

## **VMR Venus Bay - SA**

### **Notes for Coastal Cruising East or West of Venus Bay SA.**

*For any persons undertaking a voyage along the West Coast of Eyre Peninsula, the long distances between sheltered anchorages, the frequent lee shores and its particular coastal weather system, makes good forward planning essential.*

*The following information is primarily intended for those who enjoy the delights of leisurely coastal cruising, and who are also set up to explore some of the lesser known areas of interest on this part of the SA Coast, but who are unfamiliar with the area.*

*Our notes have been prepared from various sources and with the kind assistance of experienced local seamen, trawler and cruise boat skippers. We have highlighted the importance of understanding local weather patterns, listed some lesser known risks, included information on just some of the more sheltered anchorages and picked out some areas of interest (Note:- some of those may have less sheltered anchorages).*

**Communications when at sea:-** *For full detail, please refer to separate VMR Venus Bay document titled "Venus Bay - Communications, Entry and Anchorage". A number of businesses and individuals along this coast also undertake daylight hours monitoring of Marine VHF channel 16 and are willing to offer what assistance they can in an emergency situation, but at the date of writing, only VMR Venus Bay will offer specific 24/7 coverage and voyage tracking via a number of communication mediums, if that is agreed in advance.*

**VHF radio AIS system and safety at sea:-** *VMR operators regularly monitor AIS vessel movements. If you have this system operating while underway, it is an invaluable tool and can save response time for Emergency Services, should you have unexpected problems.*

**Lower to upper West Coast Weather Patterns:-** *The large size and broad wedge shape of the Eyre Peninsula with its higher and warm interior, generates a distinct local weather system of generally light early morning 'land breezes' combined with regular and strong afternoon 'sea breezes' which are a constant feature of the West Coast.*

*At times, their change of direction can begin with a short period in which the winds gust back and forth and then the sea breeze can quickly build in intensity and sometimes reach over 25 Knots/46 km per hour and may last for around 12 hours. This primarily coastal phenomenon when combined with shallower areas of the near coast waters, can in some areas cause steep wind-waves to quickly build up, particularly when strong tidal outflows also occur. The effects of the local winds can often be felt up to 25 or 30 kilometres out from the coast.*

*When this system is particularly strong, or when storms occur, they can at times affect the actual depth Vs the forecast tidal range in the large and often shallow bays and creeks.*

*Specific coastal weather information is often available to coastal cruisers by studying the B.O.M. Meteye 7 day forecasts or Willy Weather for each planned port/anchorage, rather than solely relying on a typical mix of much broader ocean weather forecasts.*

*On the positive side, this weather system plus deep waters, provides the coastal area from Port Lincoln to Venus Bay with a more temperate climate than the State's Capital City of Adelaide. On the EP's West Coast, late January and early February is typically the hottest period of any year and often includes periods of very calm weather. Note, it is also the time of the lowest tides.*

*Strong South Easterly winds are common in the afternoon during late Summer, and at night, they tend to moderate and often become Easterly. February to April are some of the best times to sail on the West Coast of Eyre Peninsula, as well as late August to early October. The stronger sea breezes then re-occur November and December. This long and mostly exposed coastline commonly has large swells and these steadily increase in height from Summer through to Winter. Good local information on both, can be found on [www.surf-forecast.com](http://www.surf-forecast.com)*

*Of the Severe storms, the most common begin with warm winds from the North East, which then build strongly as they swing further North, with often, the very strongest gusts coming from the North West before they become steadier as they then swing to the South.*

**Charts and local areas of interest:-** *The West Coast of Eyre Peninsula is a vast and sparsely populated area and has limited services, therefore careful study of up to date Australian Marine Charts is essential for any safe voyaging there. For every specific area mentioned here, the key requirement is to refer first to those charts before making an entry or anchorage.*

*Unfortunately many of the later charts are conservative on actual coastal features and omit detail of the shallow areas and creeks, which if tidal movement is carefully considered, and you have a shoal draft, or a Trailer-Sailer, plus a capable tender with shallow drive motor or Kayaks, then the time taken to explore those areas can be rewarding.*

