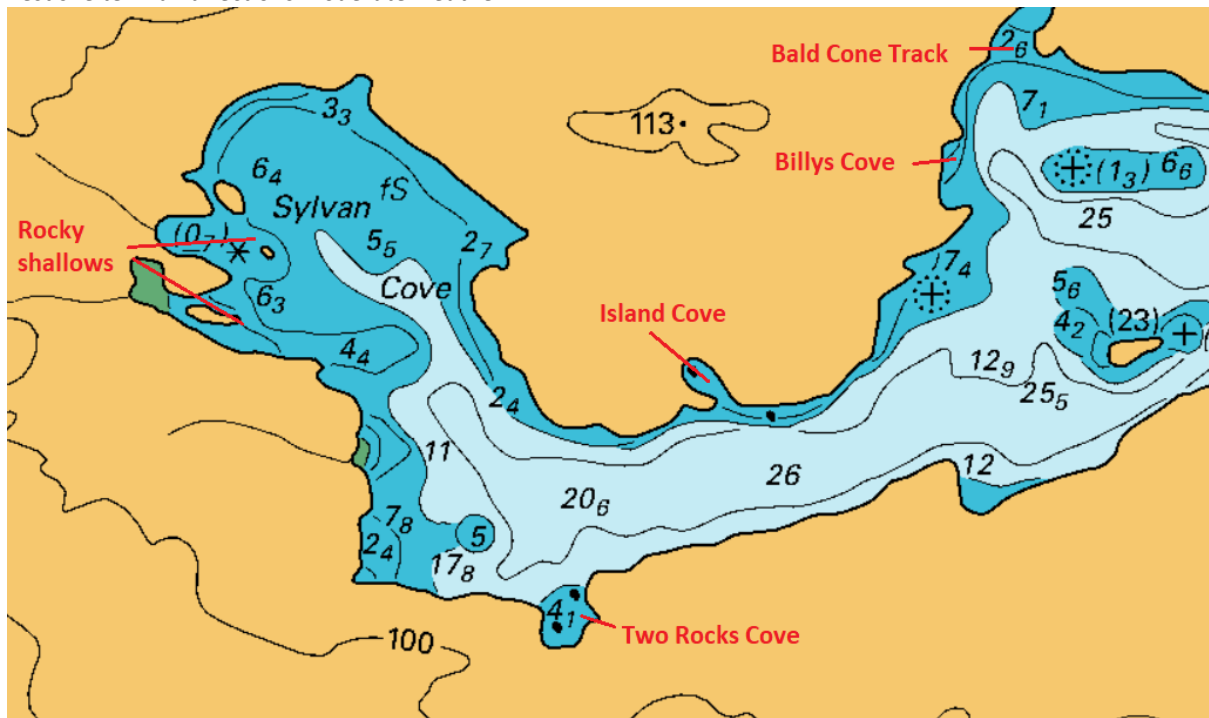
**Two Rocks Cove**  
*Best shelter – N to S*



Another one of the esoteric anchorages, but good shelter from every direction other than a westerly. Anchor in line with the two obvious rocks in 4.5m, and run a stern line into the back of the cove. Pull back till properly inside, but not too far as when the cove shallows, it does so abruptly. Good holding, sandy bottom.

## Sylvan Cove

Best shelter – all directions moderate weather

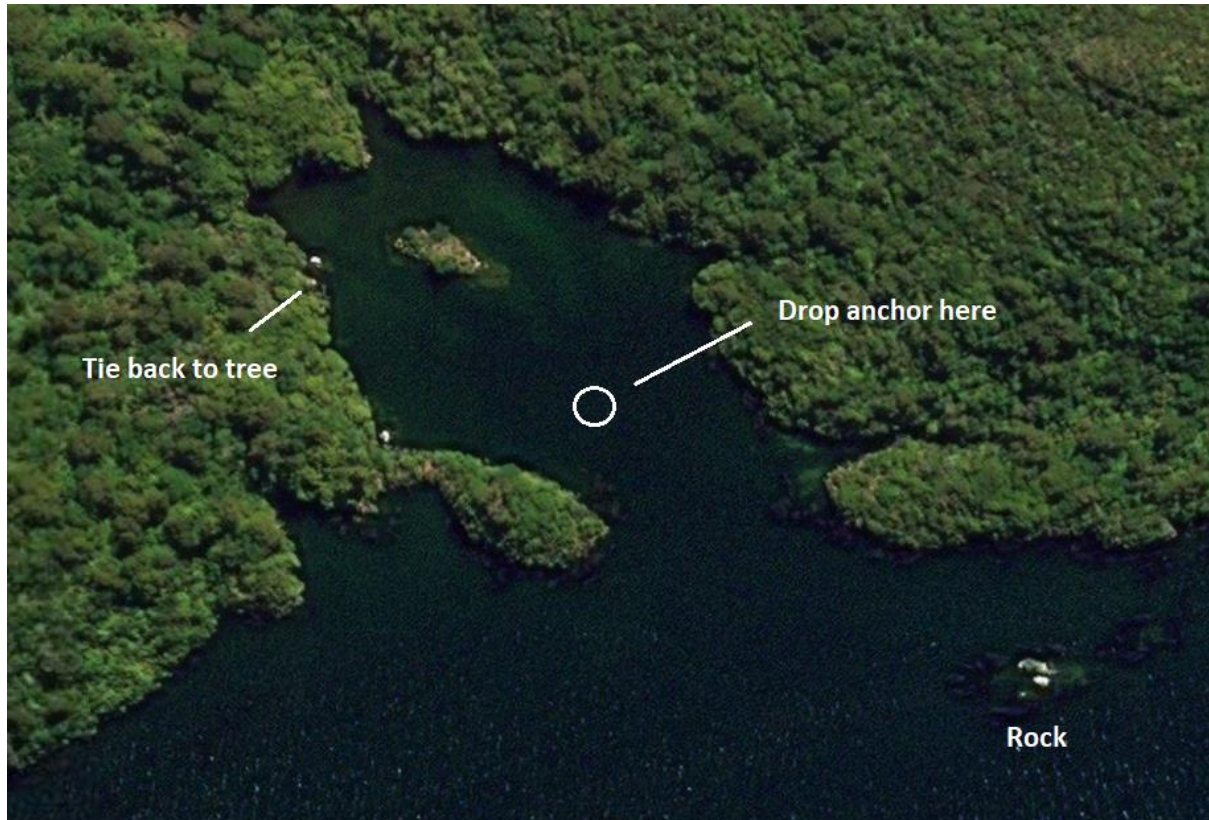


Sylvan Cove area

Looks as if it ought to be reasonably sheltered, but the configuration of the hills around the cove actually ensures it is quite gusty. A lovely place for all that though. The seas generally don't build too much in bad weather. Anchor and swing at the head of the cove to suit the conditions in deep water (over 5m at LW). Stay clear of the two small inlets marked on the diagram to avoid semi-submerged rocks. Holding in the cove is good.

