

# Chesapeake Bay, Eastern Shore

- (1) This chapter describes the Eastern Shore of Chesapeake Bay from Cape Charles to Swan Point, about 6 miles northward of the entrance to Chester River, and several bodies of water and their tributaries that empty into this part of the bay. Included are Pocomoke Sound, Pocomoke River, Tangier Sound, Wicomico River, Nanticoke River, Little Choptank River, Choptank River, Eastern Bay, and Chester River, and the off-lying islands of Tangier, Smith, Hooper, and Tilghman.
- (2) Also described are the ports of Cape Charles, Pocomoke City, Tangier, Crisfield, Salisbury, Easton, Cambridge, St. Michaels, and several smaller ports and landings.

## COLREGS Demarcation Lines

- (3) The lines established for Chesapeake Bay are described in **80.510**, chapter 2.
- (4) During the ice navigation season, the Maryland waters of Chesapeake Bay described in this chapter are a **regulated navigation area**. (See **165.503**, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

## Charts 12221, 12225, 12230, 12263, 12273

- (5) The Eastern Shore of Chesapeake Bay, from Cape Charles to Chester River, is mostly low and has few prominent natural features. The mainland and the islands are subject to erosion, and many of the islands and points have completely washed away. **Fishtrap** limits are shown on the charts and usually are marked by black and white horizontal-banded buoys. In the tributaries of Pocomoke Sound, **ice** sufficient to interfere with the navigation of small vessels may be encountered at any time from January through March. The ice from Pocomoke Sound does not interfere with the larger vessels in the bay, but the smaller oyster and fishing boats frequently are held up and sometimes require assistance, especially in Kedges and Hooper Straits.
- (7) **Kiptopeke Beach**, 3.2 miles northward of Wise Point, is the site of a former ferry terminal. The off-shore breakwaters are obsolete ships filled with sand and sunk end-to-end. Just northward of the abandoned terminal is **Butlers Bluff**, which has steep bare faces conspicuous from the bay.
- (8) **Old Plantation Creek**, 7 miles northward of Wise Point, has depths of about a foot. Many of the bars and middle grounds are marked by discolored water, and the channel usually is marked by bush stakes, but it is narrow and difficult to navigate without local knowledge. The opening in the thick woods at the mouth is visible from outside. No supplies are available along the creek.
- (9) **Cape Charles Harbor**, 9 miles northward of Wise Point, is a dredged basin on the south side of the town of **Cape Charles**. A well-marked dredged channel leads to the harbor between sand flats on the south and a stone jetty on the north. Two small dredged basins are eastward of the main harbor basin. The northerly basin is known as the Harbor of Refuge, and the southerly basin as Mud Creek Basin. (See Notice to Mariners and latest edition of charts for controlling depths.) The current velocity is about 1.3 knots 0.5 mile southwest of the Cape Charles City Entrance Light 1.
- (10) **Cape Charles Coast Guard Station** is on the spit between Mud Creek and the Harbor of Refuge.
- (11) The mean range of tide is 2.4 feet at Cape Charles. The tidal currents set across the entrance to and across the southwest section of the dredged channel, but farther north they follow the general direction of the axis. The channel is exposed to westerly winds, but is partially protected by the flats to the westward, and seldom is too rough for motorboats. However, during severe W weather heavy surges may occur in the harbor. Ice may hinder navigation in the harbor during severe winters. Because of the limited space in the channel and harbor, the larger vessels and tows occasionally are somewhat of a hazard to small boats.

## Charts 12224

- (6) **Wise Point** (37°07.0'N., 75°58.3'W.), the mainland tip of Cape Charles, is included in chapter 9, which also
- (12) Cape Charles is a **customs port of entry**.
- (13) Cape Charles Harbor is a terminus of the Eastern Shore Railroad. The railroad operates floats to Little Creek. Floats are usually brought into the harbor in the

late afternoon, although there are also occasional early morning arrivals. Due to the limited maneuvering room in the channel and the harbor, larger vessels and tows are sometimes a hazard to small craft. The tugs that handle the floats monitor VHF-FM channels 13 and 16.

(14) There is public access to the bulkheads and slips at the eastern end of the harbor. Anchoring is forbidden in any part of the harbor or the basins. A “no-wake” **speed limit** is enforced. A **harbormaster** enforces harbor regulations, and a **dockmaster** supervises docking at the municipal facilities. Gasoline, diesel fuel, and water are available. Some marine supplies may be obtained in town.

