

Deep Cove

FEET
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ST PATRICKS CHANNEL

Cruising Cape Breton

Soundings: Trevor Robertson, 2013

The Cruisers' Guide to

The Bras d'Or Lakes and Coastal Harbours

Section II — The Bras d'Or Lakes System

Deep Cove
(See Inset)

Campbells
Cove

Updated: 2020-11-28

Washabuck
& MacIvers Cove



0 1/4 1/2 3/4 1 nm

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NOT FOR NAVIGATION - For guidance only

Redrawn: 2013-11-08

Contents & Disclaimer

Bras d'Or Lakes

Bras d'Or Lakes – Overview.....	1
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St Peters Inlet

St Peters Inlet – Overview.....	3
St Peter's & Canal.....	4
St Peters Inlet - Charts A & B.....	6
Cape George Harbour.....	9
MacNabs Cove.....	11
Johnstown Harbour.....	13

West Bay

West Bay – Overview.....	15
Morrison Harbour (Morrison Head).....	16
Pringle Harbour & MacLeods Pond.....	17
Ballams Point (Dundee Resort).....	19
Head of West Bay Cove.....	20
Crammond Islands.....	21
Ross Pond.....	23
Clarke Cove (Marble Mountain).....	25

Malagawatch & Basins

Malagawatch – Overview.....	27
Little Harbour.....	29
Malagawatch Hbr & MacReas Cove.....	31
McKinnons Harbour.....	33
Entrance to North & Denys Basins.....	35
Alba & Estmere.....	37
Cassells & Crooked Cove.....	38
North Basin.....	39
Morrison Cove.....	41
Blues Cove.....	43
Denys Basin.....	44

East Bay

East Bay – Overview.....	46
MacPhersons Pond (Lochan Fad).....	47
Christmas Pond.....	49
McPhee Islands.....	51
North Side East Bay - Charts A & B.....	53

St Patricks Channel

St Patricks Channel – Overview.....	56
Baddeck Bay.....	57
Baddeck Harbour.....	59
Washabuck River & MacIvers Cove.....	61
MacNaughtons Cove.....	63
Little Narrows.....	64
Whycocomagh.....	66
Maskells Harbour.....	68

St Andrews Channel

St Andrews Channel – Overview.....	70
Shunacadie & Black Point.....	71
Island Point Harbour.....	72
Long Island.....	74
Georges River.....	75
Little Bras d'Or.....	76

Great Bras d'Or Channel

Great Bras d'Or – Overview.....	78
Big Harbour.....	79
Otter Harbour.....	81
Seal Island Harbour.....	83
Kellys Cove.....	85

Caution: These chartlets are NO substitute for CHS charts. They are intended to provide supplementary information and detail, unavailable in the large-scale CHS charts 4275, 4277, 4278, & 4279, and a handy reference to helmspersons.

Disclaimer: The authors have made every effort to verify the accuracy of the information contained in these chartlets but assume no responsibility for errors, omissions or contradictory information contained therein. The authors are not liable or responsible for any losses or damages, which include, but are not limited to: loss of personal assets (tangible or intangible), time, materials, service, profits, business, clients, or other pecuniary loss due to use of this information. As a cruiser, you assume full and complete responsibility for the use of this information and for the safe and prudent operation of your vessel.

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Bras d'Or Lakes - Overview

Silver Donald Cameron, (yachtsman and author of "Wind, Whales and Whiskey", "Sniffing the Coast" and "Sailing Away from Winter"), describes Cape Breton's Bras d'Or Lakes as: "A basin ringed by indigo hills laced with marble. Islands within a sea inside an island."

There is no doubt that Cape Breton, Nova Scotia and the 425-square-mile Bras d'Or Lakes is the destination for cruising yachts in eastern Canada. With literally hundreds of anchorages, friendly people and deep, well-marked water, the Bras d'Or Lakes are an excellent choice to get away from it all.

There are two *[main]* points of entry to the Bras d'Or Lakes, from the south, the lock at St Peters Canal and from the north through the Great Bras d'Or Channel, passing beneath the Seal Island Bridge. There are height restrictions at both entrances, 90' of clearance under the high-voltage wires at Beaver Narrows[‡], to the east of St. Peter's and 118' of clearance under the Seal Island Bridge. Once in the Bras d'Or Lakes, cruising vessels can explore a vast area of salt water with virtually no fog, little tide influence, many anchorages, and few navigational hazards. Those that do exist are well marked. Although the lakes freeze in the winter months, the water warms up quickly in the spring and is excellent for swimming. In many places the shoreline is bold and boats may put their bows on the beach with plenty of water beneath the keel.

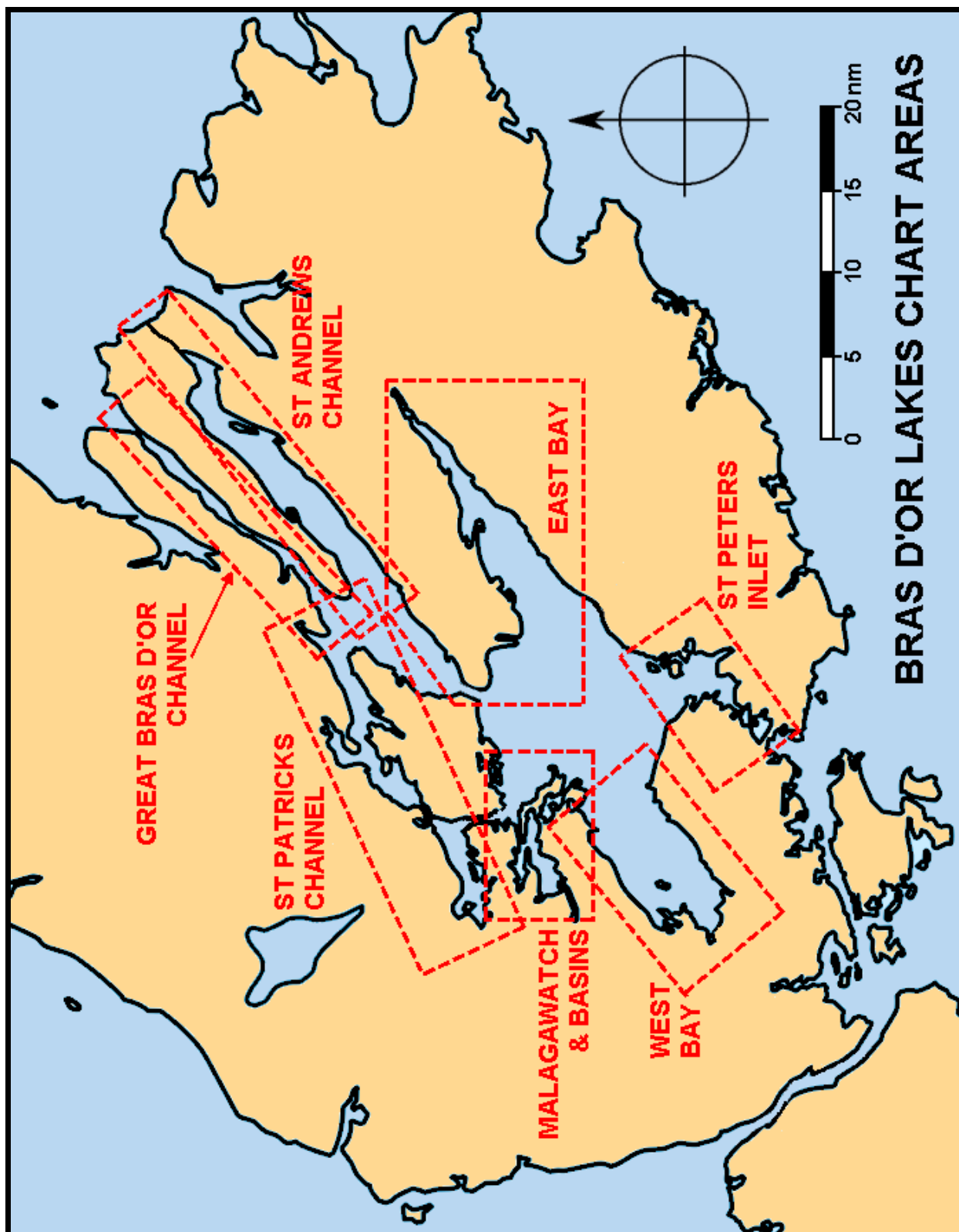
The Lakes physically consist of two bodies of water, the "Big" lake and the "Little" lake, separated by the Barra Strait which lies between the villages of Grand Narrows and Iona. A bascule bridge here allows passage of cruising vessels between the lakes. The operators of the bridge are most friendly and will see you approaching from a distance. In multiple passages, we've seldom had to hail the operators for a bridge opening (VHF 10).

Ken Heaton

[A third point of entry to The Lakes is the Little Bras d'Or. This entrance is restricted to small power craft with a draft less than 10' and an air-draft less than 21'. There are also numerous public launch ramps for those who wish to trailer their boats here. —Ed.]

Updated: 2015-04-03

[‡] In 2006 the minimum charted height was reduced from 30 m (100') to 24 m (80'), and in April 2015 was revised to 27 m (90'). Numerous boats still report the safe clearance to be closer to 30 m (100'). —Ed.



St Peters Inlet — Overview

CHS Chart No: 4275 — St Peters Bay (1:20,000)
4279 — Bras d'Or Lake (1:60,000)

Description:

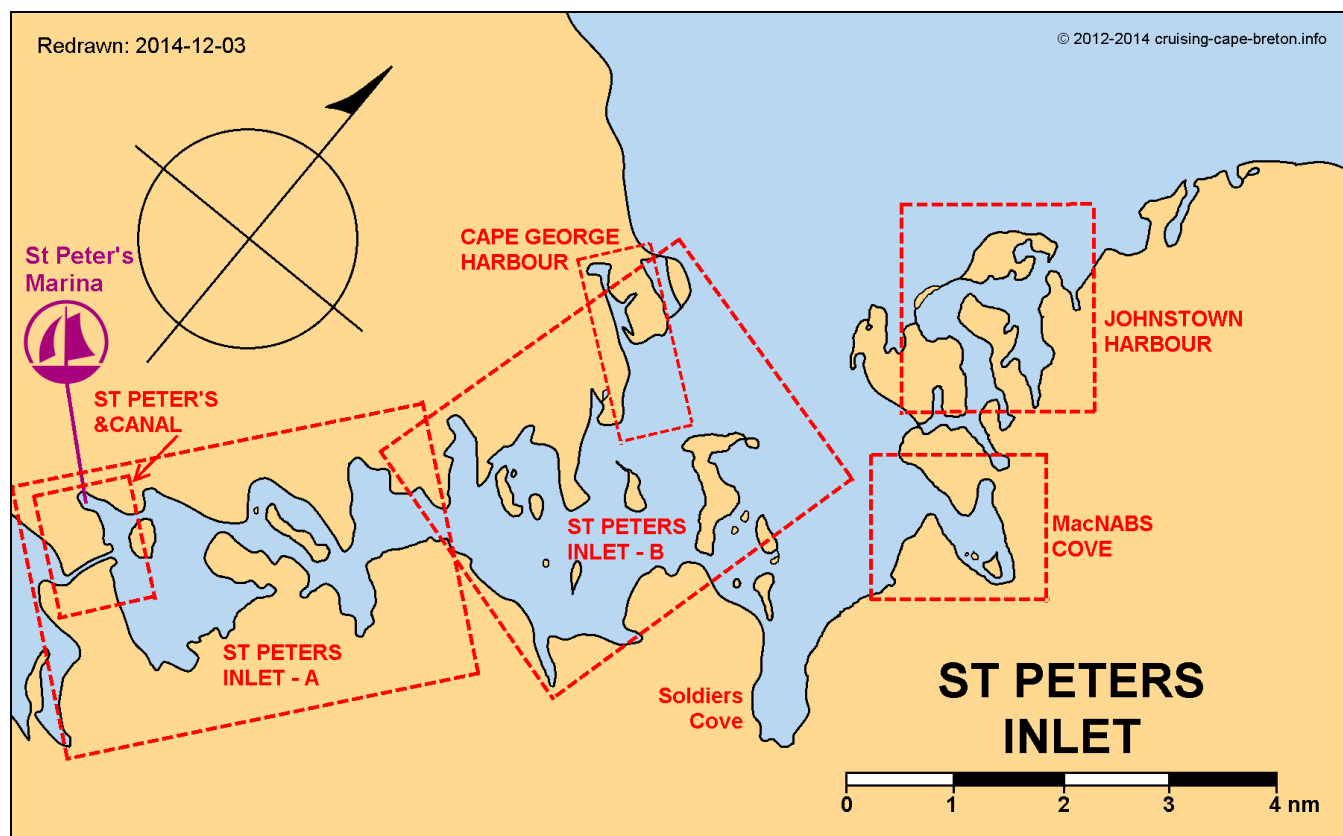
The passage from St Peter's to the Big Lake, known as St Peters Inlet, offers numerous anchorages. Although CHS Chart 4275 only just goes as far as MacNabs Cove, we include Johnstown Harbour (CHS Chart 4279) in this grouping.

See **St Peter's & Canal**, **St Peters Inlet — Charts A & B**, **Cape George Harbour**, **MacNabs Cove**, and **Johnstown Harbour** charts for details. Although included in the guidebook *Cruise Cape Breton*, a chart for Chapel Island has not been included, as Chart 4275 provides adequate detail.

Navigation:

For those entering the Lakes from the south at St Peter's the buoyage system may seem confusing. However, since the natural entrance to the Bras d'Or Lakes system is the Great Bras d'Or Channel, from St Peters Canal into the lakes one is proceeding **seaward** (i.e. green buoys to starboard). Helens Island should be left to starboard, and has finally (in 2012) had its light changed from red to green. At the far end of the inlet, Gregory Island light, also red for the longest time, is now green.

Revised: 2014-08-10



St Peter's¹ & St Peters Canal

CHS Chart No: 4275 – St Peters Bay
4279 – Bras d'Or Lake & Lennox Passage

Amenities: Almost all amenities can be found in St Peter's

Description: St Peter's is a delightful village, with many attractions: an excellent, well-run marina, several restaurants and eateries, good provisioning (Foodland will deliver your supplies to the marina), and friendly folks. Battery Point Park on the eastern side of the canal has some lovely walking trails, and is well worth a visit.

Read: [The Maritime Explorer – St Peter's & Battery Point Park](#)

Navigation:

St Peters Canal National Historic Site of Canada

The lockmaster monitors VHF–10 or call 902-535-2118

Lock Hours:

See: [St Peters Canal Lock Hours](#) or Cruising-Cape-Breton.info/charts

Boaters must arrive 30 minutes before the canal closes.

Tie-up for transit is on the western wall of the canal approach.

NOTE: For those entering the lakes from the south at St Peter's the buoyage system may seem confusing. However, since the natural entrance to the Bras d'Or Lakes system is the Great Bras d'Or Channel, from St Peters Canal into the lakes one is proceeding **seaward** (i.e. green buoys to starboard).

Updated: 2017-04-14

¹The village of St Peter's is an exception to the general rule that the names of geographic locations omit the apostrophe, but it is only used in the name of the village itself and not in St Peters Bay, St Peters Canal, etc. [Just in case you were wondering!]

Updated: 2014-03-28

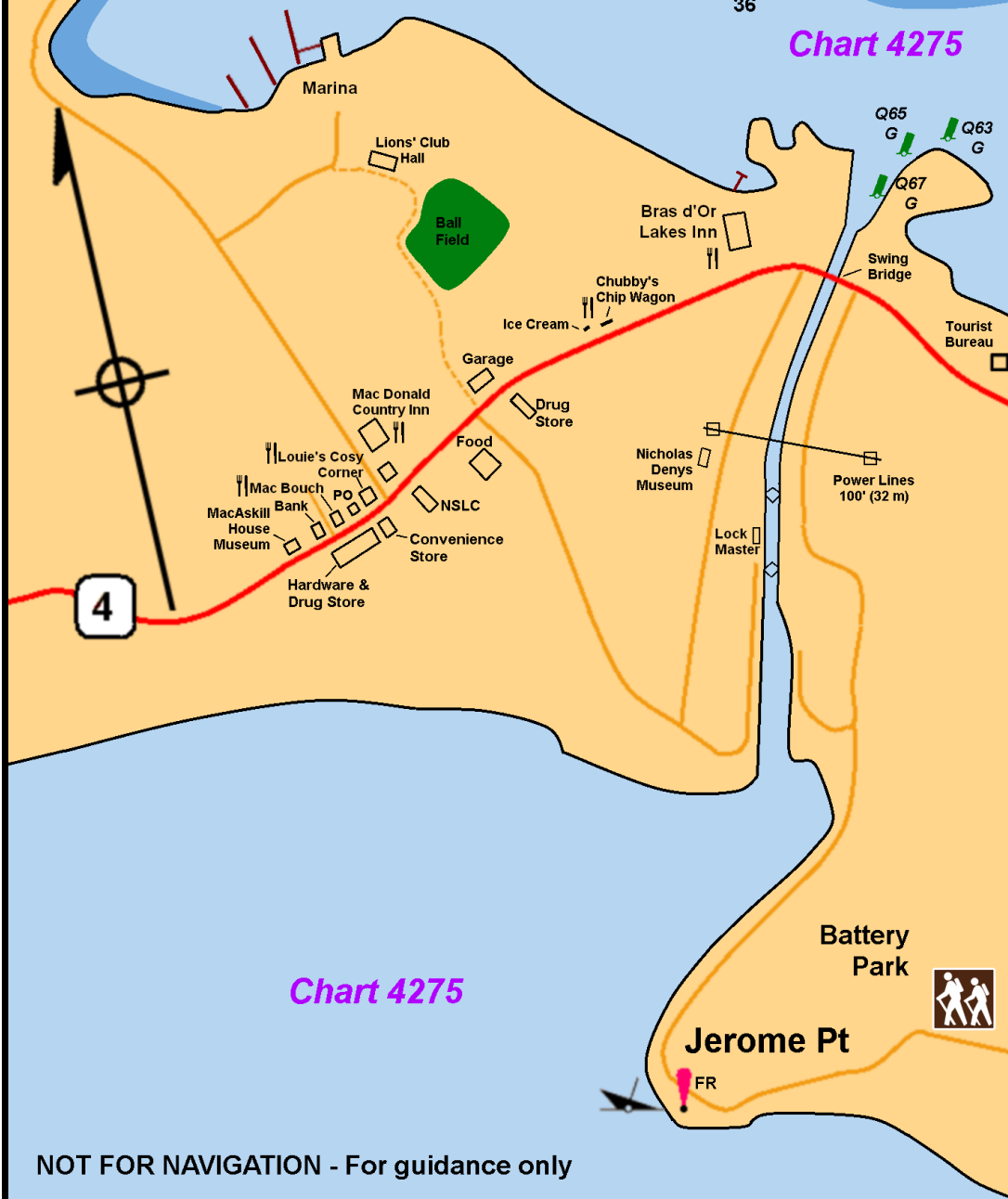
St Peter's & Canal



Handleys Island

Strachans Cove

Chart 4275



NOT FOR NAVIGATION - For guidance only

St Peters Inlet — Charts A & B

CHS Chart No: 4275 – St Peters Bay (1:20,000)

Amenities:

Description:

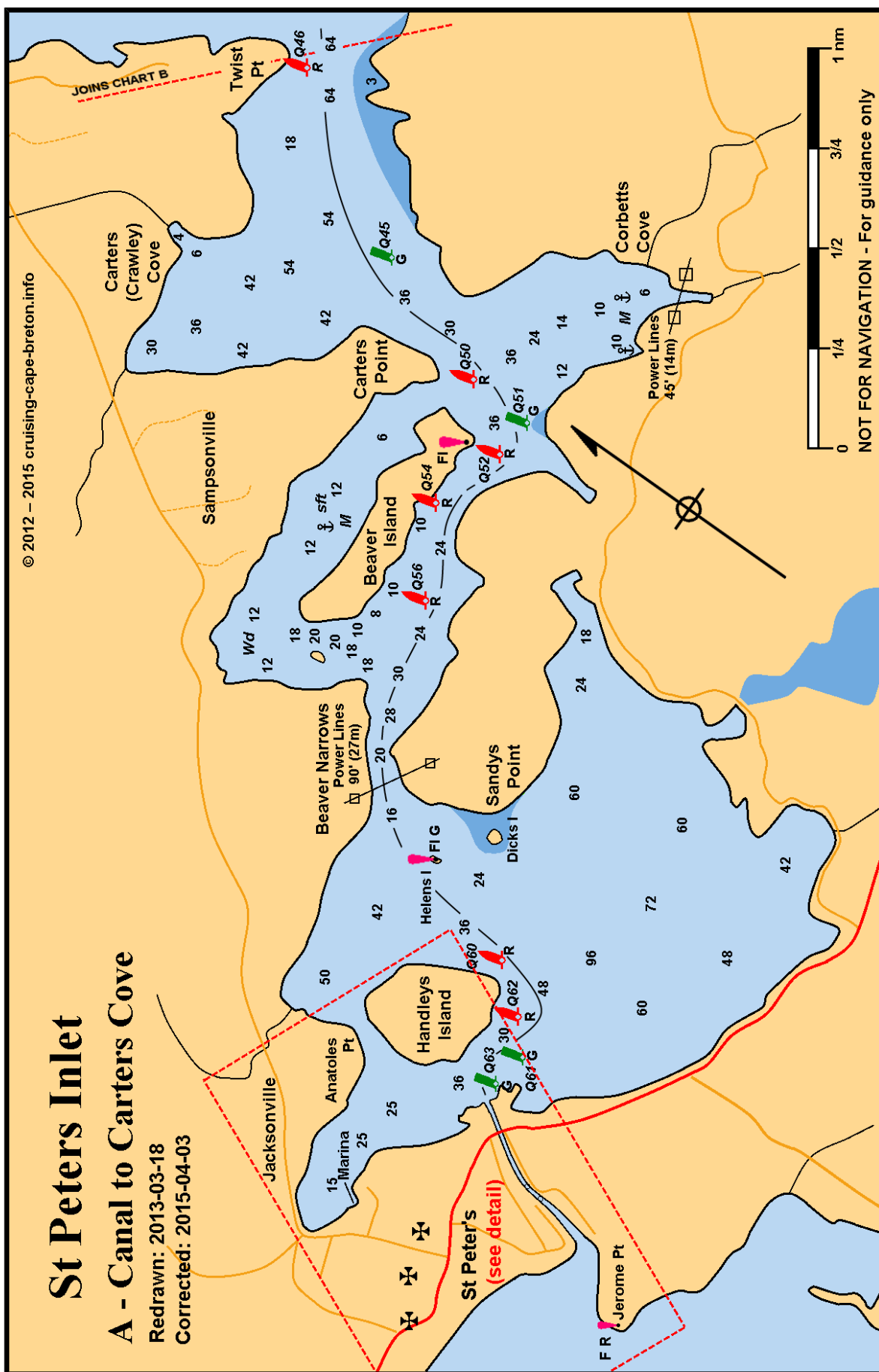
The passage from St Peter's to the Big Lake, known as St Peters Inlet, offers several anchorages. The anchorage behind Beaver Island off Sampsonville has good all round protection, but care should be taken in picking a spot to anchor. Entry should be made at the western end of Beaver Island; the intricate passage at the eastern end is best left to those with 'local knowledge'. The mud here is soft and a Danforth-style anchor is preferable to the plough-type. The western area tends to be weedy, but weed-free bottom in about 15' can be found in the middle, and provides excellent holding. Corbetts Cove is a pleasant anchoring spot, and so far is free of any habitation, but that may not last for long; heavy equipment was heard working here in 2012. Snug anchorage may be found in the lee of MacNabs Island and further up in Damions Cove. Only four cottages were unobtrusively located here in 2013.

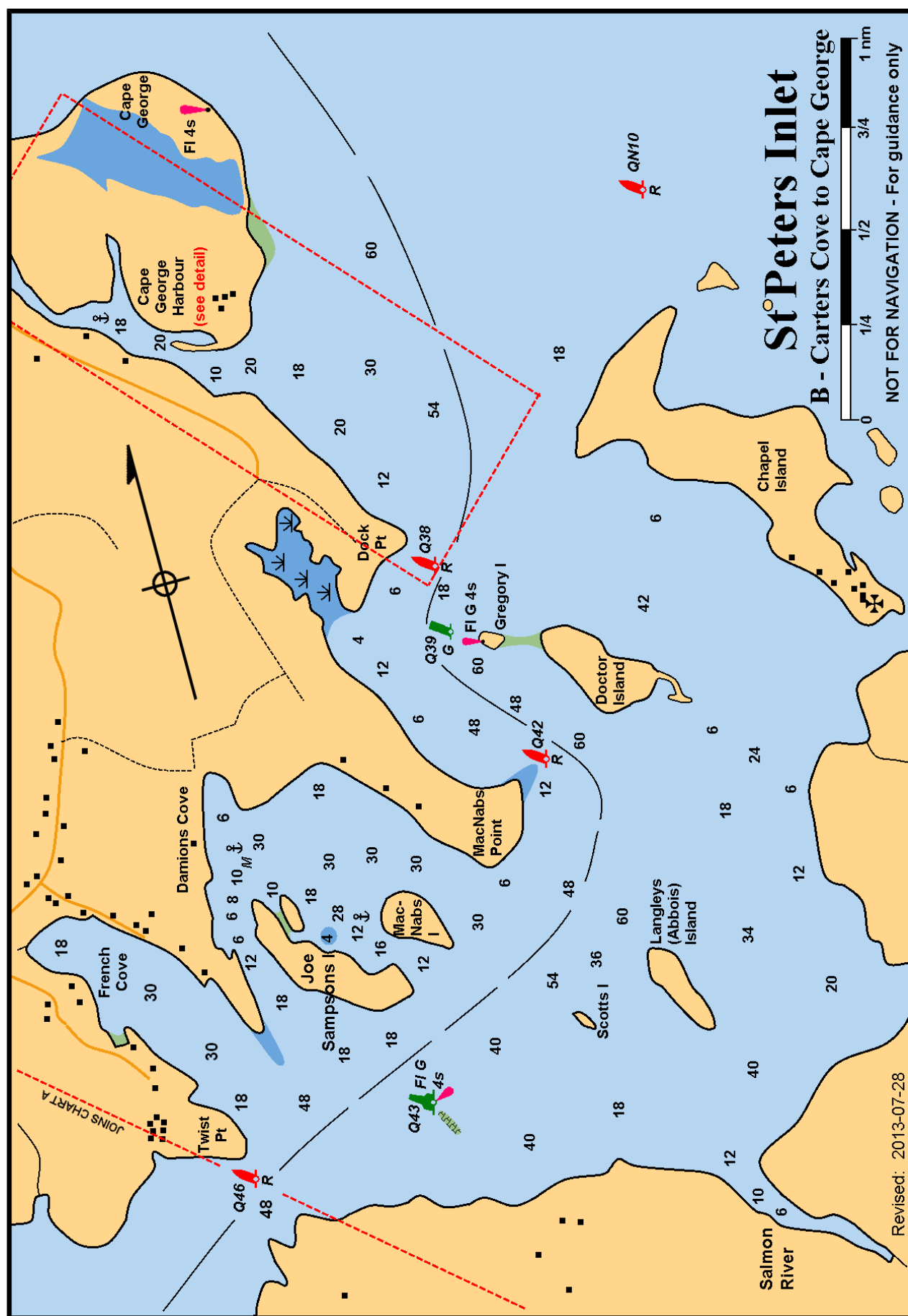
Navigation:

For those entering the lakes from the south at St Peter's the buoyage system may seem confusing. However, since the natural entrance to the Bras d'Or Lakes system is the Great Bras d'Or Channel, from St Peters Canal into the lakes one is proceeding **seaward** (i.e. green buoys to starboard). Boats with a draft of less than 5', leaving the St Peter's Marina and heading for the Lake can take the passage between Hadleys Island and Anatole Point, favouring the Hadleys Island side. Helens Island should be left to starboard, and has finally (in 2012) had its light changed from red to green. At the far end of the inlet, Gregory Island light, also red for the longest time, is now green.

Power Lines: The minimum charted height of the power lines at Beaver Narrows was reduced in 2006 from 100' (30 m) to 80' (24 m), but revised in 2015 to be 90' (24 m). Many boats still report the safe clearance to be closer to 100' (30 m). At the last count there were at least five sets of high-tension wires. The power lines crossing the head of **Corbetts Cove** have a charted clearance of only 45' (14 m). Several years back a shallow-draft (centreboard) cruising sailboat's mast struck these high-tension wires, with disastrous results. The boat suffered severe damage; fortunately the crew was only badly shaken by the incident.