### Island Cove

*Best shelter – SW to E*



Very sheltered but quite tight. Apart from close to the shores the inlet is clear of obstructions with 5-6m depth across the main part of the cove. The water shallows appreciably from the top end of the island, but this is obvious. There is only room for a single 13m boat in here. Drop anchor off the south end of the island and tie back to the large tree further into the inlet. For complete peace of mind, run a bow line the shore as well. Watch for the exposed rock just outside the entrance.

Continuing round the shore in the direction of Shipbuilders Cove are a couple of moderately useful fair weather anchorages.

### Billy's Cove

*Fair weather only*

Very open with variable holding. Not a good place to leave the boat for an ascent of Bald Cone unless the weather is fine and settled.

### Bald Cone Track

*Fair weather only*

Just to the north of Billy's Cove, is a deep narrow inlet which forks towards its head. It is possible to take a 13m boat into the narrow inlet with about 3m at low water, and the entrance is easily do-able in a 25kt easterly. Very sheltered, a good place to drop off anyone wanting to climb Bald Cone. Use your own good judgement as to whether you feel comfortable anchoring and tying back..... Good holding in 7-10m at LW just outside the narrow inlet though.

The track to Bald Cone is popular, and starts at the back of the right hand branch of the inlet. It is in good order, easily followed. Time to the top is around 1 hour for a reasonably fit person.



## Shipbuilders Cove

In general, Shipbuilders Cove is pretty open to the elements, however, there is good shelter from most directions in the anchorages described. NE Cove is quite tight. There are submerged rocks and reefs aplenty here, all seem to be charted, but care is still needed.



### SW Cove

*Best shelter - S*

Very open to easterlies and northerlies, but in the right conditions could be useful for an ascent of Bald Cone. There is just a very narrow band of bush here before the open hillside. Deep water (10m+ at LW) close in. Holding is variable.

### NW Cove

*Best shelter – W to E*

A bit open to the south, but good for westerly through to easterly conditions. Much deeper than the chart suggests. There is no through passage at the north end. Anchor behind the smaller of the two islands in about 8m on a sandy bottom, tie back to a rock on the mainland bank. Good holding.

### NE Cove

*Best Shelter – all round, not severe weather*

Shelter from all directions, although a strong wind will catch your mast and rigging. Quite tight. Enter the anchorage through a narrow channel between the island and the mainland (4m at LW). Anchor at the bifurcation, run a stern line to a tree inside the left branch, and pull back. Good holding.

There are a few other places around the north end of the cove that appear promising anchorages, but there are a lot of rock shelves running out from points and between islets, and getting into these spots becomes a bit fraught.

Just round the point eastwards from the end of Shipbuilders, on the way to Evening Cove, are the following two anchorages, which are shown on the image for Evening Cove.

**Tunnel Cove**

Very small, and a reef comes off the point into the entrance of the bay. Really can't be recommended.

**Sundowners Cove**

*Best shelter – W to N*

Fairly small and quite open, however, the buoyed mooring line in the back of the cove will allow the boat to be pulled back into good westerly and northerly shelter, less so in a southerly. Anchor off the buoy in about 8m and tie back. Good holding. Good views across the southern half of the arm.

**Evening Cove**

Continuing northwards, Evening Cove provides a number of excellent anchorages in its two arms. The East Arm especially is a popular spot.



Evening Cove anchorages

### **West Arm**

*Best shelter – all round, all weather*

Nicely sheltered, with easy access. Proceed up the right branch of the arm almost to the head. In the inlet to port is a buoyed hawser. Drop anchor in the middle of the arm in 5m at LW and tie and pull back to the hawser. Good holding, though in severe weather you may want to run a bow line to the north shore as well. If you prefer to swing to the anchor, then the left branch has good holding in 5m on a sandy/mud bottom, but it is a bit more exposed to the east.

### **East Arm**

Much more expansive than the West Arm with a variety of attractive options for stopovers. The arm does shallow towards the head, and there is a reef projecting towards the deep channel which is submerged at high water, but these are easily navigable to get a location that suits.

### **Main Anchorages**

*Best shelter – W to E*

Entering the arm up the deep water channel, there are two large bays to starboard. Although they appear quite open, they both afford good shelter, easy access, with good holding in a sandy bottom in a depth of between 4 to 6m, choose your spot to suit the current wind direction. This is one of the anchorage spots suitable for larger vessels and multihulls.

Just past the second (larger) of the two bays, a reef (Codfish Reef) projects out into the arm from the right, and the channel narrows. Keep closer to the left bank, and follow it round towards a group of islets. Be careful of some rocks just off the bank, but the channel is deep and clear. There are a couple of nice anchorages now open.

### **Islet Anchorage**

*Best shelter – all round, all weather*

This is a totally enclosed small anchorage, suitable only for a single boat. With careful positioning there is (just) room to swing at the anchor, but it might be better to tie back to a rock or tree on the bank, and this would then be a good all weather spot. Pass between the islets and the left hand bank, the channel is very narrow but is 5m deep. Carry on into the wider part of the inlet, and anchor where suits best in 2.5 to 3m. The bottom is sandy and good holding. The water is navigable almost to both shores, but starts to shallow a short distance past the larger islet.

