



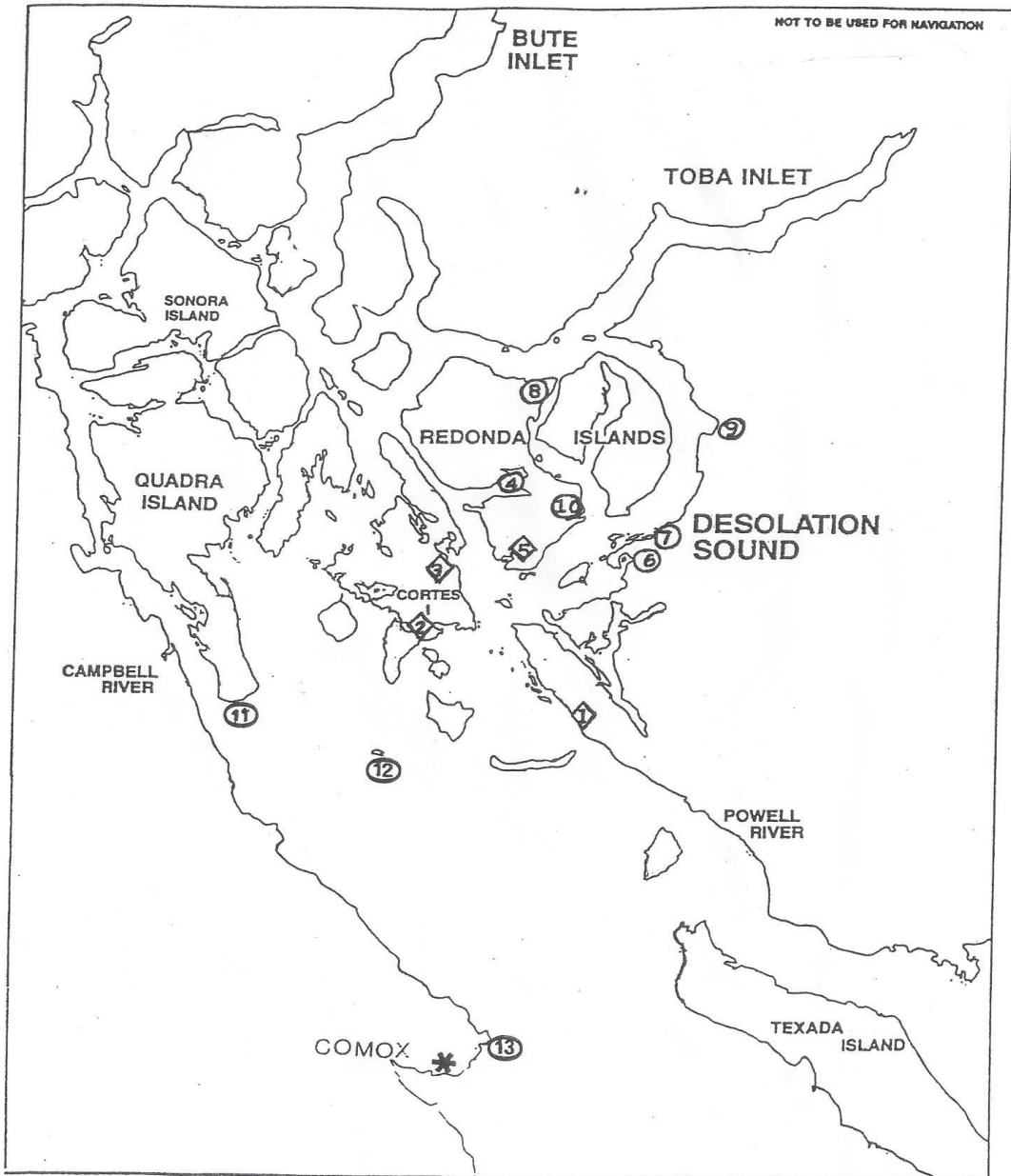
DESOLATION SOUND

YACHT CHARTERS, SERVICES & MARINE SUPPLY

CRUISING NOTES TO DESOLATION SOUND

TIPS FOR AN ENJOYABLE CRUISING EXPERIENCE

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NOTES, PLEASE DOWNLOAD OFF OUR WEB-
SITE**





CRUISING NOTES TO DESOLATION SOUND

- DEPARTURE FROM COMOX - CHART 3527, **DSYC CHARTBOOK P41, 41A**
- CROSSING THE STRAIT OF GEORGIA - CHART 3513, **DSYC CHARTBOOK P44**
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PAGE REFERENCES ARE TAKEN FROM THE EXCLUSIVE DSYC CHARTBOOKS, NOW SUPPLIED ON EACH CHARTER VESSEL. THESE BOOKS ARE A COMPILATION OF CANADIAN HYDROGRAPHIC CHARTS AND ARE LEGALLY CORRECT.

