Dry Tortugas
NOAA Chart 11438

A reduced-scale NOAA nautical chart for small boaters

When possible, use the full-size NOAA chart for navigation.

• Complete, reduced-scale nautical chart
• Print at home for free
• Convenient size
• Up-to-date with Notices to Mariners
• Compiled by NOAA’s Office of Coast Survey, the nation’s chartmaker
Published by the
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Ocean Service
Office of Coast Survey
www.NauticalCharts.NOAA.gov
888-990-NOAA

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

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

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


Garden Key is the site of historic Fort Jefferson National Monument, a hexagonal structure with walls 425 feet long rising from a surrounding moat. The fortress, once a military prison, is now a government reservation administered by the National Park Service. An abandoned lighthouse, 67 feet high, is behind the SE bastion. A fixed white light, visible at least 8 miles, is displayed at night from the tower by the National Park Service. Garden Key and the surrounding waters of the Dry Tortugas are subject to rules and regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior. Commercial fishing is prohibited within these waters. The S and N of the three wharves on the E side of the key are in ruins. The center wharf, off the SE front of the fort, is in good condition, with 16 to 22 feet alongside. No fuel, provisions, or water are available.

Loggerhead Key, the other of the two principal keys in the Dry Tortugas, is 2.5 miles W of Garden Key. Dry Tortugas Light (24°38’00”N., 82°55’14”W.), 151 feet above the water, is shown from a 151-foot conical tower, lower half white and upper half black, near the center of Loggerhead Key.

Fort Jefferson and Dry Tortugas Light are good landmarks and can be seen at a distance of 10 to 12 miles on a clear day. Fort Jefferson has the appearance of a bare rocky island, and is an excellent radar target at distances greater than 12 miles.

Bush Key, just E of Garden Key, is a refuge for noddy and sooty terns. These birds come in early April and leave in September. When approaching the Dry Tortugas from E or SE, soundings give little warning of danger, as depths of 10 to 15 fathoms are found close to the reefs in many places. The water shoals more gradually in the approaches from NW or SW, but an approaching vessel should stay in depths greater than 15 fathoms if uncertain of her position.

Southeast and Southwest Channels are the principal approaches; both are marked and the shoals can be identified on a clear day by the difference in color of the water. Northwest Channel is unmarked. Southeast Channel skirts the reefs S of East Key and Middle Key, and passes between the 25-foot shoal S of Hospital Key and Iowa Rock.

Rock off Bush Key Shoal. Iowa Rock is marked by a light. The reefs S of Middle Key can be cleared by keeping S of a line through the abandoned lighthouse on Fort Jefferson and Dry Tortugas Light. The channel has depths of 20 feet or more, but it should be used with caution by vessels drawing more than 18 feet.

Southwest Channel leads between the reefs W and SW of Garden Key and those off Loggerhead Key. The least depth found along the marked channel is 31 feet, but the same caution is advised as with Southeast Channel.

Excellent anchorage for small craft is found in the deep water of Bird Key Harbor, reached through the narrow channel encircling Garden Key, which is well marked. The entrance to Bird Key Harbor is narrow, and care is required to avoid the shoals on either side. The main entrance channel is marked by daybeacons.

In emergencies, the best shelter is SW of Garden Key and the channel encircling it, where protection is afforded from NW winds. However, the holding ground is poor, as boats drag anchor along the silty bottom. A general anchorage is in Bird Key Harbor. (See 110.1 and 110.190, chapter 2, for limits and regulations.)

Currents- In Southwest Channel, 1 mile S of Loggerhead Key, the current floods N and ebbs SW at an average velocity at strength of 0.5 knot. In Southeast Channel the current floods N and the ebb S at an average velocity at strength of 0.6 knot.

U.S. Coast Guard Rescue Coordination Center
24 hour Regional Contact for Emergencies

RCC New Orleans Commander 8th CG District (504) 589-6225
New Orleans, LA

(Selected Excerpts from Coast Pilot)
The Dry Tortugas are a group of small keys and reefs 63 miles W from Key West. The group is about 11 miles long, in a NE-SW direction, and 6 miles wide. Pulaski Shoal, at the NE end of the group, is 12 miles NW of Rebecca Shoal. Pulaski Shoal Light (24°41’36.0”N., 82°46’22.7”W.) is shown from a small black house on a hexagonal pyramidal skeleton tower on piles on the E side of the shoal.

The keys are low and irregular, and have a thin growth of mangrove. In general, they rise abruptly from deep water and have fairly good channels between them. They are continually changing in size and shape.
Lateral System As Seen Entering From Seaward
on navigable waters except Western Rivers

PORT SIDE
ODD NUMBERED AIDS
- GREEN LIGHT ONLY
- FLASHING (2)
- OCCULTING
- QUICK FLASHING
- ISO

PREFERRED CHANNEL
NO NUMBERS – MAY BE LETTERED
- PREFERRED CHANNEL TO STARBOARD
- TOPMOST BAND GREEN

PREFERRED CHANNEL TO PORT
- TOPMOST BAND RED
- GREEN LIGHT ONLY
- COMPOSITE GROUP FLASHING (2+1)

STARBOARD SIDE
EVEN NUMBERED AIDS
- RED LIGHT ONLY
- FLASHING (2)
- OCCULTING
- QUICK FLASHING
- ISO

CAN
LIGHTED BUOY
DAYBEACON

LIGHT
LIGHTED BUOY
DAYBEACON

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

TORTUGAS HARBOR
SCALE 1:10,000

PROHIBITED AREA
(see note B)

TORTUGAS ECOLOGICAL RESERVE
TORTUGAS NORTH
(protected area; see note A)

Dry Tortugas National Park
(protected area: 36 CFR parts 99)

GARDEN KEY

Ft. Jefferson

Abandoned Light House

Joints page 8

Note: Chart grid lines are aligned with true north.

Printed at reduced scale.

SCALE 1:30,000

See Note on page 5.
This BookletChart was reduced to 75% of the original chart scale.
The new scale is 1:40000. Barscales have also been reduced and are accurate when used to measure distances in this BookletChart.
For the limits of a Area (PSSA). A y person in the area should exercise and Plot volumes in area

40 C.F.R. 146

in Florida Keys National as a no Discharge Zone. t Act, Section 312, or

charge Zone (NDZ) are

discharging any sewage

waste. All vessels with an

MEO that are navigating

then a NDZ must have

overboard discharge of a install a holding tank

in the U.S. territory containing the
day (EPA) web site: solutions/waste/management.

Joins page 5

Joins page 10

Note: Chart grid lines are aligned with true north.

Printed at reduced scale. Scale 1:90,000 See Note on page 5.
Note: Chart grid lines are aligned with true north.
VHF Marine Radio channels for use on the waterways:
Channel 6 – Inter-ship safety communications.
Channel 9 – Communications between boats and ship-to-coast.
Channel 13 – Navigation purposes at bridges, locks, and harbors.
Channel 16 – Emergency, distress and safety calls to Coast Guard and others, and to initiate calls to other vessels. Contact the other vessel, agree to another channel, and then switch.
Channel 22A – Calls between the Coast Guard and the public. Severe weather warnings, hazards to navigation and safety warnings are broadcast here.
Channels 68, 69, 71, 72 and 78A – Recreational boat channels.

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

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

Quick References

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National Data Buoy Center — http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/
NowCoast web portal for coastal conditions — http://www.nowcoast.noaa.gov/
National Hurricane Center — http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/
Pacific Tsunami Warning Center — http://ptwc.weather.gov/
Contact Us — http://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/staff/contact.htm

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

NOAA’s Office of Coast Survey
The Nation’s Chartmaker