



Virgin Islands Shipping Registry

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Safety of Navigation - Areas to be avoided

Notice to all ship Masters, Officers, ship owners, agents, seafarers and other navigators

Summary

Fishing activities are in the increase in the Virgin Islands. Fish traps, Artificial Fish Reefs and Fish Attracting Devices have been deployed around the Virgin Islands. Mariners should exercise caution when transiting the area. This would avoid fish traps getting lost and engaging in “ghost fishing” and go a long way in fisheries conservation.

General

Fishing activities are on the increase in the waters surrounding the Virgin Islands especially to the North of Tortola and Jost Van Dyke. When navigating in coastal waters of the Virgin Islands, Mariners should exercise caution in areas where fishing vessels may operate. Many of these fishing vessels use trolling lines which frequently extend to a considerable distance from the vessel and may be difficult to see. Also the shoal banks to the North of Tortola are frequently used to set fish traps and lobster pots in season. Mariners should give a wide berth to these shoals to avoid entanglement with the fishing gear. Additionally artificial reefs have been constructed in various locations that may not be suitable for surface navigation or anchoring. Further, Fish Attracting Devices (FAD's) have been placed around Jost Van Dyke, Virgin Gorda and Anegada Islands. These are anchored to the sea bed and are marked by an unlit buoy. Mariners are requested to give wide berth to these FAD's and artificial reefs.

Areas to be avoided (BA Chart 2016, 2019 refers)

Fish traps

There are several shoal banks in the North Coast of Tortola and Jost Van Dyke in waters less than 50 meters deep. They are used by Fishermen to set fish traps and lobster pots depending upon the season. The location where traps are set are in the sea area South of 18 Degrees 45.0 North and West of 064 degrees 40 minutes West, in Whale Bank, Turtle head, Virgin Banks, Barracouta Banks and King Fish Banks. Mariners transiting this area should exercise caution, keep a sharp lookout and avoid transiting or anchoring over the shoals.

Artificial Fish reefs

Two artificial reefs have been constructed North of Guana Island. The co-ordinates are:

1. North 18 Degrees 31.609 Minutes and West 064 Degrees 35.256 Minutes
2. North 18 Degrees 32.143 Minutes and West 064 Degrees 35.052 Minutes

Mariners should exercise caution when transiting this area, should give wide berth, maintain sharp look out, avoid transiting or anchoring over the artificial reefs.

Fish Attracting Devices (FAD)

Fish attracting Devices have been set up in deep waters to the North of Jost Van Dyke, South and East of Virgin Gorda and North and East of Anegada. These are marked by unlit buoys. Their co-ordinates of the moorings for the buoys are as shown below:

Fad 1	N 18 24.632	W 064 19.144
Fad 2	N 18 32.288	W 064 09.071
Fad 3	N 18 35.425	W 064 05.469
Fad 4	N 18 43.351	W 064 08.075
Fad 5	N 18 48.779	W 064 13.407
Fad 6	N 18 53.234	W 064 20.802
FAD 7	N 18 42 922	W 064 50.910
FAD 8	N 18 49.578	W 064 49.429

Due to the effect of wind and current the buoys may be up to one nautical mile offset in any direction from the position of the mooring shown above. Mariners should exercise caution when transiting this area, particularly during night time, give wide berth and maintain sharp look out.

Recommended Route

The recommended route for Mariners leaving Sir Francis Drake Channel and passing between Scrub Island and Dog Island, is to steer due North North West after rounding the Scrub Island, in waters over 20 meters deep, avoiding any shallow patches on the way, until the continental shelf is passed.

**Director of Shipping,
Virgin Islands Shipping Registry
Road Town, Tortola
British Virgin Islands.
17th August 2015**