DO NOT RELY ON CHARTS, DSYC CHARTBOOKS, ELECTRONIC CHARTS INDIVIDUALLY, USE THESE RESOURCES AS WELL AS CAREFUL OPERATION OF YOUR VESSEL WHEN NAVIGATING

DEPARTURE FROM COMOX - CHART 3527, DSYC CHARTBOOK P 41, 41A

Be sure you have all your dock lines (4), fenders (4 or more) and power cord (and adaptor if being used) with you before leaving the dock. Please take note of how your yacht is tied up, two breast lines and two spring lines. This is how you will want to tie back up when you return.

CHART 3527, DSYC CHARTBOOK P 41 41A: Upon departing Comox Bay Marina, immediately turn to port and leave the TWO GREEN STARBOARD HAND DAY MARKERS (BALLS) outside the entrance to starboard staying within 30 feet (10 meters) of the west end of the rock breakwater, to avoid the shallows on your right. Once clear of the breakwater, you are in deep water and **Goose Spit** is clearly visible ahead and to your left. It is low and sandy with buildings halfway along it and trees towards its outer end. Goose Spit Light, a quick flashing red light on a 15' solid white tower with a red band at its top, marks the western extremity of the spit.

Head directly for the west end of the Spit. Once clear of the Spit, you will see **Sandy Island** to the southeast (off the northern tip of **Denman Island**). Head directly for this island until you can clearly identify the Red Cone Buoy P50 marking the channel across the **Comox Bar**. Once identified, head directly for it. The other two buoys marking the channel are also red - a Spar Buoy P52 and a Bell Buoy P54. **Hazard Alert:** *There are no green buoys marking the channel. Stay within 100 metres of the RED buoys, leaving them to port. Range markers are visible during daylight hours, but they are hard to locate.*

CROSSING THE SALISH SEA - CHART 3513, DSYC CHARTBOOK P 44

CHART 3513, DSYC CHARTBOOK PAGE 44: Once across the bar find Cardinal Buoy PJ, an east cardinal buoy marking the outer reaches of **Cape Lazo** shoals. Head directly on a 20°M heading and you will find Buoy PJ without any problem. It can be a difficult buoy to find.

Once at Buoy PJ you have two choices to reach the Sound:

1. **Shearwater Passage**, west of *Harwood and Vivian Island*.
2. **Baker Passage** between Cortes Island and Hernando Island.

Winds from the southeast will provide the choice of either route. Winds from the northeast recommend **Shearwater Passage**.

Hazard Alert: Note that **Manson Passage** is **Out of Bounds** and it is not a true passage.

1. **Shearwater Passage:** Once you have identified **Harwood Island** (flat, dark green and heavily wooded) from **Buoy PJ**, head for the western side of the Island (005°M), leaving it slightly to starboard. **Vivian Island** (treeless and mostly barren rock) will also become quite visible from about halfway across the Straits. You may approach Vivian Island, and if you are lucky you might catch a glimpse of Stellar sea lions sunning themselves on the rocks.

Hazard Alert: Favour the Harwood/Vivian Island side of the passage to avoid **Grant Reef** and **Mystery Reef**.

Tip for locating Mystery Reef: if you were to draw a line from the eastern tip of Savary Island and the northern tip of Harwood Island, you would see it marks off the clear water between the reef and the shore. If you can see that you have crossed this line and still have not picked up the buoy, turn NW and run parallel to the shore (290°M) and you will pick it up very quickly. Keep this line in mind if you are tacking up this shoreline. You will lose sight of the buoy quickly as it soon blends in with Harwood Island.