### **Codfish Reef Anchorage**

*Best shelter – All round, not severe weather*

The area at the head of the arm behind Codfish Reef is inviting looking, and is a good anchorage with a sandy bottom in 4m. There are a couple of shallower patches and rocks in the approach line past Codfish Reef, but these are easily avoided. At the back of the bay is a large rock with a prominent white mark on it. From the entrance channel into the Islet Anchorage, proceed directly towards this rock until well past Codfish Reef. Turn to starboard and anchor to suit. Plenty of room, but all of the inlets around the bay are shallower.

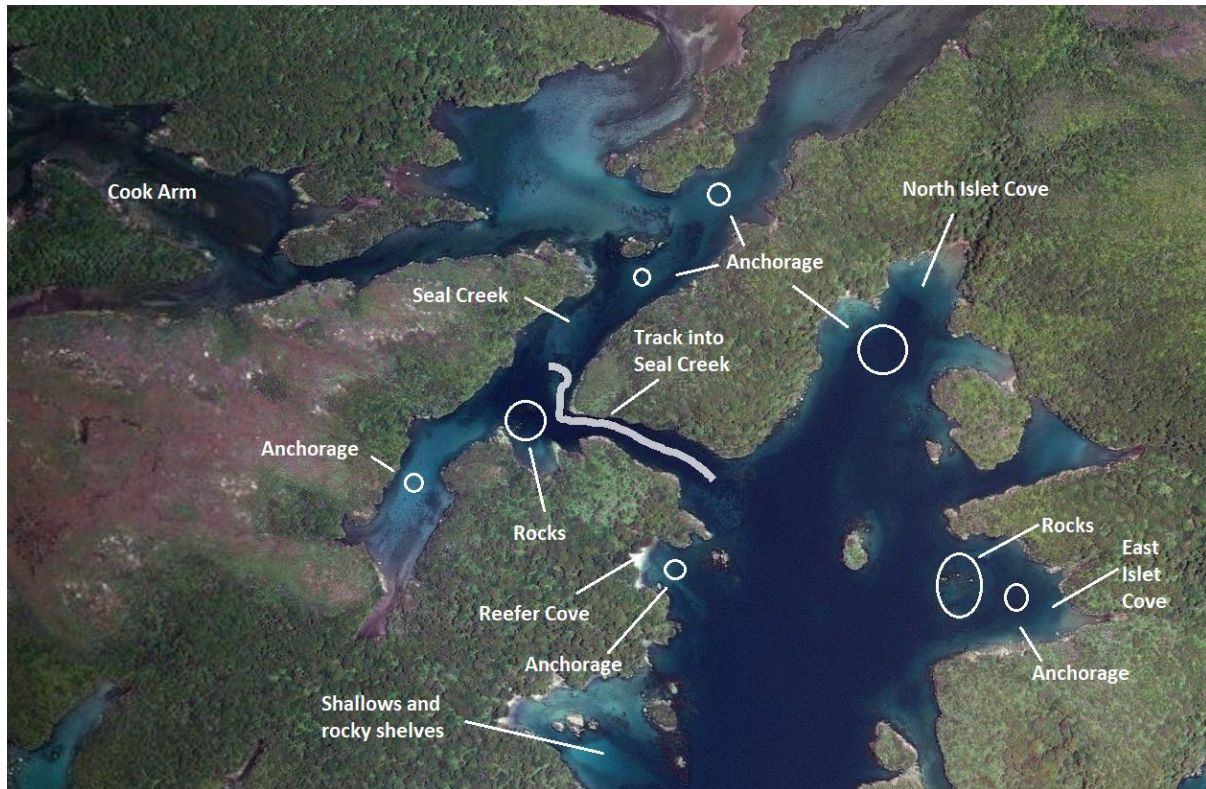


## Islet Cove

The position of some features in this inlet on the LINZ NZ Mariner chart appear inaccurate. It would be prudent to be familiar with the Google Earth image prior to entering the cove.

To enter Islet Cove, either use the main deep channel up the west side of the island just outside its mouth, or, cut across the shallower ground north of the island. Provided you keep well north of the shallows marked on the chart, there is plenty of depth to do so.

Do be aware that away from the main channel, there are a number of semi or totally submerged rocks strewn about the cove, not all of which are well charted.



Islet Cove / Seal Creek Anchorages

Entering the inlet proper, immediately to port is a large-ish bay with some islets at its mouth, and rocks in the back. Best avoided, there are rock shelves running off the islets and rocks.

## Reefer Cove

*Best shelter - W*

This is the second cove to port on entering the inlet, and contains a hunter's camp. Best avoided when the camp is occupied, it still gives a reasonable moderate weather anchorage. Anchor in the middle of the cove in about 4m with good holding. Be aware of the rocks projecting off the north promontory of this cove.

## Seal Creek / Cook Arm

This extensive waterway is reached via a narrow entrance channel to port, immediately past Reefer Cove. Once through the entrance channel, to port, is the small south arm. To starboard, the north arm is navigable up past the islet. Cook Arm runs out west from the islet, and is only accessible by tender or kayak towards high water. This northern part of the waterway has quite beautiful views across to the sharp granite peaks. Not every vessel will be able to access Seal Creek. The entrance channel, although deep enough (5m), narrows towards the intersection with the inner waterway. At the intersection, the water shallows (1.4m at LW), the north point has a submerged rocky shelf, and there is a submerged rock which is not easy to see right in the intersection. Tidal flow in the vicinity of the intersection is substantial and must be taken into account. By the time you reach the intersection, you are committed, the channel is too narrow to turn in. However, scary description aside, a prudent approach at the right state of the tide, and it is not that hard. If you are at all unsure, check out the intersection in the tender first.

Inside Seal Creek you have a choice of three good anchorages

### **South Arm**

*Best shelter – all round, all weather*

Once well clear of the intersection, turn to port, then proceed into the arm, keeping over to the starboard side of the channel to clear the obstructions in the vicinity of the intersection. Continue on until the arm starts to widen, anchor in about 3.5m, and tie back to whichever bank suits. Very sheltered, with good holding on a sandy bottom. There is just room to swing if you are careful about it, but probably safer to run a stern line. The inlet shallows a short distance into the wider part.