*For example:- in their past, VMR Venus Bay operators have enjoyed exploring many kilometres of shallow creeks within the flooded mangrove forest along the coast of Smoky Bay and on Eyre Island and had enjoyable days in a 25 foot Trailer-Sailer moored within the short creek in Bob Bay on the mid North West side of the attractive Saint Peters Island.*

*Those areas are much less visited, interesting to explore and often teem with bird life, but now need to be located using Google satellite photos or terrestrial maps and due to their shallow, tidal nature, entry must be done with a high level of caution.*

*Note: It is anticipated that in due course, both of our VMR Venus Bay documents will be attached to the impressive and useful SA anchorages website at <https://anchorageguidesa.com.au>*

**Anchorage and Anchoring:-** *No one specific spot for anchoring has been given in any area described as suitable for anchoring and this is because many factors such as tidal movement, swell, forecast winds, current flow, landform, vessel draft and bottom conditions, will all need to be assessed by the Skipper before a preferred position is chosen.*

*Look for a clear area of sandy bottom to drop your anchor into as many of the bays have sandy bottom, but with a heavy covering of strong tape weed. Always check that it has dug in, because if the anchor flukes are wide and blunt, they can sometimes slide on this tough weed in breezy conditions or it can 'ball up' within some anchor types and may lift them out of the sand.*

**The importance of landform when assessing shelter from wind:-** *Low islands and headlands or steeply sloped headlands at an anchorage, will reduce the effectiveness of the shelter that can be obtained there, even during moderate wind speeds. Small islands with high domes or steep peaks may still allow strong winds to circle around or over them. The following areas suggested as suitable for anchorage sites are quite varied in landform and that factor should be considered in conjunction with forecast weather reports.*

**Risk from Swell or Current Flow:-** The potential for risk arising from swell or from 'long-shore currents' or even from tidal outflow in narrow channels, should also be considered when choosing an anchorage site. Often when large swells occur, they will circle much of the way around small Islands situated in deep water and regardless of the prevailing wind strength or direction, the resulting surge can at times, cause a heaving sea in a seemingly sheltered location. Similarly for long shore currents swirling around the tip of a peninsula. For these reasons, we have described some anchorage areas as being suitable for use only during 'fair weather'.

**General Hazards:-** in addition to the marked reefs/sandbars and sometimes rapid weather changes and strong tidal flows in some bays, many of the West Coast bays now have expanding aquaculture leases and a sharp lookout should be kept for those and when near to reef areas, trailing lobster pot ropes. Long-line fishing is done in some bays and usually at night, so if entering/exiting the bays at night, keep watch for the work boats which are often relatively small.

Only Davenport Creek has sufficient depth to allow larger vessels ease of entry, with all the others having shallow entrances that only allow entry/exit on higher tides. A first exploration is recommended by tender and in some cases, only entry by tender is possible.

It is common for these creeks to have a deeper cut channel on one side than the other. Often they will have some short deep holes and a shallow bar may then precede a considerably deeper section.

Occasionally, large waterlogged and semi submerged mangrove trunks can present a serious hazard as they slowly work their way along the channels.

Shallow bays and creeks are often a dynamic marine environment and while it is uncommon, it is sometimes possible for recent severe storms to have built up the sand bar at the entrance to tidal creeks or bays, or in other sandy areas, to do the opposite and alter the channel direction or even deepen the access.

Any anchorage with steep or undercut calcrete cliff along its edges can occasionally have overhanging sections come loose, and then the larger in-water debris can suddenly create a new hazard for any vessel/tender nearing the shore line.

Other natural hazards in some of the less visited shallow waters can include, Sting Rays, Cat-fish, Butterfly Gurnards and sharp lipped Razor/Pen clams. Onshore may have dangerous snakes and easily broken cliff edges. Always wear good protective foot-wear and take plenty of mosquito repellent if exploring the mangrove creeks.