DESOLATION SOUND - CHARTS 3538, 3312 DSYC CHARTBOOK

P59,60,61,62,63,64,65,66,83,86,87,88,89

Savary Island has some great beaches with very warm water for day time activities like kayaking and swimming. Note: No moorage at the Government Dock on the northern shore. **Hazard Alert:** Overnight anchorage is not allowed as there is no protection from the north and winds can shift very quickly.

Beyond **Savary Island** the winds are often more westerly as they tend to blow up the Sound.

- **Lund (#1)** offers good moorage facilities, fuel, water and a full service supermarket plus a coffee house, bakery, and hotel with restaurant, store, showers and laundromat. There are no anchorages in Lund. Call harbourmaster on VHF 73

- **Thulin Passage**, between the **Copeland Islands** and **Malaspina Peninsula**, is just north of Lund and well worth passing through. **Hazard Alert:** *There are NO safe overnight anchorages in the Copelands.*

Onward to Cortes Island: **Cortes Bay (#2)** on **Cortes Island** is an option for a first night stay, it is easily reached within 5 to 6 hours from Comox by sail, much less by power. Cortes Bay offers only anchoring and no services are available.. When anchoring, do so only in the west end, taking care that the hook is well set, and you have plenty of scope. The holding is OK but not exceptional.

Approach **Cortes Bay** with great caution and always pass to the south of Three Islets going into and coming out of the bay. **Hazard Alert:** *There are very dangerous and poorly charted rocks in the area between **Three Islets** and the bluffs to their north. This area is Out of Bounds.*

In the Mouth of the Desolation Sound:

Here you will discover a variety of choices for anchorages and provisioning. Further up the east coast of Cortes Island there is an excellent anchorage called **Squirrel Cove (#3)**. Before reaching the anchorage you will see a Government Dock. This dock offers a sizable store open year round, stocked with food, alcohol, ice, propane and a limited amount of hardware. This is also one of the few places you can drop your **garbage**. There are large bins right out at the end of the dock for the convenience of boaters; there is a nominal fee per bag.

Note: there is no fuel or water at this dock. **Hazard Alert:** *the Government Dock very exposed to ANY wind and passing tugs which throw a hefty wake.*

Squirrel Cove: Directly north of the Government Dock there are poorly charted rocks just off **Boulder Point**. There is a **day beacon** mounted on the rock. **Hazard Alert:** *Give this point a very wide berth if approaching from or heading toward the north there is still more rocks to hit out beyond this beacon.*

- **Entering Squirrel Cove:** This is one of the best protected bays in the Sound. **Hazard Alert:** *You must enter by the WEST ENTRANCE ONLY ~ This narrow passage opens into a large, well-protected backwater bay. Good anchorage can be found anywhere in the bay.*
- **Inside the Cove:** A fun thing to do in Squirrel Cove is to take your dinghy into the tidewater lagoon at the end of the Cove. The entrance to this la-

goon is known as the "Reversing Rapids". Salt water flows in on a rising tide, then out again on a falling tide and all at quite a fast rate. The lagoon is very beautiful and the ride in or out is always exciting (so long as you have enough water). **Hazard Alert:** Avoid anchoring in northern corner as there are logs and cables on the bottom that will snag an anchor. **NOTE: This area is first nations territory and use of their land is at their discretion. If you meet a first nations resident, ask permission to be on their land as a courtesy.**

- **North of Squirrel Cove:** Day trip suggestion. On **West Redonda Island** is **Teakerne Arm (#4)**. At its NE end there is a spectacular 25 Metre waterfall (rainfall dependent) cascading right out of **Cassel Lake** down into the bay. The water in Cassel Lake can reach over 20°C. The falls are therefore very warm to shower in. It is also quite easy to hike up to the lake by a path that takes off from the dinghy dock. Swimming and diving off the rocks is a lot of fun. Temporary anchorage for one (1) boat can be had to the left of the dinghy dock. You will be dropping the hook in 15 to 20 metres of water with a stern line ashore. Your stern will not be far from the shore, the holding is very poor and there is no room for error.

