

# About this Guide

St. Augustine, the oldest city in North America, lies at Mile 778 of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, which runs 1095 miles from Norfolk, Virginia, to Miami, Florida. This guide is designed to help boaters enjoy and appreciate the natural and cultural resources accessible from recreational vessels in the St. Augustine area. The maps and text display and describe features from the maritime history of St. Augustine; resources important to boaters and anglers, including marinas, waterfront restaurants, and boat ramps; representative fish and wildlife; the distribution of natural resources, such as salt marshes, estuaries, and beaches; and sources of information and assistance. In addition, the guide offers suggestions for safe navigation and anchoring in area waters, which are subject to tidal currents due to the proximity of St. Augustine Inlet.

Do not rely on this guide for navigational purposes. Instead, use the latest nautical charts.

The St. Augustine Port, Waterway, and Beach District Commission provided funding for this guide, which was prepared in collaboration with the Florida Sea Grant College Program.

## NAVIGATIONAL, HISTORICAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE OF ST. AUGUSTINE WATERWAYS



The wife of Florida Governor LeRoy Collins christens her namesake at the DESCO works in 1957.



Little Town and Princess Mary were members of the St. Augustine shrimp fleet (1962).



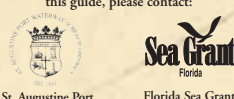
The Diesel Engine Sales Company's DESCO shrimp, longlining, and trawler vessels were the mainstay of many commercial fleets for decades. This aerial view (ca. 1960) shows the company's works on the San Sebastian River in full production. The Lufers Corporation now uses the site to build large powerboats, mostly for fishing.

The chart to the left is a 1925 nautical chart. This historical chart shows the St. Augustine Inlet in one of its more extreme configurations, appearing to be wide open, but with shoals over much of that width.

Credit: NOAA Office of Coast Survey Historical Map and Chart Collection.

All historical photos provided by St. Augustine Historical Society.

For information on obtaining a copy of this guide, please contact:



St. Augustine Port, Waterway, and Beach District Commission (904) 824-0113  
Florida Sea Grant (352) 392-1837

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## A Brief Maritime History of St. Augustine

The six principal periods of St. Augustine's multicultural history: First Spanish, British, Second Spanish, Territorial, Civil War, and Resort and Marine Industrial.

### First Spanish Period: 1565-1763

On September 8, 1565 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés landed a small Spanish force of soldiers and colonists near a shallow inlet in north Florida. They came to plant a viable colony, to protect Spanish control of Florida. Maritime commerce was endangered by Spain's inability to control the area and by the lack of a strong military presence on the mainland. Growing unrest in other Spanish possessions also stretched Spain's resources, and the United States began to contemplate incursions. In February 1821 the Adams-Onís Treaty ceded Florida to the United States of America, ending Spanish control.

In 1821 the coquina watch tower on Anastasia Island was first lit. Beginning in 1823 the structure was rebuilt and fortified, and by 1824 the first official light keeper had been appointed. An 1830 survey described the harbor as 30 feet deep, with limited access over the bar. This harbor is covered by St. Anastasia Island; is one of the finest in the world for extent, security, and good anchorage. Both channels, to the North and South of St. Anastasia Island, are obstructed by sand banks, which leave only five and a half feet over them at low water; consequently admitting but of the smaller description of navigation for a harbor that could shelter, in any number, the ships of the largest class. The removing of these bars, or at least their mending, so as to admit merchant ships, is the object of the present survey.

In 1834 the steamboat Florida ran between Savannah and Picoleta, on the St. Johns River; a stagecoach ride was required to complete the journey, some 18 miles east to St. Augustine. Access to the south, St. Augustine would remain a somewhat isolated port town until the advent of Florida's railroad system at the turn of the century.

### Territorial Period: 1821-1861

Federal troops took possession of the town in March 1862 and held it until the war's end. The lighthouse on Anastasia Island was darkened at the beginning of the war to guard against the entry of Union vessels, remained dark throughout the Federal occupation, and was relit in 1867. The Union blockade closed the harbor to almost all outside contact. An 1863 newspaper account describes it as "deserted, save when an occasional Government transport makes the echoes with its shrill steam whistle."

### The Civil War Period: 1861-1865

After the Civil War, turbulent waters threatened the coquina watch tower. The land for a new, stronger, lighthouse was purchased in 1872, and by the end of 1874 the brick and iron tower was lit where it stands today. The old tower fell into the sea in 1880.