### **North Arm**

*Best shelter – all round, all weather*

The North Arm is deeper (5m) and free of hazards. There are two good spots here, both suitable for swinging to the anchor. The first location is just behind the small island, off its southern end, 4.5m on a sandy bottom. Very sheltered. Some might find this a bit tight. To reach the other spot, continue on past the island into the wider basin between the headland and the other bank. Again, very sheltered, plenty of room in 4.5m on a sandy bottom with good holding.

The North Arm is really the place to go. Once up at the island, the views out over the Cook Arm (especially when the tide is in) towards Gog and Magog are outstanding. Also, again when the tide allows, the Cook Arm provides easy access in the tender to the path to Gog and Magog. Don't go too far past the narrows in the North Arm though, the water shallows rapidly past here.

And once back outside Seal Creek in the main cove

### **North Islet Cove**

*Best shelter – W to E*

Past the entrance to Seal Creek there is unobstructed access to the head of Islet Cove. Anchor where suits the conditions in the middle of the bay about level with the north tip of the peninsula (which looks like an island). There is plenty of room and depth (about 6 – 7m at LW). The holding is variable across the bay, but when the anchor sticks it will be good. Suitable for larger boats.

### **East Islet Cove**

*Best shelter – N to S*

Care is needed on the entry into this anchorage, but it is a lovely wee spot once you are in. The LINZ chart shows rocks in the middle of the entrance to the bay, but this outcropping is more extensive than indicated. Head into the bay close to its southern shore, well clear of the marked rocks in the middle of the entrance. The water shallows a bit close to the entrance, then deepens again once properly into the bay. Anchor well inside the bay to suit the conditions, in about 6m. Make sure you go well into the bay to give the marked rocks plenty of clearance – they extend further into the bay than marked on the LINZ chart. Cautions about the rock outcrop aside, this really is a nice anchorage.



## South Coast Anchorages

Between Port Pegasus and South West Cape there are no offshore hazards, however, the waters around here frequently have sizeable overfalls and strong currents which need to be treated with respect. Combined with the frequent heavy swells, these can make for uncomfortable travel. After a spell of southerly or westerly weather, it is probably as well to wait a day or so for the sea and swell to flatten out a bit before transiting these waters.

### Small Craft Retreat

*Best shelter – S to W*



Situated just outside the mouth of the South Passage, in behind Ernest Island, this is a fairly sheltered spot with a couple of possibilities for anchoring. However, if shelter is needed, it would be far easier to just head into Port Pegasus where there are many more options. It is an attractive enough spot though.

Enter the inlet via the passage at the north end of Ernest Island. This is narrow with breaking rocks on either side. If there is much swell running the breakers are significant, and set up a fair backwash. The entrance is deep though, so pick your line for the best run through.

The opening to the south of Ernest Island will look less forbidding in northerly or easterly conditions, but there are rocks and shallows about, so it is best avoided unless you have local knowledge.

Once inside the entrance, there is a small bay to port with a crib above the shore. This bay is out of the worst of the roll and has good holding on a sandy bottom in about 3.5m. Possibly not the best place to spend the night though. Proceeding further into the inlet, past the southern passage, is a prominent cove to starboard. Options for anchoring are either to anchor and swing in the middle of the main inlet on a sandy bottom with good holding in about 5m at LW, or, drop anchor in the mouth of the cove, run a stern line back to the trees on the shore, and pull back in. The water in the cove is deep (4m) close to the shore.

The basin past the cove is pretty, and it is possible to get about 1/3 of the way into it in 3m at LW, but do keep an eye on the depth.

Between Port Pegasus and South West Cape the currents run strongly, and the swell, even on a calm day, can be sizeable. Weather events further out in the Southern Ocean can throw a large swell onto South West Cape (and up the west coast), and when these interact with the wind, current and shallower water close to the land, the result can be spectacular – unless you are out in it! Choose your weather here, as said before, this cruising is meant to be fun.

Heading south from Small Craft Retreat, the next large indent in the coast is Broad Bay, last possible shelter before rounding South West Cape for the west coast.

### **Broad Bay**

On the face of it, Broad Bay (sometimes called Wilsons Bay) is large enough and featured enough to look as if it should provide some decent anchorages. However, it has a wide mouth, is completely open to any southerly swell going, and the coves in the head of the bay are largely shallow. There can be big overfalls off the mouth of the bay. The reality is that there is only one safe anchorage in the whole bay – Burial Cove, described below. Broad Bay is a nice place to nose around if the weather and seas permit though, if you have the time to wait, it is worth it. There are a couple of tracks through to the South Arm of Port Pegasus from Boat Harbour and Communicating Cove.

### **Burial Cove**

*Best shelter – all round, all weather*



Used by fishing boats for shelter, the all weather description is used with a caveat. Although a safe anchorage, a cruising boat might be stuck in here for some time after a gale, waiting for the sea and swell to go down. The fishing boats which use it have much more power and local knowledge to let them get in and out. A couple of the smaller side coves have lines set up for tying the stern to. Make your choice to suit the prevailing conditions. Take care to avoid the reefs and rocks in the northern part of the entrance.

A short distance further down the coast towards South West Cape lies Flour Cask Bay. This is best bypassed. Although there is a cove which gives little shelter from a moderate southerly, being trapped in here would be dire. The only reason for visiting this spot would be to explore in good weather with little sea or swell.

