

A young child with dark hair, wearing a bright yellow life vest with the word 'REVERE' on it, is smiling and looking towards the camera. The child is on the deck of a sailboat, with various sailing equipment like ropes, masts, and a blue cover visible in the background. The water is calm and blue, and the sky is clear. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

Beginner's Guide to Cruising the ICW

tigandserena.com

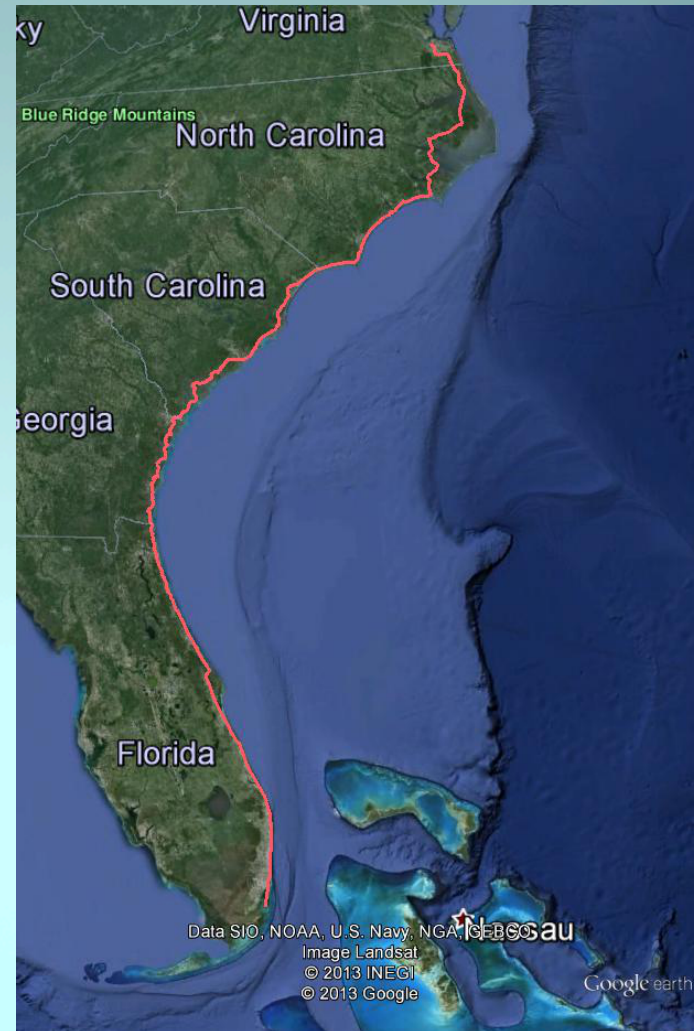
Contents

- Overview of ICW
- Trip Planning
- Logistics
- Highlights
- NOT about (but might touch upon)
 - Outfitting boat
 - Living aboard
 - Basic Seamanship



“The Ditch”

- Norfolk, Virginia to Miami, Florida
- Protected waterway
- ~1089 statute miles
- Project Depth of 10-12 ft
(not always maintained)



Charts and Guidebooks

- NOAA charts
 - Electronic
 - Printed charts and kits
- “Magenta line” on ICW
- Know how to read charts
- Resources:
 - MapTech Chart kit,
 - Skipper Bob’s,
 - Waterway Guide, ICW
 - Chartbook (Kettlewell)



Digital Resources

- Active Captain
- Tablet
 - iPad as Chartplotter
 - iNavX
 - Garmin Blue Charts
 - Navionics
 - LifeProof waterproof case
- Computer software
 - OpenCPN, Sea Clear, MaxSea, etc



ATONs

- Day markers
- **Heading South**
Red Right Return
(to Texas)
 - Keep Red Triangles to starboard
 - Keep Green Squares to port
- Beware crossing inlets



Misleading ATONs



Red 46, 52, 54 to starboard
Green 45, 47, 49 to port



Red 28, 24, 22 to port
Green 25, 23 to starboard

Ranges



Range markers NOT lined up correctly.
Steer towards bottom marker.



