

Sailing Directions for the Antilles Islands, the Coast of South America, and The Gulf Of Mexico.  
Drawn up at the direction of Hydrographic works for the understanding and use with the maps which  
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Translated by Jim Clupper for the Islamorada Public Library.

from page 260 & following.  
Shoal & Coast of Florida.

Seventeen miles to the east of the easternmost of the [Dry] Tortugas is the first shoal, named Cayo Marques (Marquesa Key) and thirteen miles to the east of its western slope is the westernmost of a group of Keys. Of these, the most northerly, named Boca Grande, is the largest, having nearly two leagues of length from east to west. About one mile to the east of this key, the first shoal ends. The eastern slope [of this first shoal] extends more or less north and south. It is separated from the next shoal by a channel about two miles in width, named Boca Grande. This channel has ten or twelve feet of water with a sandy bottom and can be used as a passage from north to south or vice-versa, but this passage ought not be undertaken without experience, for there are shallows in it [the channel].

At the second shoal, or Mangrove Islands, some of these islands rise up, of which the three most southerly (Boca Grande Key, Woman Key & Ballast Key) have white sand beaches. You are able to distinguish this second shoal from the following [shoal] since they are only at their northern parts joined by an isthmus one half mile wide, being separated otherwise by a channel of one mile width, with a depth of 2 1/2 and 3 1/2 arms of water.

The third shoal is named for Key West and the Pine Islands; So that its western part is called by the first of these names and the eastern part by the second. The first island which rises from its western slope is Key West, which extends 9 miles from east to west and is very sandy on its south shore. This key is very densely covered with trees, especially on its western part, where there is an anchorage. In order to reach it (the anchorage) it is necessary to steer to the northeast by 1/4 north (NNE) as soon as the most northwesterly point of the said key (Key West) bears in that direction. This northwest point is very notable for a large grove of trees located there, and turning to pass within a cable (666 ft.) of said point, you will drop anchor in 3 1/2 arms of water between the said point and a small island which is one mile to the north of it (the point) and which is named Cayo Canalette (Fleming Key), procuring the best anchorage a little to the east, since the bottom is cleaner there. This anchorage is frequented by the fishermen from (the Dry) Tortuga(s): The object of steering to the NE 1/4 N as soon as this course bears upon the most north west point (of Key West) is to give sufficiently wide berth to the southwest point of Key West, which has a reef running out from it one mile. From Key West to the east for 24 miles this same shoal continues, made up of innumerable mangrove islands separated by channels (so shallow that) only canoes may navigate between them. This shoal terminates at Bahia Honda, and its most eastern islands are moderately large, and thickly covered with pine trees; but they are low and (often) overflowed like the others, and the channels between them are practicable only for boats and canoes. Of all these islands there is only one of the most western of Cayo de Huesos (the shoal, not the key), which although small, is of notable elevation, rough and covered with trees, and when seen from any side it greatly resembles a saddle. (This would be the modern Saddlebunch Keys).

The shoal of Cayo de Huesos y Isla de Pinos is followed by another, named Bahia Honda, the two being separated by a channel which is one-half mile wide, named Bahia Honda in which it is possible to anchor in 3 1/2 & 3 arms of water: This channel is easily recognized because to the west near the termination of the shoal of Isla de Pinos there are three little islands and to the east near the beginning of the shoal of Bahia Honda there is one (an island) named Palmas, which is large, with a sand beach, and is very notable for many tall palms which cover it. These are the first that are seen coming from the west. (This is Bahia Honda Key, known for many years to British cartographers as Cabbage Tree Island for the same palms.) This shoal of Bahia Honda has many small keys and it extends to the east about four leagues. It

is followed by that of Vacas, which extends to the east about five leagues, upon which rise up a group of keys of the same name (Vacas) of which the most easterly is named Cayo Holandes. (Dutch Key, which we know today as Duck Key.) From this key to Cayo de Viboras (Viper Key, or today's Long Key) there is one league: Cayo Viboras is five miles in length, with a beach of white sand, and is very notable for a hill of medium height, covered with trees which is on its western end.

From the extreme eastern end of Cayo Viboras to the western end of Viejo Matcumbe (Old Matcumbe, now Lower Matcumbe Key) there are three and one half miles: Viejo Matcumbe is four miles in length in a NE-SW direction and on its northeast point it is covered with some very tall trees. One mile to the east of Viejo Matcumbe is Cayo Indiano (Indian Key), to the east of which is a channel which runs toward the north with ten and twelve feet of water where one is able to anchor sheltered from all winds, protected by the northeast point of Matcumbe: This narrow channel may be seen perfectly because the white of the banks on both sides, upon which there is no more than two or three feet of water serve as excellent markers.