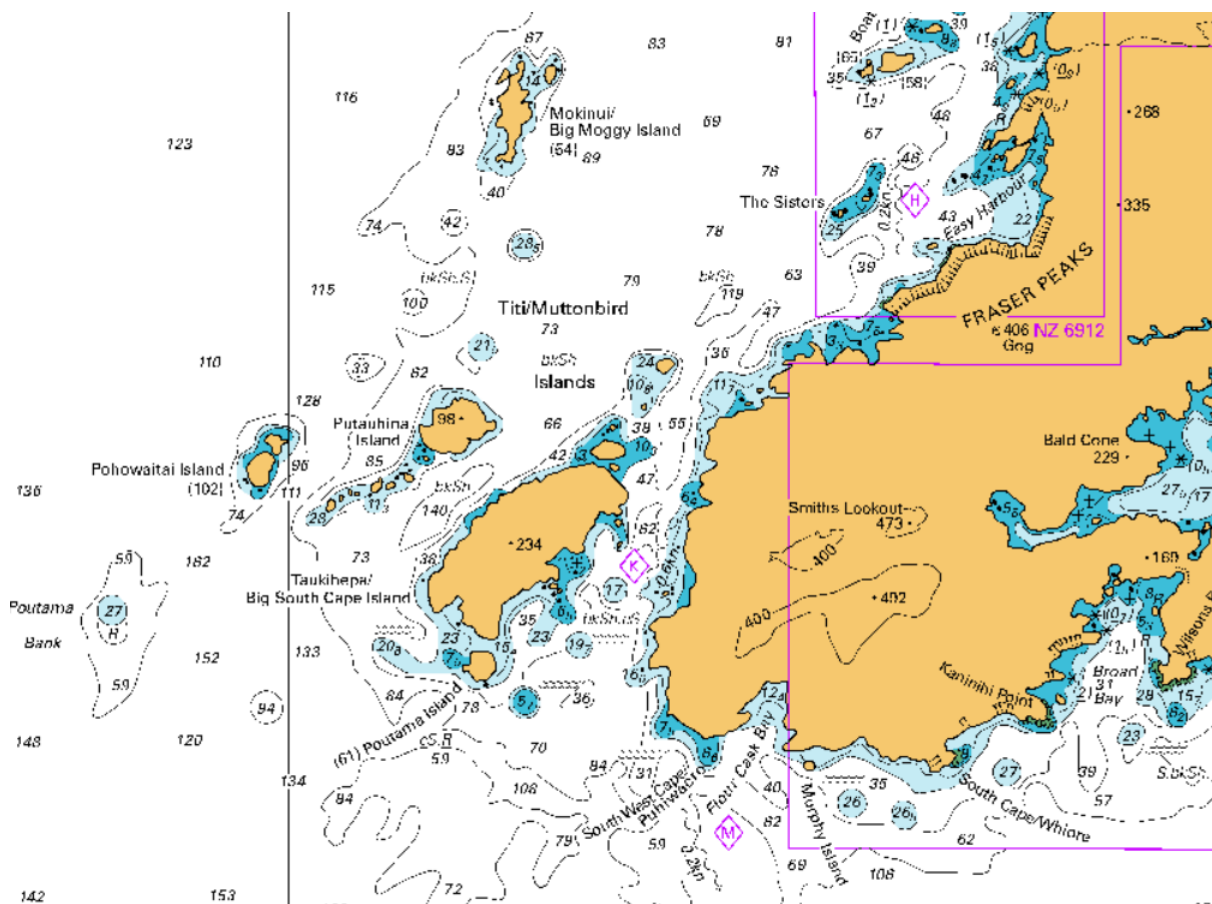
## West Coast of Stewart Island

Although described here from south to north, it is worth bearing in mind that some of the better conditions for transiting this coast will occur when there are light northerly or easterly winds, in which case it may well be easier to sail from north to south.

The west coast of Stewart Island is a pretty exposed and often inhospitable stretch of water, prone to big swells and strong currents. Even after a couple of days of good weather over the island, this coast can still be running a large swell, thrown up by an adverse weather system out in the Southern Ocean. Currents, especially around the Muttonbird Islands, Ruggedy Islands, and where there is a direction change, such as around Southwest Cape, can be getting on for 4 knots in places.

While there are a number of possible places to haul in and anchor, for the majority of sailors, most of those are only useable with prior local knowledge and/or settled good weather. Being pragmatic about it, there are only three anchorages that cruising boats can easily and consistently use, and only one of those can be considered all-round and all weather.

For those who just want to “tick” the west coast so they can say they have been right round the island, then in favourable conditions it is doable in a long day in summer from Burial Cove to Port William. But, if you have the weather and sea right, take a couple of days over it, even if only hopping between the easier anchorages. You will not regret it.



Southern corner of Stewart Island

Rounding from South Cape to South West Cape can be a bouncy experience even on a calm day, but in general, if you keep a bit further offshore – don't hug the coast – the seas will be a bit easier. There are no offshore rocks here.

Running through the channel between Big South Cape Island and Stewart Island, keep to the middle. There are assorted rocks and islets closer to the shores, which are well charted. The strength of the tidal flow through this channel is such that a cruising boat is probably advised to make the transit with a favourable tide. This whole stretch of coast is prone to large overfalls, but they should ease not too far north of South West Cape.

You can of course go outside the Muttonbird Islands, but it is a long way round, and you miss out on one of the most interesting stretches of water on the coast.

As was mentioned above, for the average cruiser, there are really only three anchorages on this coast which should be considered – Easy Harbour, inside the Ernest Islands, and Sealers Bay on Codfish Island. Easy Harbour gives the best all round protection. A look at the chart or Google Earth will show a number of other likely looking spots, and indeed they are there – Murderers Cove on Big South Cape Island and Doughboy Bay as example – but many of these are small, and give shelter from a very specific direction. Like most of the coastal anchorages on the southeast coast, you would want to be very sure of the weather before settling down in one of them. Doughboy Bay, for instance, looks reasonable, however, when the seas start to build, the surf breaks outside the anchorage, and the roll comes in. While reasonably safe provided nothing goes wrong and the wind doesn't shift, you run the risk of being trapped in a very uncomfortable spot for many days.