No Anchorage areas in Teakerne Arm : *A southeasterly wind, can drive a fair size sea into the NW corner. Never tie-off to a log booms. There is no overnight moorage or anchorage available at this location. A suggested departure route is to head south, back towards Homfray Channel and you will have plenty of time to head to Refuge Cove #5 or another spot for the night*

AVOID: Never approach Oyster Leases, Fish Farm facilities or log booms. Talbot Cove and Joyce Point are home to Oyster Leases which are identified by rows of buoys as well as **Fish Farms** which resemble low barges with railings around them.

Refuge Cove: South of Teakerne Arm on West Redonda Island is **Refuge Cove (#5)** which offers dockside moorage. (Contact by phone (250) 935-6659 & they monitor VHF 66A). you can obtain fuel, **water, propane and provisions**. For fuel only, use the fuel dock. For all other needs, please use any of the other docks. The marina has a store complete with provisions, alcohol, local crafts; showers and laundry services, as well as seasonal cafe. Garbage collection may be available through a private barge service located in the center of the bay –

please inquire upon arrival. Refuge Cove is open daily from June 1 to mid-September (9am-5pm) with extended hours in July and August (9am-6pm). WIFI is available through the General Store. Please respect the privacy of residents and refrain from trekking through residential properties.

Going south around **West Redonda Island**, past **Martin Islands** and on around the south side of **Minke Island**, there is a great anchorage in a cove in the NE corner of **Tenedos Bay (#6)**. Good holding [stern-to](#) may be obtained along the area south of the creek. Note: *There is a large rock lying straight out from the creek.* From here it is a short hike up to Unwin Lake which is very warm for swimming from June to September. There are also great hiking trails all through this area. This is BEAR country, make lots of noise while ashore.

Hazard Alert: *At the entrance to Tenedos Bay there is very dangerous and poorly charted area of submerged rocks. They lie between a little islet called **Ray Rock** and the bluffs off **Bold Head** to the north. This area is **Out of Bounds**. There is another area of poorly charted submerged rocks just inside the entrance to the NE of Bold Head.*

Around the corner and up into **Homfray Channel** is one of the best known, most photographed and prettiest areas in the Sound, **Prideaux Haven (#7)**. **Hazard Alert:** *Care must be taken to avoid **Sky pilot Rock** which lies just north of **Offet Island**.*

Options for Anchorage in Tenedos Bay:

- **Melanie Cove (#7)**. Always approach from around the NORTH side of **Eveleigh Island**, then through a narrow passage around the east end of the island.
DANGER: YOU CANNOT ACCESS THE COVE VIA THE SHALLOW PASS ALONG THE SOUTH SIDE OF EVELEIGH ISLAND.
- **Laura Cove (#7)**: though not as large, as Melanie cove and requires anchoring with a **stern line** (too narrow to swing), it has excellent holding. This cove was once the home of Old Phil the Frenchman whose cabin was at the east end of the cove.
DANGER: DO NOT ANCHOR AT THE WEST END, it is riddled with rocks.

- **Roscoe Bay #10:** Across from Prideaux Haven on West Redonda is **Roscoe Bay (#10)**. **Hazard Alert:** *Consult your tide tables carefully before entering/exiting Roscoe Bay, this is the only anchorage where you are restricted by tide getting into and out of it.* There is a bar part way along the narrow entrance that dries at low tide. Once past the bar, excellent anchorage can be obtained anywhere in this beautiful bay and it is a very short hike to **Black Lake**, another very warm lake for swimming. Further hiking can be had along the lake shore.

Pendrell Sound, which branches off from Waddington Channel and nearly divides East Redonda Island in two, is well worth exploring. It has the warmest waters of the Sound with temperatures reaching as high as 25°C for most of the summer, oysters and mussels may be available here. In settled weather, anchorage can be found stern-to at the very head of the Sound. **Hazard Alert:** *the beach and shoreline are very sharp - never go ashore anywhere in Pendrell Sound with bare feet, and be VERY careful with inflatables).*

Waddington Channel: If you would like to venture a little further, there is a great little anchorage at the top of **Waddington Channel** called **Walsh Cove (#8)**. There are ancient pictographs (rock paintings) on the cliffs at the northern part of the anchorage just inside the bight of the cove. From the water they are partly hidden by trees, but once ashore they are easily viewed. Please be respectful when visiting this sacred site. **Note:** There is no anchorage available in Waddington Channel because of oyster leases and fish farms. Just South of Walsh Cove, is **Doctor Bay**. This bay is home to a fish farm, therefore no anchorage is available.

