Cruising the AICW with Navionics and Waterway Guide
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Bob & Ann Sherer
Authors, navigators and sailors. Bob & Ann spend six months every year transiting the Atlantic ICW from NY to Key West. Recognized for his contributions to multiple navigation apps and Waterway Guide, “Bob423” maintains a watchful eye on the conditions of the ICW and publishes his observations across multiple platforms.
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AGENDA

- The AICW Defined
- Preparation for Cruising
- Provisioning
- Destinations
- Anchorages
- Favorite Stops
- Navigation
- Tips
- Resources for Planning
The ICW

- The Intracoastal Waterway
  - Boston, MA to Brownsville, TX
  - 3,000 mile inland waterway
  - AIWW from Norfolk to Key West
  - GIWW (Gulf Intracoastal Waterway) comprises two sections
  - Numerous inlets provide access to the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico

*The ICW is America’s Marine Highway*
The AICW, ICW, AIWW or the “Ditch”

- Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway
  - Norfolk (MM 0) to Key West (MM 1,243)
  - Inside route along the East Coast of U.S.
  - 1,243 Statute Miles (1080 Nautical Miles)
  - Natural and man made canals, rivers, bays and sounds
  - The last section was completed in 1928, Belhaven, NC
  - Designed to be 12 feet in depth, minimum
  - Shoaling is evident in some places
  - Dredging is on-going and effective

The ICW is America’s Marine Highway
Who Uses the ICW

- Wildlife
- Commercial Tugboats and Barges
- Long Range Cruisers Moving North and South
- Weekend and Day Boaters
- Recreational Fishermen
- Water Skiers
- Personal Watercraft (Jet Skis, Kayaks, Canoes, etc.)
- Department of Defense (Training and Access)
- Commercial Watermen

A multiuse waterway important to many communities
Preparation for Cruising

• How far are you going and how long will you be gone?
• Advice for preparing your home for long absences is found in Bob’s book
• You can travel the ICW in a big boat or a little boat
  • Mast height and draft are considerations
• Don’t get overwhelmed by too much advice
• Get familiar with your boat’s operating systems and navigation equipment
• Choose several mobile navigation apps and learn how to use them
• Learn the rules of the road

Visit online resources and study charts and books
Preparation for Cruising

• Keel Depth
  • 6.5 foot keels can make it. However, travel times will be limited to near high tide in shallow areas.

• Mast Height
  • Height of bridges at high tide are supposed to be 65 feet. But not all bridges are 65 feet. Some are as low as 63 feet.

Visit online resources and study charts and books
Costs

- Docking fees
  - $1.50 - $3.00 per foot per day
- Fuel (varies)
  - Diesel = $3.30 per gallon
  - Gas = $3.50 per gallon
- Repairs
- Car Rental
- Food and Provisions
- Entertainment

Get the information you need from Waterway Guide and Waterway Explorer
Provisioning

• You don’t need large stores of provisions if you want to dock every night and eat out – because you can on the AICW

• Longer passages on remote sections of both the AICW and ICW require that you provision your vessel if you are going to anchor or not make port

• Most marinas and docks are within easy walking, bicycling or courtesy car distance to grocery and convenience stores

• Pizza and delivery restaurants will come to your boat in many marinas

*Find your provisions using Waterway Guide and Waterway Explorer*
Destinations

• **Marinas**
  • Some marinas are all encompassing (docks, repairs, restaurants, provisions, etc.)

• **Towns**
  • From urban waterfronts to sleepy little riverfront towns

• **Anchorages**
  • Quiet and remote
  • Mooring fields
  • Groups with others

• **Attractions**
  • State and National Parks, museums, cultural centers, fairs and carnivals

• **Events**
  • Wine festivals, jazz festivals, boat shows and more

Find your destinations using **Waterway Guide and Waterway Explorer**
Favorite Towns along the AICW

• **Norfolk / Portsmouth, VA (Mile 0)**
  - Urban, renovated waterfront, restaurants, museums, festivals

• **Manteo, NC**
  - Historical, charming, good restaurants

• **Belhaven, NC**
  - Sleepy little town

• **Washington, NC**
  - Upriver, nice waterfront and quaint

• **Beaufort, NC**
  - Many marinas and fun to explore

• **Charleston, SC**
  - Good restaurants and historical attractions

• **Savannah, GA**
  - The old South with a great wharf

• **Key West, FL** (Enough said…)
Favorite Towns along the GIWW

From Carrabelle, FL to Brownsville, TX
- Apalachicola, FL
- Panama City, FL (Still storm damaged)
- Pensacola, FL
- Grand Hotel, Point Clear, Fairhope, AL
- Bay St. Louis, MS
- Slidell, LA
- Madisonville, LA
- Kemah, TX