### Resort and Marine Industrial Period: 1865-Present

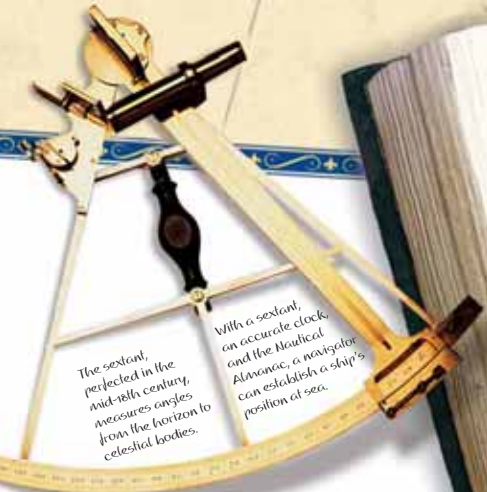
An increasing stream of winter tourists visited St. Augustine, and oil baron Henry Flagler turned his focus toward developing the city and the surrounding wetlands. Transport of people, materials and supplies was still primarily by sea until railway links were in place, although the bar and shifting sands at the entrance of the Matanzas River continued to impede access to major shipping. The city became a resort stopover for small recreational vessels, while Jacksonville assumed the role of a major commercial international port. Local mariners who ventured out daily could keep track of the shifting sands and safely navigate the inlet.

In the 1920s, three families gained from nearly 20 years of shrimping. By the 1940s, almost 100 shrimp vessels and experience gained from St. Augustine into the deep water of the Tolomato (North) River in 1940, creating a channel 200 feet wide and 27 feet deep. The Corps still must periodically dredge the cut. Some shrimpers continue to home port in St. Augustine, and a number of boatyards and marinas operate on the San Sebastian River. Today, popular with tourists who visit by motor vehicle, St. Augustine is also a well-known stopping-off place for sailors and power boaters following the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway.

Condensed from Marianne Franklin and John William Morris III, *The St. Augustine Shipwreck Survey, Phase I*, Southern Ocean Archaeological Research, Inc., May 1996, pp. 38-68; courtesy St. Augustine Lighthouse and Museum, Inc.



The coquina watch tower on Anastasia Island was built by the British, and first lit as a navigation aid in 1821. Replaced by the present lighthouse in 1874, the old tower fell into the sea in 1880.



The sextant, peered in the mid-18th century, measures angles from the horizon to celestial bodies. With a sextant, an accurate clock, and the Nautical Almanac, a navigator can establish a ship's position at sea.

### Popular Fishes

**FLOUNDER**  
Channel edges on sandy bottoms, near tidal pines and docks.

**RED FISH (Red Drum)**  
Near docks, pilings, and oyster bars; deeper holes in watterest and cooler months.

**RED SNAPPER**  
Offshore on the continental shelf, over deep reefs, banks, and rocky bottoms.

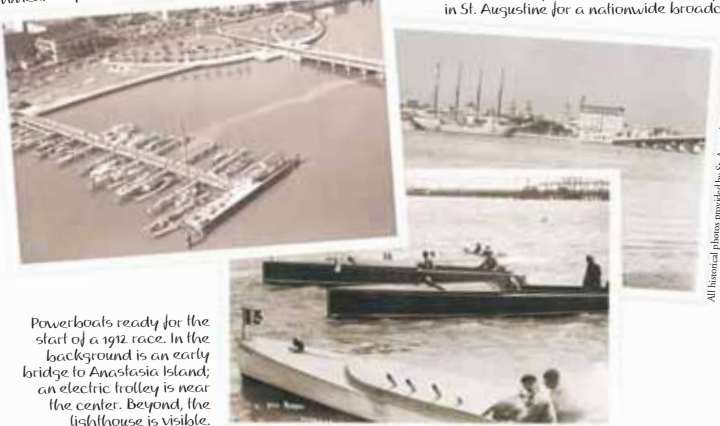
**SHEEPSHEAD**  
Near bridges, docks, seawalls, pilings, and artificial reefs.

**SNOOK**  
Canals, tidal creeks, and other deep, warm waters in cool months; near tidal pines and mangrove fringe at high tide.

**SPOTTED SEATROUT**  
Shallows when water temperatures are moderate and deeper waters during warmer and cooler months.

Fish Illustrations by Diane Rome Peckles. Provided by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Division of Marine Fisheries Management.

St. Augustine has long been a recreational boating center. This 1947 photo shows the city docks, which were immediately south of the present municipal marina.