Range markers lined up correctly.

Tides

- Recent tide table
 - Printed publications
 - App on phone/tablet
 - tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov
- Tidal trends
 - Little tidal difference near Chesapeake
 - Increasing tides south to Georgia
 - Moderate tides in Florida
- “Super Moons”
 - More extreme tides



Cautionary Tale

Currents

- ICW currents are hard to predict
- Can be especially strong at bridges
 - Possible cross currents too
 - Boats with current have right of way
- Cuts can have lots of current – plan near slack
 - Snows Cut (Carolina Beach, NC)
 - Elliot Cut in Wappoo Creek (Charleston, SC)
- “Rages” at inlets
 - When wind and current oppose each other

Bridges

Bascule



Swing



Lowest Height
Fixed Bridge
56 feet
Julia Tuttle Bridge
Miami (mile 1087)

- Types of bridges
 - Fixed
 - Bascule
 - Swing
 - Lift

Lift



Bridges (& Locks)

- Plan Ahead
 - Locks
 - Will need 2 dock lines at least 30 feet long
 - Restricted - check schedules or call ahead
 - Check height clearance (NO unnecessary openings)
 - Boats with easily removable antennae, outriggers, etc must lower
- Call tender via VHF (usually channel 9 or 13)
 - State your vessel name, type of boat, direction of travel, and request
 - Example: “This is south bound sailing vessel Wildest Dream requesting to pass at your 9:30 opening”



Bridges (& Locks) cont.

- Logistics
 - Openings dependent on bridge tender (may deem unsafe because of weather, etc)
 - Commercial traffic has priority. Do not have to wait for schedule. (Can catch a ride through with them)
- Etiquette
 - Do NOT use horn. Call bridge tender on VHF.
 - Be polite. Tell tender when you are clear. Thank tender.
 - Vessels with current have right of way
 - Watch for currents while waiting and crossing

Docking & Anchoring

- Marinas
- Bulkheads
- Pilings
- Multiple Anchors
- Do NOT set anchor in channel



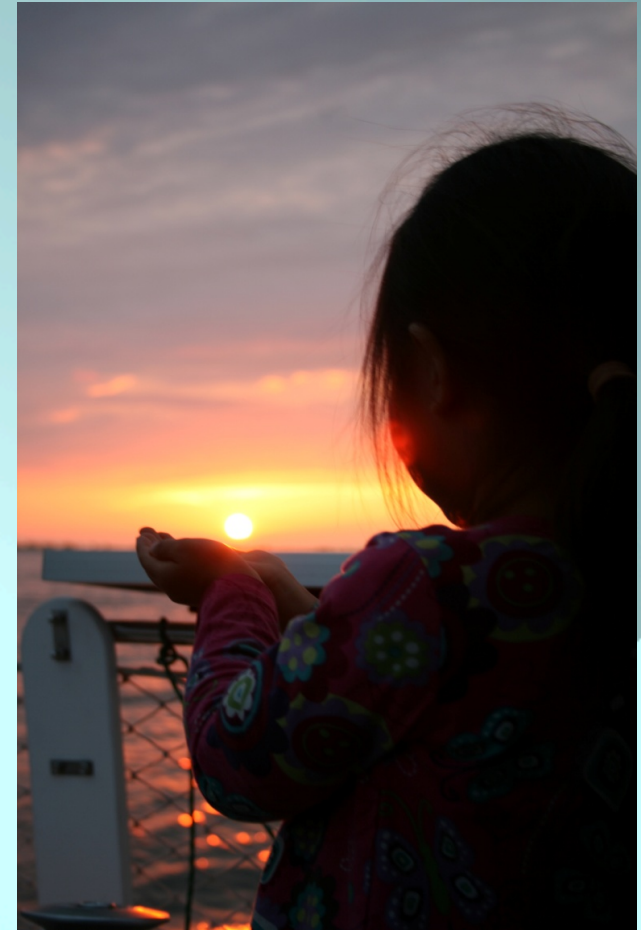
Etiquette

- Observe No Wake Zones
- Passing vessels
 - Hail on VHF
 - If can't find name, be descriptive
 - Use horn as last means
 - Talk about speed when passing