Shore Breaks/Shore dumps :- These can occur on a number of islands that are situated in deep water, but Petrel Bay on St Francis Island which lies well out to sea and in deep water, is notable for the swells surging around the island and raising the water level in an otherwise calm bay which at times, creates a sudden and steep plunging wave onto the beach. This has upended some surprised sailors as they attempted to land in their tenders on that island.

Mutton Bird/Shearwater Burrows :- In season, these birds nest in their thousands on many offshore islands, with the Franklin and Saint Francis Isles being the most notable. Their many underground burrows can create a very easily collapsed surface which isn't easily visible to the untrained eye. Often these same burrows also house venomous snakes (the localised black Tiger Snake being the most common).

**Interesting coastal attractions:-** A person's personal preferences and experiences at different locations will colour their viewpoint on this subject, but of the many islands, the ranking for scenery and interesting experiences when moving Westward along the Eyre Peninsulas coast, probably places Pearson Island as the highest, then passing by the impressive but reef bound Topgallant Isles with their sharp pinnacles and a 100 metre high dome, then Flinders Island, and then the Eyre and Saint Peters Islands.

The mostly sheer sided and relatively narrow entrance to a deep water mooring on Massillon Island in the Saint Francis Group is often mentioned as being an impressive experience, and a similar but smaller and less steep sided one on Evans Island has received praise as a sheltered, attractive inlet.

**For exploration of the larger Creeks:-** Davenport Creek (Tourville Bay) ranks highest, then probably the short Bob Bay inlet on Saint Peters, then the creeks in Smoky Bay/Eyre Island, those in Streaky Bay and the Acraman Creek. Note:- all the creeks and but one island, are now conservation parks.

**Beaches:-** Many enjoyable sandy beaches exist in this part of the Eyre Peninsula but the ones that will probably stand out for Coastal Cruisers are some in Coffin Bay, those on Flinders Island, the one backed by steep dunes on Germein Island (just across from the anchorage in Venus Bay), the dune backed beach on the exposed side of Eyre island and the much calmer ones within Smoky Bay itself.

While smaller, the beach areas in front of the sand dunes along the side of Davenport Creek often receive good comments as does the impressively long one in Petrel Bay on Saint Francis Island, despite that it is sometimes a tricky place for landing a tender.

**Some useful anchorages to the South East of Venus Bay (as suggested by local Trawler Skippers):-**

The Coffin Bay Peninsula:- a number of good anchorages exist around this large peninsula, but **Point Sir Isaac** was recommended to us. This is on the Northern extremity of the Coffin Bay Peninsula and Point Sir Isaac is the short point on the East side of a small sandy bay and the Beacon is located on the West point of that bay. Note that both of the points have fringing reefs and outlying rocks.

- The suggestion made to us is that depending on wind and sea state forecasts, a useful anchorage area can be located in clear sand bottom either just to the North West of the Point Sir Isaac or just to the East (marked as 5.5 and 3.6 metres minimum depth, respectively). N.B. this is also an attractive area that is sheltered from winds, East South East through South to South West and is often a pleasantly cool spot during high summer. It is open to all other winds.
- The small sandy bay between the two points enables good holding in a mostly sand bottom and can be used to gain more shelter from Westerly winds, but supposedly it was named Sea-sick Bay because at times it can be subject to an unpleasant lumpy sea from currents surging around the two points.

**The whole of Coffin Bay** is very attractive and much of it is well sheltered. The town has a good range of services, such as a good boat ramp, a basic slipway, Supermarket, Pharmacist, Post Office, Service Stations, Hotel, Caravan Park, General Store, good Cafes and a Sailing Club.

- If you have time to spare and a shoal draft vessel or one with a lifting keel, this is an area well worth a visit, but it has a long, winding and sometimes narrow entrance channel with strong tidal flows and a number of quite shallow areas. The bar at the entry to the town itself can shallow to 1.4 Metres depth at the lowest tides. In Summer, the town area can be still and warm.

**Pearson Islands:-** A stunning location and well known for its Island Wallabies. It has a 238 metre ascent to its highest Peak for an impressive view. It is a Conservation Park and without any facilities.