Two miles to the northeast of Viejo Matcumbe is Matcumbe el Mozo (Young Matcumbe, now Upper Matcumbe Key), which is four miles long in that direction: This key is covered with tall and thick trees. At its extreme northeast there is a small mangrove island, separated by a channel one half mile wide and to the northeast of it there is another moderately large key separated by another channel of the same width: (these two keys are apparently the two islands which became what we now know as Windley Key.) this key is also separated by a channel of the same width from Isla Larga (Plantation Key). (The three channels just mentioned would be Whale Harbor Channel, The no longer existing channel between the two halves of Windley Key, and Snake Creek.) To the northeast of Isla Larga is Cayo Largo (Key Largo) separated from the first mentioned by a channel (Tavernier Creek). Just to the east of this channel is Cayo Tabano (Tavernier Key) separated from the coast of Cayo Largo by one and one-half miles. To the north (of Cayo Tabano) there is a good anchorage for ships which do not draw more than eight feet, and this is much frequented by those boats employed in fishing. About five miles to the NNE (of Cayo Tabano) is Cayo Melchor Rodriguez (Rodriguez Key) which is a mangrove island of medium size and whose ground is spongy, with the roots of its trees exposed.

Above Melchor Rodriguez, the coast of Cayo Largo appears to be part of the mainland to the NNE, N 1/4 NE, and N., which last direction the various keys continue of which the last key is Vizcaino (Key Biscayne). A little to the north of Cayo Vizcaino is the Cape of Florida, formed by the most eastern point of an island of medium length which juts out from the mainland, which from here to the north is free of keys and reefs, and is low and subject to flooding: Its (the mainland's) shores are therefore very low and level. There are soundable waters a good distance from them (the mainland's shores); these soundable waters are encountered all along the coast, which is of great benefit to navigators except in that part of the coast which corresponds to 26 1/2 degrees of latitude, where the shallows are so narrow that they only extend out 2 miles from the shore. From that point upwards the shallows extend out from shore more and more and (the bottom) is very clean (clear of obstructions) with the exception of Cape Cañaveral where the same shallows of various depths (can be found at) a long distance from shore. In short, anyone who approaches (the Florida shore) with caution need not have fear.

## Reefs Of Florida

The reef commences in the (same) meridian as the first shoal, that is, at the same distance from the Tortugas. It (the distance between the shoal & the reef) is about three miles wide, and it continues with little change in depth until the longitude of the eastern part of Boca Grande, and over the reef there are at least three arms of water, so you are able to cross over it with ships of eighteen feet of draft, but it is important to keep in mind that over all these sand banks and shoals of white sand there is always a risk when navigating with large ships, especially when the weather is bad or the water is murky and the bottom cannot be seen, because spots where corals grow to within one arm or even less of the surface will be suddenly encountered. Therefore when we say that the reef is covered with at least three arms

of water, this must not be taken for granted, although in this area, the bottom is clean, and in crossing here you should not encounter unforeseen shallows, such as are found on other parts of this same reef.

From the eastern meridian of Boca Grande (shoal) as far as the western part of Key West (shoal) it (the reef) has the same depth and character, and above it rises a sandy key (Sand Key) which is three leagues to the SSW of Key West and can be seen at a great distance. Four miles to the west of this key, over the same reef, there is a group of dry rocks (Western Dry Rocks), and to the east of Sand Key at a distance of five miles there is a large patch of coral rocks with only 2 or 3 arms of water above it, and at two miles from the key, there is another group of dry rocks (Eastern Dry Rocks). In all this distance of seven miles which continues from the rocks to the west of Sand Key to five miles to the east of it, or three (miles) to the east of the Eastern Dry Rocks, it is very dangerous crossing the reef since there are patches of rocks with only 9 or 10 feet of water over them; In crossing the reef to the west of Sand Key there is nothing to prevent it to the west of the Western Dry Rocks and within a few miles of them; but the reef may also be crossed to the east of Sand Key if care is taken to hold to a course of NNW toward the South West part of Key West, on which course you will encounter above the reef 4 1/2 and 5 arms of water.

At 12 miles to the east of Sand Key, there rise up from the reef three sand keys (Western, Middle, & Eastern Sambo Keys). From these keys reefs extend out a moderate distance, but they are separated by channels of 3 and 4 arms of water. From these keys to the east for a distance of about 10 miles, the reef is wide and dangerous on account of the many rocks, some above water, and others only covered by 6 and 7 feet of water, with channels between them of 4, 6, and 7 arms of water. From this point the reef narrows to no more than a mile in width, and about three miles to the east of it (the point where the reef narrows) there rises up Cayo Loe (Looe Key) Named for the loss of an English ship of that name: this key is a small island of sand, upon which has been raised a tall pole which is visible from a great distance. About one mile to the west of it (Looe Key) there is a good pass across the reef with 4 or 5 arms of water, but to the east side the bottom is only 12 to 15 feet deep. This depth increases little by little until three miles from it is found three arms of depth. From Looe Key the reef continues with a width of a mile and a half, and with a fairly consistent depth of three to five arms as far as Cayo Sombrero; this key nearly due south of the most western point of Cayo de Vacas, and is the easternmost of all those (keys) on the reef, which as we have stated are Sand Key, the Sambo Keys, and Looe Key. From Sombrero Key the reef continues a short distance with the same width, but there are great variations in depth and bottoms which make navigation over it very dangerous. It is best to attempt sailing it in daylight with good visibility and great vigilance. The Reef ends with Cayo Viscaino (Key Biscayne), and outside of it, for its entire length (the reef's) there is a soundable bottom which at two miles beyond the reef has 20, 30, and 40 arms of water.