Timing & Planning

- When to go?
 - Snowbirds fall migration
 - Less daylight
 - Summer ends around Labor Day
- ICW in statute mile
 - 1 nautical mile = 1.15 statute mile
- 6 hours pleasant travel
 - Sailboat up to around 35 miles/day
 - +/- 20 miles



Cruisers' Gatherings

- Annapolis Boat Show (sail & power) in October
 - Usually the start of southbound migration
- SSCA gam, Annapolis
- Thanksgiving Potluck
 - St. Marys, GA
 - Vero Beach, FL
- SSCA gam, Melbourne, FL



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Protected?

- The ICW affords protection from big waves and reduced wind
- However, there are some wide open spaces
 - Albermarle Sound, NC
 - Pamlico River, NC
 - Neuse River, NC
 - Coosaw River, SC



Weather

- NOAA marine forecasts
 - On VHF and online
- Apps on phone/tablet
- Radar
- Internet
- Nets on HF/SSB radio



Internet Access

- Marinas
- Public libraries
- Cellular data
 - Mifi, wireless broadband
- Open Wi-fi hotspots
 - Wi-fi booster



Transportation

- Bicycles (portable/foldable)
- Public Transit (in larger cities)
- Rental Cars
- Walking
- Kindness of others



Provisioning

- Rule of thumb: have at least 1 weeks worth of food
- Groceries and stores are widely available. However some are easier to get to than others.
 - Deep Creek in Dismal Swamp
 - Vilano Beach, FL
 - Ft. Lauderdale
 - Miami
- Many marinas will give rides or have loaner cars
- Some grocery stores will pick up and drop off. Call ahead.



Other Logistics

- Trash
- Laundry
- Fuel
- Pump Out
- Water
- Propane
- Oil & Disposal
- Marine Parts



Assistance?