Toba Inlet: Moving north through the channel there is little or no current in the gap between West and East Redonda Islands. Traveling through here you will have a great view up **Toba Inlet**, a truly beautiful and remote area. **Hazard Alert:** *The top of the inlet is shallow, windy, and exposed.*

- A deep fjord, Toba Inlet is home to Toba Wilderness Resort offering excellent overnight or longer **moorage** located at the north shore of the mouth of the inlet (just NW of Double Island. Electricity, water and showers are included in your moorage. Toba inlet a very scenic 45km voyage but it offers no anchorages.

- **Anchorage** can be found in **Brem Bay only** when the weather and conditions are favorable (**NOTE** Brem Bay is an active logging area occasionally the bay is closed to recreational anchoring. Please check with Toba Wilderness Resort for updates)

Homfray Channel: Coming back south via Homfray Channel makes for a nice circuit. Homfray Channel is the second deepest sounding in North America reaching depths of 750 metres with peaks rising 1500 to 2500 metres around you.

- **Attwood Bay** *there are no anchorages.*
- **Forbes Bay** offers anchoring stern-to on the northeastern shore and offers decent protection from the north and the south.
- Dock moorage and mooring buoys are available at **Homfray Lodge** near Foster Point. (phone ahead for reservations, see Waggoners)

ADDITIONAL EXPLORING NEAR DESOLATION SOUND

CORTES ISLAND - West side: CHART 3538 **DSYC CHARTBOOK P 52,53,55 82**

Ha' thayim Marine Park/Von Donop Inlet – Hazard Alert: has an extremely dangerous rock part way along its entrance. Traverse this inlet at tick over speed and have an observer on the bow to watch for the rock. Favour the north side of the channel going in and out. Speed limit is 1 knot or less. Anchorages are found in several places in this spectacular inlet. Most people anchor with stern tie at the bottom of the inlet with good mud holding.

Carrington Bay offers a variety of good anchorages. Follow your depth sounder and tide charts carefully

Whaletown has a very small Government Dock and pleasant walks. No fuel, water or provisioning facilities. No anchoring in this small bay due to ferry traffic.

Gorge Harbour is a beautiful and extremely well protected bay. Ancient pictographs can be viewed on the cliffs on the west side of the gorge as you enter or leave. Anchorage is found at the NW end only.

Hazard Alerts: Watch your depth carefully, there are numerous poorly charted rocks - **Do not pass through the following areas:**

- Between Tan Islands, Ring Islands and the northern shore.
- Around the Pill and Stove Islets.

There is also an excellent marina/resort with full facilities near the NW anchorage called **Gorge Harbour Resort**. They have moorage, fuel, water, showers, a well-stocked store and an excellent restaurant open May through mid-September. They monitor channel VHF 66A.

QUADRA ISLAND - East side: chart 3538 **DSYC CHARTBOOK P 51,53,82,76,78,79,80**

Heriot Bay offers both a Government Dock and the facilities of **Heriot Bay Inn and Marina**, an old and very quaint resort with 550 metres of side tie moorage with washrooms, showers and laundry. Fuel, water, and propane are available. Their restaurant has an excellent reputation. Open all year, Phone (250) 285-3322 and they monitor VHF 66A. A grocery store is across the street as well as a liquor store, post office and coffee shop.

Drew Harbour, behind **Rebecca Spit**, offers reasonable anchorage, but is known as a place for dragging. BE SURE YOUR ANCHOR IS WELL SET if anchoring here overnight. It is within walking distance of Heriot Bay.

RETURNING TO COMOX

Wind direction will determine the best route. The following suggestions will guarantee you a safe and comfortable ride back.

Northerlies: If the wind is from the north, you have the choice of coming out Baker Passage or down Shearwater Passage and then across the Straits.

Southeasterlies: If the wind is from the south, **DO NOT** come out Baker Passage and try to beat into it. You won't like it or have fun. The seas in the Straits rarely get over 3 metres, but as the wind increases, they get closer together and steeper. Listen for **Sentry Shoals** on the VHF weather channel (refer to 3rd last page of notes) to know what conditions are out in the Straits.