Revised: 2015-04-03





Cape George Harbour (George Creek)

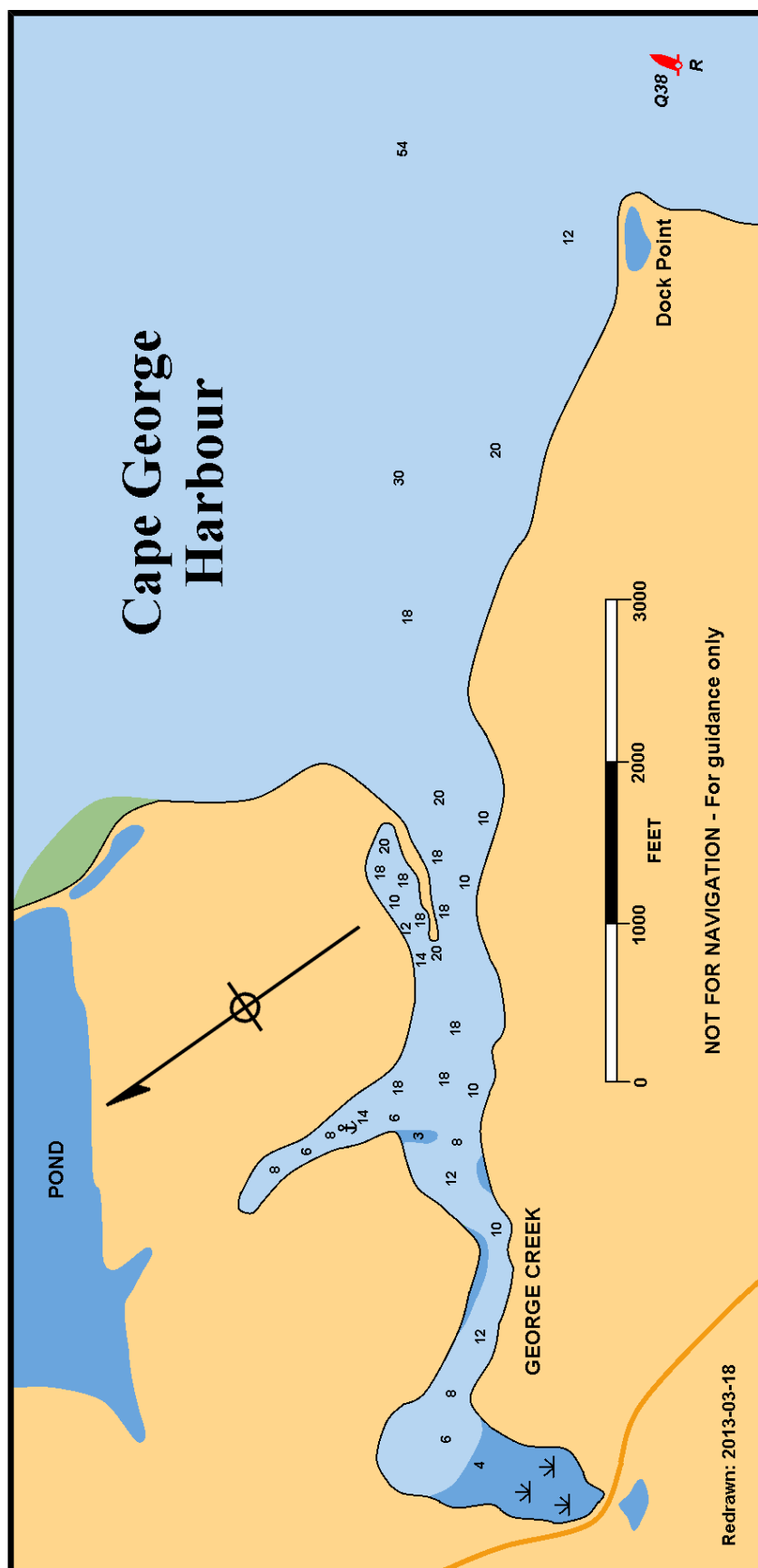
CHS Chart No: 4275 – St Peters Bay
4279 – Bras d'Or Lake

Amenities: none

Description: Cape George Harbour has long been a popular anchorage for cruisers, being completely protected and easily accessible. Development of waterside lots has, fortunately, been occurring only slowly, and hopefully people will resist the urge to defile the beauty they sought to enjoy. However, with PWCs and other small craft buzzing around anchored boats in the confines of this small harbour, it is no longer the tranquil anchorage it once was.

Navigation: Cape George Harbour or George Creek, opens up to the west after transiting the narrows at Doctors Island and rounding the red spar, Q38, at Dock Point. Stay on a course towards Cape George Light until the basin opens up and then proceed westerly into the harbour favouring the sandbar at the entrance. Good anchorage may be found behind the bar in 18 feet of water or in the small creek extending northward. A long shoal extending southward at the entrance to George Creek, restricts the channel, but 10 feet can be carried comfortably up the creek to the opening to the pond where rapid shoaling occurs.

Revised: 2012-08-14



MacNabs Cove

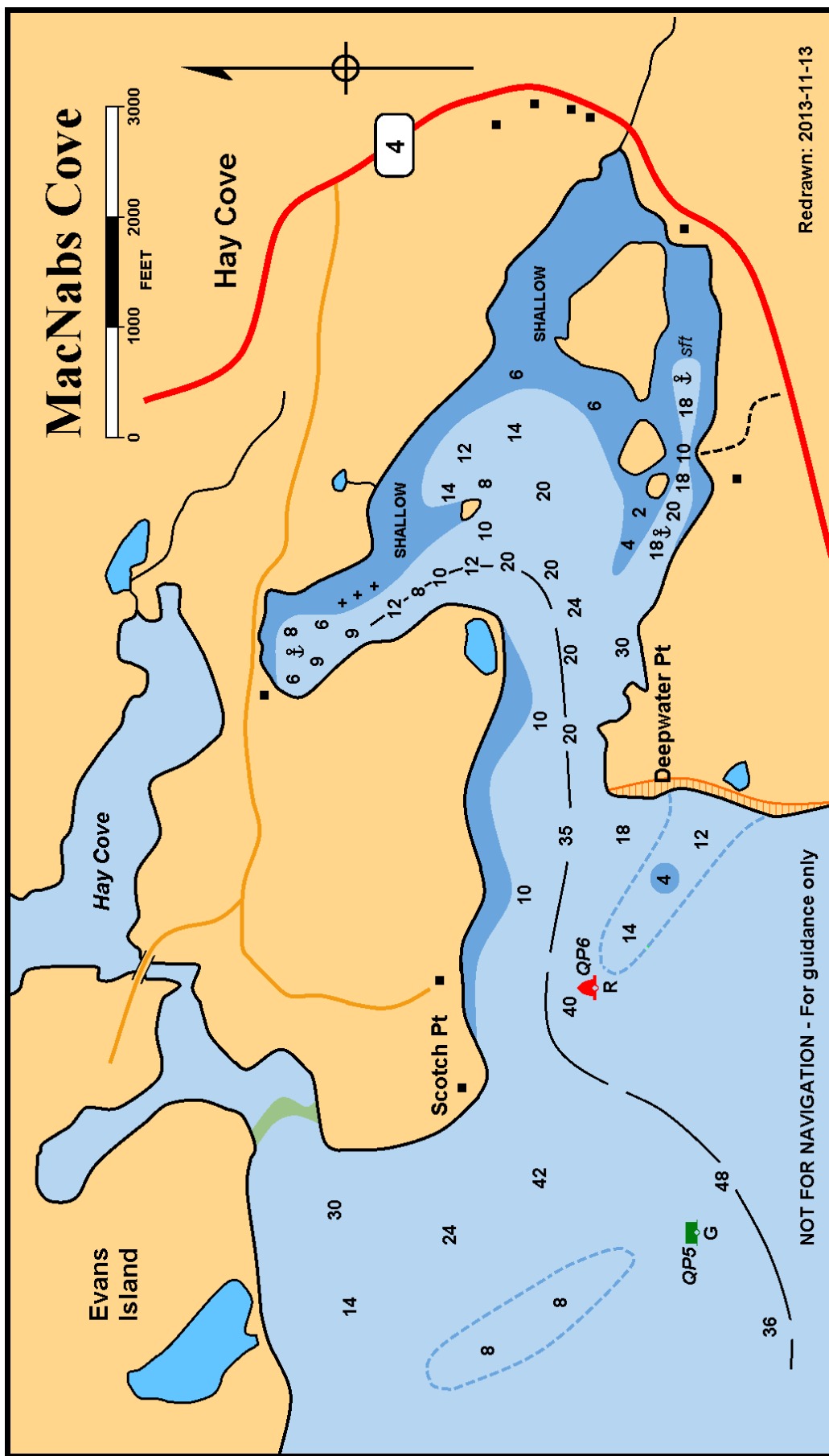
CHS Chart No: 4275 – St Peters Bay
4279 – Bras d'Or Lake

Amenities: none

Description: MacNabs Cove, 2 miles east of Cape George Harbour, around the northern tip of Chapel Island, provides several comfortable anchorages. Best protection from the south is obtained between the small islands and the mainland. In late summer, weed in the northern anchorage can make anchoring difficult.

Navigation: The approach to the cove is well marked with a starboard-hand buoy, *QN*, north of Chapel Island, a port-hand buoy, *QP5* marking the southern end of the shoal off Scotch Point, and a starboard-hand buoy, *QP6*, off Deepwater Point. After the last buoy, maintain a mid-channel course into the cove.

Revised: 2012-08-11



Johnstown Harbour

CHS Chart No: 4279 — Bras d'Or Lake

Amenities: none

Description:

Four miles to the northeast of Cape George Harbour, Johnstown Harbour (also known locally as Johnston's Harbour) provides excellent protection in a number of inner coves.

The best anchorage is well up in the harbour although any of the indentations are excellent in settled weather. The bar forming the northern entrance to the harbour consists of fine sand in the inner "hook" with a bold shore providing excellent swimming. The dock just inside the entrance was in good repair in 2013.

Hay Cove is cut off from the main lake by rocky bars from Sheep Island north to Campbells Island and south to the mainland, but is well worth a visit. From Johnstown Harbour a narrow weedy channel carrying a little over 1 foot allows small dinghies and powerboats to explore this large unspoiled area. However, even here, development is on-going.

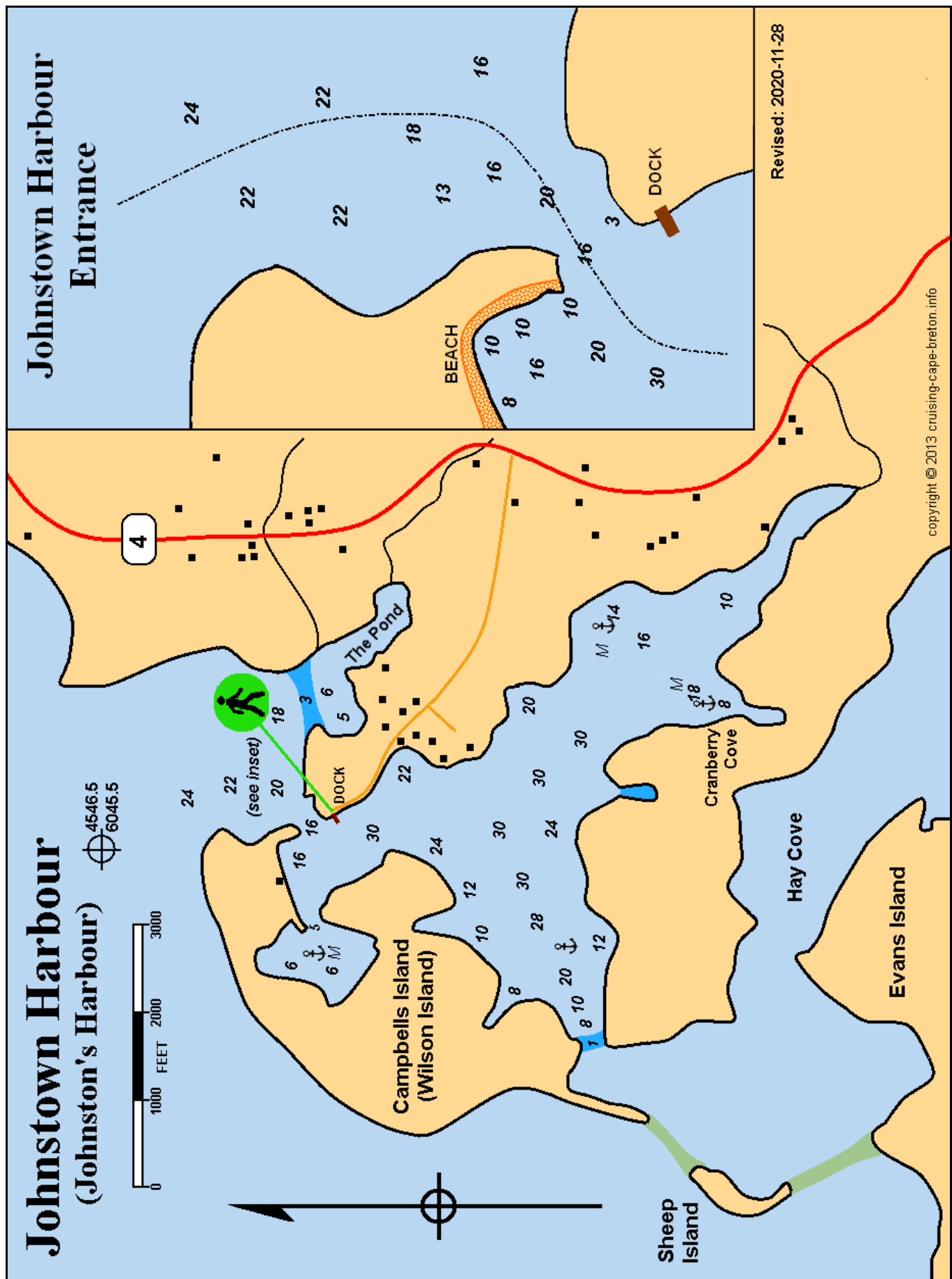
Navigation:

The outer approaches to the harbour are marked with navigation aids. From the west a port bifurcation (GRG) buoy, *QN*, marks the southern extremity of Kelly Shoals and provide a course to the harbour entrance. From the east, a green buoy, *QK1*, at the south end of Red Islands (and the abandoned lighthouse on the shore?) mark the inner channel behind Red Islands, one mile from the entrance to Johnstown Harbour.

The entrance into Johnstown Harbour itself is not marked to guide the vessel in an "S" curve into the inner reaches. A shoal, believed to be the remnants of the ballast of the Government dock, extends from the southern shore at the entrance and one is wise not to cut this shore too closely. The deepest water is close to the bar on the north side of the entrance.

Shallow draft vessels may anchor in the sheltered cove on Campbells Island. The depth is little over 6 feet. Deepest water on approach to this cove is close to the sandbar on the north side.

Updated: 2020-11-28



West Bay — Overview

CHS Chart No: 4279 — Bras d'Or Lake

Description:

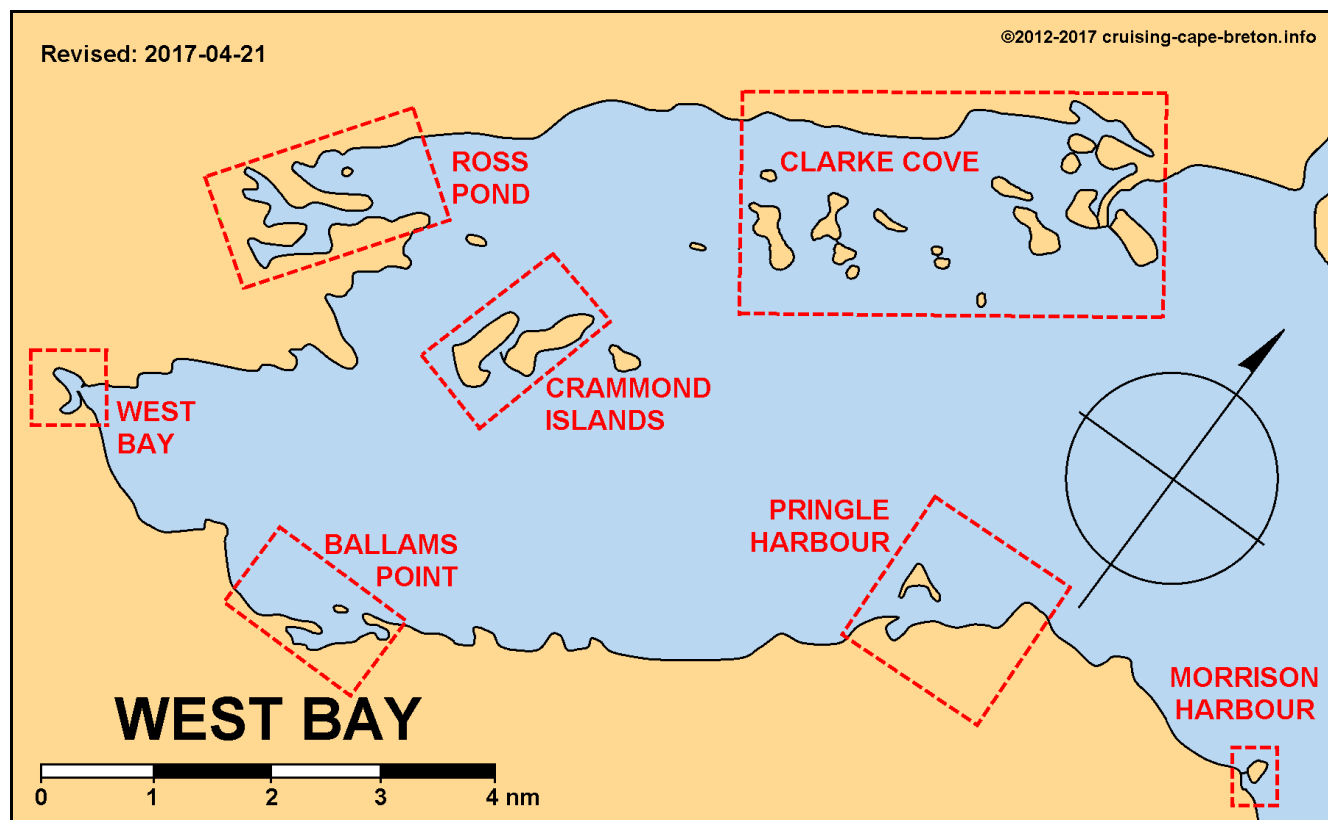
Being 'to weather' of the prevailing south westerlies of the Bras d'Or Lakes, West Bay, historically rich and yielding many beautiful anchorages, does not enjoy the exploration of the cruiser which it deserves.

The twelve mile long bay is almost a consistent five miles in width and bounded on both sides by high hills reaching an elevation of 750 feet. Along the North Mountain range the shores drop precipitously while along the southern shore of Sporting Mountain, a number of inclined islands dot the shorelines presenting their eroded clay faces towards the Bay.

Over two dozen wooded and uninhabited islands, some joined to the shore by thin sandbars and others joined to each other in mid-bay forming good anchorages, dot the Bay. Other islands, long since eroded beneath the surface by wind and water, constitute a half dozen shoals several of which are marked with navigational aids and only three of which carry less than 8 feet of water.

The early beginnings of Cape Breton pioneer life are manifested in West Bay, its namesake village at the head of the bay being a thriving and bustling terminus for water borne traffic on the lakes; the gigantic marble quarrying operation in North Mountain luring hundreds of squared-rigged vessels into the bay; the soil along its shores yielding such fruit crops that the area was known as "The Garden".

Sailing directions for West Bay are presented in a clockwise direction beginning with Morrison Head, the first refuge on the south shore after departing St. Peters Inlet.



Morrison Harbour

CHS Chart No: 4279 — Bras d'Or Lake

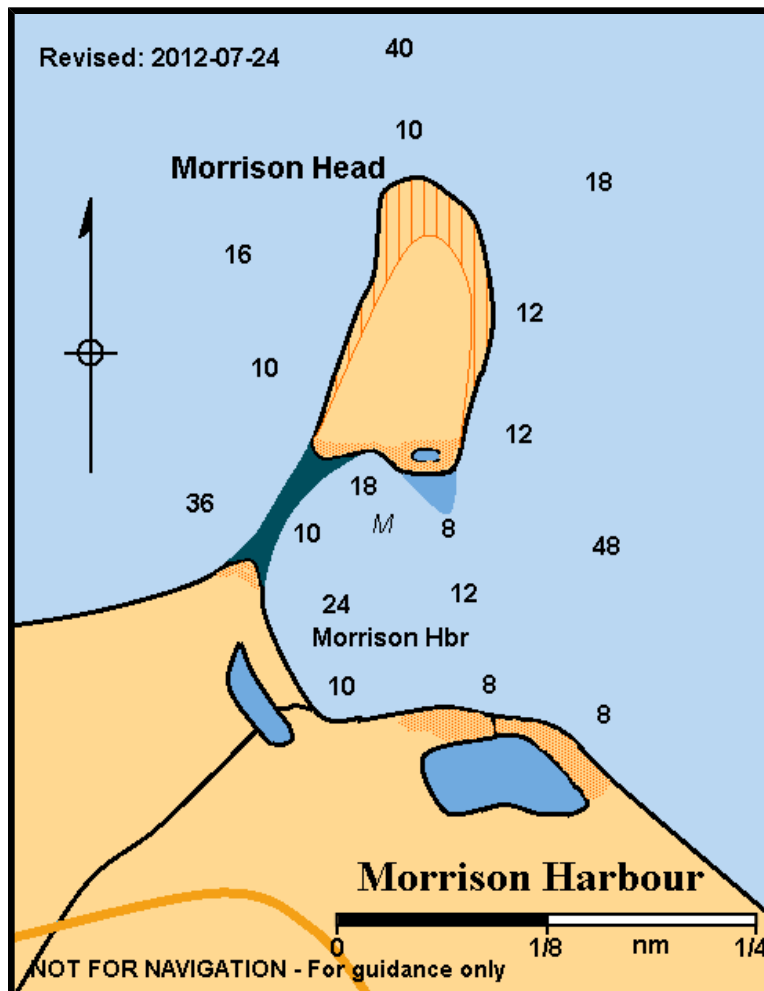
Amenities:

Description:

Morrison Harbour is formed by an island sloping towards the shore with the bay face of the islands eroded into a red cliff. The island is connected to the main shore line by a gravel bar on the western side. The entrance to the small harbour is from the east and the harbour is consequently exposed to winds from the north and southeast. A shallow bar extends from the southeast of the island. The small bay on the south side of the island is considered too shallow to afford any degree of protection from winds in the the easterly direction and anchorage in the harbour overnight should be with the knowledge that the weather is settled and the winds will remain consistent from the southwest.

The shorelines of the island and bar are bold and excellent for swimming.

Navigation:



Pringle Harbour & MacLeods Pond

CHS Chart No: 4279 – Bras d'Or Lake

Amenities: none

Description:

Pringle Harbour is formed by a similar island conformation to Morrison Island except that there is no bar on the west linking the island to the mainland.

Being a double access harbour, the anchorage is open to winds from either the east or west. However, gravel bars extending towards the shore on either side of the island form a sheltered anchorage for small craft. Within the basin, the shores are excellent for swimming.

Submerged sandbars at the western entrance extend for a considerable distance from both the shore and the island, constricting the channel. The recommended approach is from the ENE favouring the shore to avoid a short bar extending southward from the island

At the eastern entrance of the harbour are the ruins of an old government wharf. Inside the cove the water shoals rapidly behind the bar to 2 feet in mud banks and navigation to the private dock at the head of the cove is restricted to small outboard powered craft

MacLeods Pond, one mile to the east of Pringle Harbour, is an almost landlocked harbour carrying 8 to 15 feet in the basin, Unfortunately, a bar with only a few feet of water blocks the entrance, restricting access to small boats

Revised: 2014-12-01



Ballams Point

CHS Chart No: 4279 — Bras d'Or Lake

Amenities: ~~diesel, gas, water, ice, pumpout, dockage, hauling, storage, repairs, showers, laundry, wireless Internet,~~

Description:

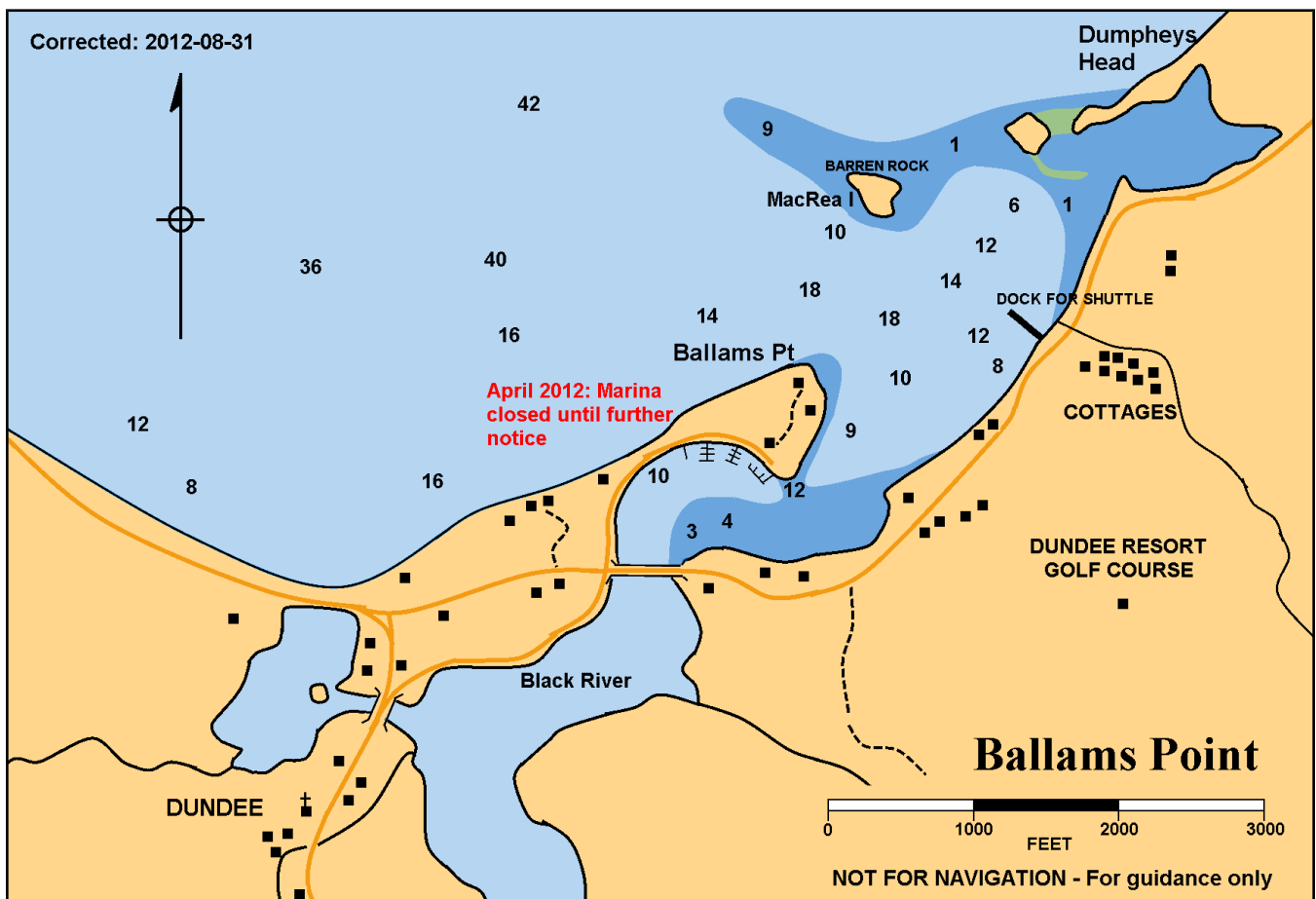
Update April 2012: **As of April 2012 the marina in Ballams Point is closed until further notice.**

Update August 2012: **The marina has been purchased by a private party for personal use and is off-limits to cruisers.**

Navigation:

Notices to Mariners report that buoys have been removed.

Updated: 2012-08-31



Head of West Bay Cove

CHS Chart No: 4279 – Bras d'Or Lake

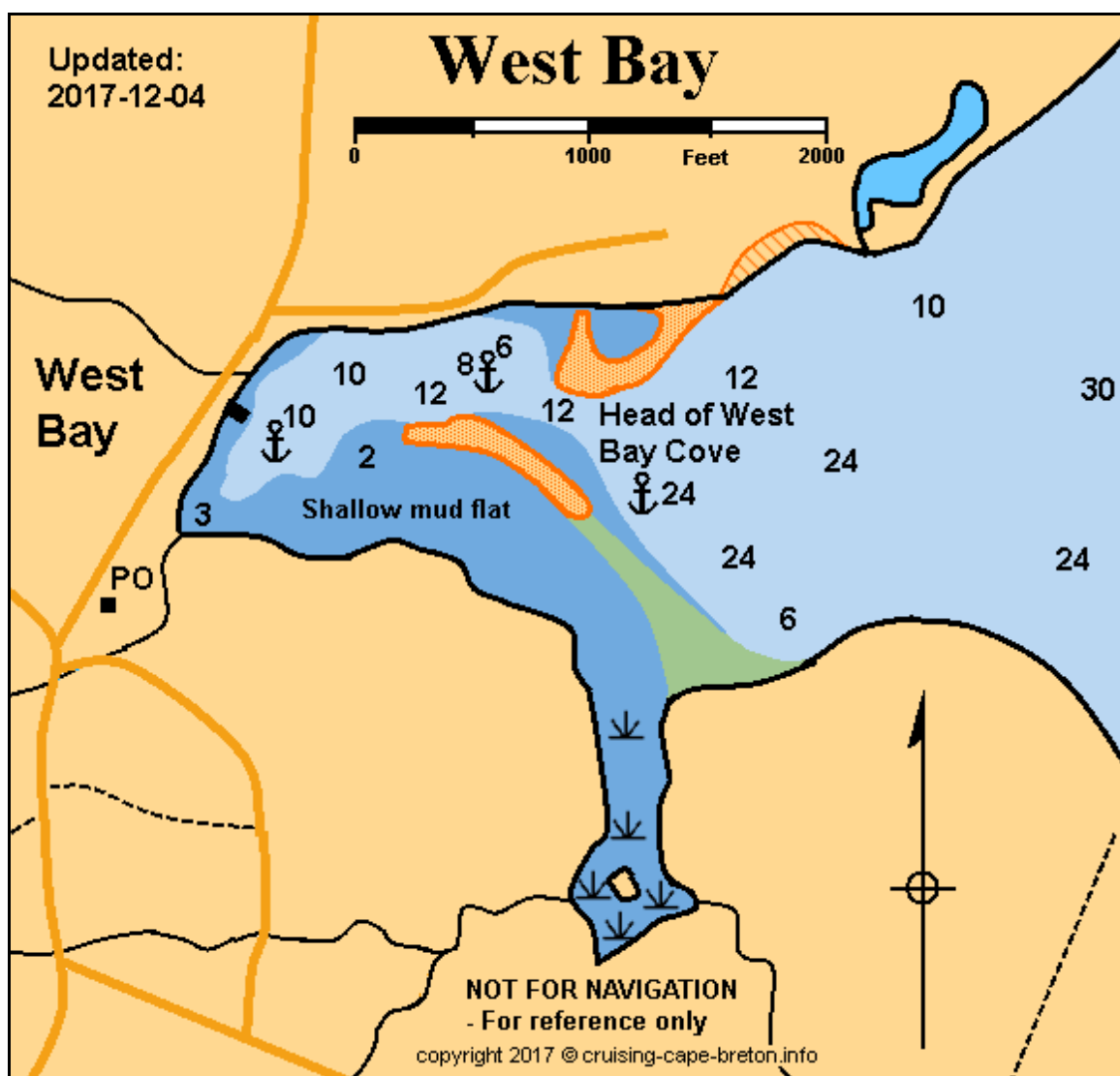
Amenities: Post Office

Description:

West Bay Village was once a thriving lake head centre, but time and progress has taken its toll, and only a few houses remain. The general store, referred to in older guide books, is no more. There is no fuel.