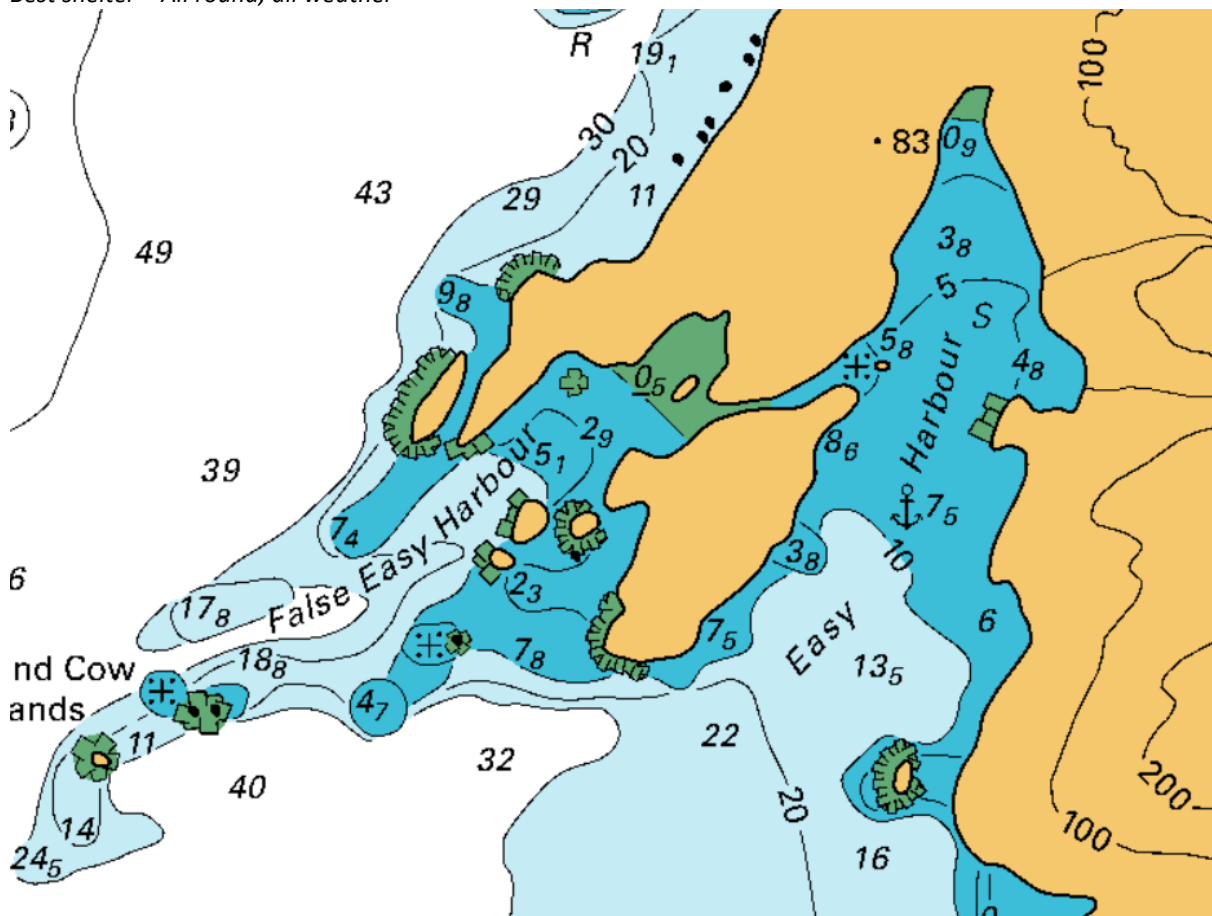
Remember that the tidal flow off the northern half of the west coast runs in the opposite direction to that off the southern half.

Having now put everyone off, the upside is that all these places are well worth exploring in good weather, rather than just doing a quick run along the coast. Spend the night in one of the recommended anchorages. On passage along the coast, there are a few offshore rocks, reefs and shallows to watch for, these are all shown clearly on the LINZ charts.



## Easy Harbour

Best shelter – All round, all weather



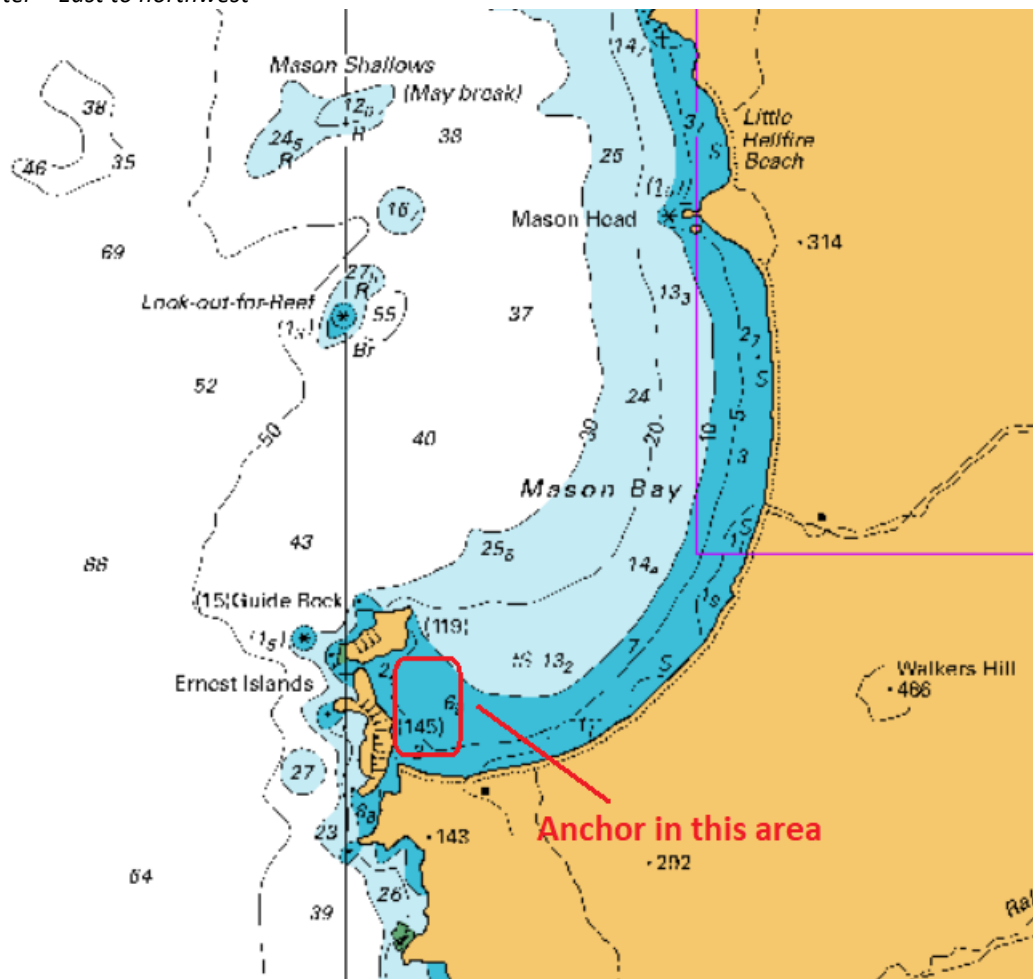
The southmost of the recommended anchorages on the west coast, and the only one which could be considered an all round location. While the inlet looks quite open to the south, it actually does provide reasonable shelter in a strong southerly if you pick your spot. Access to the harbour is straightforward, when entering, keep roughly to the centre of the inlet. Proceed further into the harbour than the anchor marked on the chartlet. About halfway up the harbour, on the west shore, is a narrowish inlet. There are rocks off the mouth of this, but by keeping more north it is possible to anchor off and pull back into the inlet on a stern line. Otherwise, anchor where appropriate for the conditions. The sandy bay on the east shore opposite the indent is a nice spot. Holding in the harbour is good.