- Always be very mindful of weather changes and quickly changing bottom conditions when at Pearson Island.
- Depending on wind and sea state forecasts, anchorage is generally good in the broad vee shaped bay on the North end of the Largest Isle of the Pearson group (a relatively deep water area). Most of this bay is sheltered from winds, South East through South to the West. Note that it has a large area of reef off its North West Point.
- During fair weather only, anchorage is possible from about 20 or more metres out from a small sandy Beach on the East side of the Southern Island (often called the Lighthouse island) which has reasonable shelter from winds, South through to West but is open all other winds and to large swell, which at times can almost circle around much of that island.

**Elliston/Waterloo Bay:-** While the Bay is attractive, it is sometimes an exposed anchorage and has frequent breaking seas across its entrance. At times even in calmer weather, turbulent seas may build up at the entry as it empties and entering/exiting this bay is only recommended with good local knowledge, therefore a nearby anchorage was recommended instead.

**East Island in the Waldegrave Group** is nearby to Waterloo Bay:- this area offers a better protected and mostly sand bottom anchorage area on the North to North West of the main island's Point McLachlan, and is also a visually attractive area.

- This area provides shelter from winds, East through South to the South West but is open to all other winds.
- No passage should be made between the two islands and that anchorage should be approached from 'outside' (the Flinders Island side).
- Note that it has a large semi submerged rock close in to the rocky tip of Point McLachlan and that it shallows quickly from the minimum 15 metre mark as you get close to the island. Ensure that you remain well clear of the breaking reef projecting out from the mainland and marked by a long line of breaking waves towards Point McLachlan.
- **If then voyaging towards Venus Bay:** At night it is best to stay at least 6 NM/11 km from Anxious Bay to about Talia because the Prawn runs are conducted primarily at night and often along that area.

**Flinders Island:-** This island is large and ruggedly attractive. It has an important light house on Point Malcolm, is well known for its good fishing and has an interesting history. It is presently operated as a farm with tourist accommodation. It has a number of useful anchorages around its perimeter, but only two have been described to us.

- The suggested first choice is to anchor in the long cove on its North East. This extends from Seal Point at an angle towards the island's Northern most tip at Point Malcolm. Ensure that you remain well clear of the large and mostly submerged reef off Seal Point and then much of the bay has good sand bottom and is sheltered from winds, South East through South to West, but is open to all other winds.

- *Another reasonably protected anchorage is the smaller Groper Bay on the island's East side, which is marked by buildings on shore. It has a shallow reef projecting off the beach and some large outlying rocks either side of the entrance. This area is well sheltered from winds, West through to North to North West, but it is exposed to winds and swell from the East through South East to South. When strong, these can produce large swells that at times will break heavily on the sides of its entrance and can make conditions uncomfortable within the bay.*
- *Please Note:- Flinders Island has many outlying reefs, large isolated rocks, and areas with large swell and breaking waves, therefore careful study of up to date marine charts is essential when visiting. These dangers are attested to by some interesting wrecks being still visible on its shores.*

**Venus Bay** itself is covered in detail within another VMR Venus Bay document titled '**Venus Bay:- Communications, Entry and Anchorage information**'.

- *Comments from visiting Coastal Cruisers have praised its sheltered anchorage and have been positive regarding their stop-over there.*
- *They suggested it has often been avoided in the recent past due to lack of knowledge and the care required to enter/exit, and believed those factors probably caused it to be under-rated.*

**Sailing further towards the West from Venus Bay (from various sources):-**

**Baird Bay:-** *it is an interesting and well sheltered location with primarily a holiday settlement and has few services. The bay has a large sea lion population and landing/walking on their small island home is unlawful.*