The area provides good anchorages in either Head of West Bay Cove or behind the protection of the sandbars in the inner basin. It is necessary to anchor in this harbour as the the area of the dock is shallow.

Navigation:



Updated: 2017-12-04

Crammond Islands

CHS Chart No: 4279 – Bras d'Or Lake

Amenities: none

Description:

As Roy Mac Keen wrote in the original ***Cruise Cape Breton***, “Add imaginary palm trees and you can have your own version of the deserted tropic island in the middle of West Bay.”

The Crammond Islands are separated by a deep channel which leads to a deep basin protected on the south by a bold sandbar. The islands were once farmed, and the foundations of the old farmhouses may still be seen.

Read [The Crammond Islands Elopement](#)

Navigation:

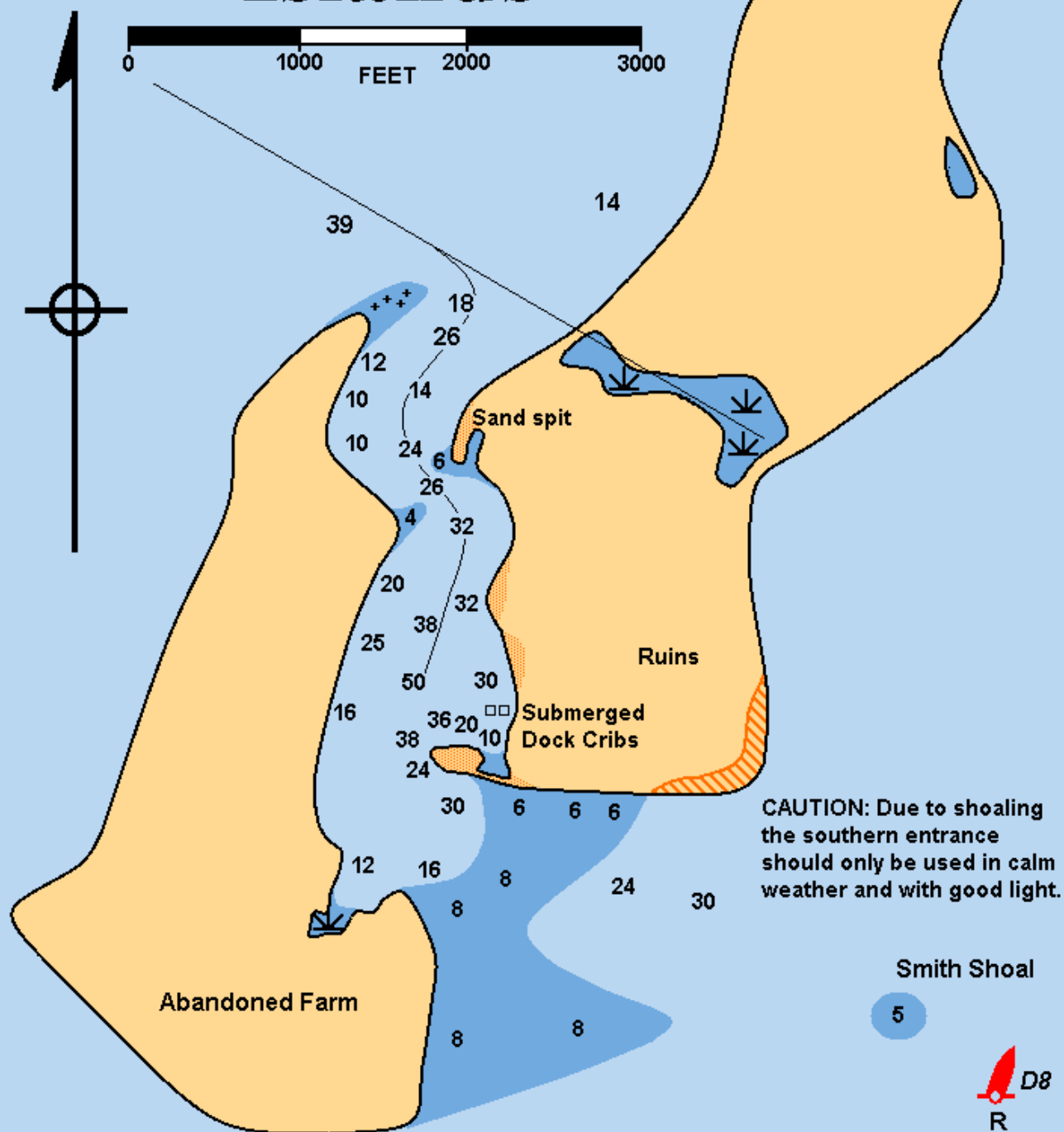
The preferred entrance between the islands is from the north, though care must be taken to avoid the rocky shoal extending from the western island.

A series of sandbars have built up in the southern entrance, and caution should be used when entering there, although in 2012, a deep channel existed with no less than 12 feet indicating the the shoals may have moved or been carried away by a recent storm. The protective sandbar is bold with fine sand on the inside, excellent for swimming or 'cook out'. Old wharf cribbing extends under water for approximately 20 feet close to the sandbar.

Updated: 2017-04-11

Crammond Islands

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Corrected: 2017-11-09

Ross Pond

CHS Chart No: 4279 — Bras d'Or Lake

Amenities: Marina Cape Breton (Sauer Boatbuilding & Maintenance Ltd): dockage, maintenance

Description:

Ross Pond is a well protected anchorage at the extreme north-west corner of West Bay, approximately two miles north-west of the Crammond Islands. A small marine facility, Marina Cape Breton, on MacLeod Creek offers dockage and maintenance. Least depth on approach is 6 feet.

Navigation:

Approaches to Ross Pond may be on either side of Dumpling Island. If the passage between Dumpling Island and MacKenzie Point is selected, favour the MacKenzie Point shore. A long hooked shoal extends westward from the island to about the mid point in the channel where there is 8 feet of water, and gradually shoals toward the Dumpling Island shore.

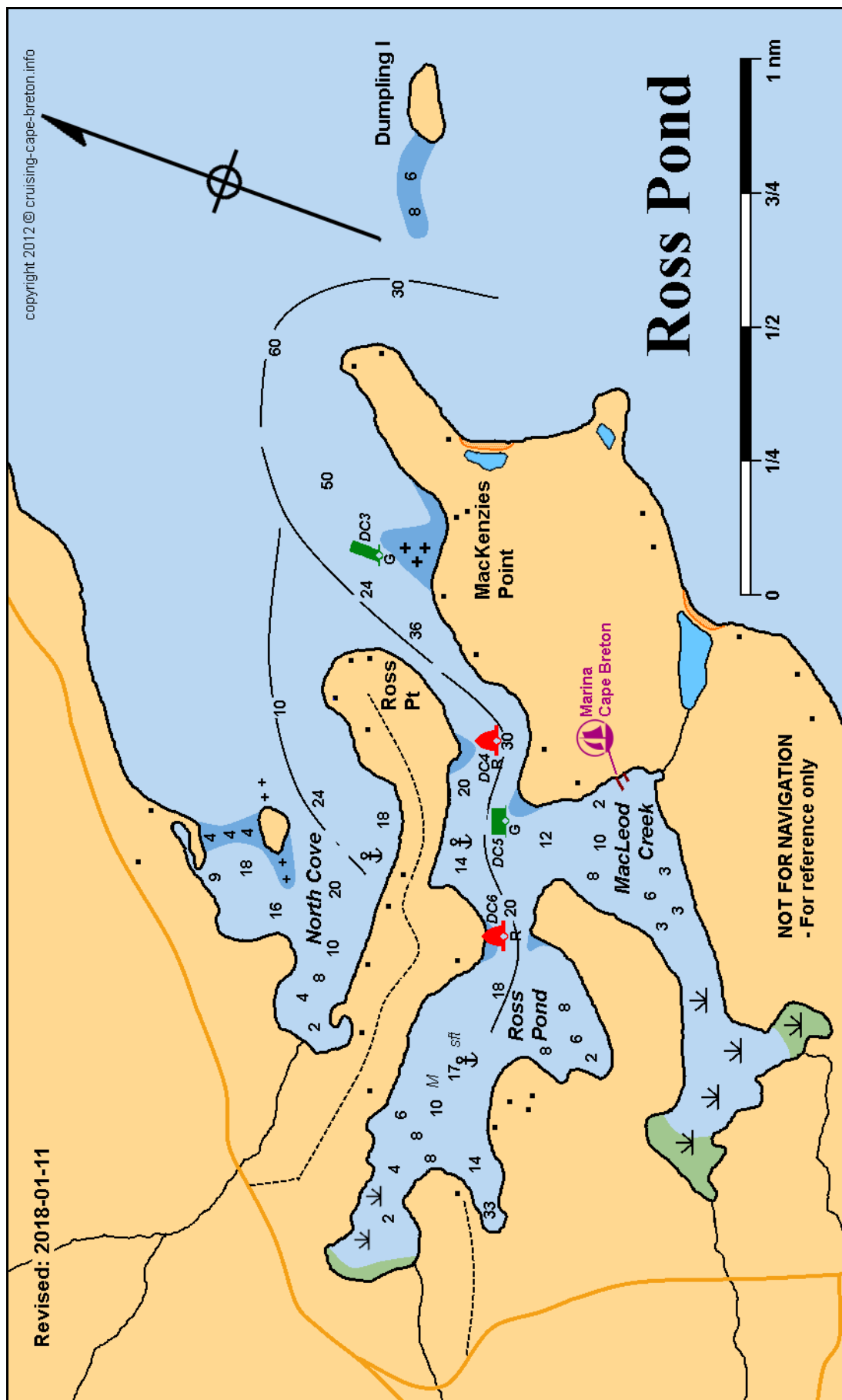
The alternate route to the north of Dumpling Island is in deep water for the entire approach.

The channel into Ross Pond opens on a bearing of 215T and is marked by two port-hand and two starboard-hand buoys. The port-hand buoy at the entrance guards against rocks extending from the MacKenzie Point shore and the balance of the spars mark a deep meandering channel between sandbars past MacLeod Creek and into Ross Pond.

Best anchorage is along the north shore at the locations indicated.

North Cove, across the peninsula from Ross Pond is less well protected than Ross Pond but still provides secure anchorage at the indicated mark. A bold submerged bar, carrying only 4 feet of water extends northward from the small island in the centre of the cove to the sandbar on the north shore. Entry into North Cove must be made by keeping the small island to starboard. The two sand beaches along the south shore of MacKenzie Point are excellent for swimming.

Updated: 2018-01-11



Clarke Cove & Marble Mountain

CHS Chart No: 4279 – Bras d'Or Lake & Lennox Passage

Amenities:

Public wharf, wash rooms, launch ramp, water.

Eileanan Brèagha Vineyards (<http://eileananbreagha.ca>) 902-756-3533

Description:

A huge scar, visible from all points in West Bay and from well down East Bay in clear weather, rises up midway along the North Mountain range. It derives from a marble quarrying operation that began in 1869 and, until its closure in 1921, brought an era of exceptional prosperity to the village of Marble Mountain.



The remains of the quarry waste, almost completely devoid of trees, form a distinctive landmark for an approach to Clarke Cove, in an island dotted bay where hundreds of sailing vessels once lay at anchor waiting to take on cargoes of marble and lime. The lime was mostly shipped to Prince Edward Island for conditioning soil. The white sand beach along this shore gives a turquoise colour to the water reminiscent of Caribbean beaches, and is a popular swimming spot. Ashore one can visit Cape Breton Island's only vineyard and the view from the old quarry is worth the hike. The Marble Mountain Wharf Preservation Society renovated and maintains the public wharf. A small fee is charged for overnight dockage. Spring water may be jugged from a hose located on the beach.

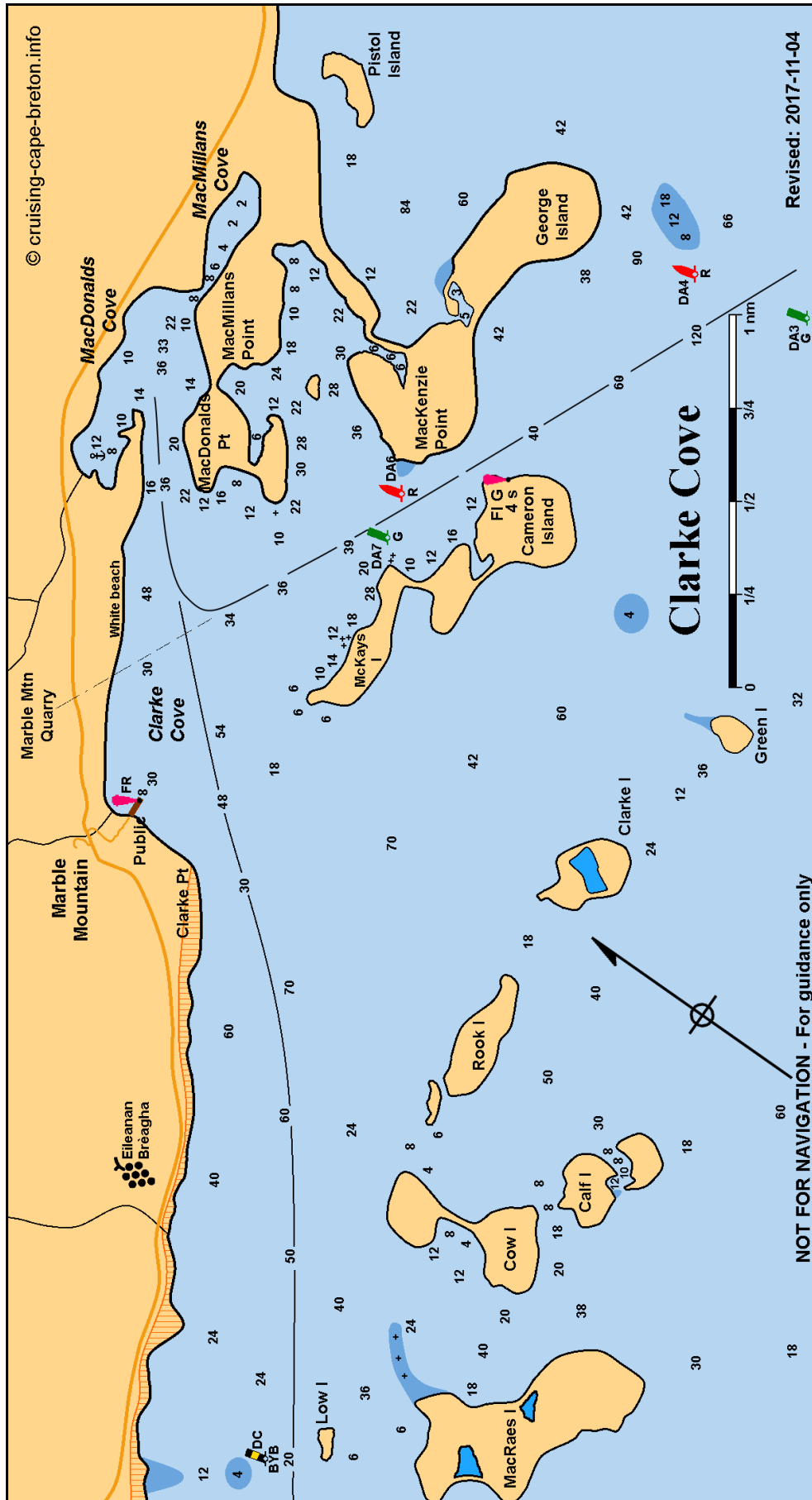
Navigation:

There's no longer commercial shipping in Clarke Cove, but the Canadian Coast Guard still maintains navigational aids for entry to the cove. However, most of the buoys are **very small**, and difficult to spot in choppy conditions or poor visibility.

On an approach bearing of 294°T, the first starboardhand buoy, DA2, marking Paddle Shoal, is located approximately mid-bay. The buoy, DA3, is positioned to the north of Nameless Shoal. Both Paddle Shoal and Nameless Shoal carry at least 9 feet. A white light tower (Fl G, 4s, seasonal, night-only) marks the north east side of Cameron Island. It is recommended to proceed on a course of 294°T directly to the second starboardhand buoy, DA4, at George Shoal, thereby leaving the green buoy, DA3, at Nameless Shoal well to port. A light (F R, seasonal, night-only) is shown from the end of the wharf.



Updated: 2017-12-05



Malagawatch & Basins — Overview

CHS Chart No: 4279 – Bras d'Or Lake

Description:

The high rolling headlands normally flanking the Bras d'Or Lakes give way in the "Malagawatch and Basins" area to low headlands and islands, interlaced with deep channels providing access to the upper reaches of North and Denys Basins. The area abounds with numerous opportunities for snug anchorages.

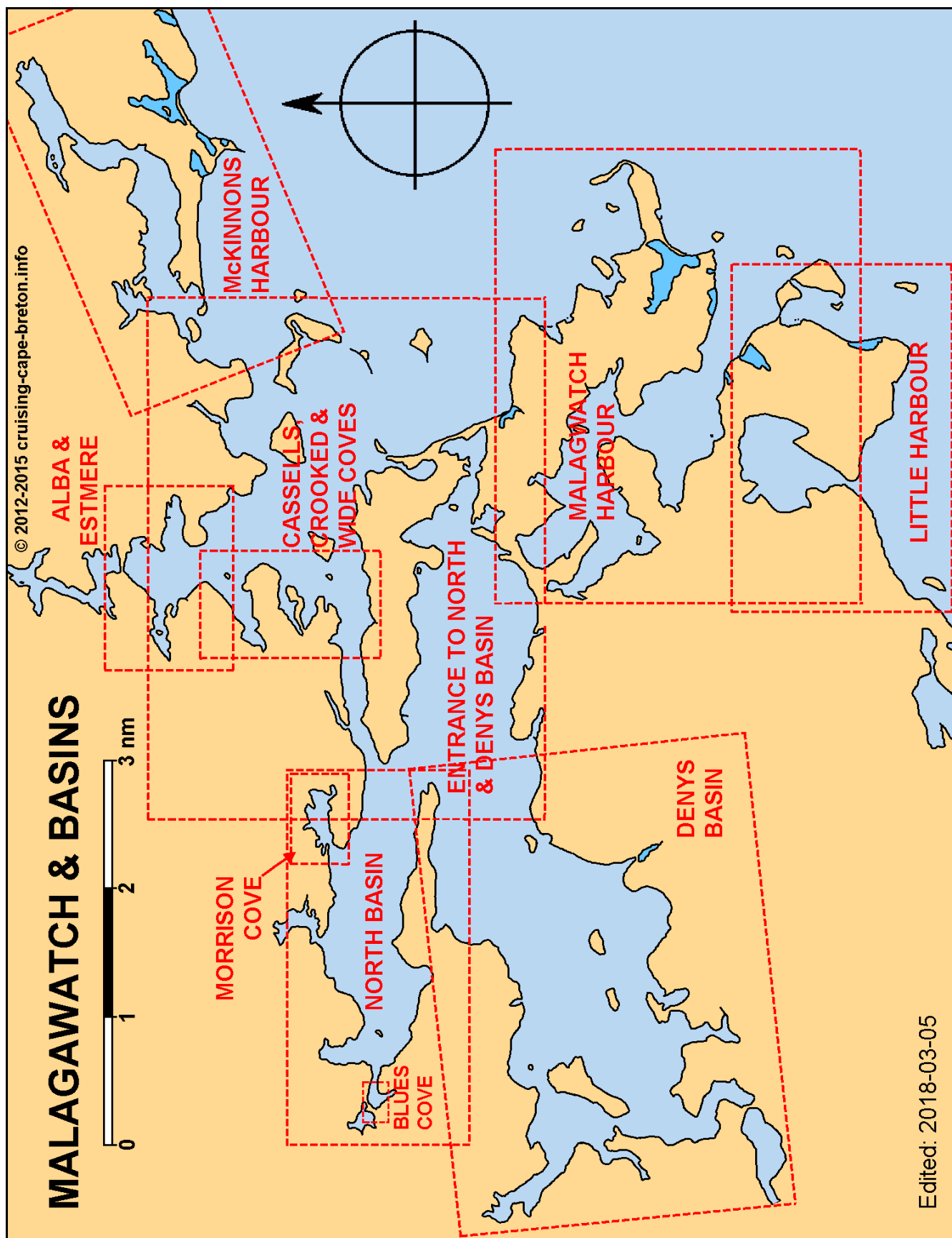
The few navigational aids indicate dangerous shoals and reefs.

With the exception of the communities of Orangedale and River Denys at the headwaters of each basin, the shorelines are almost devoid of habitation. Only the occasional farm breaks the continuity of the forested shores and the tranquillity of the numerous bays and coves is disturbed only by the occasional freight train travelling on the main line along the Orangedale/Alba shore.

Here, Bald Eagles keep a watchful eye on your passage through their territory, Blue Herons pace along the shorelines searching for morsels and occasionally deer will be seen scampering along the sandbars and shores. If you are lucky, you may see the spectacle of a bald eagle swimming to shore with its supper.

While events of great historical significance have not been attributable to the Malagawatch and Basins area, the physical nature of the countryside, the myriads of waterways and the tenacity of the hardy early settlers combine to weave a 'yarn' of interest to cruising sailors in their journeys through the harbours and basins.

For those who may consider "Malagawatch" difficult to pronounce, it is said that the literal Mi'kmaq meaning is even more unwieldy. Try (Mal'-ag-a-watch) or "triangular piece of land formed by a river on the side and the lake or larger body of water on the third side."



Edited: 2018-03-05

Little Harbour

CHS Chart No: 4279 – Bras d'Or Lake & Lennox Passage

Amenities: Cape Breton Smokehouse Restaurant (902) 756-3332 (Open noon to 9 pm daily except 5 – 9 pm on Thursday. Closes for the season in late October)

Description:

The entrance to the harbour is almost invisible until close to, and opens up due north (true) leading into a completely enclosed harbour. This well protected anchorage has one of the few lake-side restaurants on the Bras d'Or Lakes with its own dock. The restaurant's speciality is their own smoked salmon.

Update 2015-07-22: The restaurant dock has been repaired and upgraded by the addition of a floating dock.

Navigation:

The entrance is constricted by sand bars extending from each side of the headlands to a channel less than 200[‡] feet wide, and a mid-channel course should be maintained in the entrance channel. The waypoint shown on the sketch chart may be used as an approach point,

A shoal, continuing from the sandbar on the east side, carries only 2 feet of water well past the headlands, and the inward course should favour the western shore.

Within the harbour, excellent protection is found under the lee of the points on either side of the harbour. The bottom is generally soft mud.

Updated: 2015-07-22

[‡] The ***Cruise Cape Breton*** guide indicated that the width was 400 feet. That may have been an error—recent sources indicate that the width is about 180 feet. The navigable width will be slightly less. However, the mid-channel depth is about 30 feet.



Malagawatch & MacRaes Cove

CHS Chart No: 4279 – Bras d'Or Lake

Amenities: none

Description:

Malagawatch Harbour is formed by the mainland to the west and Big Harbour Island to the east, joined together by a small isthmus of low, marshy land at the headwaters. It is approximately two and one half miles long with the headland of Campbell Point providing shelter, on either side, from winds from any quadrant. Best anchorage is to the north of Campbell Point in River Cove or Cribwork Cove, depending upon wind direction. Easiest access to the shore is at the head of Cribwork Cove.

The Malagawatch end of "The Crossing" is on the southern shore of the harbour approximately 2000 feet west of the cable crossing; today, it is difficult to find. Boats hauled over "The Crossing" proceeded around Campbell Point and Nills Point to the narrow isthmus joining Big Harbour Island to the mainland. There, in the late 1800s, residents of the area, on their own initiative, dug the Malagawatch Canal—approximately 1000 feet long, 17 feet wide, and 4 feet deep—connecting Malagawatch Harbour to Denys Basin. Thus they could navigate safely among the islands from Marble Mountain to Orangedale on a route that saved about 5 miles. The trail to Big Harbour Island was maintained by a wooden bridge with a 4-foot clearance to allow small craft through the canal. With the advent of good roads and vehicles, the bridge was removed, and the breach filled with solid material; but the outlines of the canal remain in silent tribute to the industry of the early settlers of Cape Breton Island whose survival depended on the construction of such time- and life-saving facilities as the Malagawatch Canal.



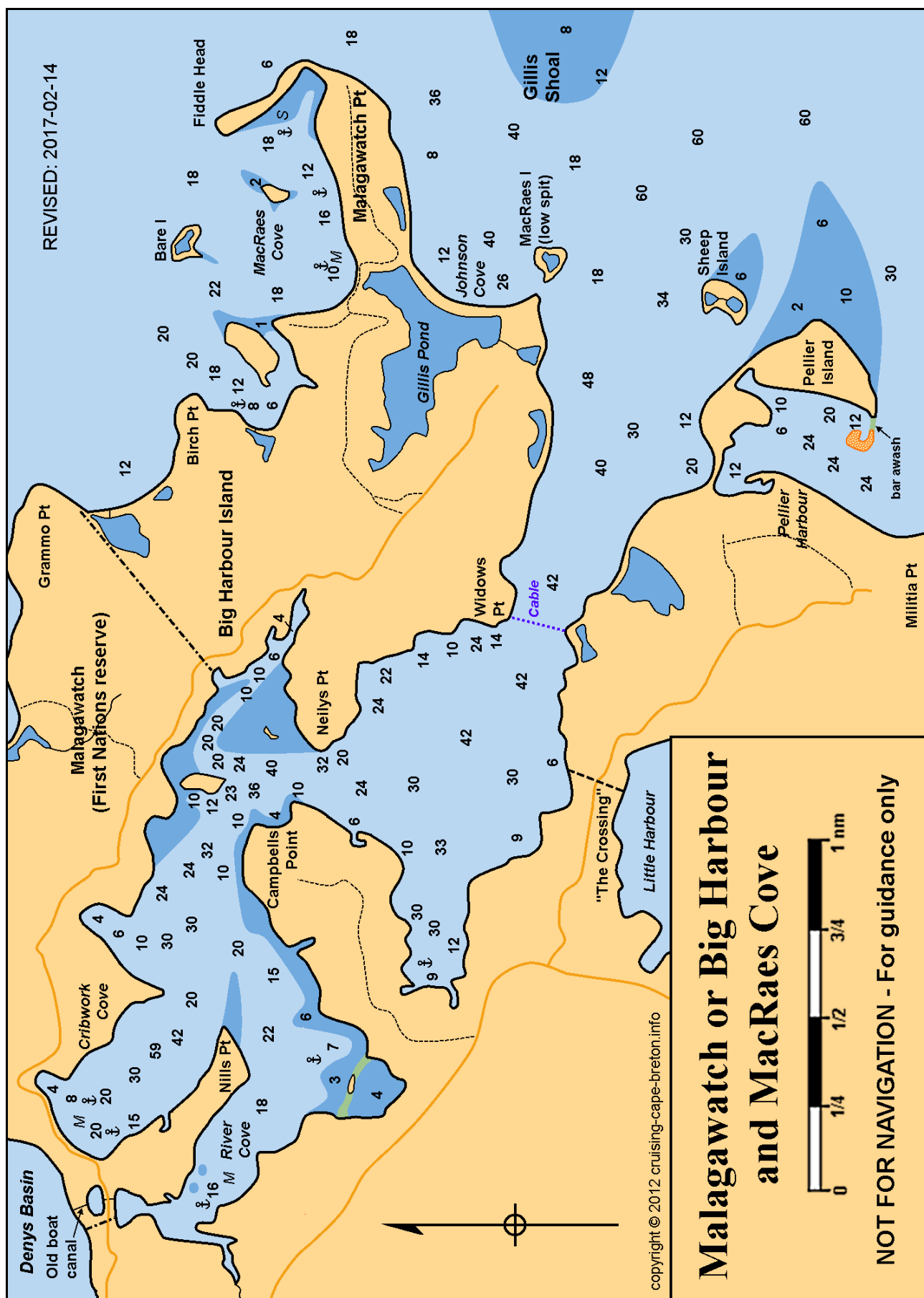
Navigation:

The approach to **Malagawatch Harbour** is from the southeast toward the entrance which is marked by Sheep Island to the west and MacRaes Island to the east. MacRaes Island is a rocky atoll growing only a few trees. From a low vantage point, it is difficult to discern.

At the narrowing of the harbour mouth, a submerged power cable crosses the bottom and anchorage in this area is prohibited. At the narrowing of the harbour at Campbell Point the deepest water is closest to the small island across from the point. Note also that Nills Point extends a submerged bar to the eastward towards Campbell Point.

North of Malagawatch Harbour, **MacRaes Cove** offers good protection in winds with any south in them. Access to the cove is gained by giving Fiddle Head a fairly wide berth and then proceeding southward along the shoreline behind the two small islands in the cove, taking care to avoid the extensive shoal north-east of the unnamed islet. The small cove at Birch Point is recommended for anchorage. Also, close to the beach protected by Malagawatch Point is a fine anchorage in settled weather. Bare Island is low and treeless, and is said to harbour poison ivy or similar toxic plant.