- Run aground
 - Kedging
 - Tilt boat
 - Wait
 - Tow Boat US

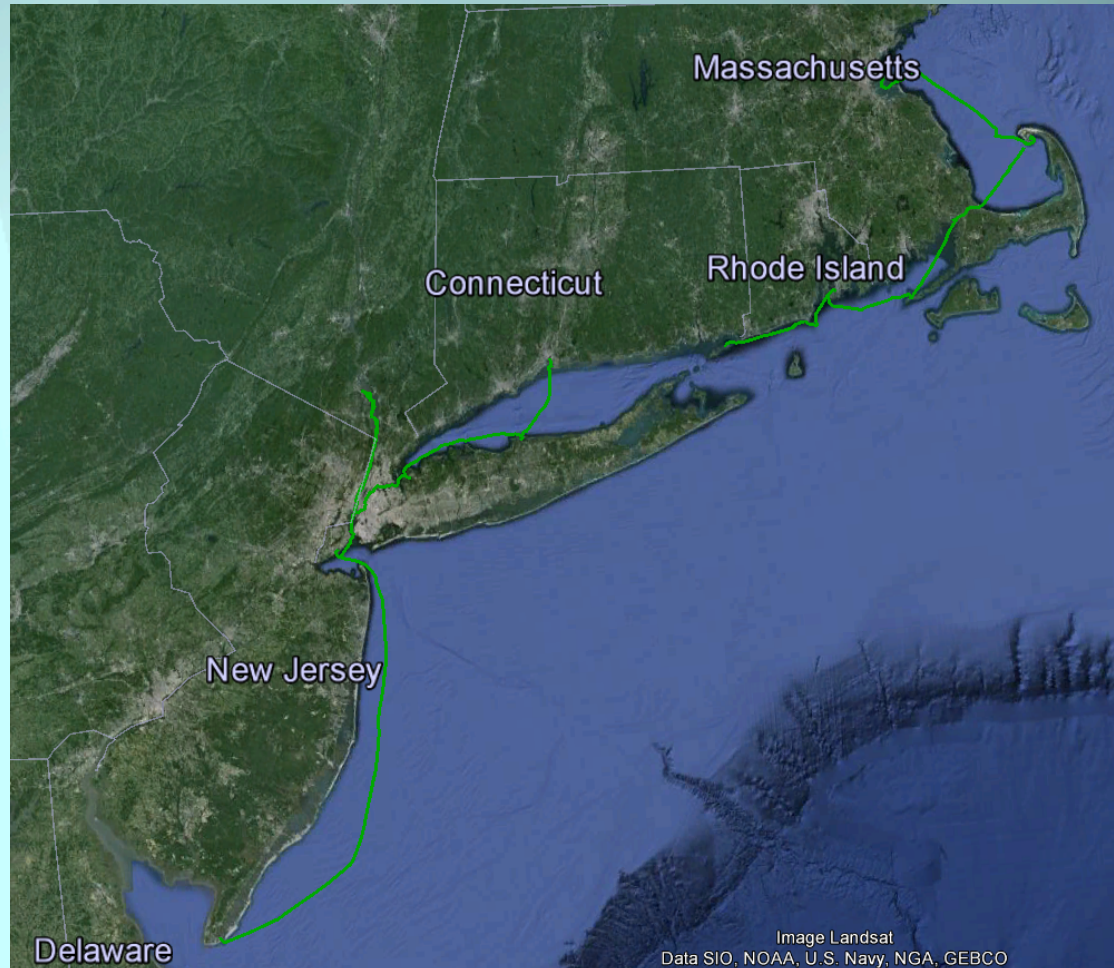


Inlets & Going Outside

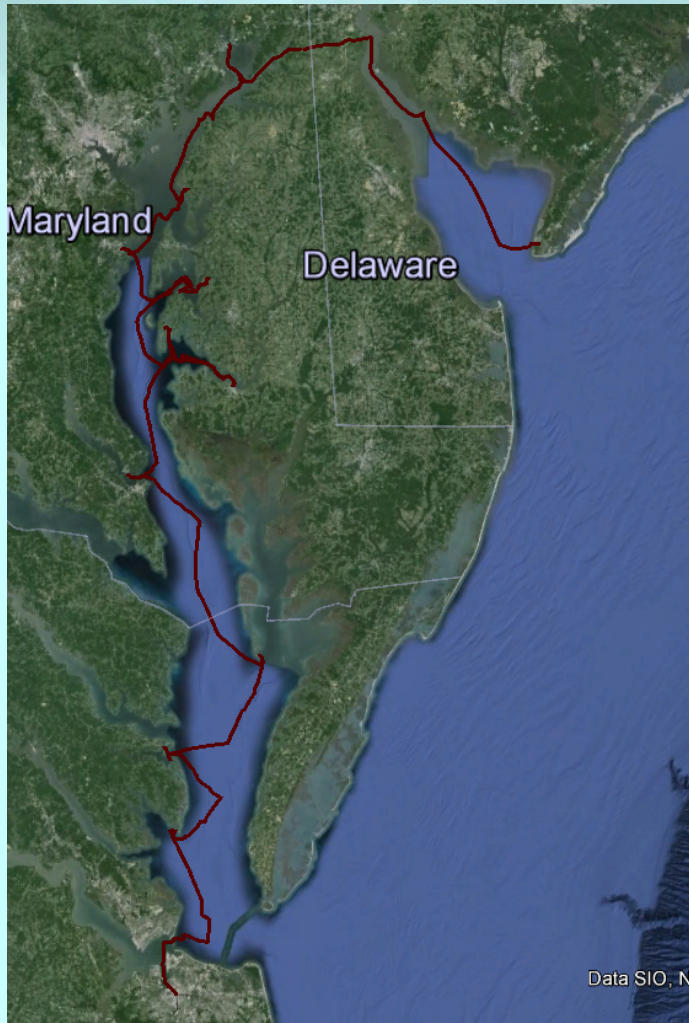
- Look at charts (if there's a lack of info, beware – ie. No buoys -> probably not a good first time)
- Some buoys shift frequently (ie. St. Augustine). And buoyed channels not always accurate
- Ask for local knowledge (Tow Boat US)
- Beware places such as Cape Hatteras (graveyard of the Atlantic), Frying Pan Shoals around Cape Fear, Gulf Stream