Sailboats - If **sailing**, **DO NOT** be lured into heading straight for Cape Lazo from the Mystery Reef Buoy Q25. Once out of the lee of Harwood and then Texada Islands, the wind will veer more southeasterly and you will find yourself beating into a steep and uncomfortable sea. The trick is to stay in the lee of these Islands and keep going south past Harwood and Vivian Islands, past Rebecca Rock light and right down as far as Marshall Point/Crescent Bay on Texada Island. Then head out across the Straits for a fun and fast beam reach home. [A little note on slab reefing here. It is much more easily done in port before you set out, or at least while in the lee of Texada Island, if high winds are expected.](#)

Powerboats - If you are travelling by displacement or semi-displacement **powerboat** into a southerly, you will in fact have a more comfortable ride by heading out into the Straits from Mystery Reef Buoy Q25. This will put the seas just off your port bow. Be sure to follow the next instructions regarding Cape Lazo.

In the rare event of more severe conditions, you MAY want to head more into the wind and seas in a southerly direction toward **Hornby Island** to reduce rolling. Then turn back up towards **Cape Lazo** where the seas will be on your stern or quarter. You would also need to allow considerably more time for the crossing. Again, these kinds of conditions are extremely rare in the summer months.

RETURNING TO COMOX FROM AREAS WEST OF DESOLATION SOUND

Note - If you are in the area of Sutil Channel between Cortes Island (Gorge Harbour) and Quadra Island (Heriot Bay) or in the Campbell River area, please read these notes very carefully.

Wind direction will once again determine the best route back, but **SEVERE CAUTION** must be advised in the event of southerly winds. If you are in the area of Sutil Channel between Cortes Island (Gorge Harbour) and Quadra Island (Heriot Bay) or in the Campbell River area, PLEASE READ CAREFULLY. The following suggestions will guarantee you a safe and comfortable ride back.

Northerlies:

No problems for either sail or power boats.

Southeasterlies:

CAUTION: Do not second guess a southeast wind. **You must** keep a close ear to your weather channel for a few days prior to being in any of the above mentioned areas. If a southeast wind is in the forecast, **do not plan to return from these areas**. If possible, you MUST get back over into the protected waters of the Sound via Baker Passage before the southeasterly begins. Most often, unless it has already starting blowing, you will have a short window of time in the early morning to do this. Leave at first light.

If you find yourself in the unfavourable situation of being in Campbell River and a southeasterly is already in progress, **do not attempt to leave the harbour**. A flood current (south) runs directly into the teeth of a southeasterly at Cape Mudge and **must be avoided, no exceptions! this is a very dangerous area in these conditions.**

If you are in the vicinity of Heriot Bay on Quadra Island or Gorge Harbour on Cortes Island, both very nice places to visit by the way, you do not have the problem of current against wind. However, it can still be rough heading down Sutil Channel, or just getting out of Gorge Harbour itself, if the winds are 25 to 30 knots plus. Again, use extreme caution in your planning; leave very early to get around

Point Sutil on the south tip of Cortes Island as early as possible. **Take care rounding the buoy Q20 marking the shoals off this point.** This buoy can be difficult to find as it is a long way from shore. This is the entrance to Baker Passage and you will be in protected waters soon after.

Once through Baker Passage, follow the directions described in RETURNING TO COMOX above.

FINDING YOUR WAY PAST CAPE LAZO AND ACROSS THE COMOX BAR

The East Cardinal Buoy PJ, marking the eastern extremities of Cape Lazo Shoals, is a long way from shore and can be very difficult to spot. Here are a few tips that can make this difficult buoy and the route on to Buoy P54 easier to find:

Situation #1 - When approaching **from the northern part of Texada Island**, i.e. sailing back in a southerly, you will see the bluffs of Cape Lazo quite clearly from the Eastern side of the Strait. Sandy Island, 6 km SE of Cape Lazo and just north of Denman Island, will also be quite visible. AIM FOR A POINT HALFWAY BETWEEN CAPE LAZO AND SANDY ISLAND. Further SW along the shore from Cape Lazo are the Willemar Bluffs. From about 2/3 of the way across the Straits they will become visible. When you can see them, head for a midway point between them and Sandy Island. This will bring you right in past the East Cardinal Buoy PJ and then right up to where you will easily pick out the Comox Bar Bell Buoy P54.