Revised: 2018-06-24



McKinnons Harbour

CHS Chart No: 4279 – Bras d'Or Lake

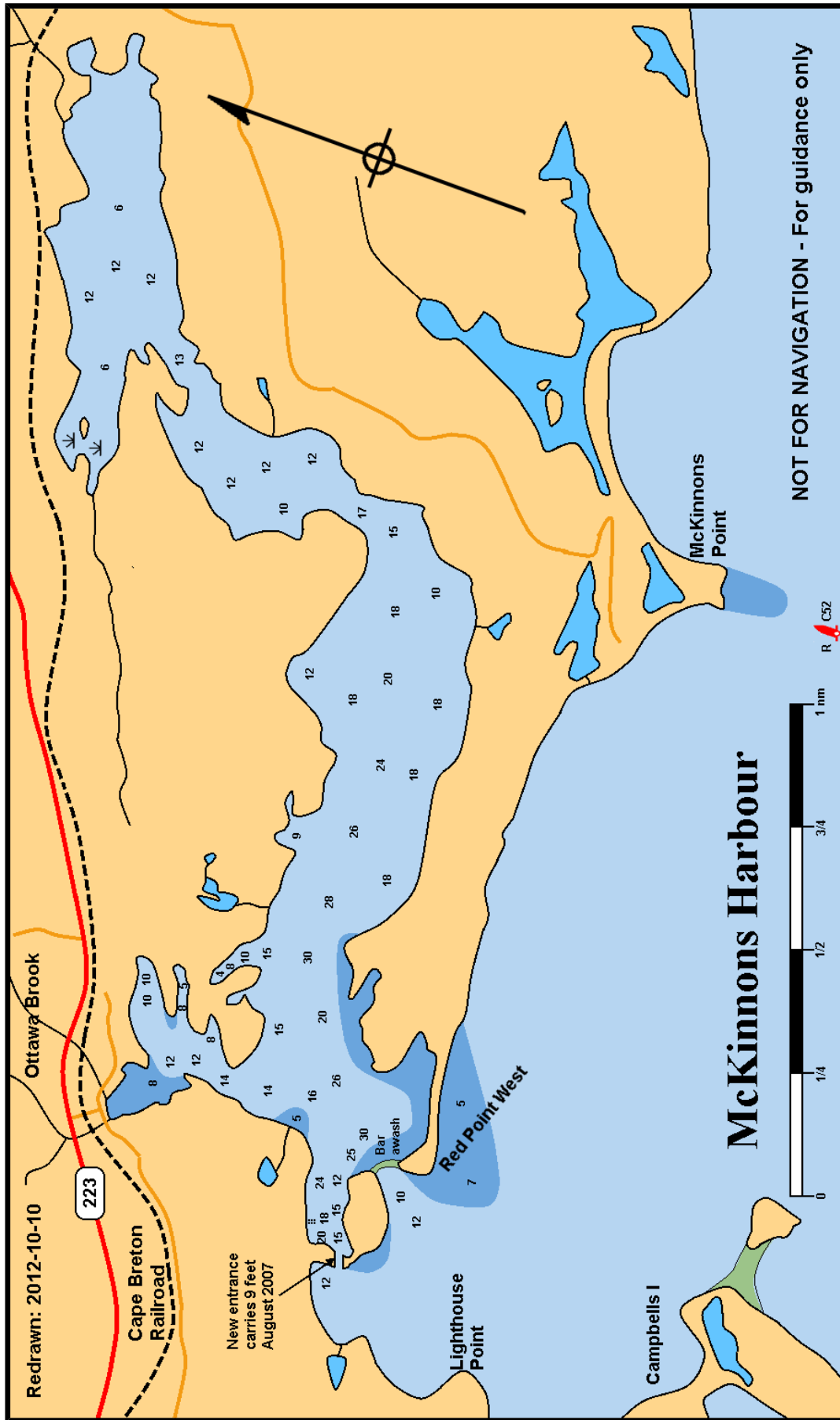
Amenities: none

Description:

McKinnons Harbour was once a commercial port for the shipment of gypsum. The entrance just north of Red Point West was kept open by dredging, but with the closing of the quarry, the dredging ceased and the entrance became blocked by a sandbar. However, the local residents and cottage owners have dug a new entrance into the harbour as shown on the sketch chart. Its location is such that little silting should occur and any necessary dredging may be done by a high-hoe from the shore. The entrance is only seen when almost upon it.

Navigation:

The approach is straightforward. From close to Lighthouse Point, head into the cove until the entrance opens up and you can see through the entrance into the harbour. Once inside the water deepens quickly. There are several well protected anchorages within the harbour, with those in the cove at Ottawa Brook being popular.



Entrance to North & Denys Basins

CHS Chart No: 4279 – Bras d'Or Lake

Amenities: none

Description:

From McKinnons Harbour, the westward route into Orangedale and River Denys winds around islands and headlands with coves and anchorages on all sides. Deepest water is normally in mid-channel and sandbars protruding from the islands are fairly bold.

Campbells Brook, the narrow inlet off Frasers Cove north of Round Island, carries 12 feet of water well in past the headlands. Due to restricted swinging room, it is really only suitable for a couple of boats, but is a great secluded spot for a quiet evening on board. Because of the narrowness of this anchorage, a 'Bahamian moor'¹ should be considered to reduce swinging.

At Round Island, the channel opens presenting a number of alternatives. If proceeding through The Boom into the inner basins, the course is around Cranberry Island into The Boom. From Round Island, the head lands of Crooked Cove appear to be 'islands' and may be confused with Cranberry Island. Bear southwest to enter The Boom, which derives its name from the days when cut timber was contained in floating booms of logs at either end of the passage on the north side of Boom Island.

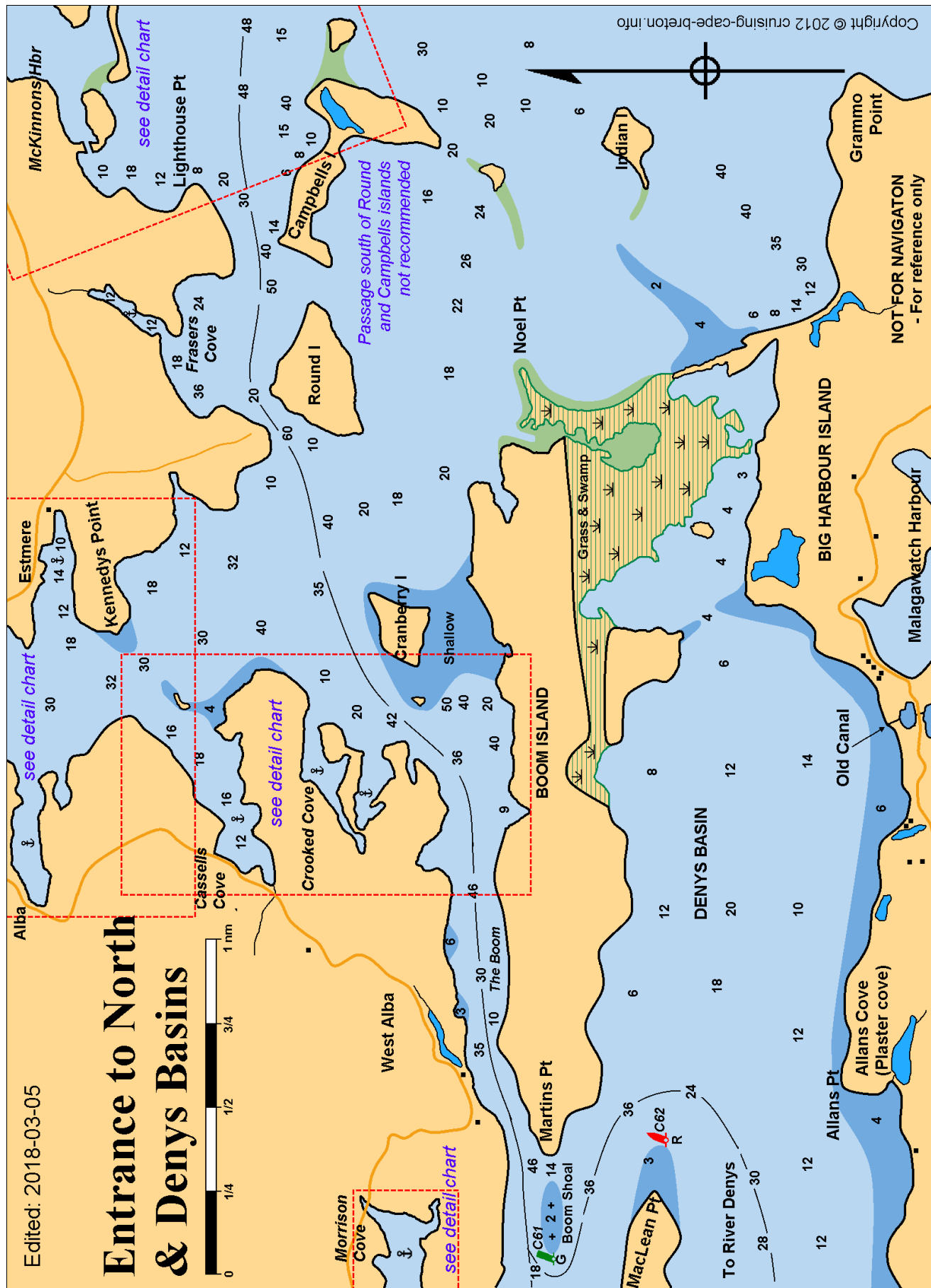
The various coves and anchorages are described in individual charts.

Revised: 2018-03-06

¹ **Bahamian moor:** Bahamian mooring is a system of anchoring that reduces the distance of swing. The boat lies to two anchors set from the bow: one anchor is set forward and the other aft

Edited: 2018-03-05

Entrance to North & Denys Basins



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NOT FOR NAVIGATION
- For reference only

Alba & Estmere

CHS Chart No: 4279 – Bras d'Or Lake

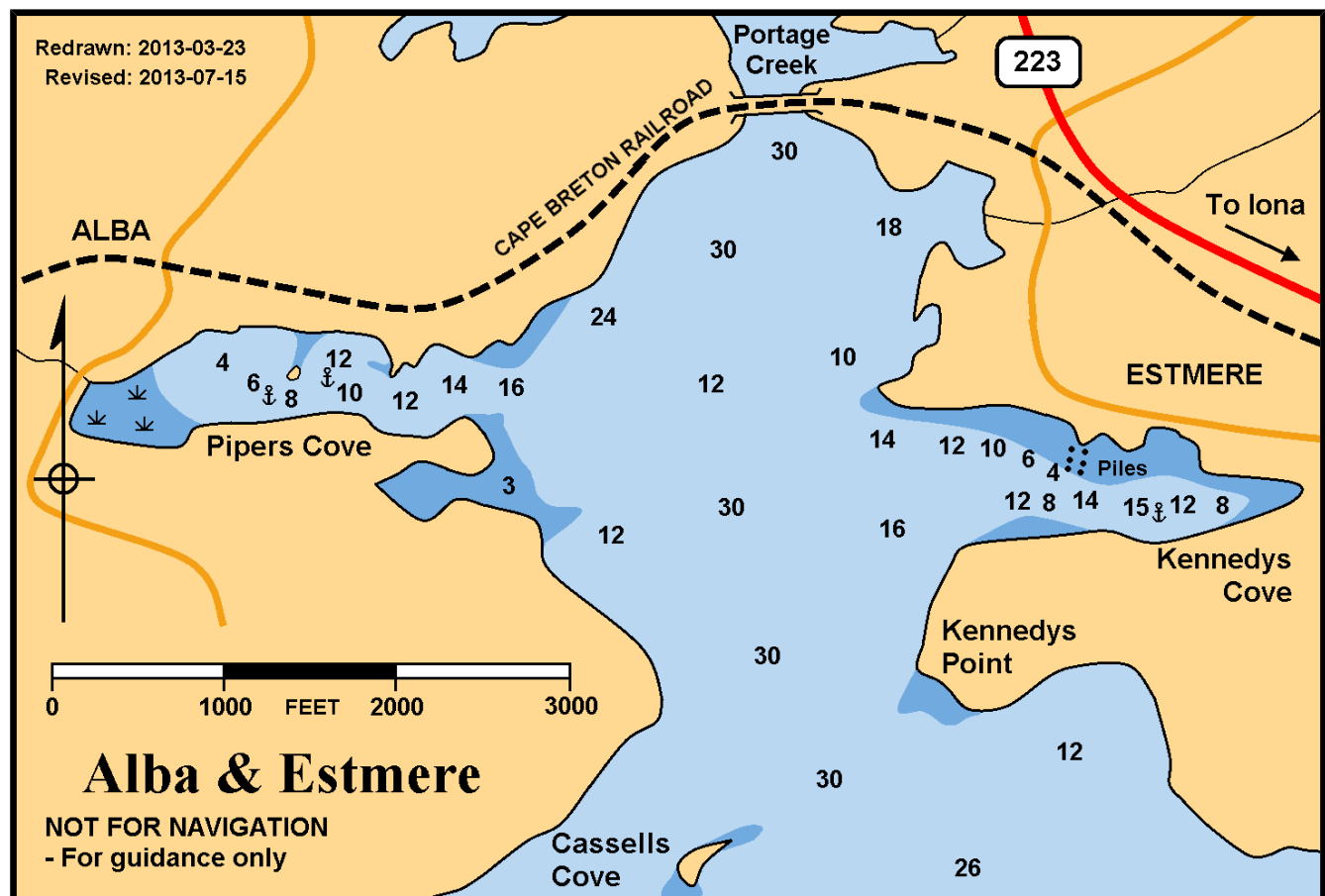
Amenities: none

Description:

Navigation: The approach off the main channel is straightforward. Although bars may extend from Kennedys Point and the small islet at the entrance to Cassells Cove, the 10-foot bar shown in earlier issues of this chart does not exist. Thirty or more feet exists as shown on the CHS chart.

Protected anchorage can be found in Pipers Cove either inside the small islet or just outside for deeper draught vessels.

Updated: 2013-07-15

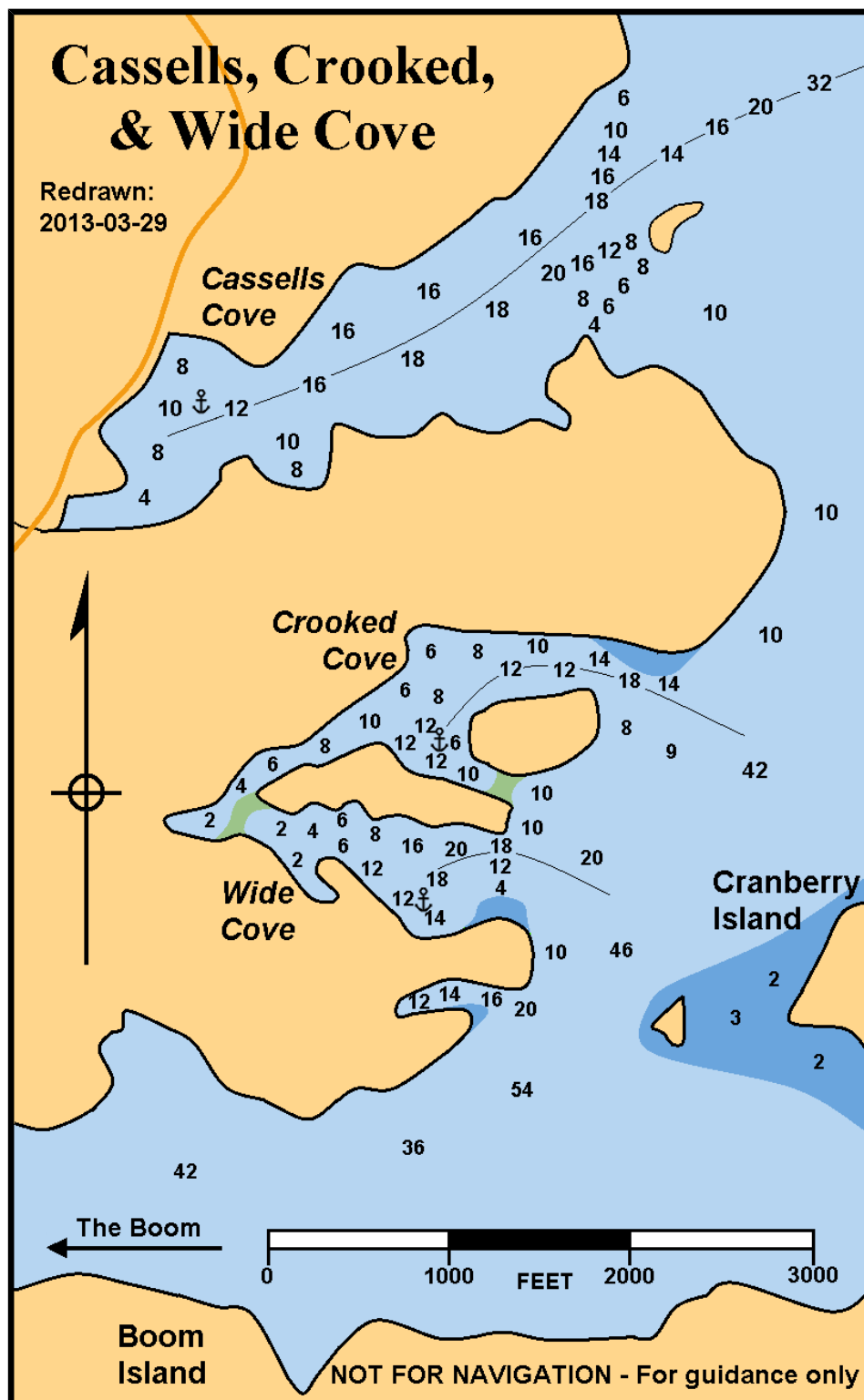


Cassells, Crooked, & Wide Cove

CHS Chart No: 4279 – Bras d'Or Lake

Description:

These three coves provide excellent protection in most wind conditions.



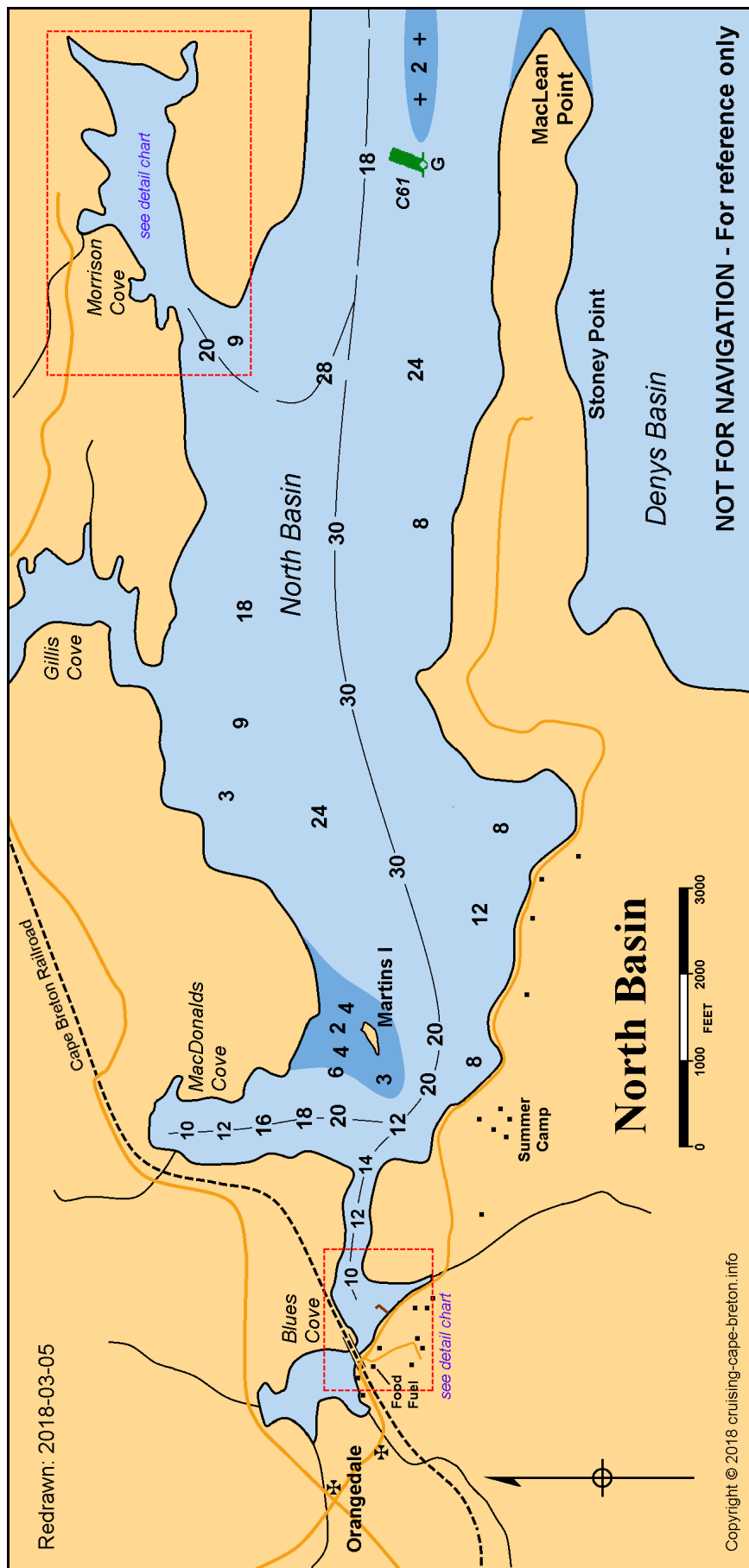
North Basin

CHS Chart No: 4279 – Bras d'Or Lake

Amenities: See Blues Cove chart

Description: Morrison, Gillis, and MacDonald Coves once supported a thriving oyster culture industry, with the railroad depot at Orangedale providing fast access to distant markets. Oyster culture has recently restarted in this area, and cruisers should watch for new rafts. Some abandoned rafts may still exist in this area. **Morrison Cove** and **Blues Cove (Orangedale)** are covered by separate detailed chartlets.

Navigation: Navigation into the North Basin is straightforward. However, if proceeding to Blues Cove or MacDonalds Cove, give Martin Island a wide berth, as the shoal surrounding it is far more extensive than shown on the CHS chart. Approach should be made toward the 'Summer Camp' indicated on the chartlet, and a course close to the southern shore maintained until well past the island.



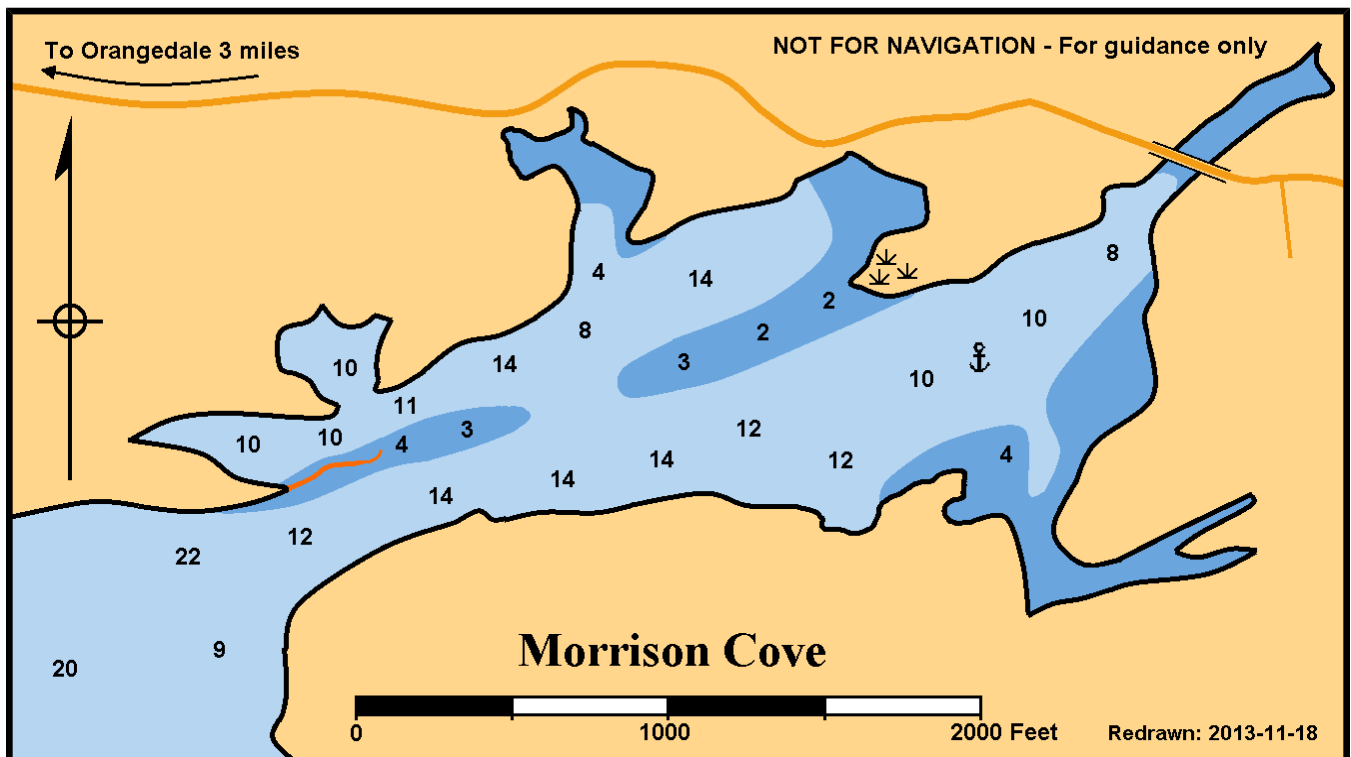
Morrison Cove

CHS Chart No: 4279 – Bras d'Or Lake

Amenities: none

Description: Entering the North Basin, Morrison Cove opens up on the northern shore, just west of Boom Shoal. The narrow entrance is fringed by sandbars on each side, and the water is deepest along the south side of the cove. Recent satellite imagery indicates that the 'long mudbar', shown in earlier versions of this chartlet, has a deep break as shown here. The depth yet to be determined, but is believed to be over 6 feet. Ample swinging room can be found where indicated.

Oyster culture has recently restarted in this area, and cruisers should watch for new rafts. Some abandoned rafts may still exist here.



Blues Cove (Orangedale)

CHS Chart No: 4279 – Bras d'Or Lake

Amenities: food, liquor, gasoline, water, ice, dockage, launch ramp

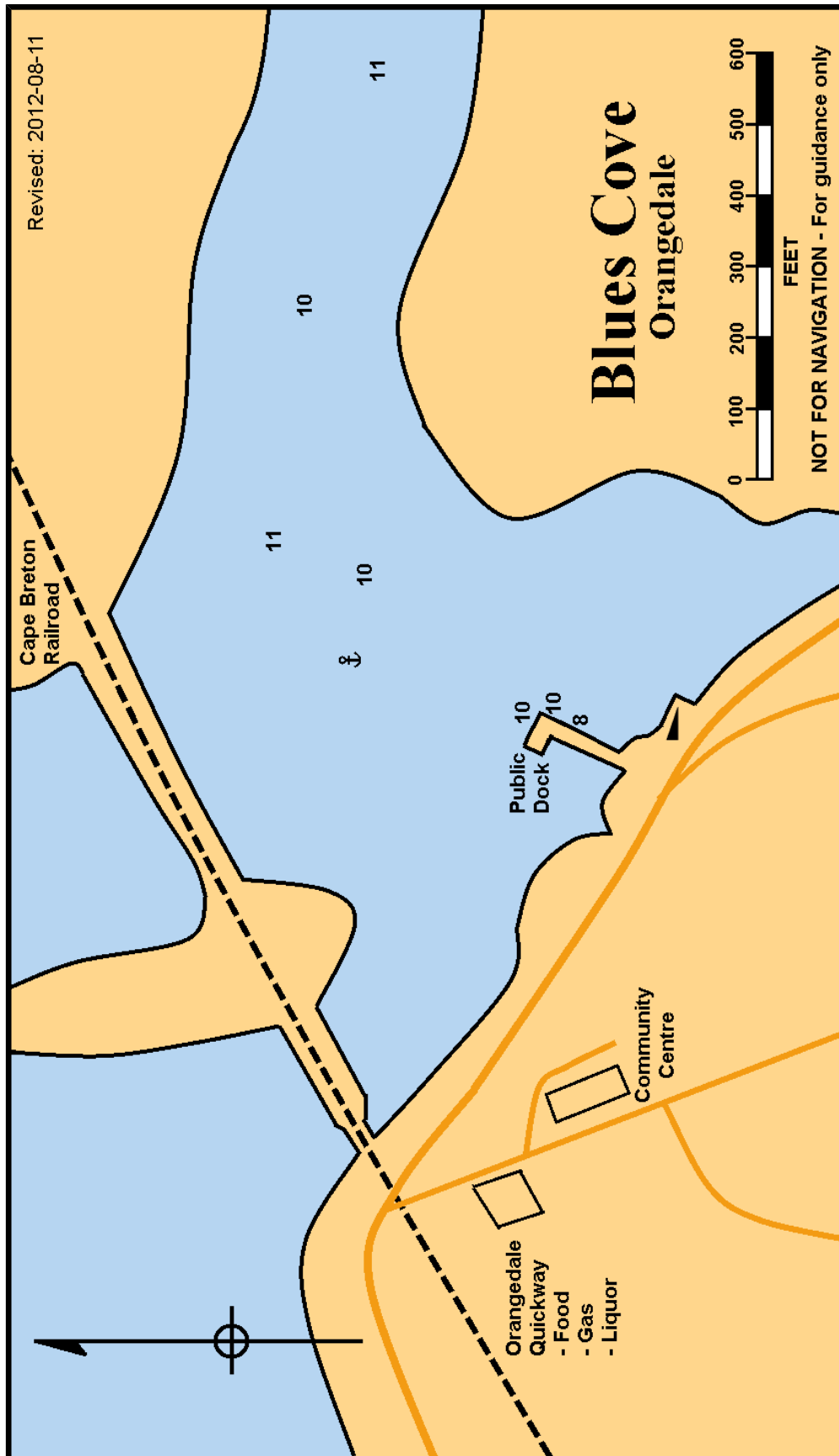
Description:

Orangedale was once a railroad centre serving many communities in this area of the lakes. It boasts the oldest railroad station in Nova Scotia (built 1886), now converted to an excellent little museum. The well-stocked Orangedale Quickway convenience store (902-756-2830), near the public dock, is an excellent provisioning point for cruisers, and has fresh and frozen meats, liquor (beer, wine, spirits, etc.), ice, gasoline (by jug), hardware, and much more...