- *Entry is through a narrow gap in the rocky bar at the entrance to this bay, which is situated approximately midway between Jones island and the nearby shoreline of the Calca Peninsula (which is dominated by Cape Radstock). Alan Payne (Baird Bay Ocean Eco Experience) estimates it is probably 3 metres minimum depth in the entrance channel at the lowest tides, but the bar is often subject to breaking swells.*
- *As the swell builds, the visibly clear entry channel area can shrink from a maximum of about 100 metres to around 50 metres, particularly as breaking waves tend to grow on the starboard side, which at times can then obscure the centre of the channel.*
- *Under certain conditions, these waves increase the risk of broaching and the suggestion is that entry/exit should only be attempted under power and in fair weather and only on a steadily rising tide (preferably near the top of tide) and not to attempt entry/exit if there is any more than 3 metres of swell or winds over 20 NM/37 km per hour.*
- *The bay's depth is variable and it shallows as you progress further in. Their suggestion is that deeper keel vessels should moor at no more than about 500 metres in from the bar.*
- *The Paynes who own the Baird Bay Eco Lodge, monitor Marine VHF Channel 16 and if you are intending to visit this Bay, it may be worthwhile checking with them about entry conditions and GPS marks or VMR Venus Bay regarding local weather conditions, before entering.*

**Sceale Bay:-** *To enter this Bay, one must remain clear of the Nicolas Baudin Island and the Point Westall area, both of which have a large number of submerged reefs that break frequently.*

- *It is an attractive bay with a small and mostly holiday town. It has a basic boat ramp, but is without a Jetty or a General Store.*

- *Just out from the town there are sand holes amongst tape weed for anchoring. It offers shelter from winds, North East through South to South West but is open to winds that occur prior to and during stormy changes that begin North and move through North West then West.*
- *Be cautious of the submerged remnant piles of the old town jetty at low tide, and there is a sizeable reef about 1NM/1.8 km West North West of the town which noticeably breaks only during low water.*

**Streaky Bay:-** *This large bay is attractive and the town area offers good shelter from most winds and is well serviced. It has good fishing and it is worth a visit and is a good place to reprovision, but requires careful navigation into the bay because it has many shallow areas.*

- *The town is approximately 12NM/23 km in total distance after rounding Cape Blanche and about 7 km just from Point Gibson (refer carefully to charts for locations of sand bars as you enter).*
- *Depending where you choose to anchor, it has some exposure to strong winds coming from the North. A more sheltered mooring area is just to the West of the town (towards Schlinks Landing) and private moorings can easily be spotted there.*
- *The jetty is located in front of the township; it has 240 volt power outlets (inc' three phase) and fresh water on the Northern side. Anchorage is available either side of the jetty in 3- 4 meters of water. The bottom is primarily tape weed over sand.*
- *Barge poles are required when tying to the jetty which is used to off load fishermen's catches. Trolleys are available for carting provisions to the end of the jetty.*
- *The town has a good boat ramp, local VMR listening posts, Service Stations, Hotel, Supermarkets, good Cafes, Bakery, Newsagent, Post Office, Hospital, Ambulance, SES, CFS, Electrician, Refrigeration mechanic, Plumber, fishing tackle, Hairdresser, Wine and Spirit Store and well serviced Caravan Parks.*
- *Within the bay, there is a large area of tidal mangroves between Moores Shute and Point Gibson which has at least three interesting tidal creeks to explore. The most accessible by tender is that nearest to the Moores Boat Ramp (tide levels will determine entrance/exit).*
- *Coastal Cruisers have rated this bay highly to VMR Venus Bay but some have cautioned that it can be a quite warm location on calm days during high summer.*

**Acraman Creek:-** *Located on the East side of Point Brown, between Point Lindsay and Flagstaff landing. This is a lengthy creek that early in European settlement of the Eyre Peninsula had sheltered a small fishing fleet including an occasional cutter, with the boxes of fish hauled to the cliff top by a motor powered 'flying fox'.*

- *It had another entrance (now a blind shallow channel) which was supposedly closed by a violent storm during early settlement.*
- *The creek itself sits in a wider but shallow valley filled with salt marsh and mangroves. It has some good beaches and is a well sheltered area. Now a conservation park without facilities.*
- *It has a typically shallow entrance that for anything other than a tender, needs to be crossed only at high tide. Good fishing with lures can be had near the mouth on an incoming tide.*
- *Be cautious before deciding to moor within the creek because depths are quite variable. An (outside) anchorage in minimum 7.3 metres of water is shown on charts at approximately 2 NM/4 km East of the mouth. That may be preferable for any vessel that is not of shallow draft. It is sheltered from winds, West through North to North East. But , but open to all other winds.*