Powerboats ready for the start of a 1912 race. In the background is an early bridge to Anastasia Island; an electric trolley is near the center. Beyond, the lighthouse is visible.

The four-masted schooner Selva Parker, berthed at the municipal pier in 1934. Built in 1918 as a lumber hauler, she was purchased in 1933 by radio personality Phillips Lord and named for his on-the-air character. Lord sailed to various exotic ports, with a team of celebrities, to broadcast his radio programs. The schooner, on her way to the South Pacific, stopped in St. Augustine for a nationwide broadcast.

All historical photos provided by St. Augustine Historical Society.



Thomas Jeffreys, British Geographer to the King, created this map in 1763. The coquina watch tower is labeled "The Lookout" (circled in red). The distinctive shape of the Castillo de San Marcos and the streets of the Old Town are immediately recognizable today.

## NATURAL FEATURES OF THE AREA

St. Augustine separates the northern and southern portions of the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve. Vessels using the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway are in intimate contact with this rich environment, over 60,000 acres of publicly owned uplands, tidal wetlands, and lagoons, as well as offshore seas.

Salt marsh dominates. Tidal flats appear relatively barren, but teem with life. Tidal beaches on the Atlantic side of the barrier islands are beautiful white quartz sand over coquina bedrock. Oyster bars are common in the estuaries. On land are coastal strand, grassy scrub, flatwoods scrub, and xeric hammock habitats, along with shell mounds created by early human residents. The diversity of communities in this system provides habitat for 240 plant species and a wide variety of wildlife, at least 20 mammal, 200 bird, 30 reptile, 7 amphibian, and 75 fish species.

Sport fishing opportunities are plentiful in the rivers, estuaries, and ocean. Other recreational possibilities include beach activities, birding, picnicking, swimming, camping, hiking, biking, water-skiing, horseback riding, canoeing, and kayaking.

### OYSTER BARS

In their grayish-white, irregularly shaped shells, immobile oysters filter water as they feed. Live oysters and empty oyster shells form bars or reefs, most prevalent near river mouths and in estuary locations that receive a steady inflow of fresh water. Common around St. Augustine, they are popular fishing spots that attract adult snook and redfish. Exercise caution in these areas; oyster bars severely damage boat hulls and props, and the sharp shells are treacherous for people wading or swimming.



Oyster bars exposed at low tide.

### MANATEES

West Indian manatees are large, gray aquatic mammals. An adult manatee may be almost 10 feet long and weigh 800-1200 pounds. Manatees live in rivers, estuaries, saltwater bays, and canals. Manatees have no natural enemies; however, many deaths result from collisions with watercraft. Manatees are protected under federal and Florida state law. It is unlawful to feed, touch, or disturb any manatee. State penalties are a maximum fine of \$500 and/or imprisonment for up to 60 days. A federal penalty may be \$100,000 and/or one year in prison.

- Some helpful tips for boaters:
- Wear polarized sunglasses and look for a snout, back, tail, or flipper breaking the surface. A swimming manatee's tail creates whirls or flat spots on the water.
  - Stay in deep-water channels. For high-speed water sports, choose areas that manatees do not or cannot frequent.
  - Remain at least 50 feet away from manatees. Stop your prop if you must go closer. Obey speed zone signs and avoid posted manatee sanctuaries.
  - Recycle your litter or throw it in a proper trash container. Debris such as discarded plastic bags or six-pack holders is dangerous to manatees and other wildlife. Properly discard or recycle monofilament line and fishhooks.
  - Feeding, providing water, or touching manatees may encourage them to approach people who might harm them.



A manatee and her calf.

### RECYCLE YOUR FISHING LINE

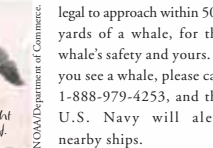
Monofilament fishing line can last for centuries in the water, out of the sun's ultraviolet rays. Each year, thousands of animals and many boat propellers become tangled in discarded fishing line.



A brown pelican at rest.

### NORTHERN RIGHT WHALES

Rare Northern Right Whales migrate to waters off North Florida to calve. You may see them within a mile of shore. Characteristics include white spots on the head, no dorsal fin, and a V-shaped blow. It is illegal to approach within 500 yards of a whale, for the whale's safety and yours. If you see a whale, please call 1-888-979-4253, and the U.S. Navy will alert nearby ships.



A Northern Right Whale and calf.