Dockage: Although no dockage fees, as such, are charged for use of the wharf, cruisers are expected to make a contribution to the wharf maintenance fund. This should be made at the convenience store—\$15 per night should be considered a minimum.



Navigation: Favour the south shore well beyond Martins Island when approaching Blues Cove to avoid the shoal, which extends SW from the island well into the basin and well past the island. Then proceed in the centre of the channel. Anchor in the cove or tie to the wharf as space permits. Ten feet of water can be found alongside the wharf. Oyster culture has recently restarted in this area, and cruisers should watch for rafts.



Denys Basin

CHS Chart No: 4279 – Bras d'Or Lake

Amenities: none

Description:

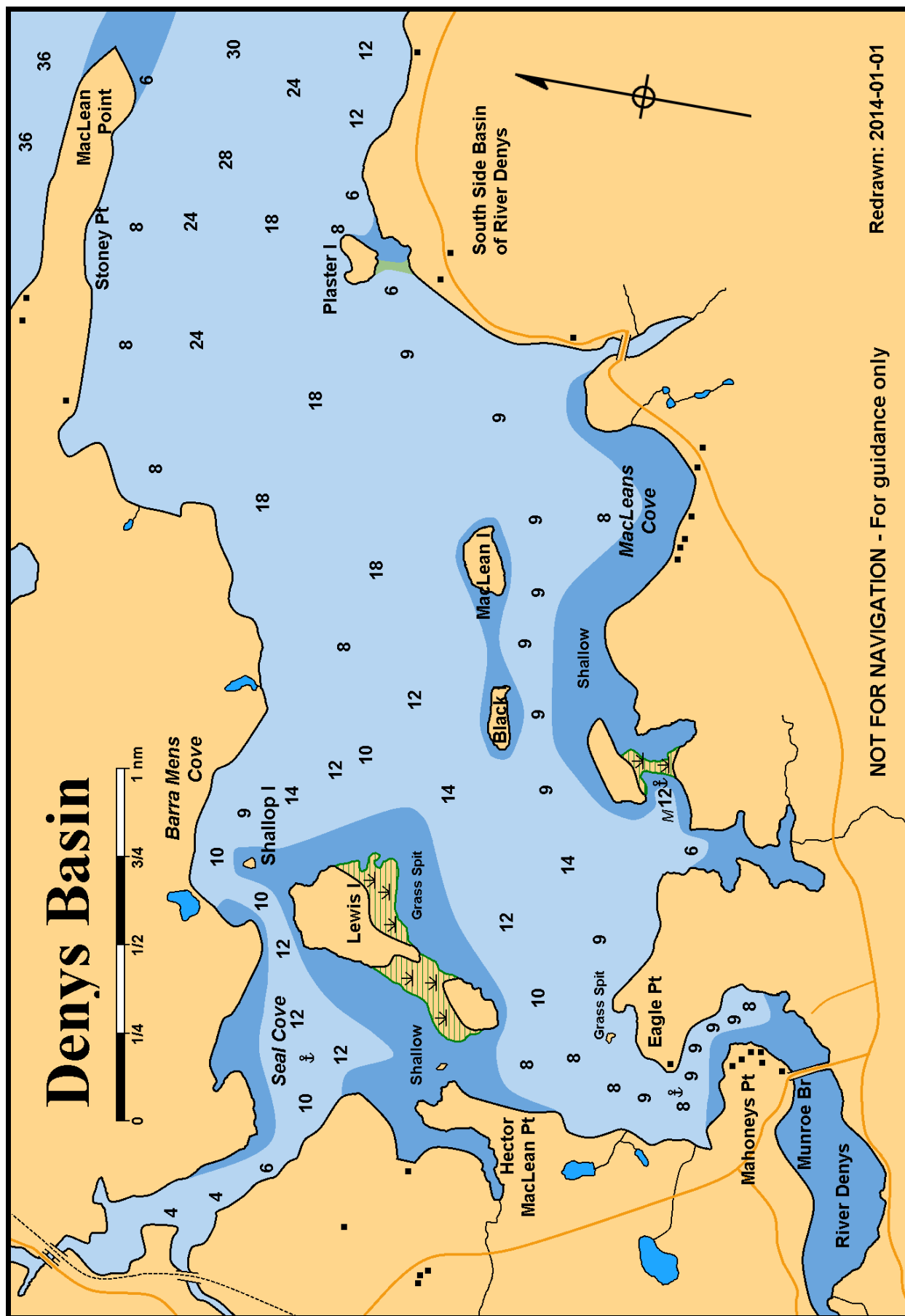
Denys Basin is another 'yet-to-be-spoiled' area. Very few houses line the shores of the basin and one can easily anchor out of their sight. The prominent church, shown on the CHS chart and referred to in older cruising guides, was removed in 2002 and now sits high atop the hill above Iona at the Highland Village Museum. Because of the vast area and shallowness of the water, the water here can become very warm in the summer and excellent for swimming.

Navigation:

Although local cruisers sometimes take the passage between Boom Shoal and Boom Island, the safest route is to honour the green buoy, **C61**, before heading east into the basin. Be sure to give the red buoy, **C62**, a wide berth. Then head toward the radio mast on the side of the hill as you head westward, this should keep you in a channel carrying at least 12 feet until past Black Island, watching out for the grassy spit off Lewis Island.

The best anchorage is said to be in the mouth of River Denys, west of Eagle Point. Another fine anchorage is to the east of Eagle Point in the bay formed by a low marshy bar to the small island south of Black Island. Twelve feet carries well into this bay.

For Seal Cove, take the narrow, but easily navigated, channel around the north side of Lewis Island, favouring the north shore at the entrance to avoid the shoal off Shallop Island. Then maintain a mid-channel course.



East Bay — Overview

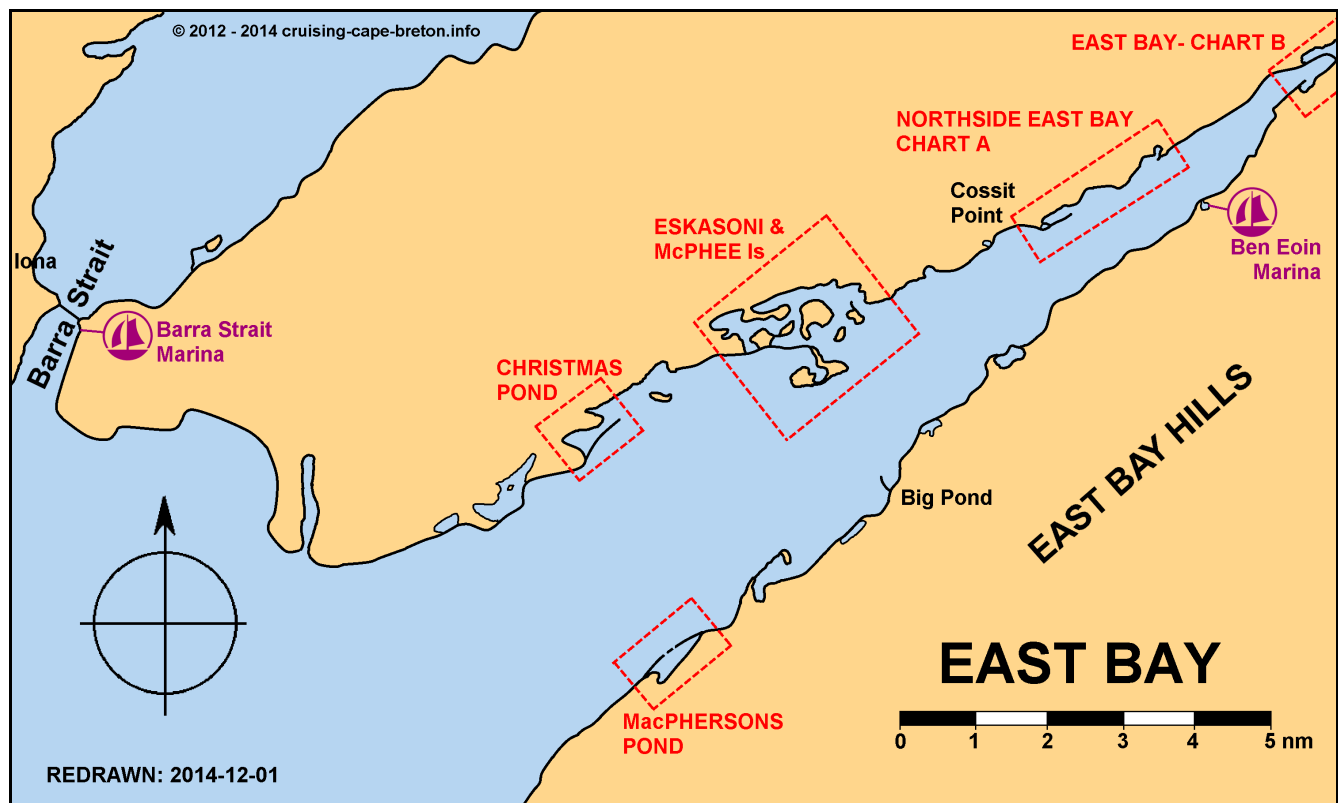
CHS Chart No: 4279 – Bras d'Or Lake

Amenities: Ben Eoin Marina (dockage, fuel, showers, water, pump-out)

Description:

East Bay is quite a spectacular area with high hills on both sides and is popular with local boaters, many of whom have cottages along its shores. It is especially popular with sailors, and provides some fine day-sailing. However, apart from the marina at Ben Eoin near the head of the bay, it has few anchorages of note to attract the cruiser, and the sheltered anchorages that exist tend to be crowded with moored boats.

Good anchoring and protection can be found in the McPhee Islands (Eskasoni) and dockage on a space-available basis at the Crane Cove Seafoods plant.



Updated: 2014-12-01

MacPhersons Pond (Lochan Fad)

CHS Chart No: 4279 – Bras d'Or Lake

Amenities:

None

Description:

MacPhersons Pond, formerly known as Lochan Fad (Gaelic for Long Pond) is a typical example of 'barachois' construction found along southern shores on the Bras d'Or Lakes. MacPhersons Pond is still under construction in that an entrance to the encircled pond still exists for small craft. In time, unless some means is used to maintain the opening, nature will close the gap isolating the waters, creating a stagnant pond. In eons of time, the pond will fill with mud and silt forming a marsh which will eventually grow into a point of land reclaimed from the sea.

Navigation:

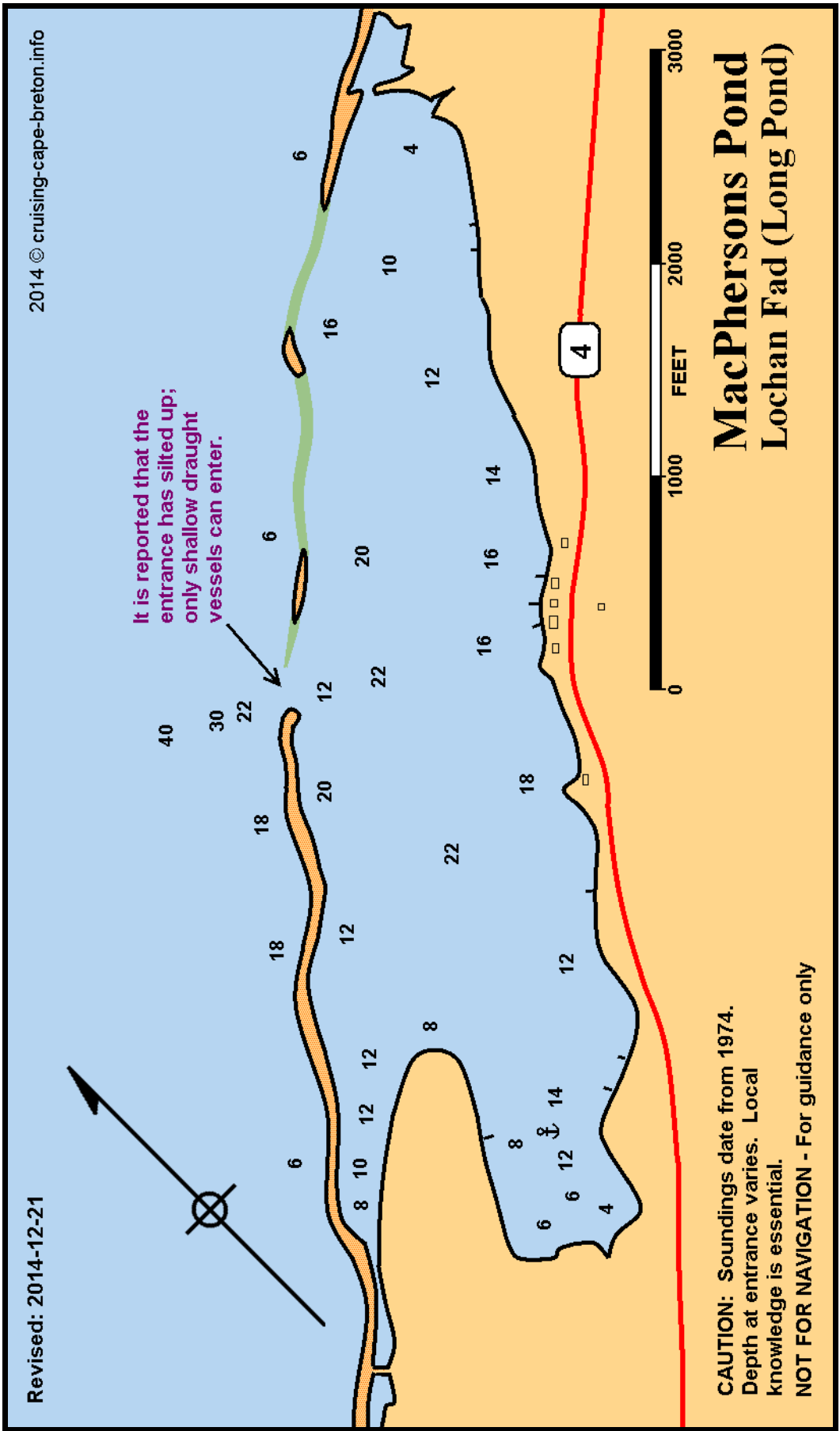
A shallow channel still remains between the bars. In 1974 Roy Mac Keen found the channel carried 6 feet, however, the authors have been unable to determine the current depth, and only noted shallow draft boats in the pond in 2012. This entrance channel is usually marked by the local residents with small low buoys, fairly close to the bar entrance.

Local knowledge is essential. Use extreme caution.

Anchorage is said to be excellent throughout the pond in mud, with the best protection in the cove to the southwest of the entrance.

Update 2014-12-21: It is reported that the entrance has silted up, and is impassable for all but dinghies.

Updated: 2014-12-21



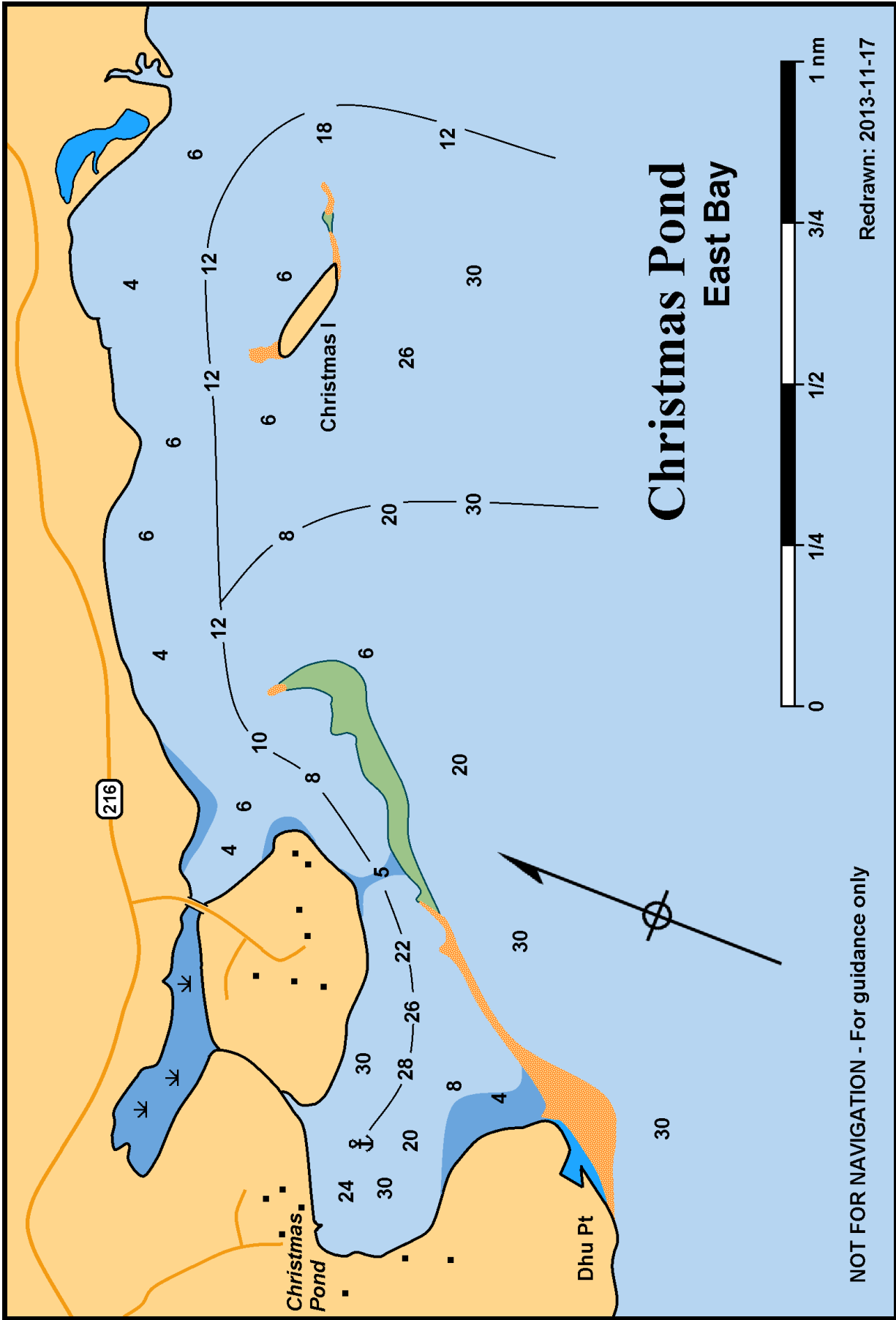
Christmas Pond - East Bay

CHS Chart No: 4279 – Bras d'Or Lake

Amenities: none known

Description: Christmas Pond is formed by a long sandbar extending eastward along the shoreline from Dhu Point. There are several cottages around the pond and numerous cottages along both sides of Hwy 216. The sandbar is low and difficult to observe until quite close to the shore. Much of the bar is awash.

Navigation: The pond may be approached either between Christmas Island and the bar (least depth 8 feet) or in deeper water around the eastern end of Christmas Island. Mid-channel soundings show clear passage into the pond, except for vessels drawing over 5 feet.



Eskasoni & McPhee Islands

CHS Chart No: 4279 – Bras d'Or Lake

Amenities: Small convenience stores in Eskasoni

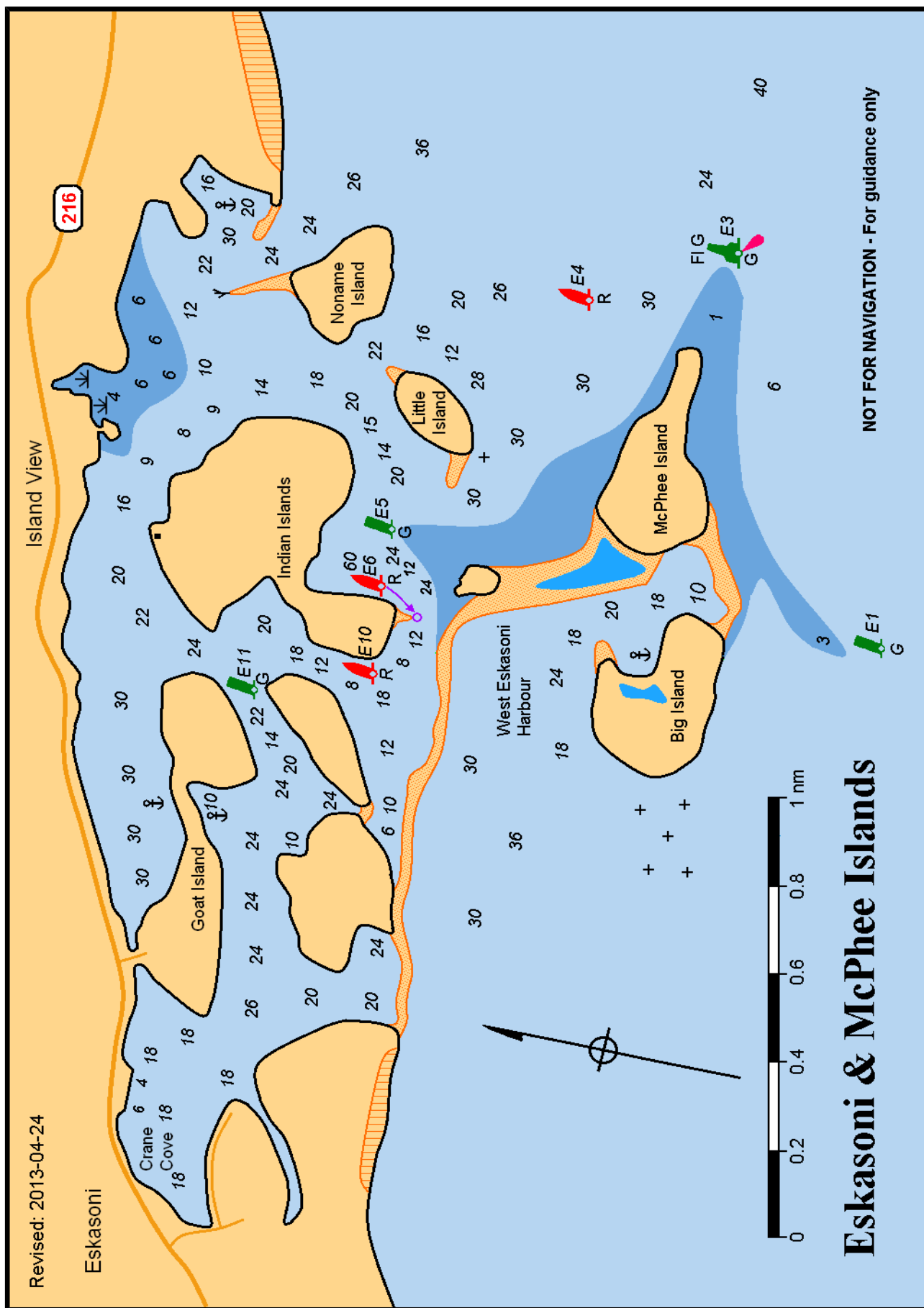
Description:

Interesting cruising waters and a number of good anchorages can be found in and around the McPhee Islands (or Indian Islands). The nine islands are wooded and without habitation, although the Eskasoni First Nation has created a unique tourism centre on Goat Island that invites visitors to learn about the Mi'kmaq culture and heritage. The Crane Cove Seafoods plant now has a number of finger-piers for small craft.

Navigation:

The buoyed channel into Crane Cove is generally deeper than 15 feet but a couple of spots as shown on the chart carry only 8 feet. Once past E11 the water is generally quite deep, but anchorage can be found in the small indentation on the south side of Goat Island, and also in the bay opposite Goat Island where a sandbar connects two islands. The north side of Goat Island also affords good anchoring.

The outer anchorage in West Eskasoni Harbour between McPhee Island and Big Island is almost completely protected by the fifty-foot elevations of the two islands. The connecting sand bars are bold and the clear waters provide excellent swimming. Keep well clear of the rocky shoal extending westward from Big Island.



North Side East Bay

CHS Chart No: 4279 – Bras d'Or Lake

Amenities: none

Description:

Five miles eastward of McPhee Islands, Cossit Point provides moderate protection behind a low sand bar. The green buoy (EA1) marks the eastern end of a 6-foot rocky shoal and should be left to port.

Soundings behind the bar at Cossit point are surprisingly deep well into the basin. The bottom shoals quickly past the cottages on the bar. Holding is good in hard-packed sand and mud. Although sheltered from the sea, there is little protection from high winds from the north or south.

Frank Elman, owner of **Yael** maintains a substantial mooring off the sand beach to the east of McAdam Point. If the mooring is available, visiting cruisers are invited to use the facility. The large A-Frame chalet overlooking the beach marks the approximate location of the buoy.

Alternate anchorage is available at McAdam Point where a shallow bay will provide protection. Draft is limited beyond the headlands.

Eastward of McAdam Point, the bay narrows rapidly from 1 nm to ¼ nm at the sandbar at the head of the bay, and the mountain ranges on either side give way to rolling hills. Considerable shoaling occurs off Campbell Point and cruisers are advised to maintain a mid-bay course down the bay.

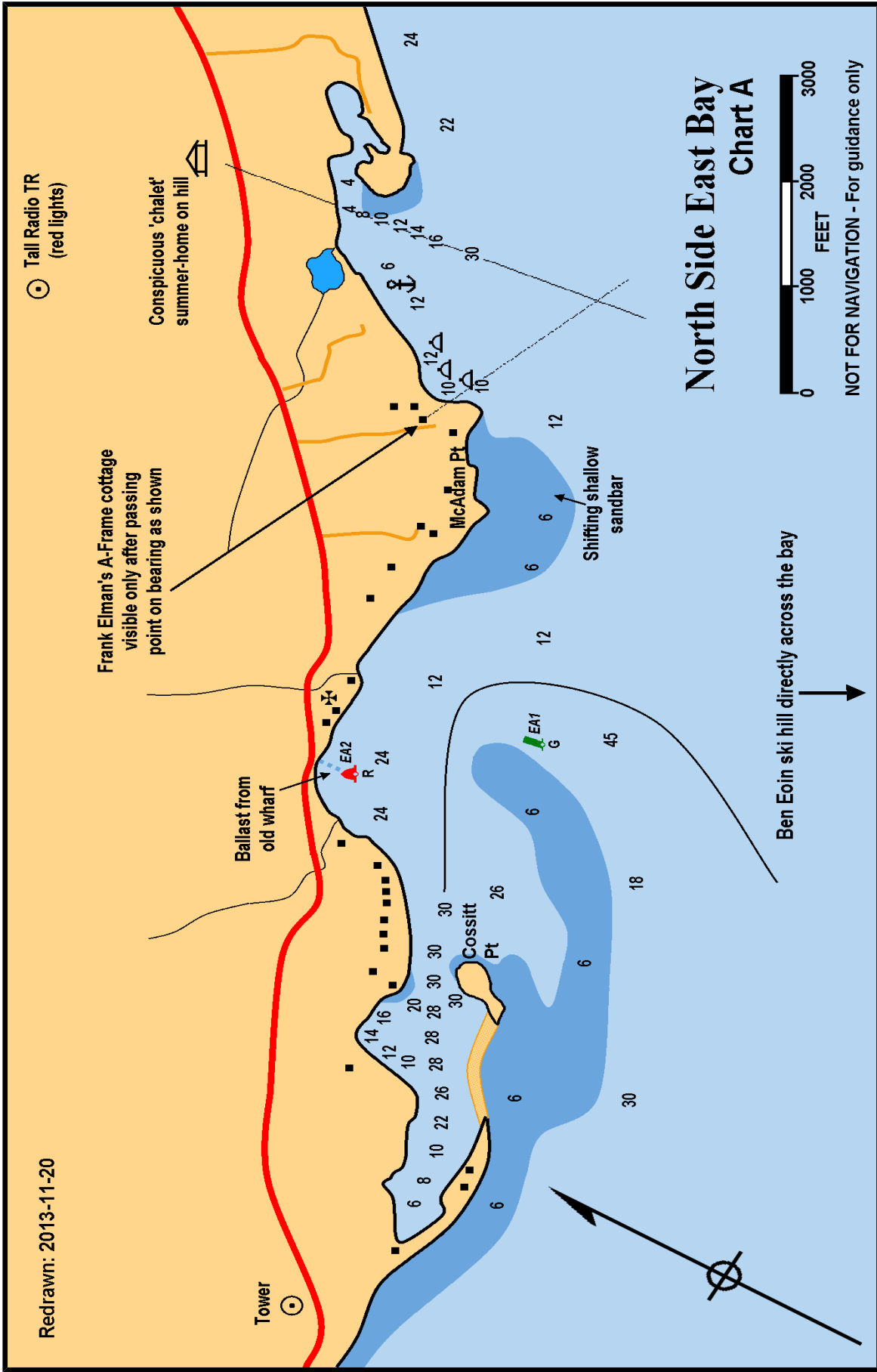
Across the bay from Campbell Point is a popular swimming beach for residents and tourists.