#### Florida Channel (Hawk Channel)

The channel begins to the west with a width of 3 or 4 miles, and from 6 1/2 to 10 arms of water are found in it, with a bottom of sand and mud as far as Boca Grande, from which point as far as Key West it is generally three miles wide, with 6 or 7 arms of water, with a bottom of fine sand & mud. In this section of the channel there are 2 bajos, (shallows?) one due south of the easternmost point of Boca Grande Key, and the other to the SSE of the westernmost point of Key West, and both are almost in the center of the channel.

From these bajos the channel continues with a width of four miles until the Sambo Keys, where as it continues to the east the channel narrows and reefs are more numerous, concluding about 5 or 6 miles to the west of Looe Key, where it is narrow, only a mile and a half in width, but getting closer to Looe Key it widens again, so that south of Bahia Honda it has become three miles wide. The bottom in this stretch of the channel is three arms deep, and past this stretch it increases to six arms.

From Looe Key the channel continues with two or three miles of width until its end; but the depths vary noticeably, inasmuch as at the center of the Vacas Keys there are 4 to 6 arms, and from here to the east it diminishes until at Old Matecumbe (Lower Matecumbe) only three arms are found, and at Cayo Tabano (Tavernier Key) two and two and one-half. The Channel above Looe Key has some patches of coral, although during daylight these do no offer any risks to navigation. They are very noticeable due to their distinctive color against the water, but they are dangerous at night, and it is absolutely necessary to sound if navigation is attempted here after dark.

A discourse on the places in these keys where fresh water can be found has been omitted (up to this point on purpose so that confusion can be avoided and to unite them (the watering places) into a single point of view as well (as) necessary for those who have the misfortune to be shipwrecked, or who for any other reason have need of this resource. ~~In~~ In the (Dry) Tortugas there is no potable water, nor on any of the other keys until (you reach) Key West, upon whose western point there are numerous dug holes in the sand: the water therefrom is moderately good, especially after a rain; but if brackish water is found, a new hole should be dug, which is easily done, and better water will be found than was in the old hole.

On Bahia Honda there is good water, which is obtained in this same way, and in the southern part of the Vacas Keys, about eight miles from the westernmost point of them: These are the only known places in the keys where sweet water is found in dug holes but there are many stagnant pools of water, and natural holes (aljibas) in the rocks. In the area to the north of the Vacas Keys, and about 6 miles to the east of the westernmost of them there is one (natural hole) where there is always sweet water. It is in a valley that is 100 varas (274 feet) from the beach and it (the water) flows out to the west of three mangrove islands called the Stirrup Keys (Cayos del Estribo): Also water can sometimes be found in the extreme western parts of Key Vacas, on the small islands which are in its immediate vicinity and at the extreme west of Dutch Key (Duck Key), and generally in all those places where the terrain is rocky, the fortunate will find sweet water, especially after the rains.

The longitudes are referenced to the meridian observatory of Old Cadiz found at  $8^{\circ} 37' 45''$  west of Paris, and  $6^{\circ} 17' 30''$  of Greenwich.



A little to the north of Cayo Vieco is the end of Florida, formed by the most eastern point of an island of medium length which juts out from mainland. That from here upwards is close of keys and reefs and is frequently inundated, therefore the coast is very shallow. That is they discharge "sounds"? A good distance in between, they are all along the coast in which is of great benefit of the navigators (captains) except in the Caribbean that of  $26\frac{1}{2}$ ° of latitude where is so narrow with the coast line that only comes out 2 miles of it from that point upwards comes out more and more out of the coast, and is all very clear with the exception of Cape Canaveral, at a very large distance ~~there~~ are the same sounds, very low, but because the sounds come out more to the ocean, with a metal is that whoever approaches with caution ~~the~~ doesn't have to be afraid. —

### REEFS OF FLORIDA

The has meadows live at the first ledge. <sup>(shoals)</sup> Sand-Bank, that is, at the same distance of the rocks, is there miles wide and is kept with little ~~the~~ coral or (beach) till the meadow live, instead of rock ground and over the water there is 3 fms of water, this tells that it can be crossed over with a 18 ft draught, but is imperative to keep in mind that over all this sand-banks or shoals of white sand is a risk to do with very large ships specially if the weather is bad or the water is murky. And cannot see bottom, otherwise it will be currents in a foot of water very sudden.