### Resource Directory

**Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Northeast Region**  
Information: (352) 732-1225 Fishing regs: (850) 488-6058  
Fish Kill Hotline: (800) 636-0511 Fish tag reports: (800) 367-4461  
Violations: (888) 404-3922 Toxic spills: (800) 320-0519  
License & species identification info: [www.myfwc.com/marine/](http://www.myfwc.com/marine/)

**Florida Department of Environmental Protection**  
Clean Marina Program: (840) 245-2847  
Incident Reports: (800) 320-0519 (24 hr)

**Monofilament Recovery & Recycling Program**  
[www.fishinglinerecycling.org/index.asp](http://www.fishinglinerecycling.org/index.asp)

**U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary**  
Florida 07-014-07 [www.uscgaux.org/07-014-07](http://www.uscgaux.org/)

**St. Augustine Port, Waterway, and Beach District Commission**  
P.O. Box 4512, St. Augustine, FL 32085-4512 (904) 824-0113

**Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve**  
[www.nerrs.noaa.gov/GTM/](http://www.nerrs.noaa.gov/GTM/) (904) 461-4054

**Florida Sea Grant**  
P.O. Box 110400, Gainesville, FL 32611-0400 [www.flseagrant.org/](http://www.flseagrant.org/) (352) 392-1837

**St. Augustine Police Department**  
Dial 911; non-emergency: (904) 825-1074

**St. Augustine Beach Police Department**  
Dial 911; non-emergency: (904) 471-3600

**St. Johns County Sheriff's Department**  
Dial 911; non-emergency: (904) 824-8304

**St. Augustine Fire Department**  
Dial 911; non-emergency: (904) 825-1098

**St. Augustine Historical Society**  
271 Charlotte St., St. Augustine, FL 32084 (904) 824-2872

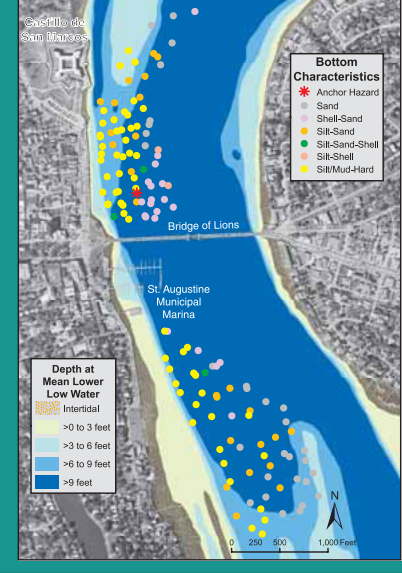
**National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service**  
[www.nmfs.noaa.gov](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov)  
Extended tide forecasts [www.waiverids.com/dynamic/dir/florida/atlanctides.html](http://www.waiverids.com/dynamic/dir/florida/atlanctides.html)  
NOAA/NOS tides [www.srh.noaa.gov/flw/7474/Saint\\_Augustine.shtml](http://www.srh.noaa.gov/flw/7474/Saint_Augustine.shtml)  
**St. Augustine Information Websites**  
[www.staugustine.com](http://www.staugustine.com) (Service of the St. Augustine Record newspaper)  
[www.oddcity.com](http://www.oddcity.com) (Information portal)  
[www.visitstaug.com](http://www.visitstaug.com) (Information offered in Dutch, French and Spanish)

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# NAVIGATIONAL, HISTORICAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE OF ST. AUGUSTINE WATERWAYS

St. Johns River mouth (approx. 34 nmi on Intracoastal Waterway)