Getting to the ICW, to Cape May

- Boston to Cape May, NJ
 - Cape Cod Canal
 - RI Sound
 - Block Island Sound
 - Long Island Sound
 - NYC
 - Coastal NJ
 - NJ ICW ?



Getting to the ICW, C&D



- Cape May, NJ to Norfolk, VA
 - Delaware Bay
 - C&D Canal
 - Chesapeake Bay
 - Annapolis, MD
 - Tangier Island, VA
 - Hampton Roads, VA



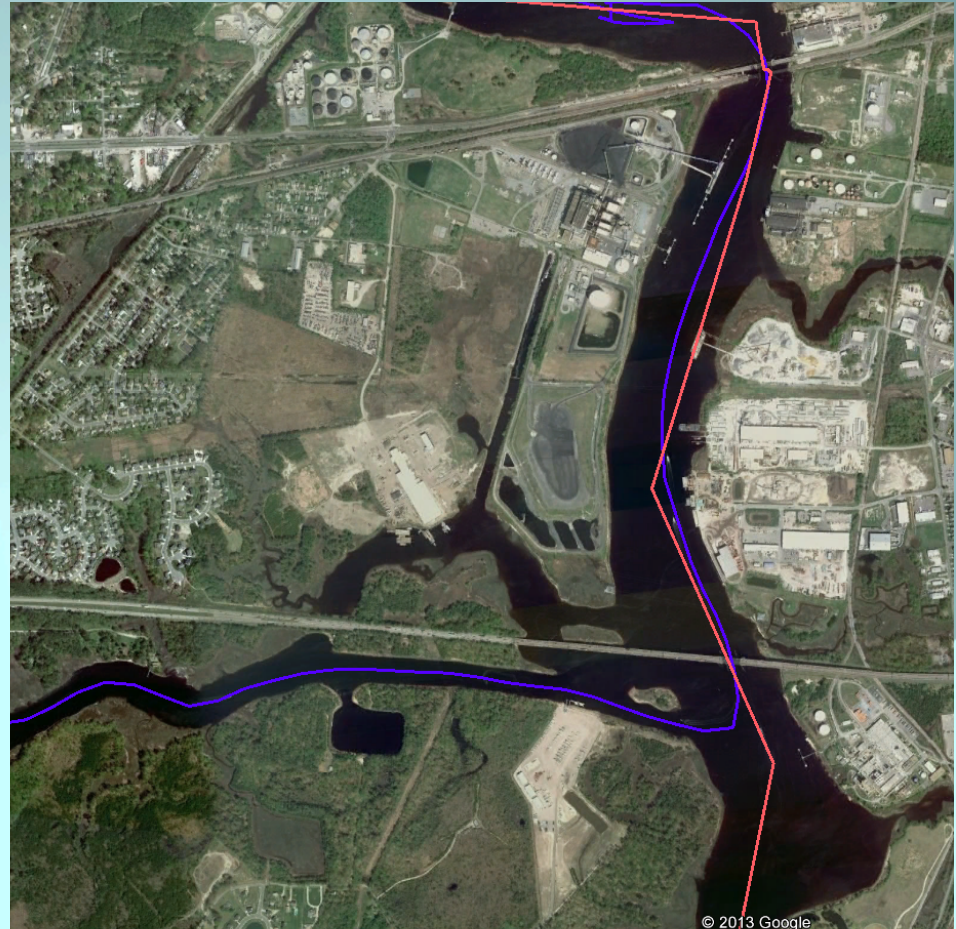
Virginia

- Mile “ZERO” at Norfolk, VA (R36)
 - Anchorage at Hospital Point
 - 2 free docks at Portsmouth
- Gilmerton Bridge @ ICW mm 6
 - Bascule Bridge
 - 35 ft height
 - Restricted schedule



Virginia & North Carolina

- Dismal Swamp or Virginia Cut?