Situation #2 - If you are approaching **from north of Cape Lazo**, stay well off to pick up the East Cardinal Buoy PB. You will not see the East Cardinal Buoy PJ from PB. An easy way to find it is to head for the eastern side of Hornby Island. Hornby is easily identified by its wedge shape. This will bring you right up to PJ. From PJ you will not see the Bell Buoy P54. Head for a midpoint between Willemar Bluffs and Sandy Island and you will come right to the Comox Bar Bell Buoy P54.

Situation #3 - If you are heading for Cape Lazo **from Shearwater Passage**, do not steer directly for it. It is better to head for the northern end of Denman Island and as soon as you can identify Sandy Island, head straight for it. This will make life much easier when trying to find that elusive East Cardinal buoy PJ. In fact, this

course will bring you almost right to it. From PJ head for the midpoint between Willemar Bluffs and Sandy Island and you will come to the Comox Bar Bell Buoy P54.

CROSSING THE COMOX BAR

From buoy P54 on the East side of the Comox Bar the next two buoys marking the channel, the red spar buoy P52 and the red cone buoy P50, are clearly visible. Leaving these to starboard you have good depths at any tide to cross the bar. This bar is safe to cross in all weather. There are no sea, wind or tidal conditions that make this bar impassable. It is well protected in a northerly and surprisingly well protected in a southerly. A large running sea out in the Straits will be considerably calmer by the time you get to the bar.

FINAL NIGHT'S ANCHORAGE

A word about your last night's anchorage. [As you must be off and clear of your yacht by 9:00 am on the last morning of your charter](#), it is not possible to get across the Straits from anywhere close enough to be on time. There is a beautiful little anchorage at the northern end of Denman Island called [Henry Bay](#). Arriving here the evening before you are due in makes for a much more relaxed and easy morning coming in. It is only 8 km from here to our docks.

[Warning, DO NOT anchor off Sandy Island overnight](#). The shallow area south of its western end is NOT AS CHARTED. There is no way of anchoring through any tidal range and not ending up on the bottom. Any boats you see anchored there will be gone before dark, or are visitors that don't know how dangerous it is at that location.

If you wish to come to the docks for your last night, a slip will be available to you at no charge.

ENTERING COMOX BAY MARINA

Once around the west end of [Goose Spit](#), you will clearly see the marina breakwater to the NNE of you. This breakwater is in two sections. Phone DSYC and give us an ETA of your arrival at the Fuel Dock. You must FUEL UP and have your holding tanks empty. PROCEED TO THE FUEL DOCK (250) 339-4664.

When refueled, wait for a DSYC staff person to pilot your vessel back to our docks. **DO NOT UNLOAD YOUR BOAT AT THE FUEL DOCK.**

Tying-Up

it is your responsibility to make sure you are tied to your DSYC berth with 4 lines, have your fenders at the appropriate level to prevent the hull from getting dock chafe and plug into shore power. Once you are plugged in, confirm that you have 110VAC at your electrical panel and the battery charger is turned on. **DO NOT TIE LOOPS INTO THE ENDS OF THE LINES - THEY CAN COME OFF AND CANNOT BE ADJUSTED; secure the lines to the cleats using a figure of eight with a cinch.**

WEATHER

Weather in Desolation Sound is quite consistent June through September, mild temperatures with winds rarely in excess of 25 knots. However, Southeasterlies can arrive with little warning. Weather systems will generally pass in 24 hours and do not necessarily bring rain. Check the VHF weather broadcast daily, but also remember that if systems decide to move quickly they can be hard to forecast.

** 24-hour weather broadcasts are available on VHF WX Channel #1 #3 #7 for our area. If you are having a problem receiving the VHF weather broadcast, call the following number(s) depending on the area you are in:

- Comox (250) 339-9861
- Campbell River (250) 287-4463
- Port Hardy (250) 949-7147

Lighthouse and buoy reports that are in or near our area are:

Cape Mudge (#11 on map)

Sentry Shoals (#12 on map)

Cape Lazo (#13 on map)

Chrome Island (south end of DENMAN ISLAND)

Sisters Island (mid Straits off LASQUETI ISLAND south of Comox)