From Tarpon Springs to Fort Myers
- Tarpon Springs, FL
- Sarasota
- Fort Myers

Slidell, LA
Favorite Marinas

• Waterside Marina – Norfolk, VA
  • Urban, fun, safe

• Homer Smith Docks and Marina in Beaufort, NC
  • Working shrimp dock and new slips for transients

• Harborwalk Marina in Georgetown, SC.
  • New slips and the town is fun to explore with plenty of restaurants

• Isle of Hope, GA
  • Courtesy car to explore nearby Savannah, GA

• Harbour Town Yacht Basin, Hilton Head Island, SC
  • Protected with plenty of amenities

Plan your stops using Waterway Guide and Waterway Explorer
Favorite Anchorages

You can anchor every night of your life along the ICW and never see the same location twice – but there are some favorites…

- Pungo River, NC at the southern exit of the Alligator-Pungo Canal
- Awendaw Creek, SC between McClellanville and Isle of Palms shallows
- Steamboat Landing, SC
- Crescent River, GA
- Jekyll Creek, GA
- Fernandina, FL
- Ft. Matanzas, FL
- Marine Stadium at Miami, FL

Find your anchorages with Waterway Guide and Waterway Explorer
Navigation

• The ICW is wide in some places - and narrow in others
• Choose your tides to transit shallow areas
• There is deep water and shallow areas in all sections of the ICW
• Learn the markers, day beacons and buoys that you will see (it’s easy)
• Pay attention to where you are on the water - not just where your chart plotter or app shows where you are on the screen
• Know the tides and the effects of wind when transiting shallow areas
• If you have AIS, use it to see large vessels in advance of narrow sections and blind curves
• Learn the language of VHF radio and the proper channels to use in all situations
Navigation

• Charts (print yourself from NOAA sources or purchase preprinted)
• Chart plotter
• Mobile Apps
  • iPad or other tablet with cell service (Verizon is strong in most AICW sections)
  • iPhone or Android (Verizon)
• Binoculars
• Book(s) with guidance and local knowledge
• Compass
• VHF Radio

*Atlantic ICW Waterway Guide and the ICW Cruising Guide by Bob423*
Navigation – Precaution Areas

• The Great Dismal Swamp Canal
• Albemarle Sound, NC
• Neuse River, NC
• Browns Inlet, NC
• New River Inlet, NC
• Lockwoods Folly, SC
• Shallotte, SC
• McClellanvile, SC
• Isle of Palms, SC

Atlantic ICW Waterway Guide and the ICW Cruising Guide by Bob423
Navigation – Precaution Areas

• Dawho River, SC
• Watts Cut, SC
• Ashepoo-Coosaw Cutoff
• Fields Cut, SC
• Hell Gate, GA
• Little Mud River, GA
• Jekyll Creek, GA
• Fernandina, FL
• Matanzas, FL
Navigation – Precaution Areas

SOLUTIONS

All of the problems can be avoided by choosing to pass through at 1/2 to full tide.

If you go at low tide, then there are additional areas you want to be aware of. A complete list can be found at Waterway Guide.

See Waterway Guide ICW Alert List for a convenient summary with links.

Another option is to bypass the shallow areas by going off-shore in good weather.
Tips

• Take your time
• Remain flexible
• If someone is meeting you - commit to a place or a date - but not both.
• Weather always changes
• Cell phones work in most areas / get an unlimited data plan
• Marinas and anchorages are more crowded in spring and fall during annual migrations of boats north and south – plan accordingly
• Hurricane season requires vigilance for protecting you and your vessel
Resources

- Waterway Guide ICW edition
- Waterway Guide Southern edition
- 2018 ICW Cruising Guide Robert Sherer
- Navionics Mobile App
- Navionics ENC for your chart plotter
- Other Mobile Navigation Apps
  - Aqua Map
  - iNavX
- Weather apps
- NOAA Weather
- ICW Facebook Page
Resources

Waterway Explorer Magazine
Resources – Important Links

Thank you

QUESTIONS

Conclusion