**Smoky Bay:-** *A reasonably protected and attractive bay with fine beaches. It has an entry at either end of its barrier island but the described entry is via the Water-Witch Channel as the Eastern channel has shallow areas at its ends, on the lowest tides.*

- *In a few areas, the Water-Witch Channel has some shallow sand bars plus a drying patch towards its edge at one point. Avoiding those generally provides a minimum 2.3 to 2.7 metre depth. The bay proper also has a number of large, shallow sandy areas that are well marked on the charts.*
- *This bay has a recently restored 'pedestrian' jetty but it is without power or water. It offers good shelter from winds, North through East to South, but less so to strong South West winds. It is exposed to winds from the West and from the North West.*
- *Its Jetty has approximately 3 meters minimum water depth at its outer end and in settled weather, anchorage is good just North of the Jetty, providing you locate clear sandy bottom amongst the tape weed.*
- *The Town has a good boat ramp, and a Caravan Park with laundry and showers. The licensed General Store has fuel, ice and gas. There is a Postal Agency and a licensed Community Club.*
- *Visitors to this area have advised VMR Venus Bay that Smoky Bay appears to have been under-rated by Coastal Cruisers in the past. It is a relatively cool place in high summer and a good location to take a break and to explore the mostly sheltered bay and its barrier island.*
- *If moving to or from Ceduna/Murat Bay, it is a shorter and more protected journey to use the (inshore) channel that enters into Murat Bay from between St Peter Island and the coast. Note the shallow stretch between Cape Vivonne and the Saint Peter Island sand bar.*

***Eyre Island:-*** *This island is located at the entrance to Smoky Bay and is unusual in that it is a sand island, therefore quite different in make-up and vegetation to most other islands off this coast. It is low (about 10 metres average height) and in two parts with its South side having high dunes and impressive but exposed beaches interspersed with banks of beach cast sea grasses.*

- *Those beaches are more easily accessed from the East end as the waters around the Western end of the island(s) are quite shallow and the dangerous Goalen Rocks begin around 2 NM South West from the smaller, but separated sandy point of the Little Eyre island.*
- *The island's North side also has large areas of shallow sand flats which can dry at the lowest tides. It has oyster farms and a large area of flooded mangrove forest with two main creeks.*
- *The most interesting of those is towards the larger island's Western end and is sometimes referred to by the locals as Karagianis Creek. It is often filled with bird life but has a shallow entrance, some narrow closely overhung areas and a number of shallow bars.*
- *On the coast opposite the East end of this island is another large area of flooded mangroves with two lengthy creeks. Similar entry conditions to those on the island but the one at the Southern end of the bay and diagonally opposite the island, is the easier to access on a good tide. It is the longer and the more interesting to visit and waterbirds are common.*

***Murat Bay (Port Thevenard and Ceduna):-*** *If entering from the Southern Ocean, via any islands of the Nuyts Archipelago, this bay requires careful navigation along a lengthy but well marked channel in order to reach the Jetties at either location.*

***The large Saint Peters Island and small Goat Island:-*** *located on the South East side of the entrance to Murat Bay and extending almost to Cape Vivonne. The larger of the two islands is generally considered the most attractive of the many islands within the nearby Nuyts Archipelago. It has good birdlife and shy wildlife, such as bettongs and stick nest rats.*

- It has good water depth at its South Western end, but has a reef extending from its Southern tip and a larger one extending from its South East.
- Caution is required when anywhere near to the largely submerged wreck of the sunken cargo ship *Elini K*, or near to any of the aquaculture leases dotted around the island's perimeter.
- The shallow sand flats begin as you travel North, North East and close to this island, but with careful consideration of tidal movement, Bob Bay and then the long channel on the East side (or Smoky Bay side) of the narrow Northern tip of the island, are interesting places to visit in a lift keel Trailer-Sailer or Tender and the view from Mt Young-husband at 48 metres high, is impressive.
- This "inner" (Western) side of the island is sheltered from winds, North East through East to South, but is open to winds from the South West, West and to strong winds from the North.