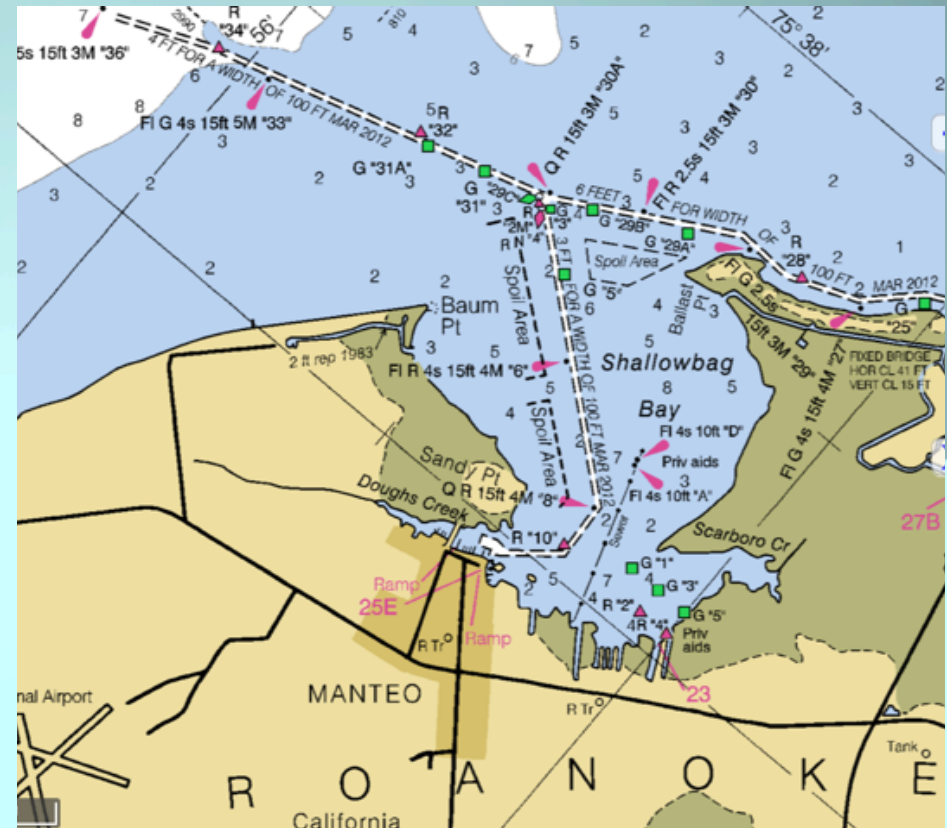
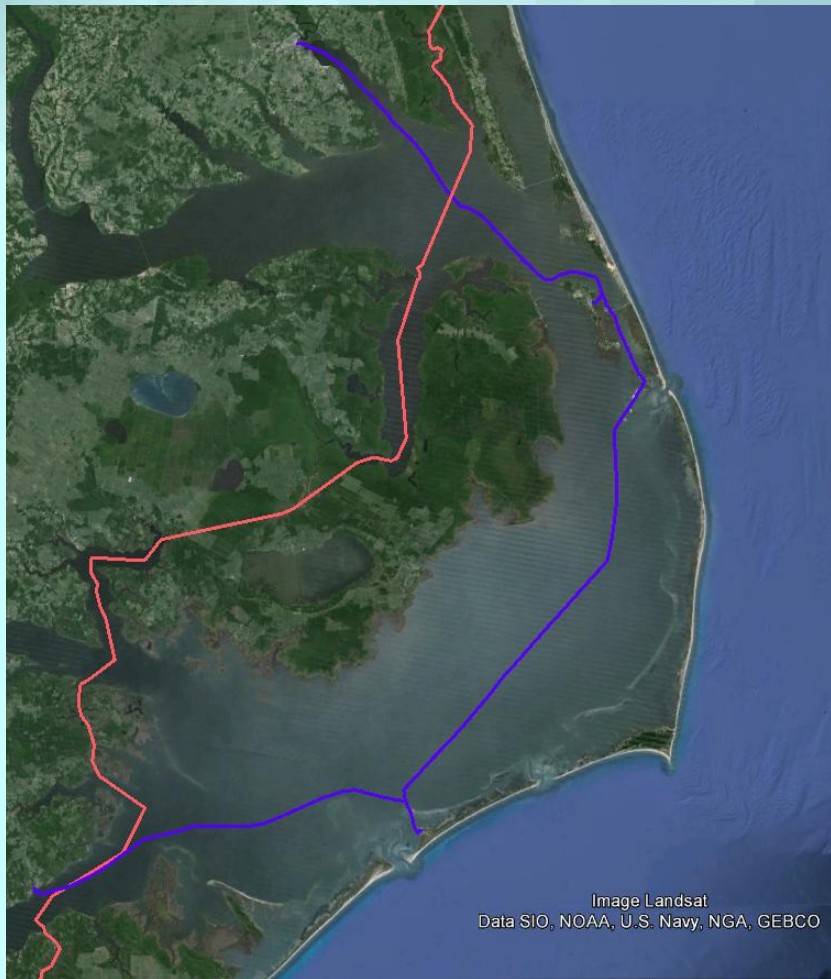
North Carolina