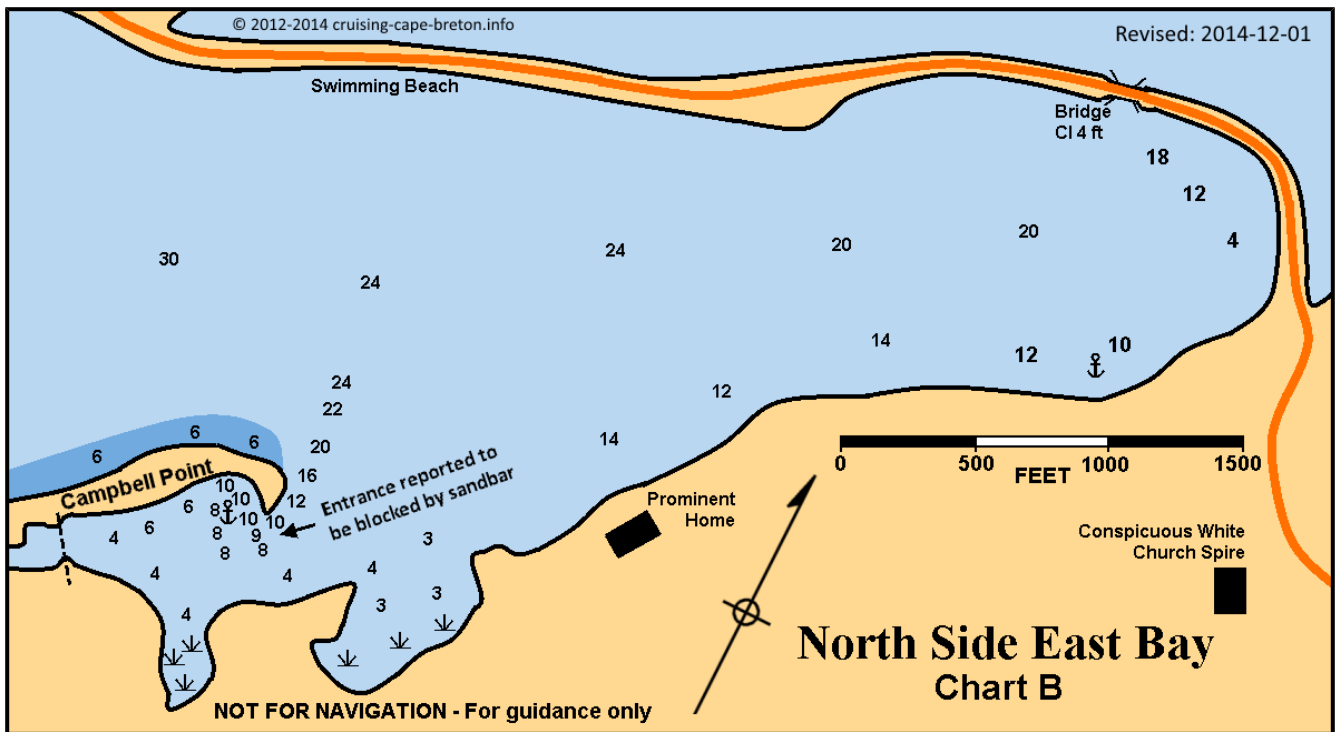
The hooked sandbar at Campbell Point once provided a small but protected anchorage. However, it is reported that the entrance is now blocked by a sandbar.

Alternate anchorage may be found in the cove to the east of the white gabled home in 10 to 12 feet of water.

Navigation:

Updated: 2014-12-01





St Patricks Channel — Overview

CHS Chart No: 4278 – Great Bras d'Or and St Patricks Channel

Amenities: See charts for Baddeck Harbour, Little Narrows, and Whycomomagh

Description:

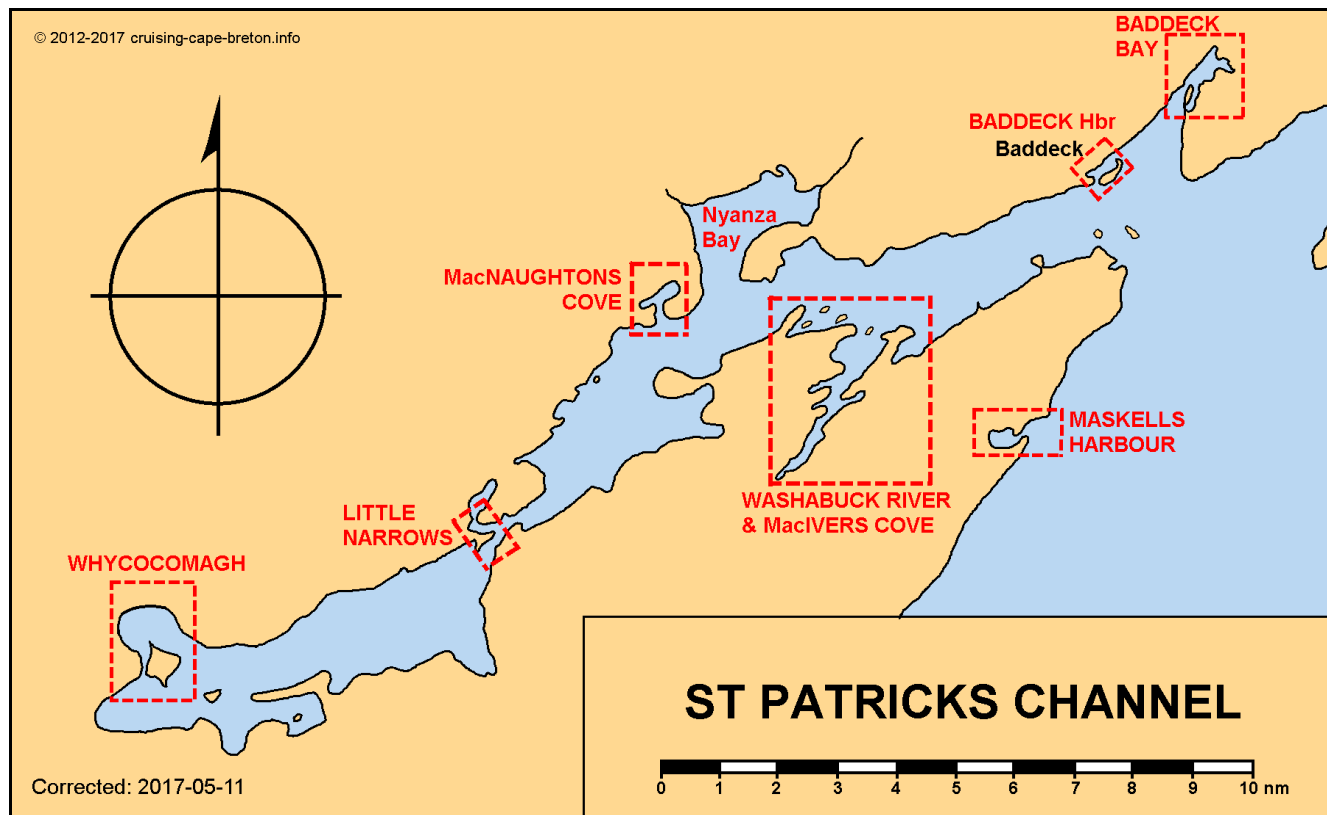
Although Maskells Harbour, Baddeck Bay, and Baddeck Harbour are not strictly on St Patricks Channel, for convenience they are included with this area.

The area from Red Head to Whycomomagh has numerous coves to attract the cruiser, though not all provide complete all-round protection. Favourites are Washabuck River with its several snug coves in which one might ride out a hurricane, and Maskells Harbour. The smaller coves such as MacNaughtons and Little Narrows provide good protection and seclusion.

Nyanza Bay has little to offer the cruiser: it is wide open and relatively shallow. The dock at the head of the bay near the 'Herring Choker' is a crumbling concrete-and-steel structure (2012) with a high deck and is best suited to steel barges. Dinghying ashore is difficult. A small bulkheaded docking area near the entrance on the western shore belongs to the Wagmatcook Aboriginal Fisheries and has little or no facilities for cruisers, but could be used in an emergency for access to the shore.

Navigation:

As the channel is used by ocean-going ships, it is well marked as far as Little Narrows. From buoy **A11**, off MacIvers Point, the deeper water is marked by a series of ranges as well as buoys to guide ships to the gypsum loading dock. While these ranges may be of little interest to cruisers, it should be noted that after dredging of the Great Bras d'Or Entrance to allow deeper draught vessels to enter the lakes, a couple of additional ranges were added to guide ships around the south side of MacIvers Shoal. If these ranges are not shown on your chart, this may cause confusion.



Updated: 2014-12-04

Baddeck Bay

CHS Chart No: 4278 – Great Bras d'Or & St Patricks Channel

Amenities:

None known

Description:

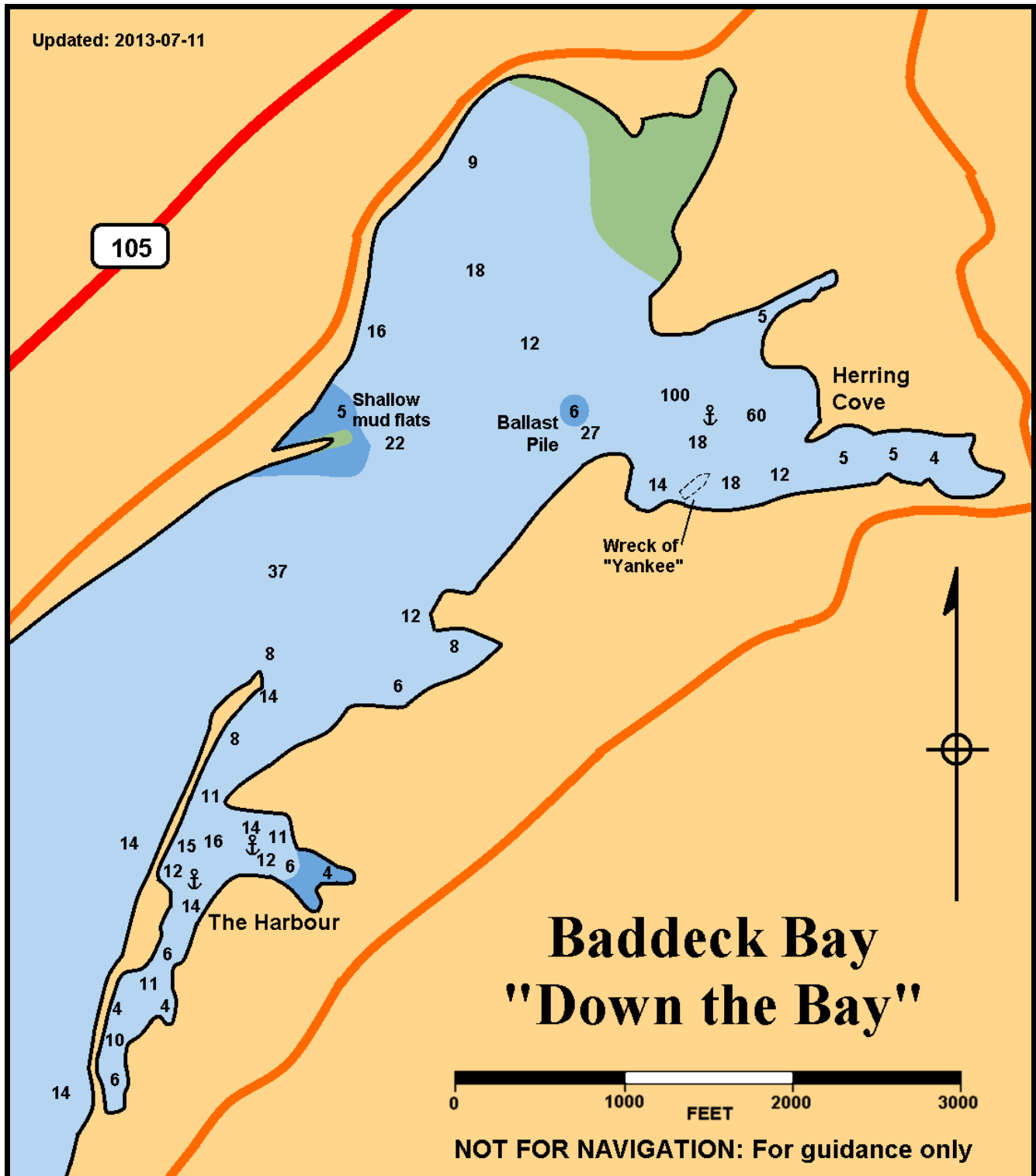
It is said that local boaters go “down the Bay” when referring to Baddeck Bay and go “up the shore” when referring to St Patricks Channel. The bay extends over two miles to the northeast and contains a number of anchorages. The anchorage known locally as The Harbour is formed by a long sandbar, extending northeast from Beinn Bhreagh, and provides excellent protection from the southwest.

Further down the bay, Herring Cove to the northeast contains the wreck of Captain Irving Johnstone's 92-foot schooner “Yankee” as shown on the chart. Although well sheltered, the water in this cove, is for the most part deep, with depths of 100 feet in places. Much of the 'anchorable' water is filled with moorings of the cottagers, and so the cove offers little room for a cruiser to anchor.

Navigation:

The approach is straightforward, but one should maintain a centre-channel course as the bay narrows to avoid the sandbars extending from the shores. Deep-draft vessels need to watch out for the ballast pile shown on the chart, as the position shown is approximate.

Updated: 2013-07-11



Baddeck Harbour

CHS Chart No: 4278 – Great Bras d'Or and St Patricks Channel

Amenities: All amenities are available including health and dental care.

Description:

The picturesque village of Baddeck is the largest settlement on the Bras d'Or Lakes, and is the main boating centre on Cape Breton Island. It is also a major tourist centre with numerous hotels/motels and restaurants (open in the summer months only). It is home to the Bras d'Or Yacht Club.

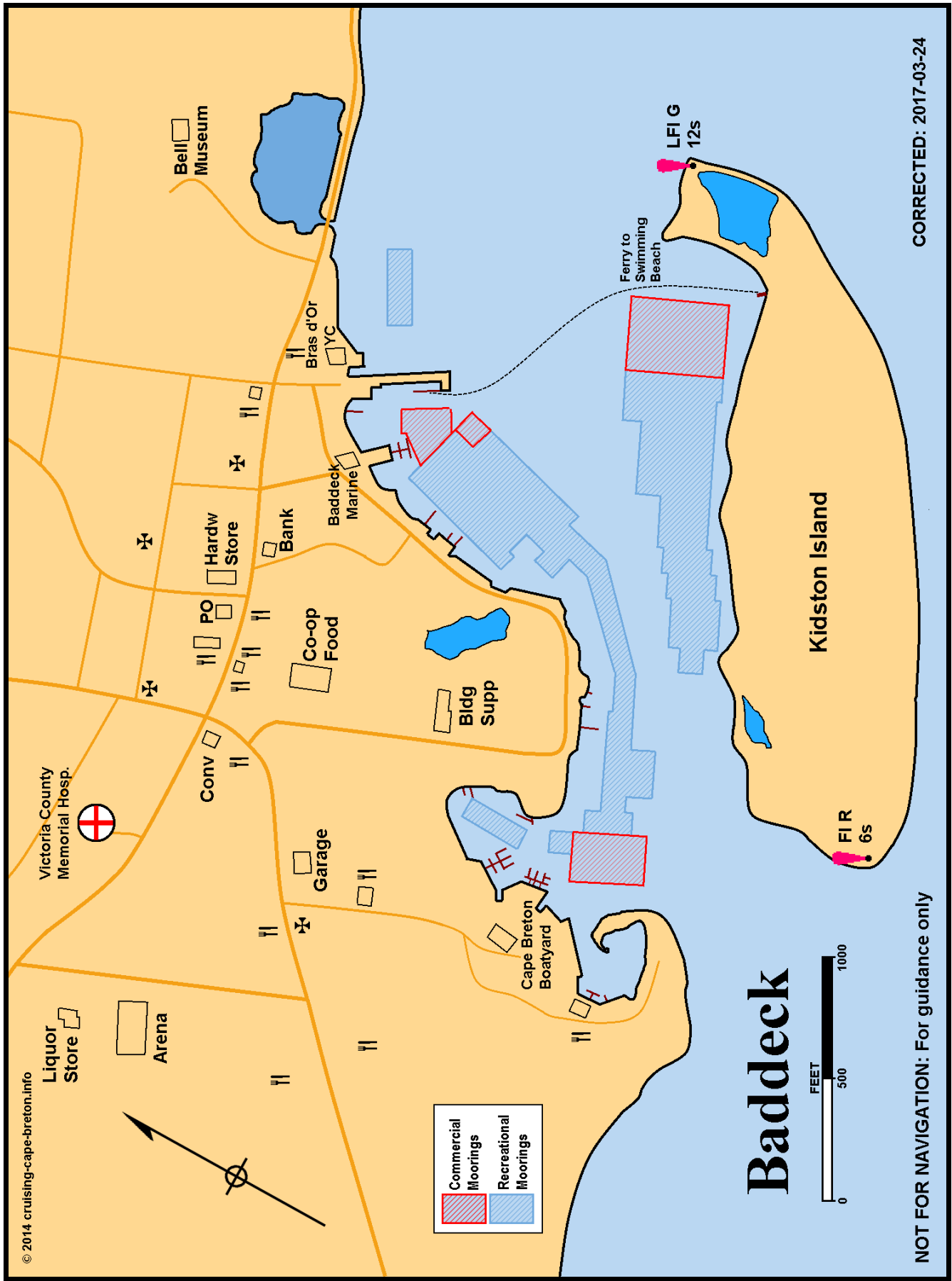
Dr Alexander Graham Bell made his home nearby on Beinn Bhreagh, above the red cliffs of Read Head, and the museum dedicated to this famous inventor's work is the main tourist attraction in the village.

The Baddeck Harbour Authority (BHA) was created in 1995 to combat the uncontrolled proliferation of moorings within the harbour. As a result, controlled mooring fields with 111 mooring spots were established that now take up most of the preferred anchoring areas. Of those moorings, 22 are "commercial" and may be rented by visitors as available from Cape Breton Boat Yard or Baddeck Marine. The remaining moorings are "recreational" and are strictly for the use of their assigned boaters. Anchoring is permitted elsewhere in the harbour, but not between the mooring fields and the shores. The mooring areas are shown on the sketch chart, which also shows businesses of immediate interest to boaters.

Navigation:

Navigation is straight forward, with the preferred entrance being from the east. CHS Chart 4278, with a detailed inset of Baddeck Harbour provides all the information required, except that the 'anchorage' symbols should be ignored.

Prepared: 2014-01-04



Washabuck River & MacIvers Cove

CHS Chart No: 4278 – Great Bras d'Or & St Patricks Channel

Amenities:

None known

Description:

MacIvers Cove provides a good anchorage.

Washabuck River has a number of quiet, sheltered coves, and is possibly the best hurricane hole between Newfoundland and the Caribbean, Deep Cove being particularly safe.

The heavy equipment sounds you can hear, when at anchor here, come from the gypsum mine just a couple of miles to the SW.

The water in the Washabuck River is only slightly brackish, and provides excellent swimming.

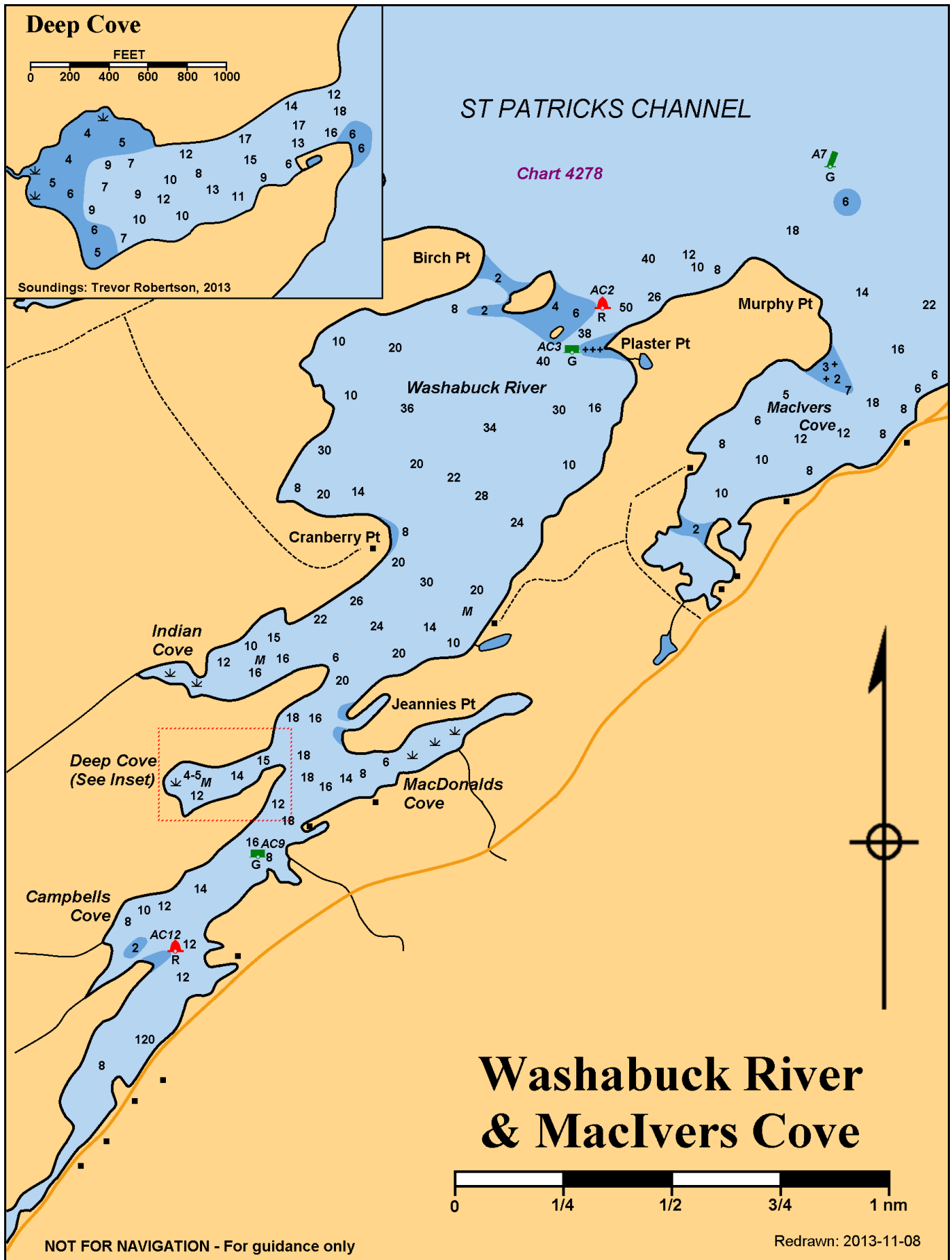
Navigation:

Approach should be made from the green buoy, **A7**, off Murphy Point.

If entering **MacIvers Cove**, favour the port-hand shore as a rocky shoal extends well across the entrance from Murphy Point.

The buoys at the **Washabuck River** entrance mark a deep, narrow channel with a rock pinnacle on the starboard side and a razor-sharp reef on the other. Once inside the river is wide and deep. A little past the last red buoy, AC12, the water deepens to 120 feet, which precludes anchoring in that area.

Updated: 2013-11-08



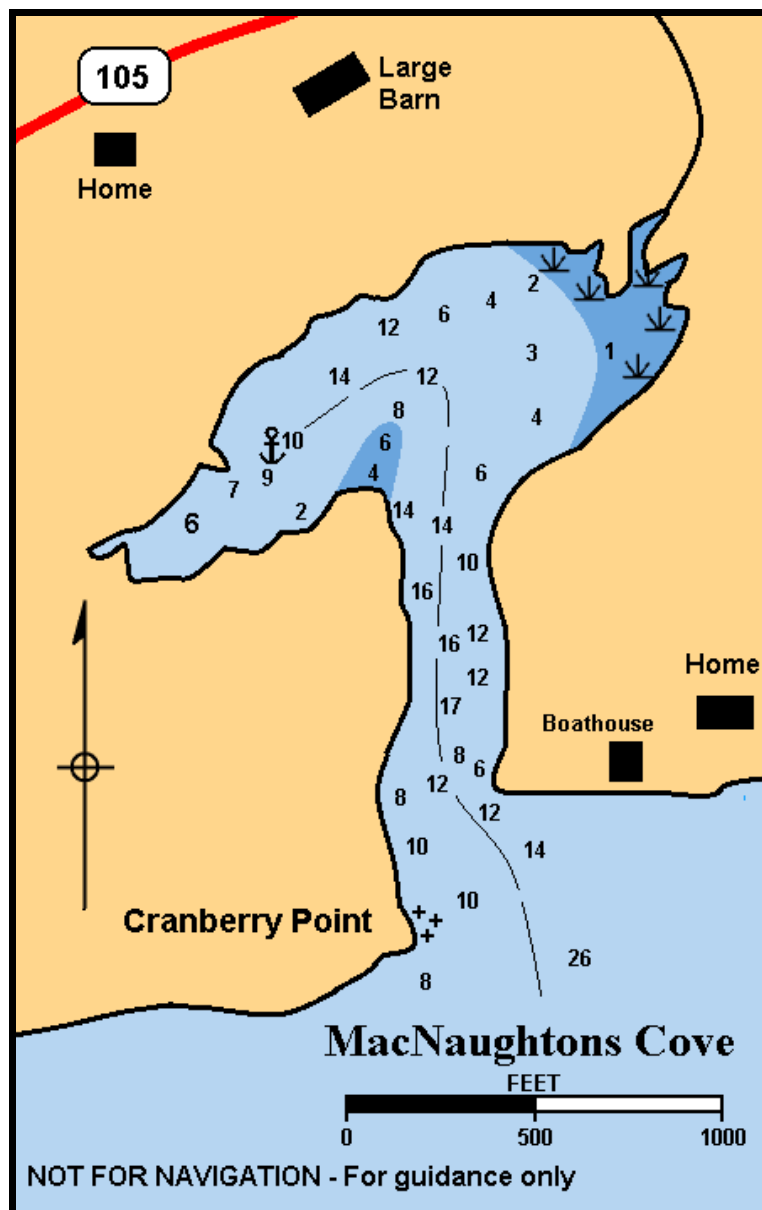
MacNaughtons Cove

CHS Chart No: 4278 – Great Bras d'Or and St Patricks Channel

Amenities: none

Description: MacNaughtons Cove, an almost landlocked harbour at Cranberry Point is an excellent anchorage for small craft.

Navigation: The entrance can be identified by a summer home and boathouse, slightly east of the entrance. Favour the eastern shore at the entrance and then proceed mid-channel until well into the centre of the harbour. A rock shoal extends off the western inner point and a swing to the west should be made from the centre of the harbour. It shoals rapidly in the northeast corner.



Little Narrows

CHS Chart No: 4278 – Great Bras d'Or and St Patricks Channel

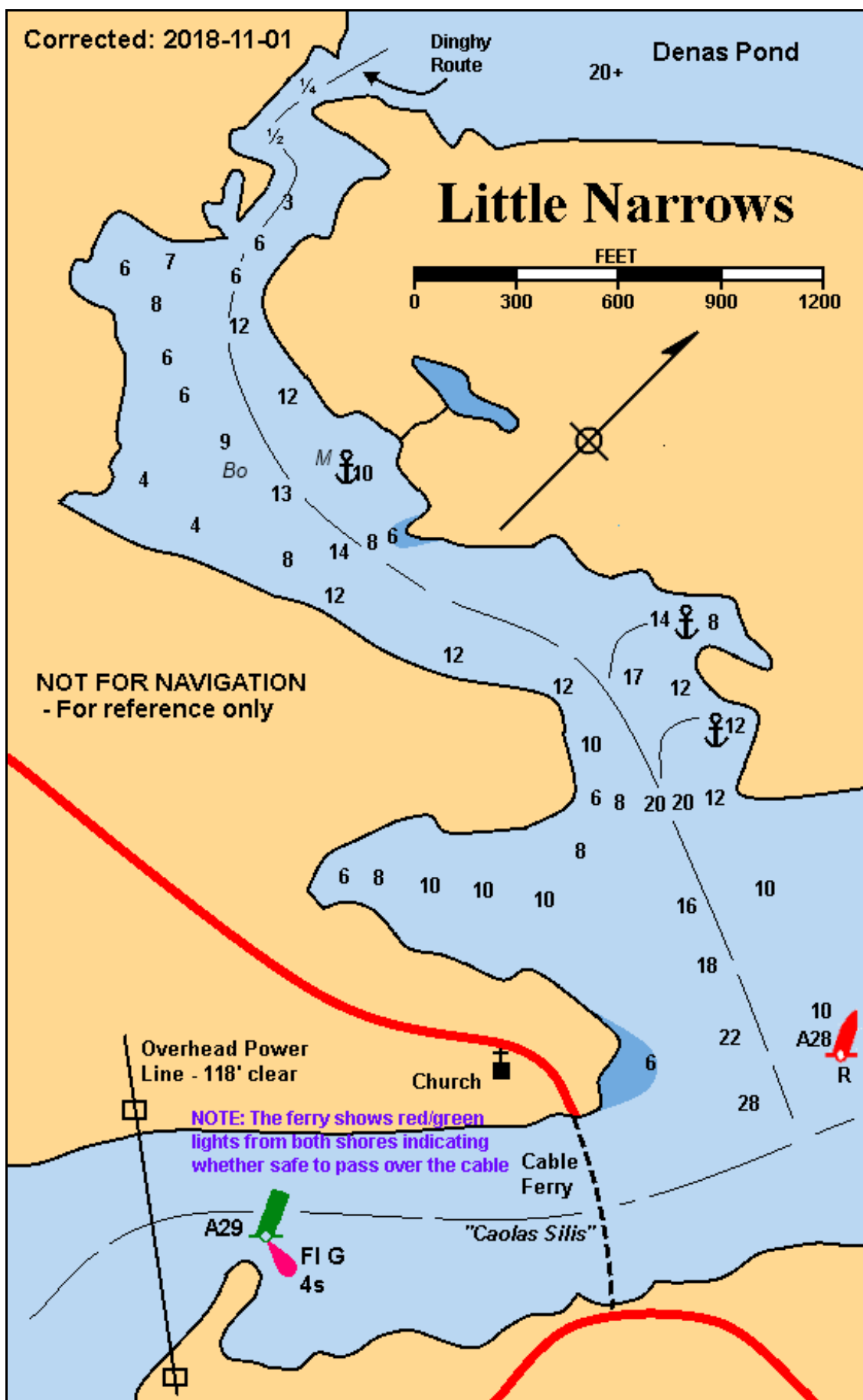
Amenities: ~~Mackenzie's Country Store (902-756-2985) with convenience items, grocery, hardware, ice cream, coffee, hotdogs, cigarettes, ATM, ice, gas, propane exchange.~~

[The store burnt down in October 2015. Its future is uncertain.]