**Thevenard** is a smaller town with a sizeable and active commercial port plus large bulk storage facilities and a well protected anchorage for commercial fishing vessels. It has a Supermarket, Hotel, and Postal Agency.

**Ceduna** is the major town with a very good range of services and facilities. It has a good boat ramp, well equipped SES/VMR station, Airport, Pharmacy, Post Office, Hospital, Ambulance, CFS, Sailing Club, Hairdressers, Mechanical Services, Service Stations, Hotels and Taxis.

- The Ceduna jetty is situated in front of the town and is within walking distance to most services. It is sheltered from winds, North, through East to South East but is more exposed to winds, South through West to North.
- There is no water or power on the jetty. At the end of the jetty in approximately 4 metres of water, one can temporarily moor on either of its sides (barge poles are required because of often strong wave action) and the bottom is tape weed over sand.
- The better place to moor for a short stay would be to anchor South of the Jetty end (directly out from the Hotel) where there are private moorings visible.
- This is an attractive bay and in a well serviced area but it is often a hot place during high summer.

**Denial Bay:-** this small bay is situated on the opposite side to Murat Bay and about 5 NM/9km West from Ceduna.

- This is a good alternative anchorage if bad weather is predicted because it is well sheltered from winds, South through West to the North. But normally, it is exposed to the more common wind from the South East. It has a lighted jetty and a small town but is without a shop or other facilities.
- An anchorage is shown on charts as being approximately 0.8 NM/1.5 km out from the Jetty and on the bottom contour line change from 5.3 to 4.6 metres. The bottom is mostly tape weed over sand.

**Davenport Creek/Tourville Bay:-** An impressive and attractive anchorage situated about 11NM/20 km South West of Ceduna and offering 360 degree of shelter. No facilities, but great fishing, nice beaches and good crabbing.

- The entrance to Tourville Bay is between Cape Beaufort and Point Peter. The bay's deeper but relatively narrow entrance is situated more towards the Point Peter side amongst a large area of sand flats that will dry on the lowest tides. The first port side channel leading off the main entry channel is the entrance to the Davenport Creek.

- While the creek depth varies, its entrance is approximately 3 metres deep at low tide and the creek is approximately 4 to 5 metres deep at the "anchorage" which is at the first large bend, then the creek shallows as you progress further in.
- The attractive "anchorage" is surrounded on one side by high sand hills and on the other by mangroves. It has a mostly sand bottom and during change of tides it has noticeably strong flows.
- At times, the outflow from this large bay and an incoming wind plus deeper water at the very entrance to it, can create a turbulent area.
- Those Coastal Cruisers who have spent days relaxing in Davenport Creek, have rated it highly to VMR Venus Bay for scenery, relaxation and as a very protected anchorage, but they advised that good insect repellent and well screened vents/hatchways are essential on calm and warm nights.

**The Islands of Nuyts Archipelago:-** This island group stretches over 22NM/41 km seaward and contains 11 islands of various sizes plus a number of dangerous reefs/rocks. Only a few of the more interesting ones are included here and to navigate safely amongst this scattered group, requires an abundance of care.

**Evans Island:-** This is a small but distinct plateau island and situated about 3.2 NM/6 km South from Goat Island and adjacent the route to St Francis. This 40 metre high island has a relatively small but sheltered inlet on its North East end which has steep sides. This inlet is fringed with large areas of tide washed rocks and around the island base are deep caves and overhangs.