- Elizabeth City
- Albermarle Sound
- Pamlico Sound
- Oriental
- Beaufort
 - Good place to go “outside” to Wrightsville Beach
- Morehead City
- Wrightsville Beach
- Southport



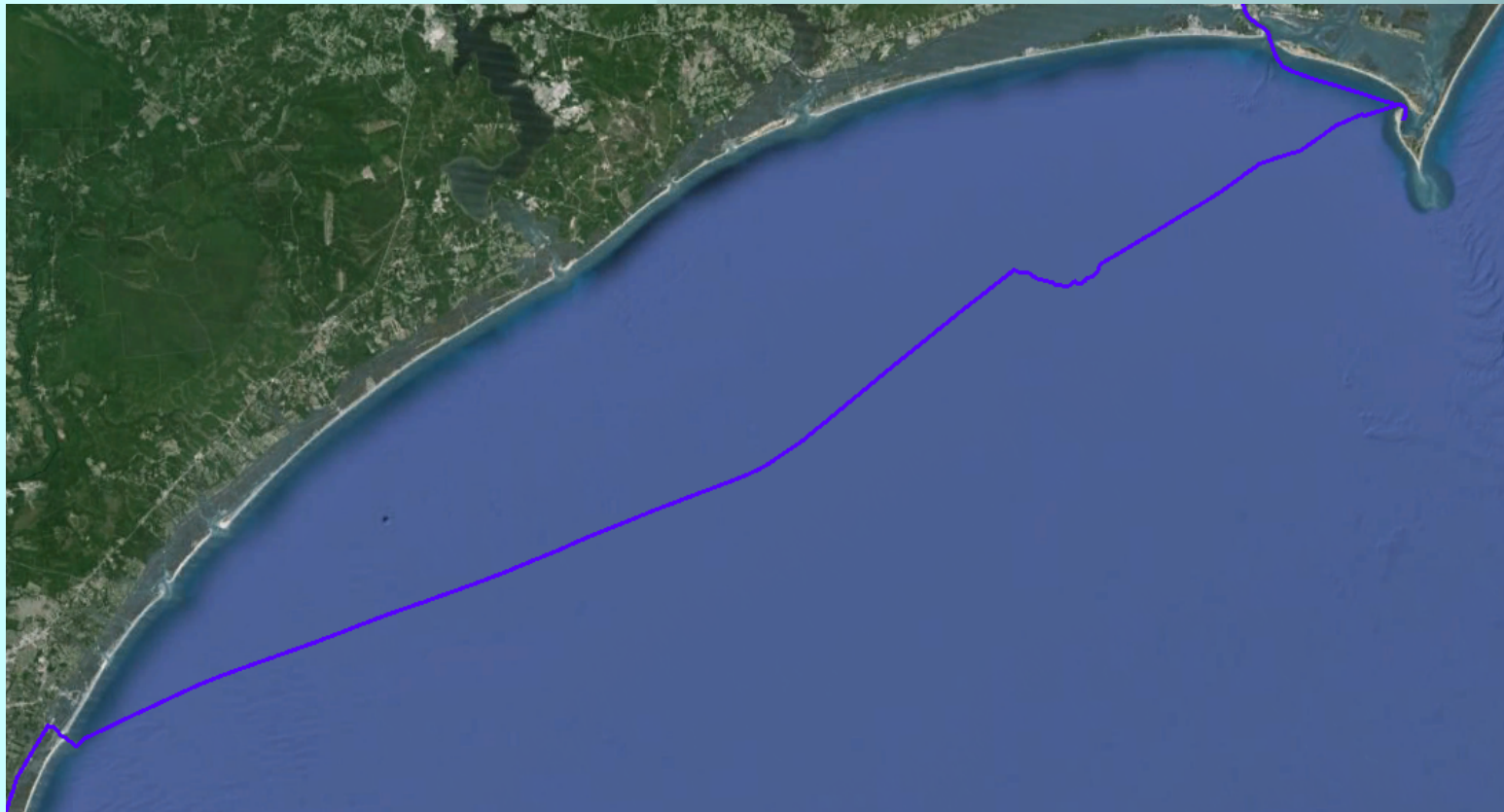
N. Carolina Alternate Route

- N. Carolina Outer Banks



Beaufort, NC to Wrightsville Beach

- Beaufort inlet to Masonboro inlet approx. 65 nm



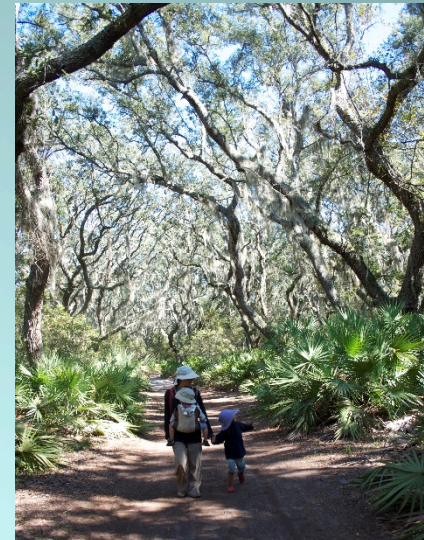
S. Carolina & Georgia

- “Rock Pile”
- Georgetown
- Charleston
- Beaufort
- Savannah
- Brunswick
- Saint Marys
- Cumberland Island



Cumberland Island, GA

- St. Marys River
FL/GA border
- National Seashore
- Ruins
- Wild Horses
- Live oak & Spanish
Moss
- Shark's Teeth
- Trails
- Beach



Northern Florida

- Fernandina Beach
- Saint Johns River (Jacksonville)
- Saint Augustine
- New Smyrna Beach
- Titusville
- Cape Canaveral
- Cocoa
- Melbourne



Southern Florida

- Vero Beach
- Fort Pierce
- Palm Beach/Lake Worth
- Fort Lauderdale
- Miami



The End?

- Florida Keys
 - Key Largo, Islamorada, Marathon, Key West
 - Boot Key Harbor in Marathon
- Western Florida
- Gulf Coast
- Bahamas
- Dominican Republic
- Puerto Rico
- Carribbean