Description: ~~A general store is situated close to the ferry ramp on the eastern side of the narrows, opposite the church.~~ There is a small dock and launch ramp, just south of the ferry crossing. The name of the ferry is "Caolas Silis" [pronounced "KOO-luhs SHEE-luhs"] and means Julia's Strait. There is a good anchorage on the west side of the narrows. The Denas Pond is deep but the entrance to it is extremely shallow, even for a dinghy.

Navigation: From MacIvers Point to the gypsum loading dock there were two (2) well buoyed channels in 2011. The more recently marked channel taking the deeper water route to the west of MacIvers Bank. Past the gypsum dock the channel narrows and is buoyed by small buoys. Just before the ferry crossing the small cove opens to the west. Leave the red buoy (A28) to starboard to enter. Good anchorage can be found in 10 feet just south where the stream flows out of a small pond, just inside the shallow spit. Avoid the southern side, as the holding is poor, with a boulder-strewn bottom. Red and green lights show from both shores to indicate whether safe to pass over the cable. The ferry operators may be a little slow to notice a boat approaching, so do not attempt to cross until the green light is shown.

Updated: 2015-11-28



Whycocomagh

CHS Chart No: 4278 – Great Bras d'Or & St Patricks Channel

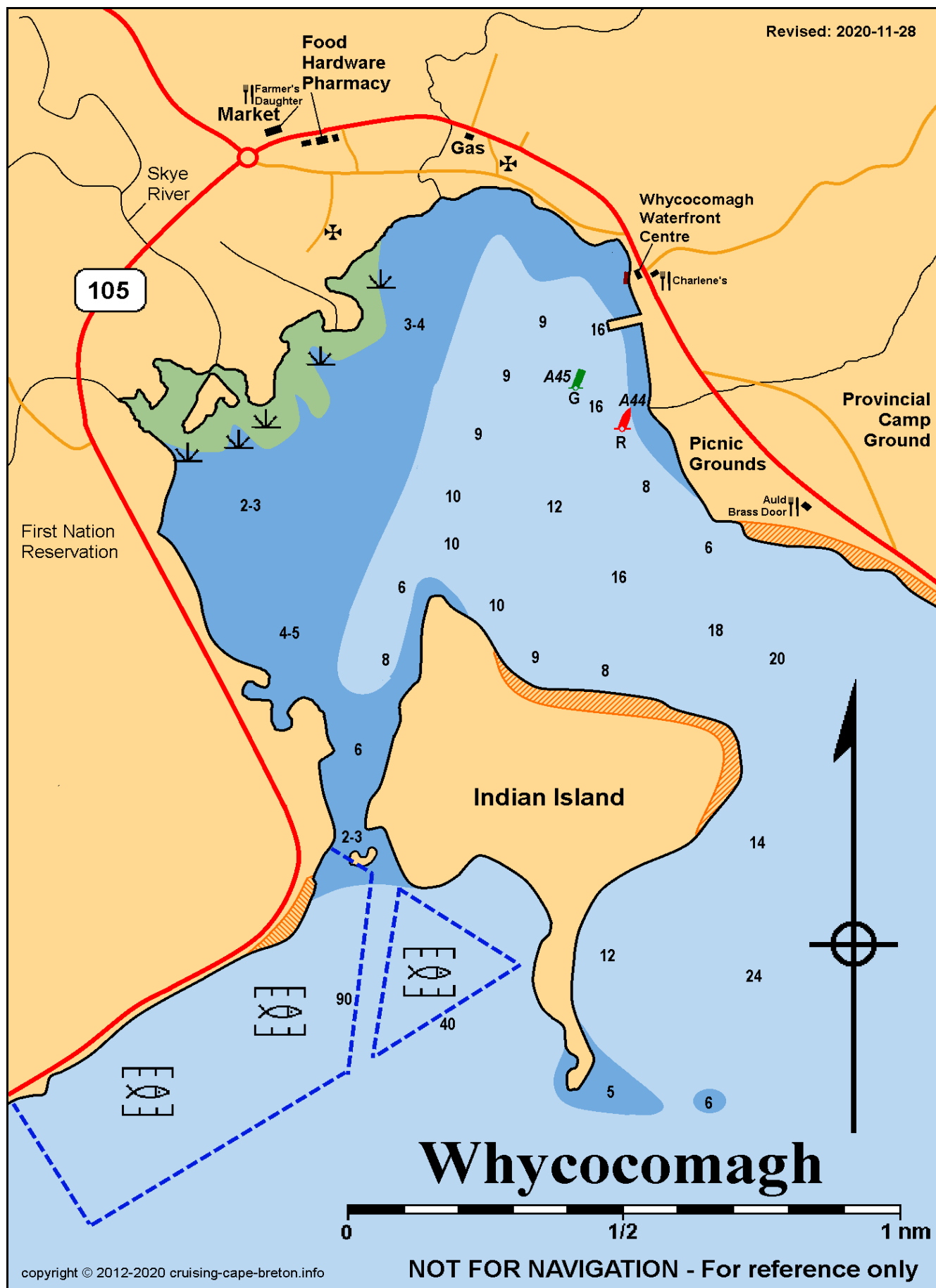
Amenities:

Whycocomagh Waterfront Centre (dockage, pump-out, water, toilets)
Food (Co-op), Fuel by jug, Hardware (Home Hardware), Pharmacy, Restaurants (Charlene's, Farmer's Daughter, Auld Brass Door), NSLC outlet (Co-op)

Description:

Whycocomagh, pronounced "why-COG-a-muh", has many amenities, though at some distance from the public dock. The Esso station is about 1 km from the dock. The Co-op food store, Hardware, Pharmacy, and Farmer's Daughter Country Market are about 1.4 km (0.9 miles) from the dock. The Whycocomagh Waterfront Centre, formerly the Royal Canadian Legion building, is a little closer to the amenities and has dockage for boats with less than 6 feet of draught. Charlene's Bayside Restaurant and Café is conveniently located just across the road from the Waterfront Centre. The Farmer's Daughter restaurant is in the Country Market. The Auld Brass Door bar and restaurant is located to the SE of the public dock; a walk of about 800 metres (½ mile). The area on the west side of the bay, SW of the Skye River, is a First Nation reservation

Updated: 2017-07-29



Maskells Harbour & Gillis Point

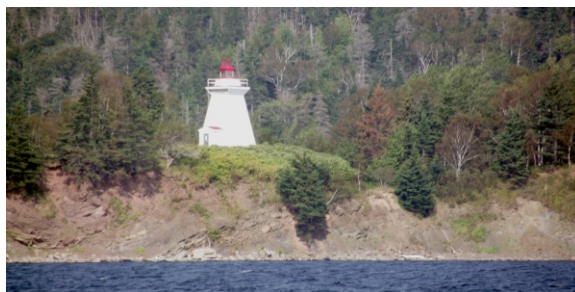
CHS Chart No: 4278 – Great Bras d'Or & St Patricks Channel

Amenities: none

Description:

Originally called Bouliceet Harbour, Maskells Harbour is surrounded by steep rolling hills and is almost landlocked by a sandbar stretching across the entrance. The unspoiled beauty makes it a popular sanctuary for boaters, and it is one of the most popular anchorages on the lakes system because of its proximity to Barra Strait and Baddeck, and its idyllic setting. The majority of the land fringing the harbour is privately owned and the owners have chosen to refrain from development of any kind and thus retain the natural beauty of the harbour, which should be an inspiration and incentive to all visitors to keep the harbour and shores clean.

Gillis Point lighthouse has been “discontinued” and although the structure of the lighthouse remains (2011) it no longer shows a light. The structure is obscured or partially obscured by trees from some directions.



Navigation:

The approach to Maskells Harbour is from the northeast, respecting the green buoy (QD1) placed almost midway between the headlands of Gillis Point and Ponys Point.

The water is deep well into the harbour, shoaling at the western end. It is inadvisable to round up too close behind the sand bar, as a mud-bank extends westward from the inside of the bar. The water is bold along the north shore and one can step ashore from the boat in several places.

Updated: Sep 10, 2011

Maskells Harbour



HIGH HILLS - DENSE WOODS

PRIVATE BOATHOUSE
& LANDING

BEACH

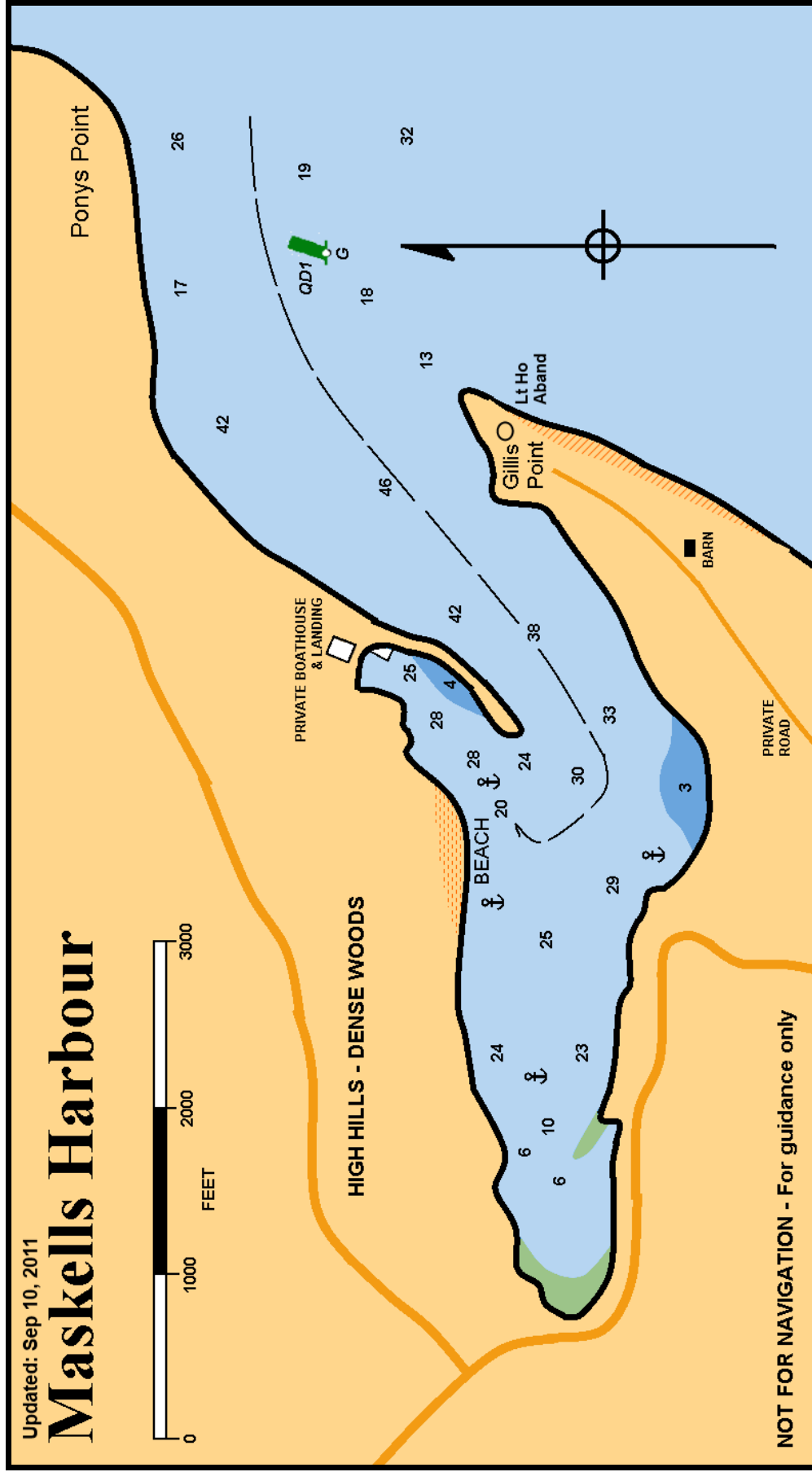
BARN

PRIVATE
ROAD

Gillis
Point

Lt Ho
Aband

Ponys Point



St Andrews Channel — Overview

CHS Chart No: 4267 — Little Bras d'Or
4277 — Great Bras d'Or, St Andrews Channel & St Anns Bay

Amenities:

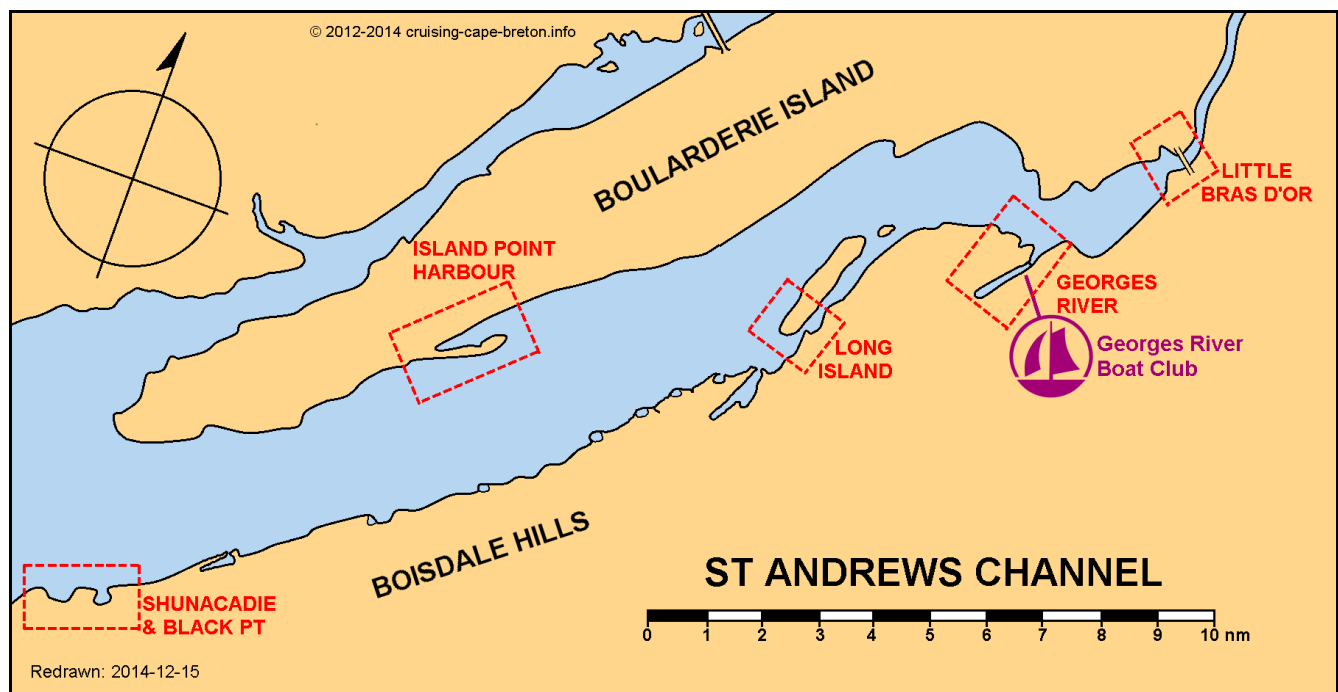
Description:

The St Andrews Channel arm of the Bras d'Or Lakes contains approximately 40 square miles of open deep water. The deepest sounding in the Lakes system of over 1700 feet (526 m) is to be found in the centre of the channel between Long Island and Boularderie Island.

The northern shore is characterized by almost continuous sheer bluffs of gypsum and sandstone, ranging in height from 10 to 75 feet, and is sparsely populated.

The southern shore slopes gently to the water and exudes a number of 'barachois', sandbars growing from the shorelines that eventually encapsulate a small body of water and create a point of land. There are numerous homes and cottages along this shore.

During prolonged strong winds from either the north or south, waves can build up to 3 to 4 feet. Winds normally subside on the Lakes at dusk.



Updated: 2014-12-05

Shunacadie & Black Point

CHS Chart No: 4277 – Great Bras d'Or, St Andrews Channel & St Anns Bay

Amenities:

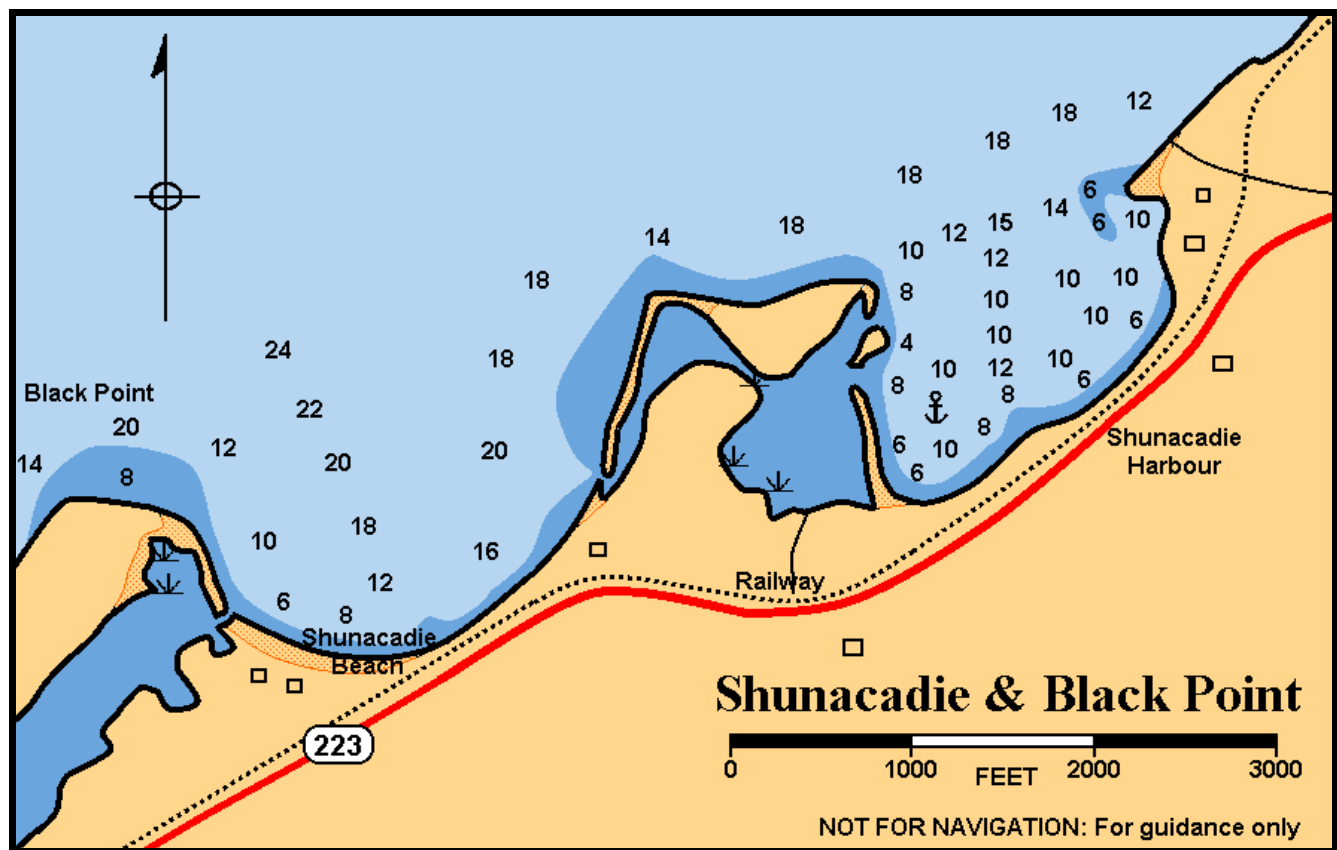
Fine beach

Description:

Shunacadie (sometimes spelled 'Shenacadie') is 5 miles due east of Maskells Harbour. The name 'Shunacadie' is from a Mi'kmaq word meaning "a place of cranberries".

The two coves afford limited protection as they are open to the north.

The western cove, inside Black Point, has one of the finest sand beaches on the lakes, with 6 feet of water close to the beach on the western shore.



Island Point Harbour

CHS Chart No: 4277 – Great Bras d'Or, St Andrews Channel & St Anns Bay

Amenities: none

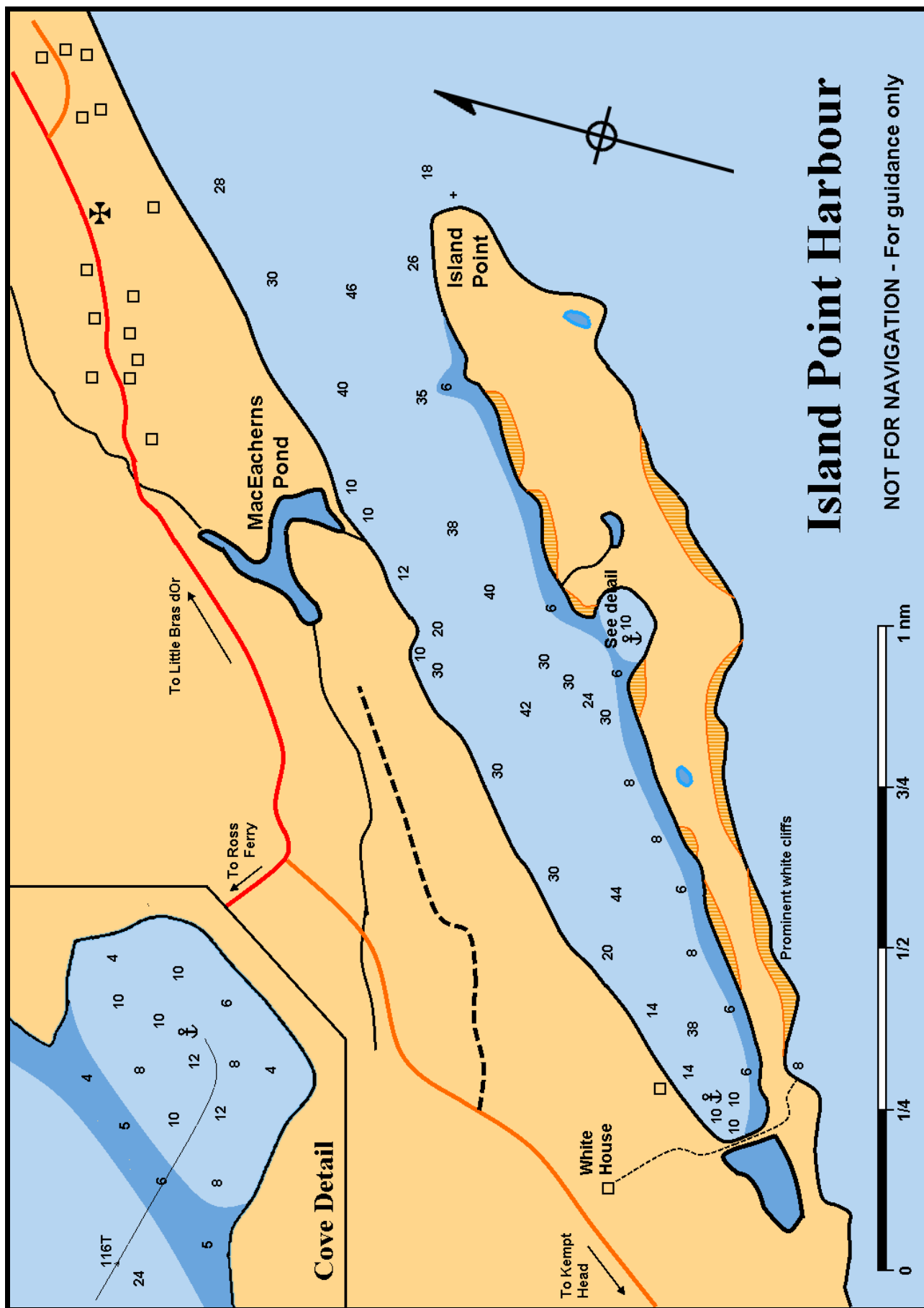
Description:

The harbour at Island Point is created by a 1½-mile long gypsum outcrop rising to a height of 30 feet from the south shore of Boularderie Island. The white gypsum cliffs, standing out from Boularderie Island, make a good landmark for the approach to the harbour. Except for the shoal shown, extending from the small point in the entrance, the water is deep when approaching the harbour, and carries 38 feet well up to the sandbar connecting the island to the mainland. It shoals quickly in sand and mud to 10 feet about 1000 feet from the bar.

The sheer, eroded white cliffs belie the presence of shallow water along the southern shore of the bay, extending approximately 700 feet from the shore, and is built up from the erosion of the gypsum cliffs. The water on the north shore is bold.

A small basin, approximately 700 feet by 500 feet, opening along the south shore, is probably the result of a sink-hole, a common occurrence in karst topography. A bar extends across the entrance, carrying only 6 feet, but once inside the cove provides good protection. Favour the the western side of the entrance.

Updated: 2014-01-14



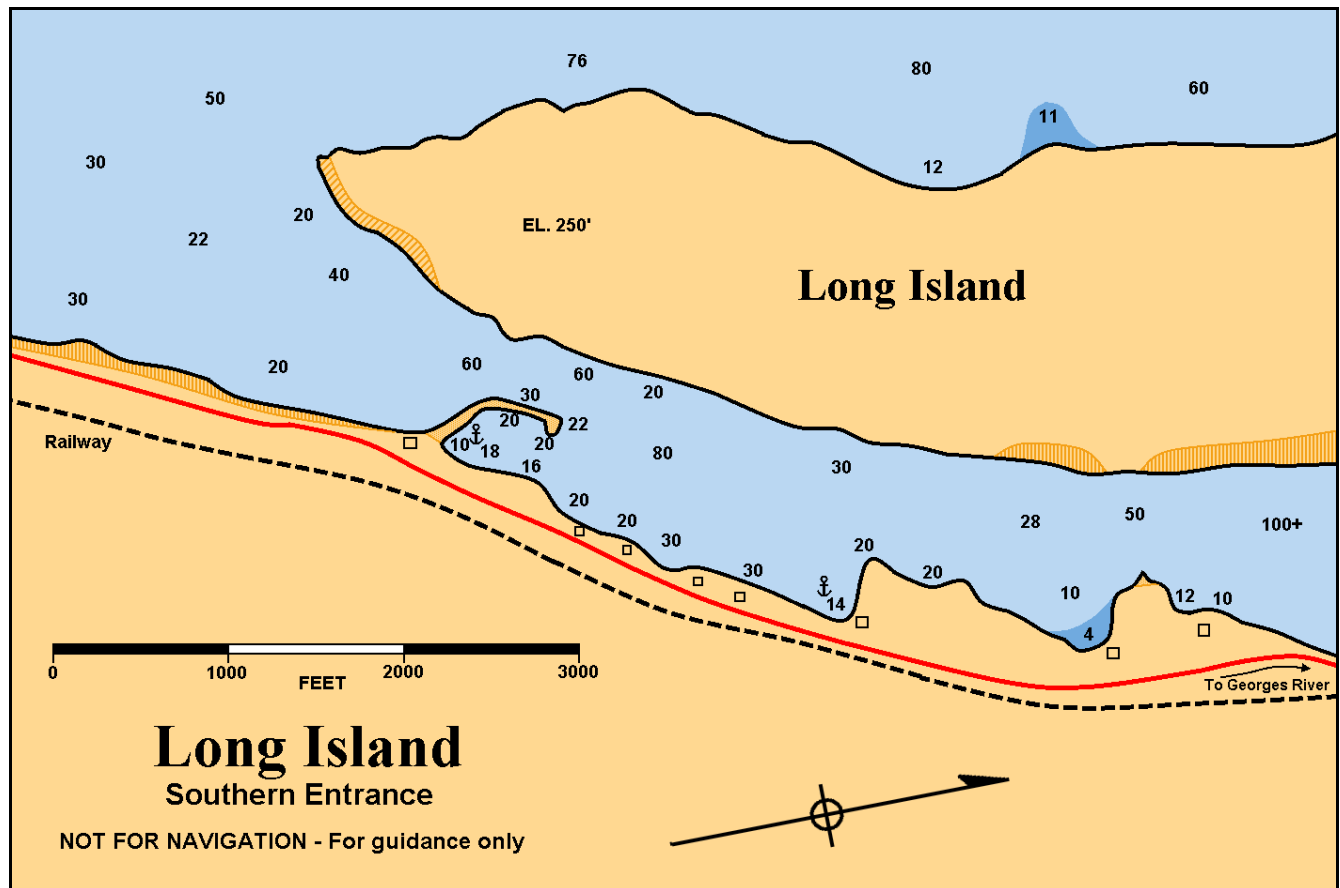
Long Island

CHS Chart No: 4277 – Great Bras d'Or, St Andrews Channel & St Anns Bay

Amenities: none

Description:

The narrow, 2-mile long fiord is formed by Long Island and the mainland of Cape Breton island on the eastern shore of St Andrews Channel. Generally, the fiord is less than 500 yards wide the whole of its length. A long hooked sandbar restricts the southern entrance to a width of only 100 yards, however the water is bold on both sides. The northern entrance is also restricted by Mouse Island, with the deepest and widest passage being between Mouse Island and Long Island. The best anchorage in the area is behind the sandbar. The other anchorage indicated on the chart does not provide the same measure of protection as the sandbar from strong southwesterly winds.