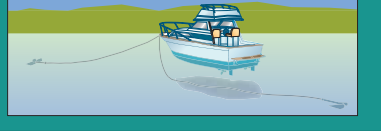
## ST. AUGUSTINE MUNICIPAL ANCHORAGE



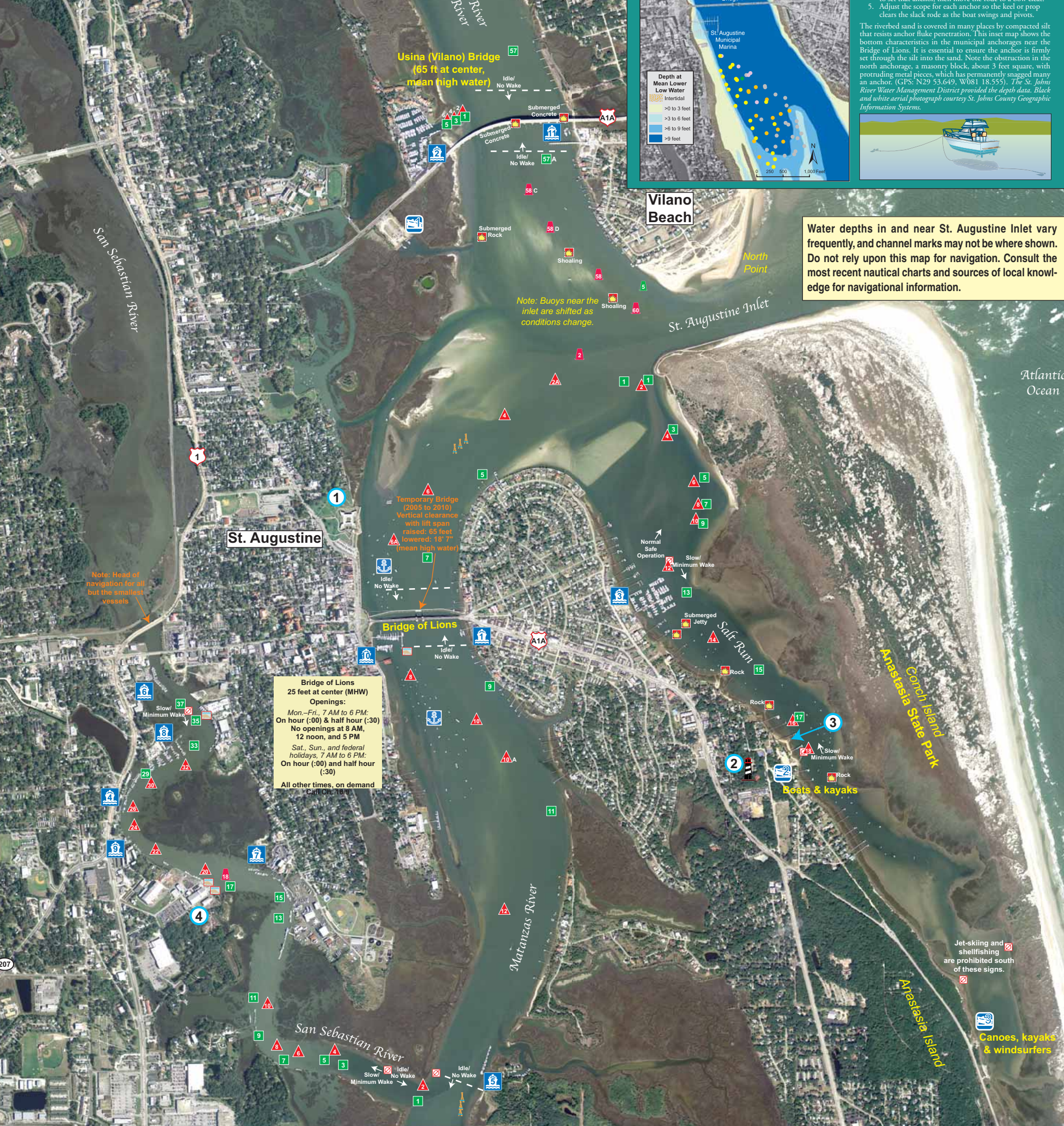
In the Matanzas River, the swift current reverses with each tide cycle, and a vessel riding to a single anchor may break the hook loose at an inopportune time. The 'Bahamian Moor' is a relatively simple way to set two anchors, each oriented to hold in one of the opposing current directions, especially important if the vessel is left unattended. Wind direction is a wild card, but a properly set Bahamian Moor lets a vessel swing in a controlled circle under the influence of all wind and current direction combinations.

1. Drop the first anchor where you would normally set a single hook in the prevailing conditions.
2. Fall back on the wind and/or current, letting out about twice the usual scope. Snub up and set the anchor. Now, let down the second anchor.
3. With the second anchor rode running free, pull forward to midway between the two anchors. If using power, haul in the line from the first anchor, taking care not to foul the prop.
4. Clear off the second anchor line on the stern, go ahead to set that anchor, then move the rode to a bow cleat.
5. Adjust the scope for each anchor so the feet or prop clears the slack rode as the boat swings and pivots.