If the weather breaks while you are in Easy Harbour, it might well be inadvisable to try to leave until it eases and the sea goes down a bit, however, the harbour is safe and fairly comfortable, there are worse spots to sit out the weather.

Just to the north of Easy Harbour, there is a clear passage inside the Boat Group of islands, which is more engaging than the outside passage, if not quite as scenic.

## Ernest Islands / Mason Bay

Best shelter – East to northwest



Mason Bay has a long curving sandy beach, largely pretty exposed, however, the Ernest Islands jut out north from the south end of the beach, providing good shelter in this corner of the bay from the east through to the northwest. There are a number of spots down the inshore side of the islands suitable for anchoring, dependant on the conditions. The holding in the bay is excellent in 4 to 6m. The bay can get a bit roily if the wind or swell has much north in it. Give the headland at the north end of the Ernest Islands a wide berth when coming into the anchorage, otherwise, there are no hazards to worry about.

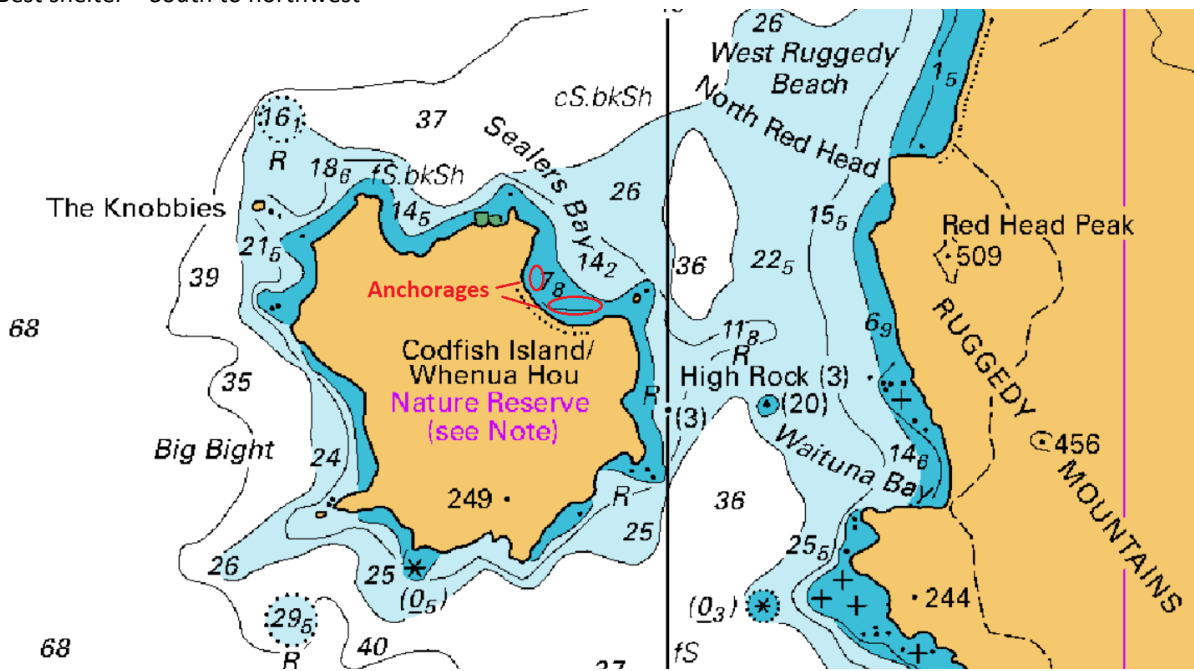
When tracking offshore across Mason Bay between the Ernest Islands and Codfish Island, keep watch for, and avoid, Look-Out-For-Reef and the Mason Shallows. These lie offshore from Mason Head. Look-Out-For-Reef breaks, and while you won't run aground on the Mason Shallows, they can be quite bumpy in the right conditions.

Provided you maintain a reasonable distance offshore, the outside passage around Codfish Island is clear, but do watch out for The Knobbies off the northwest corner of the Island. There are a couple of rocks which are above water located in the inside passage round the island, these are large, charted, and easily avoided.