- When approaching this island it has some dangerous rocks off its North West and South Eastern Corners (up to 300 metres out from the island).
- It has an important beacon on its summit, many Mutton Birds and has one of the closest in breeding colonies of Storm Petrels.
- As you enter the inlet, some large, at times almost submerged rocks, lie around the edges. The inlet is about 150 metres long and most charts will show it as 5.2 metres minimum depth but locals have suggested it shallows to 3 metres.
- The inlet is sheltered from winds, East through South to North West but is exposed to winds from the North and North East.
- It is best considered as a fair weather anchorage because it is in relatively deep water and at times, a heavy surge from large swell can almost encircle it, although in calmer weather it tends to be moderate within the inlet.
- The risks that might arise from any large swell should be given careful consideration before you moor in the inlet, particularly if it is coming from the East to South East.

**Saint Francis Island:-** This is the largest island in the Saint Francis group with a long history of being farmed. It has a number of anchorages that can be used to gain shelter in different weather conditions and it is approximately 81 metres high.

- It has an important beacon on its summit and is mostly covered with hardy but stunted vegetation that is peppered with easily collapsed Mutton Bird (Shearwater) burrows.
- On the Northern side of the island is Petrel Bay which has an impressive and long sandy beach with relatively deep water close in to the sand-line.
- Note:- this beach is mentioned in the Hazards section as at times having an unpleasant 'shore dump' and the bay is often subject to swell.
- It has a mostly sandy bottom but with large patches of weed. Being a long crescent shape it is possible to move your mooring position from one end to the other, in order to get shelter from most wind directions, but it is quite open to any strong winds coming from the North.
- It has the remains of a landing, an interesting large cave that was once mined for bat guano, uncommon but shy wildlife and some badly weathered (former) farm buildings.

- At approximately the centre of Petrel Bay is a private mooring, which is owned and regularly required by EP Cruises PL. If you wish to access that, then please first call them on 0428 365 611 or on VHF channel 16.

**Masillon Isle:-** This smaller island has three distinct peaks that reach up to 76 metres high and is noticeable for its banded orange-red and yellow calcarenite cliffs which are more apparent in low angled sunlight.

- It is situated approximately 2NM/3.7 km South East of the main Saint Francis island (Note the submerged reef off the South tip of St Francis island).
- It is best known for a large and almost sheer sided inlet on its Western side which has many deep caves around its base and is a deep water anchorage. With care, good holding bottom can be found there in around 10 to 15 metres of water.
- The inlet opens into a larger and attractive lagoon like area that is very well sheltered from winds, North through East to South, but the entrance is exposed to any strong winds or large swell from the South West through West to North West. Therefore, this anchorage is more suited to fair weather visits.
- Depending on wind and swell forecasts, the EP Cruises PL preference when at Masillon Island, is to moor in an area of clear sandy bottom (3 to 5 metres of water) in the bay on the North side. Note that either end of that bay has quite shallow reefy areas.

**VMR Venus Bay wish to thank:-**

- Terry Paul, Skipper of Prawn Trawler, Limnos, Venus Bay
- Alan and Trish Payne, Operators of Baird Bay Ocean Eco Experience
- John Williams, CFS, SES/VMR, Sceale Bay
- Rod Keogh, Skipper/Operator of EP Cruises, Streaky Bay and Fowlers Bay
- Greg Smith, Skipper of vessel Laccona
- All others who have made contributions in some way

**Suggested references:-** (Hardcopy) A Cruising Guide to the Historic West Coast (Vol 4 or later) By Graham Scarce. (On-line) Royal SA Yacht Squadron - Anchorage Guide (<https://anchorageguidesa.com.au>) also South Australian Sailing, - Jack & Jude and West Coast Cruise 2015 on [jackandjude.com/anchorages/sa/westsas](http://jackandjude.com/anchorages/sa/westsas).

**We wish you the best for your Coastal Cruising.**

Rob and Ruth Gregor

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**IMPORTANT NOTICE!**

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Any use of this document does not replace the responsibility of all persons voyaging in this area to properly check such critically important data as updated Marine Charts, Water Depth, Tide Times, Weather Forecasts, Swell Predictions, or to gain accurate G.P.S position headings and to understand the sea bottom conditions and their anchor's holding ability when choosing an anchorage site.

It is provided free of charge by volunteers and it is only intended to provide warnings of risk issues and to highlight some local areas of interest and some options for anchorage areas.