The riverbed sand is covered in many places by compacted silt that resists anchor fluke penetration. This inset map shows the bottom characteristics in the municipal anchorages near the Bridge of Lions. It is essential to ensure the anchor is firmly set through the silt into the sand. Note the obstruction in the north anchorage, a masonry block, about 3 feet square, with protruding metal pieces, which has permanently snagged many an anchor. (GPS: N29 53.649, W081 18.555). The St. Johns River Water Management District provided the depth data. Black and white aerial photograph courtesy St. Johns County Geographic Information Systems.



Water depths in and near St. Augustine Inlet vary frequently, and channel marks may not be where shown. Do not rely upon this map for navigation. Consult the most recent nautical charts and sources of local knowledge for navigational information.



**Bridge of Lions**  
25 feet at center (MHW)  
Openings:  
Mon.-Fri., 7 AM to 6 PM:  
On hour (:00) & half hour (:30)  
No openings at 8 AM,  
12 noon, and 5 PM  
Sat., Sun., and federal  
holidays, 7 AM to 6 PM:  
On hour (:00) and half hour  
(:30)  
All other times, on demand  
Call Ch. 1676

Beats & kayaks  
Jet-skiing and shellfishing are prohibited south of these signs.

Canoes, kayaks & windsurfers

## MARINAS & BOAT RAMPS

Marina	Reported Approach Depth (ft)	Reported Alongside Depth (ft)	Transient Slips Elce Water	Repair Hull Engine Electronics	Haul Out Tonn	Boat Motor Sail Row PWC	Restaurant Lodging Snacks	Pumpout Toilets Showers Laundry	Wet Slips Dry Storage	Charts	Water Propene Ice	Bait Tackle	Gas Diesel	Contact (Area Code 904)	Address
1 Anchorage Inn	17	13	E/W			M R	R L S	T S L	W					829-9941 www.staugustineanchorage.com	1 Dolphin Drive St. Augustine, FL 32080
2 Camachee Cove	7	6	E/W	H En El	50	M S	R L S	P T S L	W	Y	W 1	B T	G D	829-5676 www.camachee.com	3070 Harbor Drive St. Augustine, FL 32084
3 Conch House	7	6	E/W			M S R P	R L	P T S L	W	Y	W 1	B	G D	(800) 940-6236 www.conch-house.com www.conch-house.com	57 Comares Avenue St. Augustine, FL 32080
4 English Landing	10	8	E/W					T S	W D		W			814-7968	509 S. US 1 St. Augustine, FL 32084
5 Fish Island	3	12-16 3.5 (basin)	E/W					T S	W					471-1983	State Road 312 St. Augustine, FL 32086
6 Hidden Harbor	8.5	16	E/W					T S	W		W			829-0750	10 Prawn Street St. Augustine, FL 32084
7 Oasis	20	20		H En El	50				W D					824-2520	256 Ribena Street St. Augustine, FL 32084
8 Oyster Creek	7	8	E/W	H En El			R S	P T S L	W		W 1		G D	827-0520 oystercreekstaugustine.com	65 Lewis Blvd. St. Augustine, FL 32084
9 Sebastian Harbor	15	4	E/W		6			T	W D		W		G D	825-4666	975 S. US 1 St. Augustine, FL 32084
10 St. Augustine Municipal	20	3-15	E/W				R L S	P T S L	W	Y	W P 1	G D	G D	825-1026 www.staugustinefl.com	111 Avenida Mendez St. Augustine, FL 32084
11 Sea Love	15	15	E/W			M	R S	T S	W	Y	W 1	B T	G D	824-3328 KcaughtABigOne@sea-lovefishing.com www.sea-lovefishing.com	250 Vilano Road Vilano Beach, FL 32084

By awarding the Clean Marina designation, the state recognizes a marina that takes extraordinary measures to help protect coastal waters. Only designated marinas may fly the Clean Marina flag.

**Points of Interest**

1 Castillo de San Marcos	1 Picnic Facilities
2 St. Augustine Lighthouse and Museum	2 Piers
3 Site of early coquina watchtower/lighthouse	3 Parking
4 Duqu Cane, St. Park	4 Restrooms

(These sites are discussed on the other side of this guide.)

**LEGEND**

- Marina
- Anchorage
- Boat Ramp
- Point of Interest
- Day Beacons
- Buoys
- Lighthouse
- Mooring Dolphin
- Hazard Warning
- Regulatory
- Manatee Advisory

**SIGNS**

- Hazard Warning
- Regulatory
- Manatee Advisory

Scale: 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 feet  
Aerial photographs courtesy of St. Johns River Water Management

Ponce de Leon Inlet (approx. 53 nmi on Intracoastal Waterway)