**Note that Codfish Island is a nature reserve, and that landing is prohibited unless a permit is obtained from the Dept. of Conservation.**

### Codfish Island / Sealers Bay

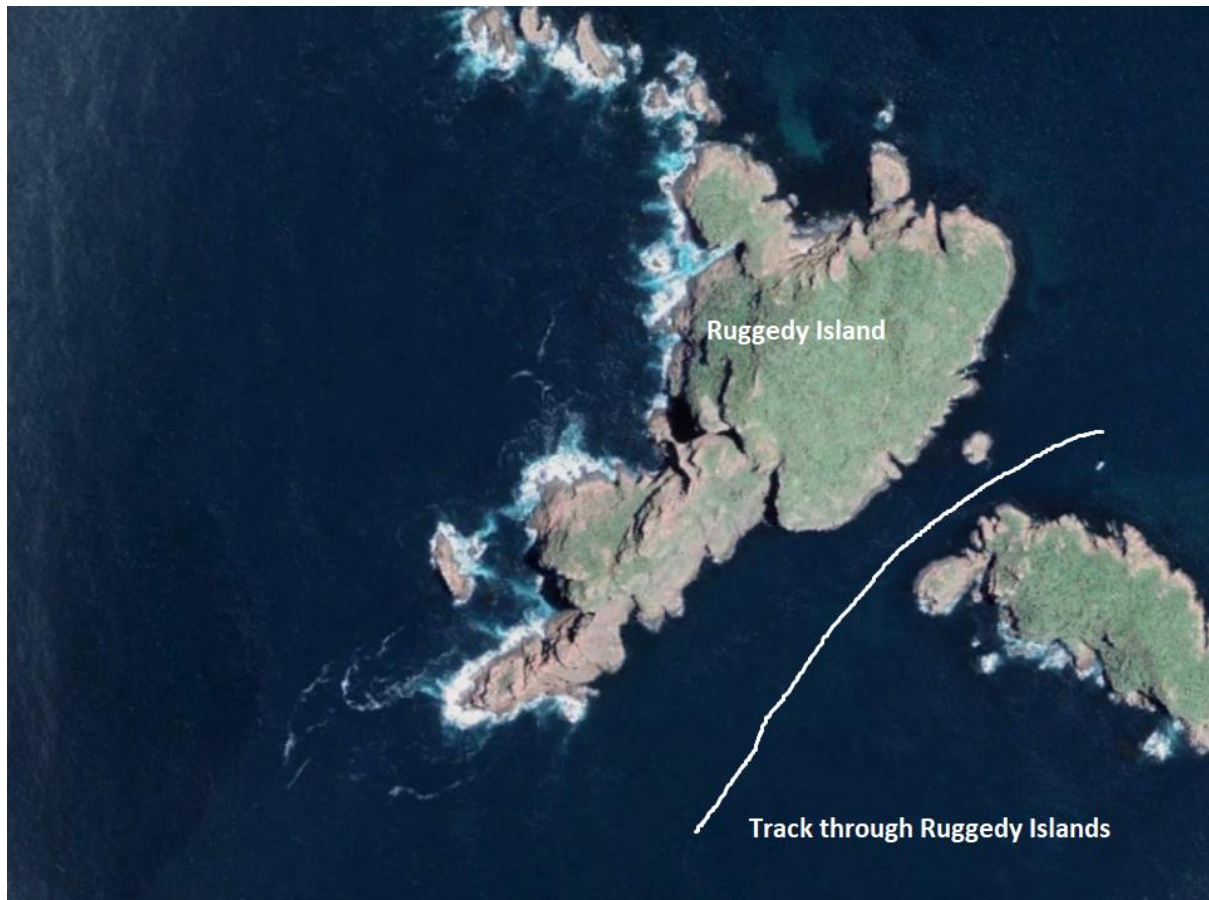
Best shelter – South to northwest



Provides good shelter from a southerly through to a nor'wester, with good holding. Anchor in a sandy bottom to suit the current conditions. Can be a bit roly if there is a sea out of the northwest, but it ought to be possible to get out of the worst of it. If approaching from the south, give the small island and associated rocks off the point at the south end of the bay a wide berth.

Waituna Bay, opposite Codfish Island on Stewart Island, provides decent shelter and holding in an easterly, but is quite open to other directions. On Codfish Island, Roderigues anchorage and South Bay are possible anchorages if the wind goes more to the north, but it would mean anchoring in deep water.

The Ruggedy Islands can be passed to seaward, however, give the rocks at the end of the chain a very wide berth, the waters around here become prone to overfalls and strong currents. There is a good passage through the group, just to the east of the largest island. There is clear deep water in this channel, and it can be used in all weathers. The line is indicated on the diagram.



Ruggedy Islands Passage

Off the north coast of Stewart Island, the water is somewhat shallower, and this, combined with the strong currents in the area can generate quite large overfalls. It can be quite attractive to transit this stretch of water inside the Bishop and Clerks Islands, but this is best left for a calm day. Generally, for a smoother ride, it is better to give the northern end of the island a wide berth between the Ruggedy Islands and Black Rock Point.



## **Anchorage suitable for larger yachts and multihulls**

Many of the anchorages around Stewart Island are fairly confined, and not really accessible to some of the larger cruising boats and multihulls, so the following list of suggested anchorages is provided for their information. There is of course, nothing to stop the larger vessels using the smaller anchorages, as always, it is up to the skipper of each vessel to exercise their best judgement on the day.

<b>Otago Harbour</b>	Careys Bay Portobello Bay	
<b>Catlins Coast</b>	Nugget Point Irihuka / Long Point	
<b>Stewart Island</b>	Port William Horseshoe Bay Half Moon Bay Glory Cove Harry West Point Golden Bay Sydney Cove Oyster Cove Abrahams Bosom Cooey Bay River Anchorage Ben's Bay Albion Inlet Sheathknife Bay Disappointment Cove Sylvan Cove Evening Cove – West Arm Evening Cove – Main Anchorage Islet Cove – North Islet Cove Easy Harbour Ernest Islands/Mason Bay Codfish Island/Sealers Bay	Northeast Coast Northeast Coast Northeast Coast Paterson Inlet Paterson Inlet Paterson Inlet Paterson Inlet Paterson Inlet Port Adventure Port Adventure Lords River Lords River Port Pegasus North Arm Port Pegasus North Arm Port Pegasus South Arm Port Pegasus South Arm Port Pegasus South Arm Port Pegasus South Arm Port Pegasus South Arm Port Pegasus South Arm Port Pegasus South Arm West Coast West Coast West Coast