

Marine

News

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Great Boats of 2011



Subchapter M

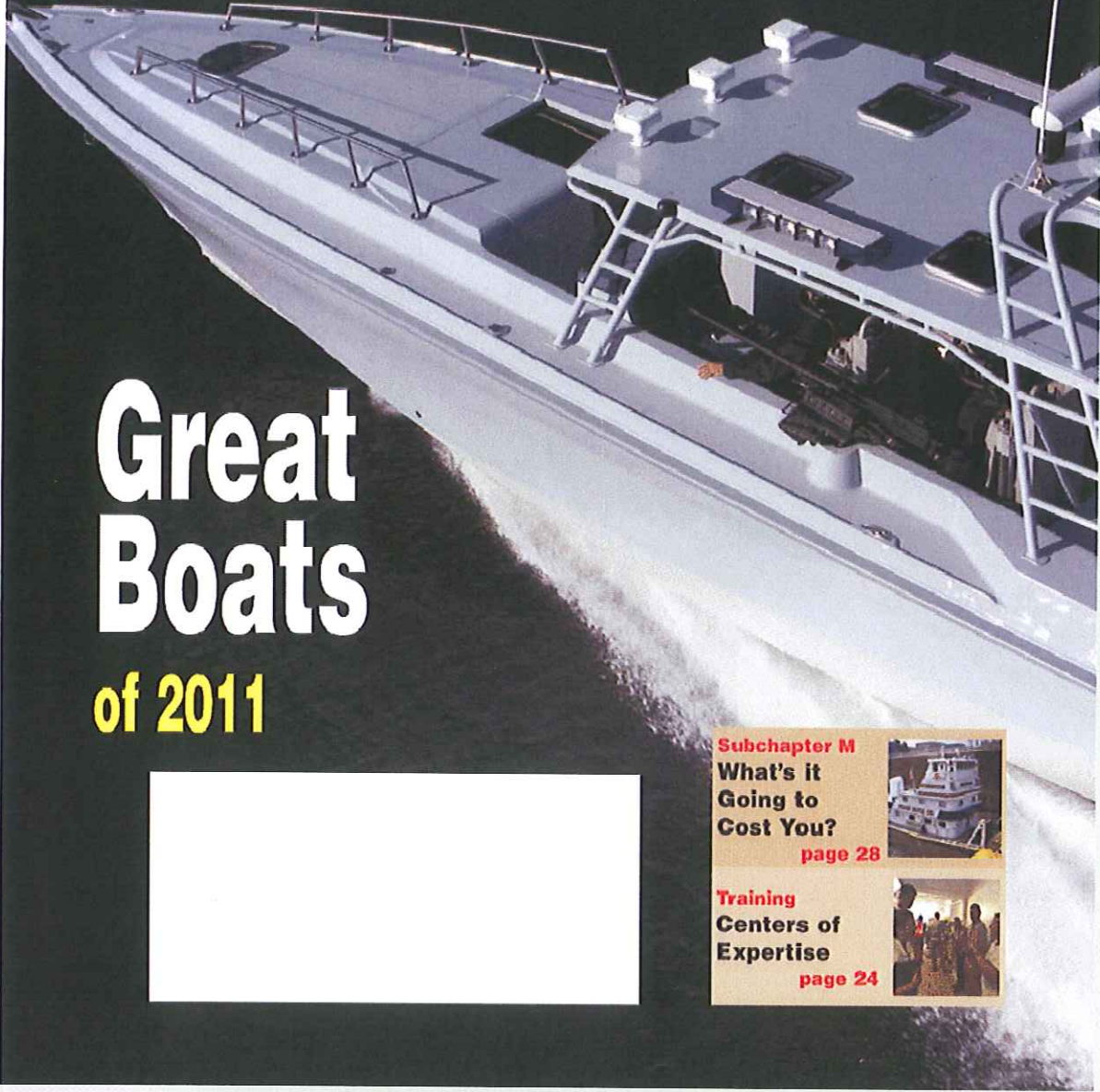
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Going to
Cost You?