(15) **Cherrystone Channel** is a passage inside Old Plantation Flats that leads from deep water 2 miles south-southeastward of Old Plantation Flats Light northward to Kings Creek and Cherrystone Inlet. The route follows part of the dredged channel to Cape Charles Harbor for about 1 mile. That part of Cherrystone Channel southward of the dredged channel to Cape Charles Harbor is unmarked and little used. Cherrystone Channel above Cape Charles Harbor is marked by lights and daybeacons to the vicinity of **Sandy Island**. This part of the channel has depths of about 10 feet, but is narrow in places, and local knowledge is required to carry the best water. The recommended southerly approach to Kings Creek and Cherrystone Inlet is via the marked dredged channel to Cape Charles Harbor, which was discussed earlier in this chapter.

(16) **Kings Creek**, about 1 mile northward of Cape Charles Harbor and eastward of Sandy Island, has depths of 3½ feet for 1 mile upstream. The shoal that extends out from the north side of the entrance bares at low water; a light marks the entrance. The creek is used extensively by fishermen and pleasure craft. Gasoline, diesel fuel, berths, and marine supplies are available at a marina just inside the entrance.

(17) **Cherrystone Inlet**, which extends northeastward from Sandy Island, has depths of 5 feet for 2 miles, thence 4 to 2 feet to the upper end. The channel in the inlet sometimes is marked by bush stakes, but it is narrow and difficult to navigate without local knowledge.

(18) Boats bound for Kings Creek or Cherrystone Inlet can leave the Cape Charles Harbor channel west of the jetty on the north side of the harbor entrance and proceed northward in marked Cherrystone Channel. Depths of 2 to 4 feet over the flats that extend southward for 2 miles along the west side of Cherrystone Channel from Sandy Island limit the draft that can be carried over that area from westward and northwestward. The area between Sandy Island and **Wescoat Point**, 0.3 mile to the northward, bares at low water.

(19) A **fish haven**, marked by private buoys, is about 1.8 miles northwest of Wescoat Point.

## Chart 12226

(20) **Hungars Creek** and **Mattawoman Creek** have a common outlet (37°23.7'N., 75°59.4'W.) to the bay 8 miles northward of Cape Charles Harbor (see chart 12224). Hungars Creek is marked by lights, daybeacons, and bush stakes, and Mattawoman Creek by bush stakes. Both creeks are difficult to follow without local knowledge.

(21) Hungars Creek extends about 4 miles in a northeasterly direction to **Bridgetown**. Depths of 3 feet are available in the narrow entrance channel, marked by lights, thence decreasing to 1 foot to Bridgetown.

(22) Mattawoman Creek extends about 2 miles in a southeasterly direction and has several branches at its head. The best approach is to follow the lights at the entrance of Hungars Creek to the light off **Wilsonia Neck**, then follow the bush stakes southeastward and southward along the shore. The controlling depth is about a foot to the head of navigation. The overhead power cables near the head of the creek have a minimum clearance of 33 feet.

(23) A **danger zone** for naval firing begins about 12 miles north-northwestward of Cape Charles Harbor and extends northward to Tangier Sound Light, just south of **Tangier Island**. (See 334.220, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

(24) **Nassawadox Creek**, 13 miles northward of Cape Charles Harbor and about 5 miles northward of the entrance to Hungars Creek and Mattawoman Creek, extends about 5 miles to the northeast. The controlling depth across the bar is about a foot, thence 4 feet for 4 miles upstream. The channel is marked by a light and daybeacons for about 1.6 miles, but local knowledge is necessary to carry the best water. An overhead power cable with a clearance of 38 feet crosses the creek about 3 miles above the mouth. The flats on either side of the entrance are nearly bare at low water, are covered by marsh grass in the summer, and are usually well defined. The mean range of tide is 1.8 feet. **Bayford**, on the southeast side of the creek 1.5 miles above the mouth, has a wharf. The several creeks that branch off from Nassawadox Creek have depths of 3 feet or less. A marine railway at **The Saltworks**, on the north side of the creek, can handle boats up to 35 feet for hull and engine repairs.

(25) **Ocohanock Creek** (37°33.0'N., 75°56.3'W.) flows into Chesapeake Bay from eastward 18 miles northward of Cape Charles Harbor; a fixed bridge 5.4 miles above the entrance is the head of navigation. In August