Updated: 2014-12-05

Georges River

CHS Chart No: 4277 – Great Bras d'Or, St Andrews Channel & St Anns Bay

Amenities:

Georges River Boat Club (902-794-8908), has toilets, showers, and pumpout station.

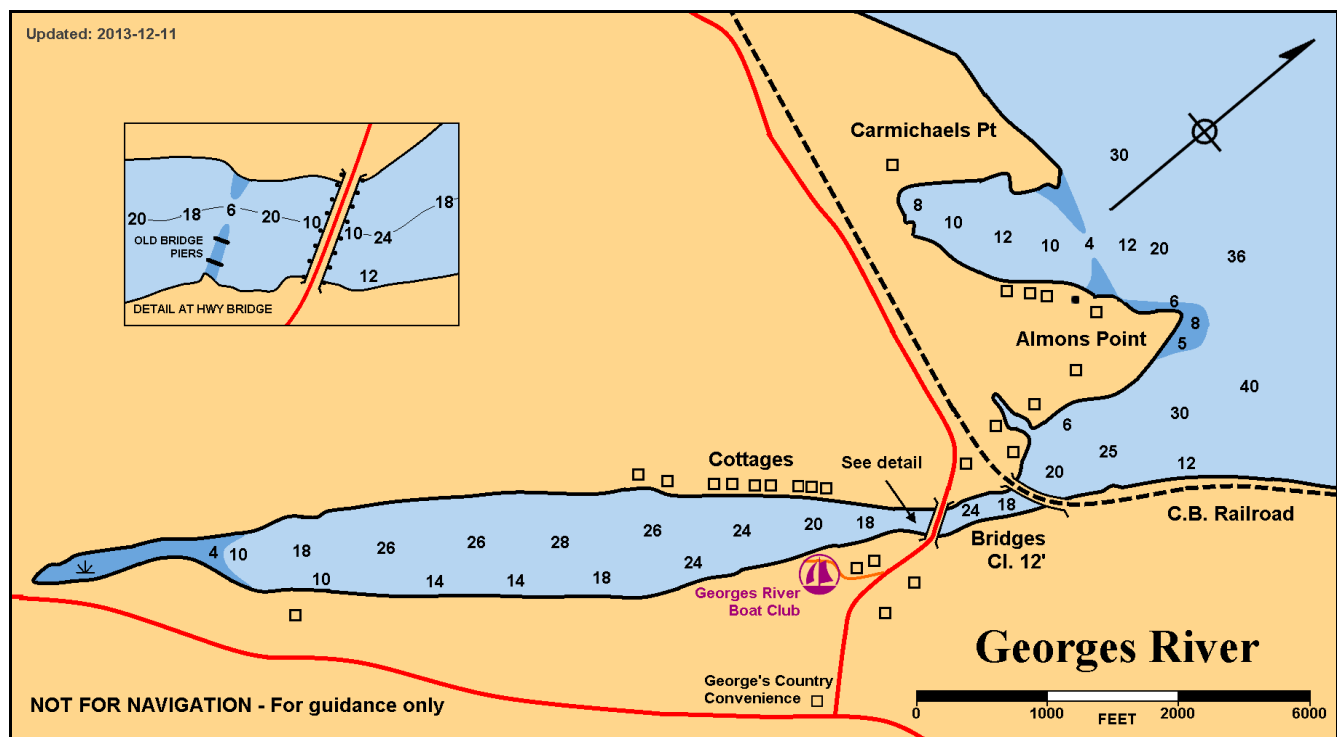
George's Country Convenience Store (902-241-3020, ice, propane exchange) ½ mile

Description:

Power craft with an air-draft of less than 12 feet can thread their way into the protected waters of Georges River. Leaping from the highway bridge into the river is a favourite summer pastime of the local youngsters—Proceed with caution!

Navigation:

There is 12 feet of water either side of the centre abutment of the railway bridge and 10 of water under the centre span of the highway bridge, which is the only one that may be navigated. Beyond the highway bridge there is only 6 feet of water between the old bridge piers. Local knowledge is advisable to avoid grounding in this area.



Updated: 2018-06-24

Little Bras d'Or

CHS Chart No: 4267 — Little Bras d'Or
4277 — Great Bras d'Or, St Andrews Channel & St Anns Bay

Amenities:

Gas stations have diesel, ice, propane exchange, and limited food supplies.

Restaurant: Bras d'Or View Restaurant & Pizzeria, 902-736-3311 (Canadian and Chinese)

Restaurant: Kitchen 1409, 902-794-1409, (¼ mile from service dock)

Celtic Country Market, 902-544-1144 (¼ mile from service dock), bakery, produce, grocery

Hillside Trailer Services, 902-736-9655, (½ mile from service dock) propane filling

Ice Cream Caboose (close to service dock)

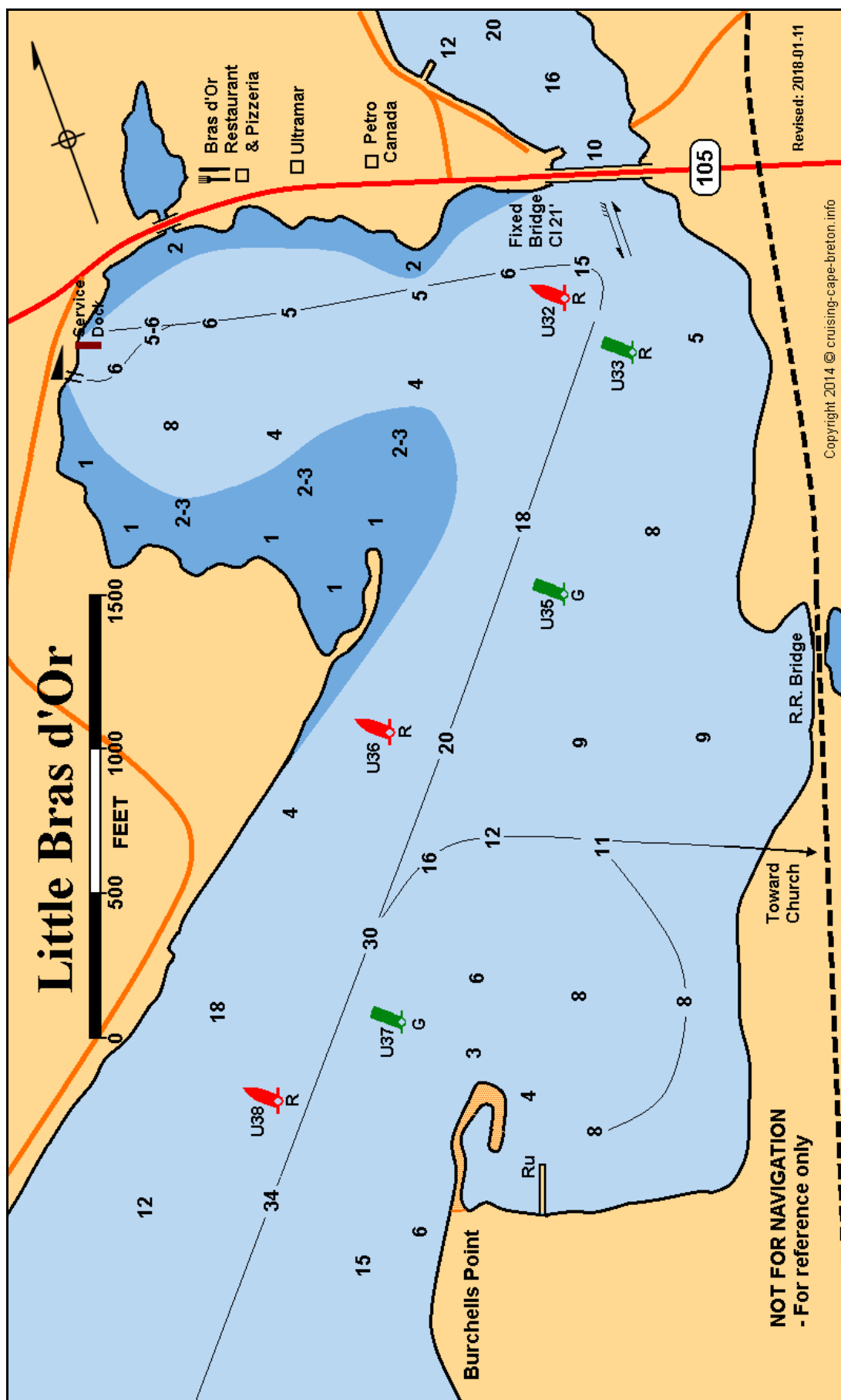
Description:

The Little Bras d'Or Channel is the preferred passage for many power boats transiting between Sydney Harbour and the Lakes. The old road bridge was replaced by a single-span bridge in 2013. The seaward entrance may be impassable in a heavy sea due to breakers, especially with wind against the tidal current.

Navigation:

The fixed bridge to the ocean has a clearance of only 21 feet. The least depth in the winding channel is 12 feet. The current is strong in the passage, and it is recommended that it be negotiated at slack water. The current tables for Great Bras d'Or Narrows may be used for the times of maximum current and slack water. Traffic at the seaward end of the passage may be considerable as boats come and go between the Atlantic and the fish processing plant. The seaward end of the passage is buoyed and two ranges provide guidance.

Updated 2018-01-11



Great Bras d'Or Channel — Overview

CHS Chart No: 4277 — Great Bras d'Or, St Andrews Channel & St Anns Bay

Amenities:

Ross Ferry Marine Park (902 674-0148): pump-out, washroom, shower.

Seal Island Marina: tbd

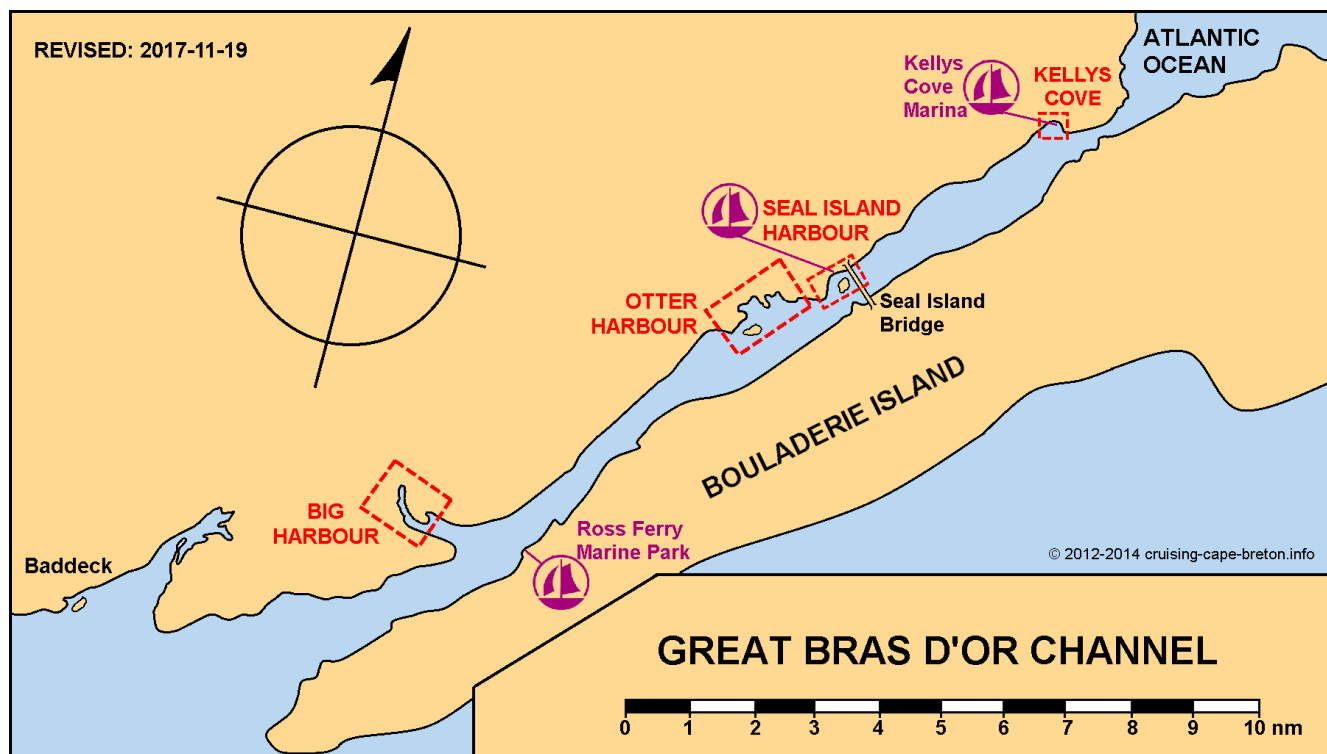
Kelly Cove Marina: tbd

Description:

The Great Bras d'Or Channel is the main sea entrance into the Lakes, stretching 17 miles from Noir Point to Kempt Head. The anchorages at Big Harbour and Otter Harbour, and the marina in Seal Island Harbour are excellent staging points for a passage through the channel, especially if making an early morning exit or a late afternoon entry. The fishing wharves at Kelly Cove and Big Bras d'Or are also convenient, but should be avoided in lobster season. The Ross Ferry Marine Park, almost directly opposite Big Harbour has some dockage space, and is an excellent place to get ashore and stretch your legs.

Navigation:

The clearance under the Seal Island Bridge is 118' (36 m). Small craft should exercise caution in navigating this channel, as tidal currents can exceed 6 knots in the narrows between Noir Point and Carey Point, and wind against current can create a brutal chop. The current may be less under the Seal Island bridge, nevertheless, eddying can be severe in this area, especially on the south side of the bridge. The two narrows are best navigated near slack water, which occurs about three hours after high or low tide. The current tables for the Great Bras d'Or Narrows should be consulted. The seaward approach to the narrows was dredged to allow deeper draught gypsum ships into the Lakes. At the same time the channel was straightened, so that a single range from Noir Point, and a sector light on Black Rock Point now provide guidance.



Updated: 2017-11-19

Big Harbour, Port Bevis, & Surprise Cove

CHS Chart No: 4277 – Great Bras d'Or, St Andrews Channel, & St Anns Bay

Amenities: none

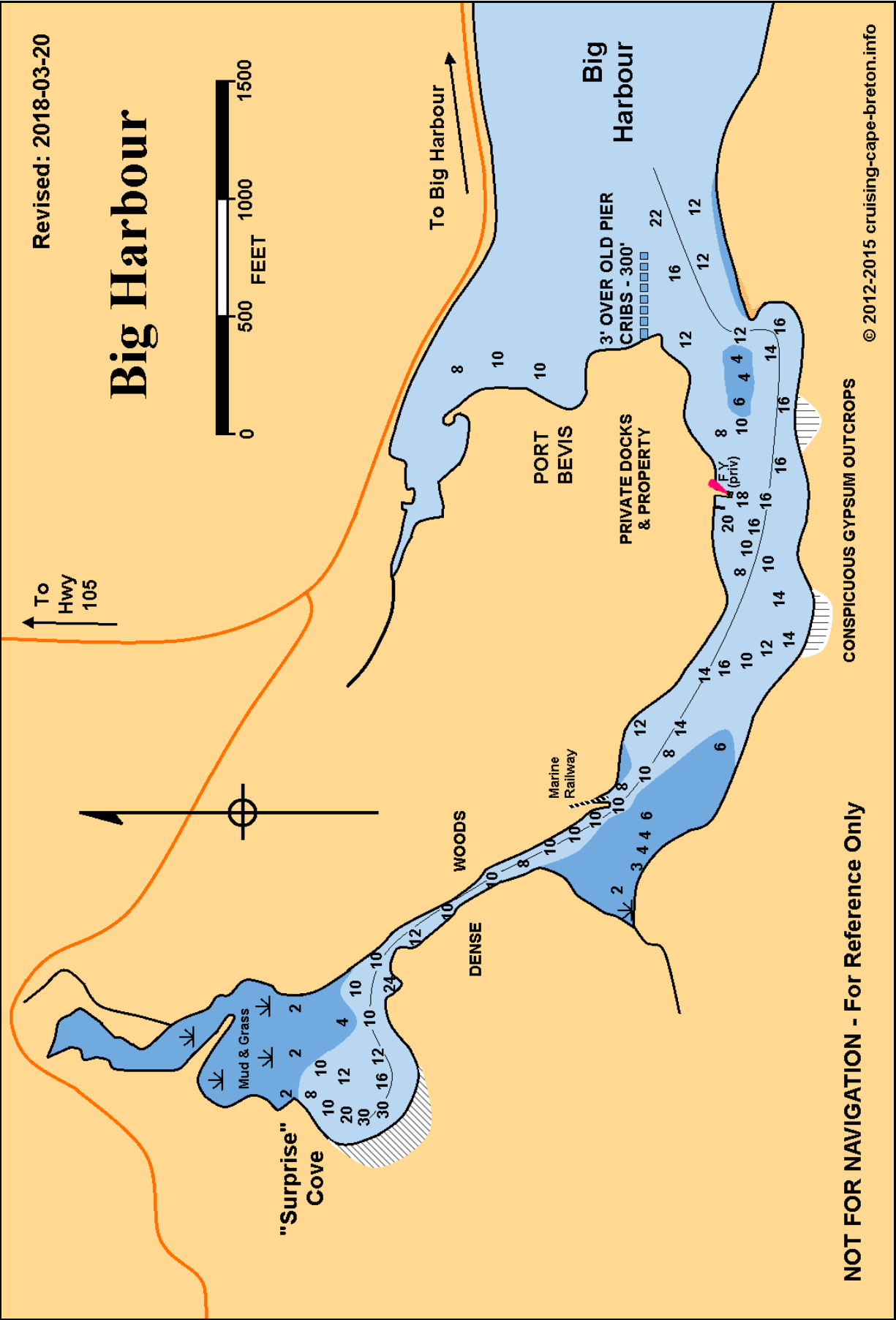
Description: Port Bevis (Big Harbour), on the northwest shore gives excellent protection for small craft from either north or south winds. A small channel at the head of Port Bevis winds inland to a deep pocket of water almost completely surrounded by gypsum cliffs. This cove was formerly called “Bevis Cove”, but more recently seems to be known as “Surprise Cove”.

Navigation: The course into Surprise Cove is by favouring the sandbar at the entrance and then swinging south towards the gypsum outcrops, avoiding the rocky 4-foot shoal. At the first outcrop swing back northward heading for another tree shrouded outcrop about 2000 feet upstream. A marine railway, extending from the north shore, marks the turning point for the tree shrouded entry into Surprise Cove. Dredge material from construction of the marine railway extends from the shore, paralleling the railway. At this point the channel is about 35 feet wide, with the best depth close to the dredge bank, favouring the east shore until into the passage. The keep a sharp lookout and dead slow ahead.

Upon entry into the basin, swing to the west and round up in 30 feet of water. The basin is irregular in shape with an extensive mud bank intruding from the north. As swinging room is limited, it is suggested that the anchor be dropped on the mud bank and a stern line be secured to the gypsum outcrop.

The Great Bras d'Or Channel is extensively fished for lobster from mid May to mid July and numerous trap buoys will be encountered. After lobster season a lesser number of buoys for a crab fishery may be encountered throughout the summer. A sharp lookout is recommended at all times.

Updated: 2018-06-24



Otter Harbour & Barge Cove

CHS Chart No: 4277 – Great Bras d'Or, St Andrews Channel & St Anns Bay

Amenities:

None

Description:

A shallow indentation on the north-west shore of the Great Bras d'Or Channel forms Otter Harbour, though generally the area considered to be "the" Otter Harbour is the portion to the southwest of Harbour Point. The northern area has a number of rocks and reefs and should be entered with caution and a good lookout in fair weather. Barge Cove, a name coined by Roy Mac Keen, contains several sunken barges left from a quarrying operation at the head of the cove. This cove provides an alternative anchorage should "Otter Harbour" be over-crowded. The more intrepid may thread their way through the narrow channel around the sunken barges into the the head of the cove and anchor in 9 feet. The bottom in Otter Harbour is generally rocky, although good anchoring in mud can be found just off the entrance to the small creek on the western shore. Care should be taken in setting an anchor. The harbour provides good shelter under most conditions, and is a popular stop-over for boats proceeding to or from the Lakes.



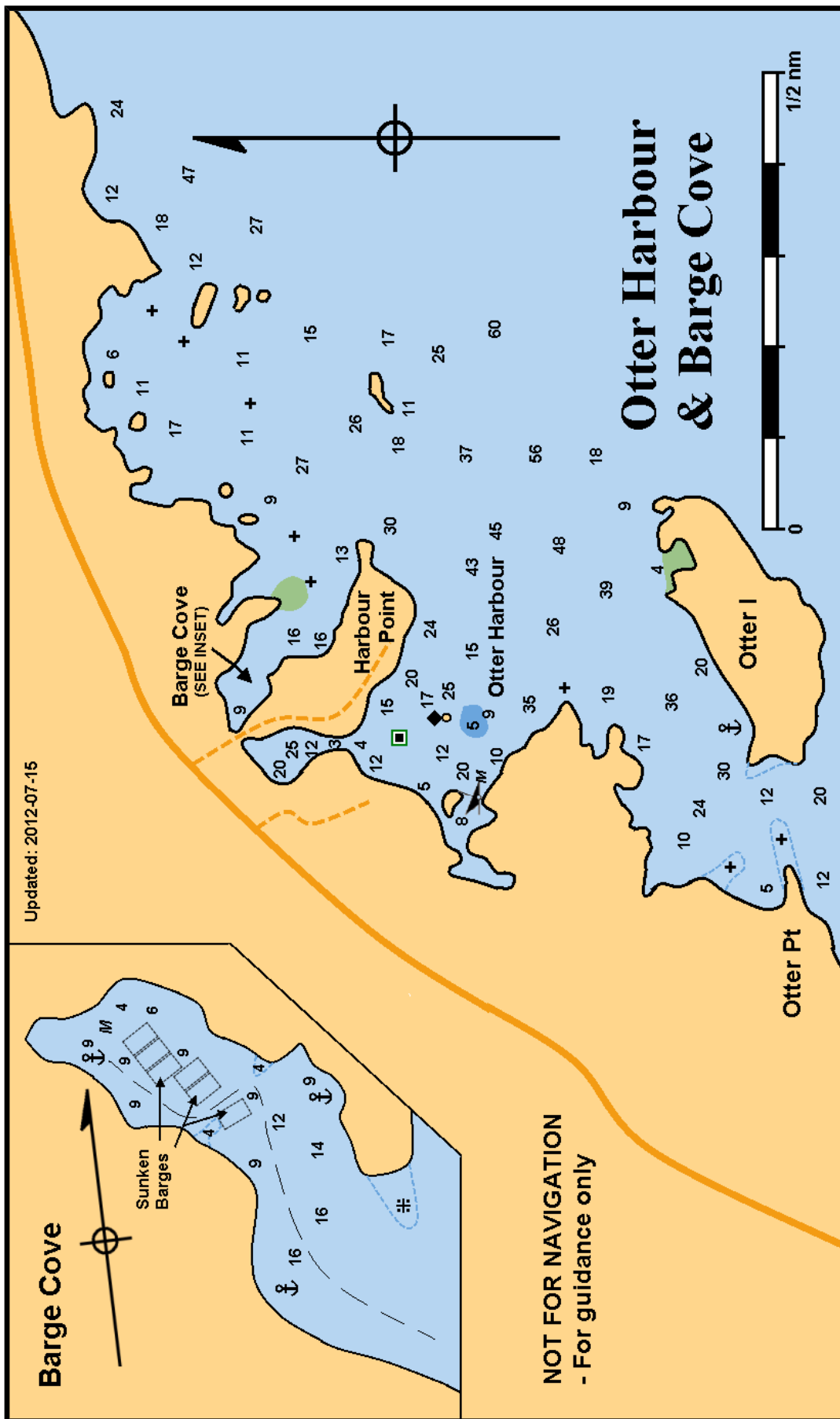
The sector light, still shown on nautical charts and in some cruising guides, has been discontinued and the equipment removed. In July 2012 the islet (little more than a few small boulders) on which it stood still had a helipad extending northward into the harbour, and the small white shed which housed the equipment. A green port-hand day-mark on cribwork marks an isolated rock. There is adequate depth to pass between the day-mark and the islet.

There is a small private dock on the south side of Harbour Point.

Navigation:

A 12-foot winding, narrow channel exists between Otter Island and Otter Point, but should only be attempted in clear weather on calm days. Water on the north side of the island is deep and that is the recommended route into the cove.

Updated: 2012-07-15



Seal Island Harbour

CHS Chart No: 4277 – Great Bras d'Or, St Andrews Channel & St Anns Bay

Amenities:

Wall's Seal Island Marina (moorings, dockage, water, Wi-Fi) 902-674-2447/2912

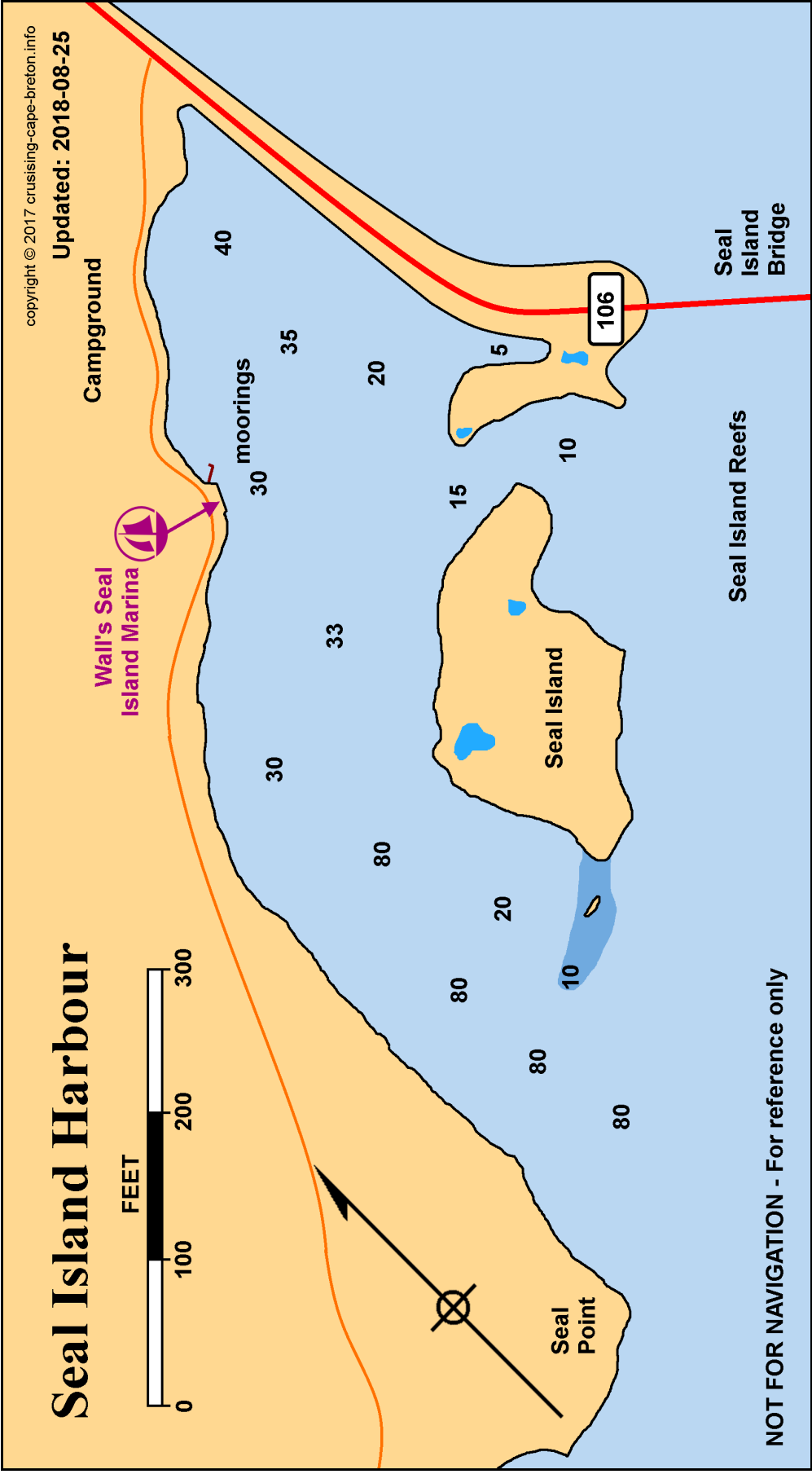
Description:

The construction of the Seal Island Bridge over the Seal Reefs created a sheltered harbour behind the causeway extending from the north shore, with good protection from the prevailing winds in the channel. Deep water and rapidly changing depths generally preclude anchoring in this area. However, the marina has a wharf and floating dock, and a number of moorings. This is an ideal location to await passage through the bridge and Great Bras d'Or Narrows

Navigation:

Enter and leave on the west side of Seal Island, favouring the western shore to avoid the reef extending from Seal Island

Updated: 2018-08-25



Kellys Cove

CHS Chart No: 4277 – Great Bras d'Or, St Andrews Channel & St Anns Bay

Amenities:

Kellys Cove Marina: (info to be determined)

Description:

Kellys Cove is an excellent stopover to await favourable winds or tidal currents for entering or leaving the Bras d'Or Lakes.

The small wharf in Kellys Cove is now part of the Kellys Cove Marina, maintained by the Kelly Cove Heritage Society.

Good anchoring in 15 feet in sand and mud can be had, though with the prevailing wind being from the SW, small vessels will be more comfortable tied to the wharf in such winds.

Navigation:

Entry is straightforward and free of hazards.

The Lat/Lon of the light on the wharf is N46°17'19" W60°26'13" and shows Long Flashing White.

Updated: 2020-11-07