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BY THE NUMBERS

There may be no more important issue to vessel operators today than the depth of the water under the keels of 40,000 commercial hulls crisscrossing the nation's waterways. Great Lakes operators put the exclamation point on that by illustrating how many tons of cargo is lost annually due to each inch of draft that is unavailable. Beyond the gray noise of complaining about the lack of maintenance dredging is the concern that depths on charts may be inaccurate. Therefore, for commercial and pleasure boats operators alike, the need to avoid areas where actual depths are less than what is depicted on charts is a quandary. *At least until now.* If you plan to transit the ICW in the near future and depths less than 12 feet get your attention, then you might want to take a look at the chart shown below. Note that these are simple vessel observations that reflect tidal conditions, have not yet been corrected or added to the database for collective processing, and should *NOT* be used for navigation. Today, federal law provides for the waterway to be maintained at a minimum depth of 12 ft. (4 m) for most of its length. But, as shown below – this isn't always the case. Moreover, depths on charts are typically referenced to a mean low water datum, and since the state of the tide isn't taken into consideration below, actual depths may even be less.

ICW Study Area						% of Soundings	
Start Location	Mile Marker	End Location	Mile Marker	Distance (mi.)	Total No. Soundings	Depths < 12'	Depths < 6'
Atlantic ICW (Norfolk, VA)	0	Fort Pierce, FL	965	965	277,078	9.1	0.1
VA/NC Border	35	Winn Bay	105	70	12,207	31.7	0.0
Bogue Sound	215	Carolina Beach	295	80	15,197	5.9	0.0
North Myrtle Beach	345	International Drive	360	15	7,390	13.3	0.0
Georgetown	400	Charleston	460	60	23,520	29.9	0.2
Edisto Island	500	Beaufort	535	35	11,517	14.7	0.2
Hilton Head Island	560	Savannah	585	25	12,163	6.1	0.0
Saint Catherine's Sound	625	Jekyll Sound	685	60	23,755	9.6	0.1
Fernandina Beach	720	Jacksonville Beach	745	25	10,748	10.6	0.4
Flagler Beach	810	Fort Pierce	965	155	34,528	14.9	0.3
Gulf ICW (Sand Ridge)	185	New Orleans	0	185	16,489	6.7	0.1
Sand Ridge	185	Gum Island	155	30	1,996	29.0	0.1
Cypremort	135	Mud Lake	120	15	587	19.6	0.0
Larose	35	New Orleans	0	35	3967	5.2	0.0

ARGUS™

Source: ARGUS. This data not to be used for navigational purposes. Data represents full length but NOT full-width coverage of ICW. This limited data snapshot is intended to demonstrate how these opportune soundings can be routinely processed to highlight potential waterway trouble areas.

Cataloguing almost 300,000 soundings as recorded by three recreational vessels in the above example, reported depths are often far less than charted values and that prescribed by the government. In three separate waterway stretches, 30 percent of soundings were less than 12 feet. The most recent update from the Hydrographic Services Review Panel (HSRP) Federal Advisory Committee outlines actions NOAA must take to provide critical hydrographic and navigation services. The second of two such reports since 2007, the HSRP update identified the Most Wanted Hydrographic Services Improvements, which include, among other things, that NOAA (a) aggressively map the nation's shorelines and navigationally significant waters; (b) integrate coastal mapping efforts and ensure federally maintained waters are surveyed to the highest standards; and (c) disseminate NOAA's hydrographic services data and products to achieve the greatest public benefit. While you are waiting for that to happen, you may have other options.

Representing one of the more interesting – and valuable – uses of social media that has evolved over the last few years, ARGUS (Autonomous Remote Global Underwater Surveillance) provides cooperative surveying of coastal and inland waterways through the acquisition and collective processing of vessel chartplotter and environmental data.

BY THE NUMBERS

The marine community is enabling ARGUS in the pursuit of updated nautical charts, increased public safety and environmental stewardship, and maximized navigational efficiency. Your vessel provides an efficient means of data acquisition, and cost sharing of processed data provides a prudent means to survey the areas that you most frequently travel. In addition to helping to prioritize Federal efforts, you benefit by having improved, community generated chart products at a fraction of the cost of current methods, and in places that haven't been surveyed in decades. And the Wave WiFi, integrated into the ARGUS onboard units for automatic data offload, provides multipurpose Internet connectivity. The possibilities are literally endless. A boater – recreational or commercial – may choose to follow a single vessel traveling ahead of him as a means of more prudent navigation or use the cumulative breadth of data from hundreds of others as the yardstick. For a deeply laden tug and tow, the means with which to avoid uncharted hazards may soon become widely available. ARGUS relies on the marine community for data, which in turn provides the community with a wide range of benefits and opportunities.



The patent-pending system provides both hardware (connecting to depth sounders) and data processing. Mariners will be able to subscribe to the data produced by a myriad of others either as an observer, or as a participant that also provides data from his vessel. Take advantage of the chart-plotter on the boat in front of you.

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